

LESSON TWENTY-TWO 29:1—30:20

E. REMINDER OF GOD'S BLESSINGS 29:1-13

1. THE PRESENT LAW TO BE ENFORCED (29:1)

These are the words of the covenant which Jehovah commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:1

510. Why another covenant with Israel? Or is this the thought here?
511. Consider the circumstances of this text. What particular need was there for a renewal of God's covenant?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:1

These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

COMMENT 29:1

Note that the covenant made here on the plains of Moab is distinguished from the covenant previously made at Sinai.*

The Pulpit commentary remarks, "This was not a new covenant in addition to that made at Sinai, but simply a renewal and reaffirmation of that covenant. At Sinai, the covenant was, properly speaking, *made*; sacrifices were then offered, and the people were sprinkled with the sacrificial blood, whereby the covenant was ratified (Exod. xxiv; Cf. Ps. L. 5); but on the occasion here referred to no sacrifices were offered, for this was merely the covenant formerly made as still subsisting." Thus in future writings, "the law of Moses" includes both those given at Sinai and on these plains of Moab. Compare 5:2, 3, notes.

2. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD (29:2-9)

And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that Jehovah did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; 3 the great trials which thine eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders: 4 but Jehovah hath not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto

*In the Hebrew text this verse is included with ch. 28. But of course Moses made no divisions of chapters and verses in his original autograph.

this day, 5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxed old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxed old upon thy foot. 6 Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink; that ye may know that I am Jehovah your God, 7 And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them: 8 and we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of the Manassites. 9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:2-9

512. If Jehovah did not give them a heart to know or eyes to see, how could Israel be held responsible?
513. Read the comments on 8:3, 4 to review what is meant by the preservation of clothes and shoes.
514. How would the lack of bread and wine establish their trust in Jehovah?
515. Why the review of God's acts of power and conquest?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:2-9

2 Moses called to all Israel, and said to them, You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to all his land;

3 The great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders;

4 Yet the Lord has not given you a [mind and] heart to understand, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day.

5 I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes have not worn out upon you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet.

6 You have not eaten [grain] bread, nor have you drunk wine or strong drink, that you might recognize and know [your dependence on Him Who is saying], I am the Lord your God.

7 And when you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out against us to battle, but we defeated them;

8 We took their land, and gave it for an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manassites.

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

COMMENT 29:2-9

BUT JEHOVAH HATH NOT GIVEN YOU A HEART TO KNOW . . . UNTO THIS DAY (v. 4)—This was partly their own fault, partly the working of God. Truthfully Moses could say they had been rebellious “from the day that thou wentest forth out of the land of Egypt” and “from the day that I knew you” (9:7, 24). Persons with such dispositions are not capable of perceiving and appreciating the will of God. Thus this passage is similar to those above, and should also have served as a rebuke: God has not seen fit to open up your eyes *even yet*—“unto this day”. The essence of the rebuke seems to be, “Will you now *wake up?*” Stubbornness and rebellion invariably clog the channels of one’s spiritual perception—and God withholds understanding (Isa. 6:9, 10, Matt. 11:25, 26, Rom. 11:7-10).

Yet, Israel had every opportunity *to* understand and appreciate God’s ways. These are enumerated in vv. 5-8, with the conclusion, “Keep therefore the words . . . that ye may prosper . . .” (v. 9).

YOUR CLOTHES ARE NOT WAXED OLD (v. 5)—See 8:4, note.

YE HAVE NOT EATEN BREAD, NEITHER HAVE YE DRUNK WINE OR STRONG DRINK; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT I AM JEHOVAH YOUR GOD (v. 6)—Basically the same thought is expressed in 8:3. They had been living all these years, not by harvesting wheat and baking bread, or by harvesting grapes and making wine. In short, they had not been sustained by their own labor, “but by every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (8:3). It was *God* who directed their route for forty years, who kept their clothes from becoming old and ragged, who kept their shoes from wearing out, and who daily supplied their manna for food. The response *should* have been heartfelt obedience and praise to their Sustainer and Giver of life! Their recent victories in battle (vv. 7, 8) described earlier (chapters 2 & 3) were also the result of God’s direct blessing and goodness, and provided yet *another* reason for their cheerful obedience.

