

DEUTERONOMY

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Deuteronomy chapter 30 as we continue our study through the Word of God. The children of Israel are now in the fortieth year of their exodus from Egypt and they are on the boarder of the Promise Land. For a one-month period of time Moses has been instructing this new generation on the things of God as they prepare to enter into the Promise Land, the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua.

In our last study we saw Moses instructing them to set up an altar on Mount Ebal and offer sacrifices there. Also, to whitewash stones and write the Law down upon them so everyone could clearly see them. Then, six of the tribes were to stand by Mount Ebal, where the cursings were spoken towards; and six of the tribes were to stand by Mount Gerizim where the blessings were spoken towards. In the middle of these two small mountains were the priests with the Ark of the Covenant and they would shout out the blessings and the cursings and each time, from Mount Ebal when the cursings were spoken they would say “Amen!” and the same took place on Mount Gerizim when the blessings were spoken by the priests.

In other words, they understood what would come upon them if they disobeyed the Lord and what would come upon them if they obeyed the Lord! And for the cursings, it was not a pretty picture, nor was it intended to be as Moses gives some 52 verses of what will happen if they walked away from God, if they disobeyed Him. You see, God wanted them to clearly understand this. They made a covenant with God and now God expected them to keep it!

And we concluded last time with these words, **“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.”** Deuteronomy 29:29. Folks, we too have made a covenant with God as we gave our life to Him, we were saying that He is not only our Savior but He is Lord over our lives and thus, we will obey Him! Thus, as we read God’s Word, we need to apply these things to our lives because true love is seen in obedience and that is truly where the blessings of God are found. With that said, let’s begin reading in Deuteronomy chapter 30, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word!

DEUTERONOMY 30

VERSE 1

1. Moses did not understand the idea of how to win friends and influence people. He just spoke forth the Words of God in truth and thus, the people were now accountable for their actions. And Moses, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells the children of Israel that they will see the blessings of God upon their lives for obedience, and we see that under the reign of King David and his son, King Solomon as the nation prospered!

But Moses also tells them that they will see the cursings of God upon their lives for their disobedience. And we do see that in the Northern Kingdom of Israel who had no godly kings, they all were wicked even though some were better than others and they went into captivity at the hands of the Assyrians. And the Southern Kingdom of Judah, who had some godly kings also turned from the Lord in disobedience and God brought the Babylonians down upon them and they too went into captivity. Just as Moses spoke, these things did come to pass for the children of Israel, they did not heed the warnings of God and obey!

2. As Christians, if we turn from the Lord, disobey the Lord, we too can find ourselves in captivity to all kinds of things and be driven out of the work that God has called us to do.

Thus, this lesson, this warning applies to us today!

3. Now, what were they to do if they found themselves in captivity because of their disobedience? Let's read on because Moses will show them and us what is to be done.

VERSES 2-5

1. We see a picture of what this will be like when the Jew's returned from their Babylonian captivity, but I don't believe that is what Moses is speaking of, the Jews did not turn back to God as a nation and they did not come from the four corners of the world.

We also see a partial fulfillment of this prophecy with the Jewish people returning to the land of Israel after almost 2,000 years of wondering throughout the world without a homeland. And in all those years they remained a separate people, they were not assimilated into other cultures as should have been the case and is the case for any other people. Back on May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, proclaimed the birth of the sovereign state of Israel and he called this land not Jerusalem or Palestine, but Israel as the prophet Ezekiel said it should be called. In fact, he said it was in fulfillment of what the prophet Ezekiel spoke! He saw this as the fulfillment of that prophecy.

And then, upon Israel's declaration of independence, of their statehood, they were immediately attacked by seven Arab armies and out-manned 50 to 1. The goal was to drive Israel into the Sea, and to destroy them! In fact, long before this became a reality, back on March 1, 1944, Yasser Arafat's uncle, Najamin el-Husseini said on Radio Berlin regarding the increase numbers of Jews in the land: "Arabs, rise as one man and fight for your sacred rights. Kill the Jews wherever you find them. This pleases God [Allah] and religion [and] saves your honor. God is with you." Before they even became a nation the call from their enemies was to destroy these Jewish people and that has not changed in the over 60 years since these words were spoken.

What took place when Israel became a nation? IDF General Shimon Erem said back in 1948: "Twenty thousand untrained civilians, many of them speaking languages which could not be understood took on armies represented by 100 million Arabs, and prevailed. It was a miracle of God; there is no other explanation. God was keeping His word. The key was faith. We believed God. We believed the prophets. And because of God, we prevailed. The difference is faith in God, the God of the Bible."

