

Deuteronomy 27-30 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Last week we finished up Moses' Second Address to Israel as they were in the final days of preparation for growing over into the Promised Land.

That second sermon went from ch. 5 thru 26 and was mostly a brief summary of the more detailed laws we find in Exodus & Leviticus.

Following his second speech, Moses told the people when they entered Canaan they were to enact a ritual that would be a kind of object lesson of the covenant they had entered into with God.

Now, let's review once again the terms of that covenant.

In one word -

What was Israel side of the covenant? **OBEDIENCE.**

What was God's side? **BLESSING.**

Israel was to obey the Law of God as revealed through Moses.

And if she did, God would prosper & protect them materially.

But there was a down side to this.

If Israel's obedience would bring God's blessing, then her disobedience would result in His curse.

Moses wanted to cement this reality into the minds and hearts of the people, so he called them to carry out a special event once they'd made their initial conquests in Canaan.

III. BLESSINGS & CURSES Chs. 27, 28

A. *Instructions For Mts. Ebal & Gerizim Ch. 27*

1. Set up stones on Ebal 27:1-4

¹ Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today.

As Moses knows his leadership of the nation is coming to an end, he wisely has the elders who will be taking on a larger role once he's gone, stand with him as he calls the people to renew the covenant.

While Joshua will take Moses' place at the head of the nation, he will not be recognized by the people as possessing the same measure of authority Moses had.

The task of leadership will be more evenly distributed now among the tribal elders and clan leaders.

Moses has these guys stand with him as he addresses the people & calls them to renew the covenant made with their parents a generation before.

² And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. ³ You shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you. ⁴ Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed

over the Jordan, *that* on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime.

Writing on whitewashed stones was a common practice in the ancient world and something the Egyptians did often.

The law they were to write on them was probably the whole Scroll of Deuteronomy.

These stones were to be set up on Mt. Ebal, which was just across the Jordan from where they were.

The city of Shechem was at the base of Mt. Ebal.

It was there at Shechem God had first appeared to Abraham and he had built his first altar. [Gen. 12:6-7]

It's a point easily missed because of all the distance between Abraham's story in Genesis and where we are now in Deut., but as the people of Israel, **Abraham's descendants** were coming back to the land, it was the **fulfillment** of the promise God had made to Abraham at Shechem hundreds of years before.

This ritual of writing the Law on stones & setting them on a mount in the heart of the Promised Land was a way to **formalize** the covenant between God & Israel. They were "drawing up a contract."

2. Set up an altar on Ebal 27:5-8

⁵ And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them. ⁶ You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. ⁷ You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God.

While the terms of the covenant were obedience & blessing, God knew the people could not keep the law.

It's not that the law was **too hard**, but that their hearts were too willful & rebellious.

So along with the law, God provided a way for their sin to be covered over & their guilt expunged – through the sacrifices.

Where there's the law, there has to be an altar – a place where the broken law can be atoned for.

This altar was to be made of un-worked, rough stones.

God didn't want them to add any human adornment or creative artistry to it.

[Ex. 20:24–25.]

All the focus was to be on the sacrifices made **ON** the altar, not the altar itself.

The altar was simply a means to an end, and that being renewed fellowship with God through the atonement made **by** the offering.

There's a valuable lesson in that for us.

It ought to be our aim in all we do in public ministry as a church, to become **invisible** so that the attention can go to the Lord and the work He is doing.

From the leadership of the elders, to the maintenance of the building, it has been the guiding principle here at CC to strive for **invisibility** so that Jesus might be more clearly seen & heard.

Once they'd set up the altar on Mt. Ebal, they were to offer burnt & peace

offerings on it.

Remember from our study in Numbers that the burnt offering was totally consumed by the fire & was a picture of complete consecration to the Lord. The peace offering was a festive meal that celebrated their relationship with God.

8 And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law.”

God wanted His word to be open and available to all, not the private possession of an elite few.

It wasn't just the priests who had access to the Law.

It was for all the people because the covenant embraced every man, woman, and child.

Note this – As far back as Deuteronomy, God said His Word was to be published very plainly!

He wanted *everyone* to have access to it and to understand it.

It's important we see this because there are groups today who say you can *only* understand God's Word if you've been properly trained by their schools or have the proper spiritual enlightenment, which again requires their specialized & expensive training.

If that were true, then that would mean God is a respecter of persons, which is something The Bible tells us He is **NOT!**

God gives to all the moral & spiritual capacity to understand His Word.

And that is why it's crucial those who are it's guardians do not hide or obscure it, but that we present it as openly and plainly as possible.