REUBENITES . . . GADITES . . . MANASSITES (v. 8)—Note their boundaries in 3:12-17.

3. THE PURPOSE OF GOD (29:10-13)

10 Ye stand this day all of you before Jehovah your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel, 11 your little ones, your wives, and thy sojourner that is in the

midst of thy camps, unto the drawer of thy water; 12 that thou mayest enter into the covenant of Jehovah thy God, and into his oath, which Jehovah thy God maketh with thee this day; 13 that he may establish thee this day unto himself for a people, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he spake unto thee, and as he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:10-13

516. Please notice how God expected everyone to enter into His covenant on a personal basis. Has His interest in individual participation changed?
517. What was God's purpose in establishing His covenant with Israel?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:10-13

10 All of you stand before the Lord your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel.

11 Your little ones, your wives, and the stranger and sojourner in your camp, from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water;

12 That you may enter into the covenant of the Lord your God, and into His oath, which He makes with you today;

13 That He may establish you this day as a people for Himself, and that He may be to you a God, as He said to you and as He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

COMMENT 29:10-13

AS HE SWARE UNTO THY FATHERS (v. 13)—Israel, about to become a great nation, was the chief participant in the covenant God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:7), Isaac (Gen. 26:4), and Jacob (Gen. 28:14). Cf. 8:1, etc. The promises of God were not being kept because of Israel's goodness (7:6-8, 9:4, 5) but because of God's eternal purpose to bring the Messiah into the world through a nation he loved.

F. SOLEMN WARNINGS AND REMINDERS

(29:14—30:20)

1. COVENANT ALL-INCLUSIVE (29:14-21)

14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath, 15 but with him that standeth here with us this day before Jehovah our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day; 16 (for ye

know how we dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which ye passed; 17 and ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them;) 18 lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from Jehovah our God, to go to serve the gods of those nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; 19 and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to destroy the moist with the dry. 20 Jehovah will not pardon him, but then the anger of Jehovah and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall lie upon him, and Jehovah will blot out his name from under heaven. 21 And Jehovah will set him apart unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that is written in this book of the law.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:14-21

518. Who could be identified under the phrase "with him that is not here with us this day"?
519. Jehovah's wrath is especially kindled against some people. Who are they?
520. Give three characteristics of the person of question 519.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:14-21

14 It is not with you only that I make this sworn covenant,

15 But with future Israelites who do not stand here with us today before the Lord our God, as well as with those who are here with us this day.

16 You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations you crossed;

17 And you have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them.

18 Beware lest there should be among you a man or woman or family or tribe, whose [mind and] heart turns away this day from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a [poisonous] root that bears gall and wormwood;

19 and lest, when he hears the words of this curse and oath, he flatter and congratulate himself in his [mind and] heart, saying, I shall

have peace and safety, *though I walk in the stubbornness of my [mind and] heart [bringing down a hurricane of destruction] and sweep away the watered land with the dry.

20 The Lord will not pardon him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall settle on him; the Lord will blot out his very name from under the heavens;

21 And the Lord will single him out for ruin and destruction from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.

COMMENT 29:14-21

NEITHER WITH YOU ONLY DO I MAKE THIS COVENANT (v. 14)—The covenant extended to all who were within the country of Israel as a nation—or who *would be* (v. 15, 22). Thus strangers and sojourners who made Israel their home were also included, Lev. 24:22, Num. 9:14, 15:14-16, 29.

Israel was to be a land within whose confines *God* was to be worshipped according to His word—regardless of the nationality of the resident. So it was with such well-known sojourners as Rahab and Ruth (Ruth 1:16).

LEST THERE SHOULD BE AMONG YOU MAN . . . TO GO TO SERVE THE GODS OF THOSE NATIONS (v. 18)—referring back to the neighboring nations of v. 16, a fact that lends weight to the argument of modern translators that the parentheses enclosing verses 16 and 17 should be omitted.