General Shimon Erem believed what God said and now, their existence in the land of Israel is a fulfillment of what God promised even though the enemy was bigger and stronger than they were.

Now, this is a partial fulfillment and it is at the end of the Tribulation Period, when Israel returns to the Lord, that He will gather them from the four corners of the earth. In Matthew 24:27-31 we are told, "**For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**"

It is then that they will be gathered from all over the world and come to Jerusalem and they will never be removed and the fulfillment of God's promises to them will come to pass as the Lord sits on the throne to rule and reign! Keep in mind that what we see in Israel today is a physical re-gathering, and they have not turned back to the Lord, there has not been that spiritual rebirth yet, but look at the next verse.

VERSE 6

1. As much as God had miraculously birthed this nation once again and brought them into the land of Israel, most of the nation is secular today! Yes, they respect God's Word as a historical book, a book that speaks of their identity, but they have not turned back to the God of the Book! And this fits in perfectly with Ezekiel 37 as those dried bones, those lifeless bones came to life, speaking of Israel and then God breathed in them His Spirit. Today they are in the land and one day, at the end of the Tribulation Period, they will turn back to God, they will receive Jesus as their Messiah!

2. In Jeremiah 31:31-34 we are told of this spiritual rebirth, **“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”**

Notice, this is not a covenant based in the Law and the outward rite of circumcision, but a covenant based upon the blood of Christ that is inward, the circumcision of the heart because that is the only way God can forgive sin, through the finished work of Christ applied to our lives!

We see this also in Ezekiel 36:26-28, **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.”** So Israel as a nation will return to the Lord, they will receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior for Jesus said to them, **“for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”** Matthew 23:39.

VERSES 7-10

1. Again, we see a partial fulfillment with the Jewish people in the land today, but again, spiritually speaking, they have not returned to the Lord yet! Thus, I see these blessings occurring during the Kingdom Age, not that individual Jews who turn to the Lord won't be blessed today, but this is speaking of the nation of Israel, and as I have said, Israel is mostly a secular nation today!

VERSES 11-14

1. How important these words were not only to the children of Israel, but they should be important to us. Moses is saying that God's Word, His Law is not too difficult for them to follow, it is easy to understand, it is easy to reach, there is no need to make some kind of pilgrimage to Mecca or Medigoria or wherever! God had given it to them and it should be in their hearts, they should treasure it to help them in their daily walk with Him and so should we!

2. Now, in reading this it seems like Moses is saying that as we keep the Law you can obtain salvation, that it is possible. I don't believe that is what Moses is saying; it would be contrary to many other Scriptures dealing with this topic. Moses is not speaking of salvation but of fellowship with God for the Law can't save us, it never could, but by breaking it we can break our fellowship with God!

3. If you doubt that, then listen to what one ancient Rabbi had to say regarding this portion of Scripture here in Deuteronomy. Paul, that ancient Rabbi tells us in Romans 10:3-10, **“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, ‘The man who does those things shall live by them.’ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down from above) “Who will descend into the abyss?”” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”**

Do you see what Paul is saying here? First of all you can't keep the Law to be saved, only Jesus could and did and thus, it is by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone that we are saved! It truly is a matter of the heart and not outward actions that save us. The outward actions just give the evidence for our faith, it shows that we are saved and if we are saved and yet we are disobedient to God, then our fellowship with Him will be broken, we can't lose our salvation. And again, if you doubt that, listen to what David said as he was in sin before God, his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah to cover his sin and then what he did to restore that fellowship with God.

In Psalm 32:1-5 we are told, **“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”** I think that is

important for us to understand, you can't live in rebellion against God, if you are saved, and be in fellowship with Him. You need to repent and get right with God and if you don't know God, you need to repent to open the door of fellowship with Him, asking Him to be Lord and Savior of your life!

Moses pointed to the Law for fellowship. Paul shows us that Jesus fulfilled the Law and it is only through Him we can be saved. I don't see these two passages contradicting each other, but they truly compliment each other!

4. Now listen to what Spurgeon said regarding these verses in Romans that we just read: “Christ did not come to make the law milder, or to render it possible for our cracked and battered obedience to be accepted as a sort of compromise. The law is not compelled to lower its terms, as though it had originally asked too much; it is holy and just and good, and ought not to be altered in one jot or tittle, nor can it be. Our Lord gives the law all it requires, not a part, for that would be an admission that it might justly have been content with less at first.”