3. Dividing the tribes 27:9-13

9 Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, “Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the LORD your God. ¹⁰ Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.” ¹¹ And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, ¹² “These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; ¹³ and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

Mts. Ebal & Gerizim stand next to each other, forming a little valley between them.

6 of the tribes were to stand on one slope while the other 6 were to stand across from them on the slope of the other mount.

Those standing on Gerizim would pronounce the blessings on obedience, while those standing on Ebal would announce the curses on disobedience.

4. Curses on individual sins 27:14-26

14 “And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel:

Now, we need to stop for a moment and figure something out here.

After telling us in v. 12 that the tribe of Levi was going to be on MT. Gerizim to pronounce blessing, we read here that the Levites will say to ALL the people . . .

15 ‘Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image

16 ‘Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.’

17 ‘Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor’s landmark.’

And so on through v. 26. And no where here do we see blessings announced, just this list of curses.

Then, as we look at Ch. 28, we find a *different* list of both blessings & curses.

So what’s going on?

By looking at Joshua 8 where they actually did this at Gerizim & Ebal, we get a clearer understanding of what Moses meant.

Once the tribes were standing in their assigned places on the 2 mts., the priests who were standing around the ark of the covenant in the middle of the valley between the 2 hills would lift up their voices to pronounce the list of curses found in vs. 15-26.

If you compare this list to the curses in the next ch. you’ll see there’s a difference.

These curses were spoken toward individuals who got caught up in the abominations that marked the lifestyle of the Canaanites.

Understand what we read here in vs. 15-26 as the urgent caution of a parent to their child who’s going out to play in the same place where some really bad & tough kids are.

And that parent is says as the child is about to go out the door, “Make sure you don’t fall in with those bad kids because if you do, bad things will happen to you!”

The curses found in Ch. 28 are aimed at individuals so much as at the nation as a whole, warning them what will come upon them as a nation if they should turn away from the Lord.

15 ‘Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.’

· “And all the people shall answer and say, ‘Amen!’

16 ‘Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.’

· “And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

17 ‘Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor’s landmark.’

· “And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

And so it goes through v. 26.

The priests announce a ban on specific, individual acts that violate the Law, and the people voice their unanimous consent, pledging to enforce the penalty the law proscribes.

B. The Blessings 28:1-14

Now we come to the list of blessings that would be theirs if they obeyed the Lord.

This is what the tribes on Gerizim would read.

Since we covered vs. 1-10 Sunday, we'll skip them tonight.

And vs. 11-14 are really just an elaboration on vs. 1-10.

C. The Curses 28:15-68

But then we come to the curses, which are spread over 54 verses!

To be frank, some of them are hard to read because they are so brutal.

15 “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: 16 “Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country.

This is a reversal of the blessing in v. 3, & so it goes for the next vs. . . .

17 “Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 18 “Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. 19 “Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. 20 “The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.

Take note of that last part.

These are the curses that would come, not when the people had backslid a bit or when their affection for the Lord had cooled somewhat.

These are the curses that would come when they had willfully turned their backs on God and defiantly moved to worship idols.

21 The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. 22 The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

Just as God's blessing would pursue their obedience, the curse would pursue their destruction.

23 And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron.

There will be no rain and the soil will become like rock.

24 The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. 25 “The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.

Heed that curse well. Israel, the Jews would become a race that *bugged* others.

They would be seen as troublesome, a problem to be overcome.
That has certainly been realized by the Jews throughout history!

26 Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten *them* away.

One of the greatest marks of dishonor a Jew could suffer was to be left unburied.
The idea that unclean animals would dispose of the remains was abhorrent beyond description.

27 The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.

The idea here is that they will suffer all these individually & *concurrently*.

Boils were one of the plagues. They were huge, painful things.

“*Tumor*” refers to a *hemorrhoid*.

“The *scab*” meant *scurvy* – an affliction that occurs when the connective tissues of the body begin to break down.

The victim grows physically weak, the gums of the mouth become spongy & inflamed, the teeth get loose, the joints swell & become tender and blood vessels throughout the body begin rupturing.

The “*itch*” was an intense form of *eczema*; a scaly, oozing torment of the skin.

28 The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. ²⁹ And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you.

³⁰ “You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes.

All of these are pictures of being conquered in battle so that they do not get to enjoy the fruit of their labor.

31 Your ox *shall be* slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey *shall be* violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep *shall be* given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue *them*. ³² Your sons and your daughters *shall be* given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail *with longing* for them all day long; and *there shall be no strength in your hand*.

This is a picture of living in the Land of Israel, but they’ve lost control of their political house.

Foreigners rule over them, confiscate their property, and even their own family to make them slaves.

33 A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. ³⁴ So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see.

The outrage of the injustices & cruelty they witness will drive them *insane*!