LEST THERE SHOULD BE AMONG YOU A ROOT THAT BEARETH GALL AND WORMWOOD (v. 18)—descriptive terms of one who was rebellious, stubborn, and disobedient towards God and his word, as the following verses show. And the factor of *others being defiled by this man's influence* may well be implied here, as in Heb. 12:14, 15.

*It is on the strength of the Lord's oath to be Israel's God and also to protect them, that this Israelite flatters himself he is secure, no matter how he may behave. In the history of religion such a delusion has been lamentably frequent, and persons depending upon the unlimited protection of election have presumed on this and recklessly indulged in evil (*Cambridge Bible, condensed*). The Bible emphasizes the "security of the saints," but it is equally emphatic concerning the insecurity of those in conscious and continued indifference to God. [Ezek. 3:29; 18:24,26; Rev. 22:14; James 1:21; Gal. 6:8; 2 Pet. 1:10,11.]

GALL (Heb. *rosb*) is the name of a poisonous plant or herb. It grows quickly and luxuriantly (Hos. 10:14, "hemlock"), but is of bitter taste (Ps. 69:21, Lam 3:5) and on this account is, as here and in Lam. 3:19, connected with wormwood.

On the other hand, "What the Heb. *laamab* [wormwood] may have been is obscure; it is clear it was a bitter substance and it is usually associated with 'gall' . . . The genus *Artemisis* . . . has five species of shrubs or herbs found in Palestine, any one of which may furnish a bitter taste" (I.S.B.E.). Thus this man's influence would be poisonous, hurtful, and distasteful both to God and his people.

TO DESTROY THE MOIST WITH THE DRY (v. 19)—The margin reads "to add drunkenness to thirst."

Note that in the former part of the verse this man is blessing himself in his heart—i.e., congratulating or complimenting himself, saying "I shall have peace"—i.e. "all shall be well with me, everything is fine." And this, though he realizes he is stubborn of heart, and intends "To destroy the well-watered [land] with the dry" (Pulpit). His hardness of heart would influence him to destroy *one and all*. His very nature is destructive and ruinous. This interpretation suits the context, describing one whose influence is pernicious and devastating to God's people. Such a person imprecates the wrath of God (vv. 20, 21).

2. ISRAEL'S COMING WICKEDNESS: THE JUDGMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS AND FOREIGNERS (29:22-29)

22 And the generation to come, your children that shall rise up after you, and the foreigner that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sickness wherewith Jehovah hath made it sick; 23 *and that* the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, *and* a burning, *that* it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which Jehovah overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: 24 even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath Jehovah done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? 25 Then men shall say, Because they forsook the covenant of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, 26 and went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods that they knew not, and that he had not given unto them: 27 therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against this

land, to bring upon it all the curse that is written in this book; 28 and Jehovah rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as this day. 29 The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:22-29

521. From reading this text there seems to be but little question that Israel will be tragically disobedient. Could they help it if God thus predicted it?
522. State three descriptive phrases used here to describe God's punishment of His disobedient children.
523. There seems to be a balance between the natural results of disobedience and the punishment of God. Are these two sides of the same coin?
524. Read verse 29 very carefully. Why does it appear in this context?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:22-29

22 So that the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who shall come from a distant land, shall say, when they see the plagues of this land, and the diseases with which the Lord has made it sick—

23 The whole land is brimstone and salt, and a burned waste, not sown or bearing anything, where not grass can take root, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah with Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and wrath—

24 Even all the nations shall say, Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?

25 Then men shall say, Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt,

26 For they went and served other gods, and worshiped them, gods they knew not, and that He had not given to them;

27 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses that are written in this book;

28 And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger and in wrath and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as this day.

29 The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

COMMENT 29:22-29

AND THE GENERATION TO COME, etc. (v. 22)—Better, "And later generations will ask—the children who succeed you . . ." (The Torah).

Both the generations future to those Moses was addressing and foreigners would speak of Israel's decline and degeneration in terms of reproach and disdain.