And do you see the simplicity of salvation - it cost Christ His life and He has extended that free gift of eternal life based upon His finished work, if we believe by faith and receive Him into our lives. It is as Spurgeon said: "We believe everything which the Lord Jesus has taught, but we must go a step further, and trust him. It is not even enough to believe in him, as being the Son of God, and the anointed of the Lord; but we must believe on him . . . The faith that saves is not believing certain truths, nor even believing that Jesus is a Savior; but it is resting on him, depending on him, lying with all your weight on Christ as the foundation of your hope. Believe that he can save you; believe that he will save you; at any rate leave the whole matter of your salvation with him in unquestioning confidence. Depend upon him without fear as to your present eternal salvation. This is the faith which saves the soul."

VERSES 15-20

1. Do you see God's love for His people in these verses? God gives them a choice to make, to disobey Him and receive the curses upon their lives or obey Him and receive the blessings upon their lives. And God even tells them which one of these choices they are to choose, "**therefore choose life.**"

We have game shows today like "Deal Or No Deal" where you have to pick different suitcases and try to pick low dollar amounts so you can win a million dollars but you are not told which one to pick. I have seen people walk away with just \$1 because they made bad choices. But our God doesn't leave it to chance. He leaves nothing to chance. He tells us the consequences of both choices and then He tells us, "**therefore choose life.**" Why in the world would you choose death, and yet, many do!

2. Now what does that mean to “**therefore choose life**”? Again, we don’t have to guess because Moses tells us in Deuteronomy 30:20, “**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.**”

Jesus expounded on this in Matthew 22:35-40 where we are told, “**Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.**” First we are to love God and then, and only then can we love our fellow man with the love that God desires, with Godly love! You see, we are to love Him with our whole being and yet we do fall short and in that we need to be careful for if we disregard the Law of God, the Words of God, you are easily going to be drawn away from Him!

DEUTERONOMY 31**VERSES 1-2**

1. Please don't come to the conclusion that because of his age, 120 years old, Moses was physically unable to lead the children of Israel into the Promise Land. In Deuteronomy 34:7 we are told, **“Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished.”** The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was perfect and he was as strong as a young man.”** Thus, it was not a matter of physical strength that prevented him from entering in and leading the people!

Then why did God tell Moses he could not lead the people into the Promise Land, why couldn't he enter in? Back in Numbers 20:7-12 we are given the reason. We are told, **“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.’ So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, ‘Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?’ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.’”**

Moses misrepresented God before the people and God held him accountable. And not only did he misrepresent God before the people but he disobeyed God, he did not trust in the Words of God but did as he thought, and he was wrong and God was right, go figure! So he will not be able to lead the people and he will not be able to enter into the Promise Land.

VERSES 3-6

1. Who was going into the land before them? Yes, Joshua would lead them but it is God who is the one who goes before them and thus, if God is for them, who can be against them? And the answer is that no one can stop the work of God and His people because He is leading the way!
2. One more point here and that is God doesn't want them to be fearful. Yes, Moses has been their leader for forty years now, and many of them knew no other leader and thus, they could have been fearful of what was to come. But God is for them, He will lead them, and He will work through their new leader, Joshua just as He worked through Moses, don't be afraid. That is important for us to understand, it is not the leader but God who is working through that leader that matters!

VERSES 7-8

1. God is the one who will bring the people into the Promise Land but don't forget that God uses common people to do His work through and here we see God raise up Joshua! And for Moses, no bitterness in his words, he is encouraging the people that God will fulfill His promises to them through Joshua. And thus, they needed to follow his leadership as they enter into the Promise Land!

VERSES 9-13

1. The Levites were to minister God's Word to the people and every seven years these words of Moses were to be read to them so that they may continue to fear the Lord and obey His Words to them.

2. We do see this played out for us in Nehemiah 8:1-8 where we are told, **“Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.”**

So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.” How important is that for us to do today, to read from the Bible, to give them a sense of what was going on and then to apply those things to our lives, make an application!

3. As we read through the Scriptures, the first we know of a public reading of the Law is in Joshua 8:34-35, where we are told, **“And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.”**

Then, the next time we hear of the reading of the Law is during the reign of Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 17:9-10, more than 500 years later. And here we are told, **“So they taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the Lord with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. And the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.”**

Then, in the reign of Josiah there was another public reading of the Law and that is found in II Chronicles 34:29-33, more than 250 years after Jehoshaphat. And here we are told, **“Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. The king went up to the house of the Lord, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem — the priests and the Levites, and all the people, great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord. Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the Lord their God. All his days they did not depart from following the Lord God of their fathers.”**

Now of course there might have been public readings of the Law as commanded here which are not recorded; but the fact that some are recorded probably means they were unusual, not typical. And think about this for a minute. When you have this kind of neglect of God's word there is no wonder Israel was so often in trouble and I truly believe that is true for our own lives as well!