35 The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. **36** “The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone.

This was the ultimate humiliation for them as a nation – that they would be deported to another land.

37 And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you.

The Jews would suffer so terribly, their suffering would become an idiom of speech in other languages, describing someone who’s gone through the wringer.

In vs. 38-44, the previous curses are expanded.

45 “Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. **46** And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever. **47** “Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, **48** therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.

These vs. make it clear that these curses are meant to be understood, not as individual curses when specific people disobey, but as what will happen to the nation if they corporately turn from God.

49 The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as *swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, **50** a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young.

Respect for the elderly & tender protection for the young was something that was so much a part of polite society & civilization, anything else was considered *barbaric*.

God says the nation that defeats them will be cruel & vicious barbarians.

An apt description of the Assyrians who conquered Israel.

51 And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you. **52** “They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates through-out all your land which the LORD your God has given you.

Ancient warfare was usually carried out in 2 kinds of engagements.

- 1) The open field; one army against another in a face to face slugfest.
- 2) Sieges; where an army would try to conquer a city by starving the inhabitants.

That kind of warfare is described here, and the announcement of it would strike terror in every heart because for those inside a besieged city, it was terrible! Food would run out. Fresh water would run out.

And as things got scarce, the crime and violence among the people in the city would grow terrifying.

Lamentations 4 describes the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

53 You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you.

While this is severe, a fulfillment of it is seen in 2 Kings 6:24-30.

54 The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, ⁵⁵ so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. ⁵⁶ The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, ⁵⁷ her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. ⁵⁸ “If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, ⁵⁹ then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. ⁶⁰ Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. ⁶¹ Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. ⁶² You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. ⁶³ And it shall be, *that* just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. ⁶⁴ “Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers

have known—wood and stone. ⁶⁵ And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. ⁶⁶ Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. ⁶⁷ In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were evening!’ And at evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!’ because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see. ⁶⁸ “And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, ‘You shall never see it again.’ And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.”

And no one would buy them because they are so sick & weak they would make a poor worker.

Besides there would be so many of them, the slave market would end up being depressed.

In v. 64 we read - “Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other.”

In AD 67 the Romans finally had enough of the rebellious Jews and arrived on the western coast with a huge force.

They quickly subdued Galilee then marched South and laid siege to Jerusalem. There was a great expectation among the Jews, based on the prophecy in Zechariah 12, that Messiah would soon arrive to save them.

In that passage, God promised to destroy the armies laying siege to Jerusalem.

But there’s a condition given in v. 10, the Jews must repent of their rejection of Jesus and welcome the one they had pierced.

This, of course, is something they refused to do in 68 AD.

But they were so confident of the Messiah’s coming that the differing Jewish factions fought each other inside the city, vying for position and trying to be in the lead position when the Messiah came so they could claim His favor.

They burned each other’s food stores, set aside for the siege.

According to the Jewish historian Josephus, if they’d preserved their food stores instead of destroying them, they could have & would have outlasted the Romans (*Wars* 5.24 & 26).

Famine ended up being the cause of the city’s fall.

Once the northern walls were breached, the Roman officers pressed Vespasian, the Roman general in charge of the war, to attack.

But he knew street to street urban warfare would mean many casualties for his troops and decided to let the Jewish factions continue to batter each other.

He told his staff, “Why risk Roman lives when the Jews are doing a fine job of killing each other without us?”

In the siege of Jerusalem hunger became so intense many Jews tried to slip outside the walls of the city under the cover of darkness to steal food from the Roman camps.

An average of 500 per night were caught.

These were then crucified within sight of the city walls but safely out of an arrow's reach.

Josephus says that so many were crucified, they ran out of places to put them, and wood became scarce. (*War* 5.451)

More than 600,000 died from starvation, their bodies dumped over the walls of the city.

More than a million died. Nearly 100,000 were captured, with most of them being shipped to the Egyptian slave markets.

But too many Jewish slaves glutted the Egyptian slave market leaving a surplus.

What's fascinating to learn is that the Christians living in and around Jerusalem had been warned by Jesus in Luke 21:20-24, that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by enemies, to get out of the area as quickly as possible because the days of vengeance were at hand.

They did, and the story says not a single believer was caught up in the conflagration of Jerusalem's last days.

After the fall of Jerusalem, the Jews still living in the province of Judea were treated cruelly by the Romans.

So after a little more than 60 years, in AD 132, they again rebelled under the leadership of a false messiah named *Bar Kochba*.

Rome came down with renewed fury on the rebels and decided to end the Jewish problem once and for all by banning all Jews from the land.

Josephus said that as a result of the many battles with Rome, the once beautiful land was destroyed, and that it could not even be recognized.

