

Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story

Lesson #40 • “Israel's Has A Choice”

Deuteronomy 30 - Deuteronomy 31:1-13

•HANDOUT•

► This lesson begins with Chapter 30, where we find a subtle shift in attitude; Moses actually seems hesitant about Israel's future. Considering Israel's past behavior, his hesitancy shouldn't come as a surprise to us. What it all comes down to is this: Moses wasn't sure how Israel would choose? Would they choose to be holy unto the Lord, or would they try to mix the pagan world with their devotion to God?

► Deuteronomy 30:1-3 • When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.

Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.

The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today.

Q: What is significant about this promise of restoration?

Q: Why is it significant that Moses promised Israel that the LORD would “put curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you?”

Q: What is a circumcised heart and why is it significant to Israel when Moses declared it?

Q: What was the stated foundation for the promise of Israel's restoration?

► Deuteronomy 30:9-10 • Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Q: What does the statement, “The LORD will again delight in you ...” tell us about God's desire?

Moses concludes his very long but great sermon ...

► [Deuteronomy 30:11-16](#) • Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

Q: What does Moses say about the commands he is giving Israel this day?

Q: Does this mean that Moses is saying the law could be kept perfectly and thus one could earn a righteous standing before God?

► [Psalm 103:13-14](#) • As the father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him; for He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust.

Moses lays out the consequences if Israel chooses to turn away from God.
This is Moses' most passionate plea ...

► [Deuteronomy 30:17-20](#) • But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and *if* you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.

Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to Him. For the LORD is your life, and He will give you many years in the land He swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Q: Why does Moses finish by calling on heaven and earth as His witnesses?

Q: What is Moses' bottom line question here?

Q: What is the question that stands before each of us today?

Moses give some final instructions and thoughts in Deuteronomy 31 ...

► Having completed his sermon with such a passionate plea, Moses begins to speak to the people about his personal situation. He says, "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.'"

Q: What Moses states has both truth and error in it. So what is going on with Moses? Is he lying, or perhaps trying to save face before the people? Or is he unable to face the truth before God? Without sidelining Moses by saying that he is only acting like a human, how are we to reconcile the truth from the false?

► True:

- 1.
- 2.

► Not True:

- 1.
- 2.

Q: Why does God's punishment seem so excessively harsh? Moses has mostly been most amazing.

Q: So what is Moses doing with his explanation?

► Following his announcement about not crossing over the Jordan with them, Moses gave Israel a word of encouragement. He might not be going with them, but the Lord God Himself will be crossing over before them and will prepare the way for their crossing. Moses had led Israel for over 40 years; he was the only leader most of these people had ever known. Yet the nation could be confident, and Moses could go his way in peace because He knew God was with Israel. Furthermore, under the leadership of Joshua God would give them superior strength over the occupants of the Land. So, Israel, be strong and of good courage.

Q: Why would Moses feel it necessary to remind Israel to be strong and of good courage?

► Deuteronomy 31:7-8 • Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you, nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Q: In addition to this passage in Deuteronomy 31, where else does it promise that the Lord will never leave or forsake his people?

The promise is found throughout the Bible – both Old and New. Here are five examples:

1. Joshua 1:5 •
2. Isaiah 41:10 •
3. Psalms 94:1-4 •
4. Hebrews 13:5, 9 •
5. Matthew 28:19-20 •

► After his words of encouragement, Moses sets about to write out the Law and deliver it to the Levite priests, along with the elders, with instructions that the Law be read to all of Israel every seven years. [Conservative scholars interpret the term “the law” to refer to more than the Decalogue. It included the essentials of the covenant treaty which are constantly referred to in Deuteronomy, along with the historical, academic and legal elements of the Law.]

This seven-year national focus on God's Word was designed to teach the children God's Word. The seven-year cycle was part of the sabbatical year and coincided with the time of canceling debts. It was to be done during the Feast of Tabernacles when all Israel was to appear before the Lord at the place the Tabernacle was placed. This was to be done as long as Israel was in the Land.

Q: Was the practice of a public reading of the law to Israel every 7 years actually accomplished?

► Next will be Joshua's inauguration followed by Moses' death. This is where we will pick up the story next time.



Next Time • Lesson #41
“Moses and His Legacy”
[Deuteronomy 31:7-30 & Deuteronomy 32<>33:1-5]