4. Now there is one more point that I think is important for us to look at. Today God's Word is neglected. In most churches it is not a priority and many times it is lost in everything else that is being done. Listen carefully to what one person wrote regarding the church and where it is at. He wrote?

The Word of God is not loved and studied, either privately or publicly. Trashy literature is devoured in private, and music, ritualistic services, and imposing ceremonies are eagerly sought after in public. Thousands will flock to hear music, and pay for admission, but how few care for a meeting to read the Holy Scriptures!

These are facts, and facts are powerful arguments. We cannot get over them. There is a growing thirst for religious excitement, and a growing distaste for the calm study of Holy Scripture and the spiritual exercise of the Christian assembly. It is perfectly useless to deny it. We cannot shut our eyes to it. The evidence of it meets us on every hand.

Thank God, there are a few, here and there, who really love the Word of God, and delight to meet, in holy fellowship, for the study of its precious truths. May the Lord increase the number of such, and bless them, "till traveling days are done."

- C. H. Mackintosh, "Deuteronomy", in Notes on the Pentateuch, p. 895

Folks, this was not written today or five years ago, ten years ago, even 50 years ago, but C. H. Mackintosh wrote this over a century ago. If he wrote this back then, can you imagine what he would say today! Folks, how many churches today teach verse by verse through the Bible from Genesis through Revelation, and yes, even the book of Leviticus! Not many do. When you see people going into a church how many are carrying their Bibles with them? Again, not many! There are more cell phones going into churches today than Bibles and that should not be! You see, God's Word is not valued any longer and then people wonder why they are a mess, depressed, have no hope! It is because they have neglected God's Word in their lives and they are spiritually starving themselves to death, they are not spiritually healthy! The solution is to get back into God's Word!

VERSES 14-15

1. Here we see Moses retirement ceremony and Joshua's inauguration ceremony you might say!

VERSES 16-22

1. For Moses, leading these people for forty years, this had to be hard for him to swallow. It is not if they play the harlot but they will play the harlot, they will turn from the Lord! As a leader, my heart breaks when I see people turn from God, disobey His Word to them, do their own thing and thus, I can't imagine how Moses felt knowing that the nation itself would turn from the Lord!

2. Why did they need a song when they had God's Word to remind them of their future idolatry? Because we tend to remember songs better than we do the Scriptures. Think about it. It may be 20 or 30 years since you heard a song and there it is one day and you start singing along, you remembered the words. Thus, this song of Moses was to remind them of God's warning to them and what would happen as they turned from Him and we will see this song next time as we get into Deuteronomy chapter 32.

VERSE 23

1. Notice the Lord didn't say to Joshua, "You da man Joshua! You are so strong, so brave, so tough. You don't know how long I have been waiting for a man like you!" No, the Lord saw the weaknesses of Joshua and thus, He told him to be strong, not in himself but in the Lord. And as we get into the book of Joshua we see this played over and over again, "Don't be afraid. Be strong," and-so-on. And then, by then, by the time we get to Joshua 10:25 we are told, "**Then Joshua said to them, 'Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.'**" Because Joshua learned the faith lessons he was able to encourage those who were fearful, didn't feel strong in the Lord. Folks that is a great lesson for us because we can't encourage anyone unless we believe and have experienced it ourselves, that we can walk by faith in the Lord!

VERSES 24-27

1. Notice that a copy of Genesis through Deuteronomy were placed next to the Ark of the Covenant as a witness to them and against them when they rebelled against the Lord. Folks, God's Word is a witness to us and against us when we rebel against the Lord! Yes, we can find refuge, comfort in God's Word as we walk with Him, as we obey His Word, but there is the judgment for disobeying Him!

VERSES 28-30

1. Even at the end of his life Moses has a love for his people and he wanted them to walk with God, even though he knew they would enter into a time of rebellion against Him.

2. As I close this evening let me leave you with these words from J. Vernon McGee from his commentary on Deuteronomy. He wrote: "May I say that this statement which Moses made about 3500 years ago is still accurate, still true. It has been fulfilled quite literally. It is also true of the entire human family, for God has said that mankind apart from God will utterly corrupt itself. All we need to do is look around us today and we can see that this is true." May we learn the lessons and heed the warnings and walk with God and see the blessings that will flow into our lives and through our lives touching the lives of others for His glory!