AND THAT WHOLE LAND THEREOF IS BRIMSTONE, AND SALT, AND A BURNING (v. 23)—Obviously figurative language to describe a sterile, desolate unproductive land. Perhaps also *punishment* and *destruction*, which *brought* such barrenness. See Job 18:15, Ps. 11:6, Isa. 30:33. But these minerals would, in truth, be physically present, and burning. See below.

BRIMSTONE (v. 23)—Heb. *gophriṯh* (as in Gen. 19:24), signifies "brimstone, sulfur" (Baumgartner). Gesenius agrees, believing the word originally meant *pitch*, "the name of which was afterwards transferred to other inflammable materials; especially *sulphur*." The I.S.B.E. is helpful here: "Sulphur existed in Palestine in early times and was known by most of the ancient nations as a combustible substance that the inhabitants of the land had experienced the terrors of burning sulphur is very probable. Once one of these deposits took fire it would melt and run in burning streams down the ravines spreading everywhere suffocating fumes such as come from the ordinary brimstone [sulphur] match. No more realistic figure could be chosen to depict terrible suffering and destruction. It is not at all unlikely that during some of the disastrous earthquakes which took place in this part of the world, the hot lava sent forth ignited not only the sulphur, but also the bitumen, and added to the horrors of the earthquake the destruction caused by burning pitch and brimstone."

SALT (v. 23)—also associated with destruction, ruin, and desolation, Job 39:6, Jud. 9:45, Jer. 17:6, Zeph. 2:9.

A BURNING (v. 23)—Again, a phenomenon especially associated with devastation and destruction, especially by a foreign power, Isa. 1:7, 64:11, II K. 25:9, Ps. 74:7, 8, etc.*

Such land as described above is worthless for agriculture, so THAT IT IS NOT SOWN, NOR BEARETH, NOR ANY GRASS GROWETH THEREIN (v. 23). Rather, it is LIKE THE OVERTHROW OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH, ADMAH AND ZEBOIIM [Gen. 19:23-28, Admah and Zeboiim are associated with Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen. 10:19, 14:2, and thus are included in "the cities of the plain" destroyed with Sodom] WHICH JEHOVAH OVERTHREW IN HIS ANGER, AND HIS WRATH (v. 23)—and this is the *very point* of Moses' words. Their wickedness would result in their overthrow. Note vv. 25, 26.

ALL THE CURSE THAT IS WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK (v. 27)—The reference seems especially to refer to those just uttered, beginning in Ch. 27. But many others may well be included, not only in Deuteronomy (as in 4:25-27), but in other passages of the Pentateuch, such as Lev. 26:14 ff.

ROOTED THEM OUT . . . CAST THEM INTO ANOTHER LAND (v. 28)—See 28:36 ff, notes. This is not foreign domination or servitude to another power, but *captivity*.

THE SECRET THINGS BELONG UNTO JEHOVAH (v. 29)—The reference may be especially to *future* matters: "The hidden issues of the future . . ." (Moffatt), but "secret" (Heb. *sather*) of itself simply means hidden, secret, or concealed. ". . . things in God's purpose known only to himself: these things, it is affirmed, belong to him, are his affair, and may be left with him" (Pulpit). On the other hand,

THE THINGS THAT ARE REVEALED BELONG TO US AND OUR CHILDREN FOR EVER, THAT WE MAY DO ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW (v. 29)—What God *has* revealed he expects his children to study, meditate upon, and obey. Cf. 30:11-14. His people are responsible to him for responding to what he has made known. Thus, as it is wrong to subtract from what *is* written, so it is wrong to *add* to God's will where he, in his infinite wisdom, has seen fit to say nothing. His word is sacred—and so is his silence. (Cf. 4:2, 12:32). See also Ps. 119:160, Jn. 17:17, II Tim. 3:16, 17, Rev. 28:18, 19.

*Fires also raged in Jerusalem's destruction. See Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Ch. IV, #8; Ch. V, #1; Ch. IV, #5.