The edict of Rome banning Jews from their homeland saw the Jews scattered to the four winds & added greatly to the *Diaspora*, which refers to Jews *not* living in the Holy Land.

While God said all of this would come upon the nation if they rejected Him, which they did and it did, the prophet Ezekiel speaks in ch. 37 of a future time when Israel will be gathered out of all the nations and brought back into her homeland in a rebirth of her as a geopolitical entity.

Against all hope, that occurred in May, 1947 and continues on today in the new nation of Israel.

IV. MOSES' THIRD DISCOURSE Chs. 29, 30

A. The Covenant Made in Moab Ch.29:1–21

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. [Sinai]

Since this is a new generation from the one that made the initial covenant with God at Sinai, it needed to be renewed & ratified.

2 Now Moses called all Israel and said to them:

This begins his 3rd & last speech.

“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.

The elders of the nation had been children & teenagers when the Exodus took place. They remembered what had happened 40 years before.

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

Moses blames their lack of spiritual sensitivity on the fact that God had not given them the necessary enlightenment.

Now, understand that he’s not saying Israel was disobedient & rebellious because they couldn’t help it.

Rather, he’s saying it was *because* of their unbelief & disobedience God had been unable to enlighten them.

God does not bestow the grace to understand spiritual things to those who dig in their heels and resist Him.

It is faith, not unbelief, that opens the eyes of our heart.

Israel had largely remained faithless, even when she had seen countless miracles.

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.

For 40 years, their clothes & shoes had not worn out – that is a miracle.

For 40 years they’d eaten manna and drunk fresh, clean miracle water.

The miraculous was a daily event of them – yet they had come to treat these things as normal & expected.

For those who cannot see a miracle for what it is, it’s not likely they’re going to receive much spiritual illumination.

In vs. 7-17 Moses says that the covenant they are renewing will look back to include their ancestors, as well as forward to include all their descendants.

Then in vs. 18-21, He warns against anyone who might think that he or she can play the game of being part of the covenant outwardly, enjoying the blessings of God, but secretly they plan of worshipping other gods.

Such a person must not think they can escape God’s sight, knowledge, or judgment.

B. Punishment for Breaking the Covenant Ch. 29:22–29

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 Zeboiim, 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.*’

God is saying here that Israel will be a testimony to God one way or another:

Either they will testify of His grace through His blessing.

Or they will give witness to His righteousness through their curses.

The covenant they are entering with God will play out in one of two way – they get to pick which way it plays out.

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.**

How very true this is.

Because God is God, because He is infinite and we are finite, there will be aspects of Him and His work that transcend our understanding.

As is often said, a God that is small enough to *comprehend* is too small to worship.

And while there will always be something of the mystery as far as God and His ways are concerned, the things we *need* to know, the things that make a difference in our lives and our eternity, He reveals & makes clear to us.

C. Restoration for Returning to the Covenant Ch. 30

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 the 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. 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.**

This is certainly a promise we're seeing fulfilled in our own time as the globe has now been encircled with modern civilization.

If you travel east or west from Israel, what is the furthest extent you come to as far as major cities and settlements are concerned?

The West Coast of the Americas, and the Russian Far East.

Jews, who'd lived in these places for generations are moving back to the modern State of Israel, their travel their made easy by modern modes of transportation.

And though Israel is less than 60 years old as a nation, it boasts one of the highest standards of living in the world.

The whole Zionist movement that began over a hundred years ago was started as a global call to Jews to renew their faith in God and return to their roots and traditional faith.

There was the concern that they were being absorbed into the materialistic cultures of the nations where they'd been scattered.

So a movement was birthed that sought to recall them to the faith of Abraham.

This return to faith saw the eventual emergence of the State of Israel.

Notice what v. 6 says; it's as God fulfills this promise to gather repentant Jews back into their land that He gives them a true heart to seek & find Him.

This sounds like the promise God made to the prophets Jeremiah & Ezekiel, that He would make a new covenant with Israel – one in which they would receive a new heart.

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. 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. 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.*

This is another passage we would do well to take to heart.

God says that His Word, what He wants His people to know and live, is not some lofty, esoteric mystery that only the specially gifted & enlightened can discover.

It's a simple & readily available thing.

It doesn't require great feats of strength or special giftedness to acquire.

It's something every man, woman, & child can lay hold of.

As we read these last vs. of ch. 30, hear them with all the passion of a man who's retiring from his role as leader of a nation of some 3 million people, who has served in that role for over 4 decades, and who, in the course of that role has been privy to some of the most awesome events in all of human history!

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.”

Think of the incredible passion that must have filled him as he spoke these words, knowing they were among his last.