This passage is not intended to discourage honest scientific investigation. It simply states that there *are*, indeed, many "secret" things in life—and ever *shall* be, no matter how much knowledge accumulates. There are secrets among the minute (a *few* more of which have recently been probed by the electron microscope and other scientific instruments). There are secrets in the vastness of space—What is beyond the farthest observable star? And who can tell *all* about a blade of grass or a stone—let alone the human body! In short, the religion of God demands that a man admit certain limitations within *himself* and the omniscience of God. He who contains all knowledge and wisdom has revealed *what we need* for life everlasting. And he has granted unto *us* "all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:3). The truths of the universe known or knowable only to himself will not form the criterion for our judgment in the final day.

This passage also forms, indirectly, an exhortation for studying. If we are responsible for revealed truth, effort must be exerted that we might *know* what is revealed. And it also comprises a *rebuke* to those who believe *spiritual* truth is found outside God and his word. Cf. Prov. 3:5, 6, Isa. 8:19, 20, I Cor. 1:18-25, I Tim. 6:3-5, II Tim. 1:13.

It was, in fact, the very essence of this scripture that was being repeated by Thomas Campbell's famous phrase, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

Opinions, conjectures, "educated guesses," theories on any of thousands of subjects *not* discussed in God's word—what do we do with them? As far as God is concerned, this word is open for exploration and investigation. But when we profess to know more than our maker and transgress *revealed* truth, we have, indeed, degenerated. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?" (I Cor. 2:16a).

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

A recapitulation of God's gracious dealings with Israel, 1-8. An exhortation to obedience, and to enter into covenant with their God, that they and their posterity may be established in the good land, 9-15. They are to remember the abominations of Egypt, and to avoid them, 16, 17. He who hardens his heart, when he hears these curses, shall be utterly consumed, 18-21. Their posterity shall be astonished at the desolation that shall fall upon them, 22, 23; shall inquire the reason, and shall be informed that the Lord has done thus to them because of

their disobedience and idolatry, 24-28. A caution against prying too curiously into the secrets of the Divine providence, and to be contented with what God has revealed, 29.

3. JEHOVAH'S BLESSINGS ASSURED WHENEVER ISRAEL REPENTS (30:1-10)

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither Jehovah thy God hath driven thee, 2 and shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; 3 that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples, whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And Jehovah thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. 7 And Jehovah thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, that persecuted thee. 8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of Jehovah, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. 9 And Jehovah thy God will make thee plenteous in all the work of thy hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, for good: for Jehovah will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers; 10 If thou shalt obey the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law; if thou turn unto Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 30:1-10

525. Read Neh. 1:4-9; Psa. 85; 126 and 137 for a fulfillment of the promise made in 30:1-3.
526. Just how did God accomplish the task of circumcising the heart of Israel?
527. Specify at least three benefits promised to those who obey Jehovah?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 30:1-10

And when all these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, where the Lord your God has driven you,

2 And shall 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 [mind and] heart, and with all your being;

3 Then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes, and have compassion upon you, and will gather you again from all the nations, where He has scattered you.

4 Even if any of your dispersed are in the uttermost parts of the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there will He bring you.

5 And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will do you good, and multiply you above 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 [mind and] heart, and with all your being, that you may live.

7 And the Lord your God will put all these curses upon your enemies, and on those who hate you, who persecute you.

8 And you shall return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all His commandments which I command you today.

9 And the Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in every work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, of your cattle, of your land, for good; for the Lord will again delight in prospering you, as He took delight in 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 [mind and] heart, and with all your being.

COMMENT 30:1-10

JEHOVAH . . . WILL TURN THY CAPTIVITY, AND HAVE COMPASSION UPON THEE, AND WILL RETURN AND GATHER THEE FROM ALL THE PEOPLES (v. 3)—a particularly graphic fulfillment is found in the Babylonian captivity, Neh. 1:4-9, Ps. 85, 126, and especially 137. And as v. 6 indicates a heart-circumcision, note the revival after the return in

Ezra and Nehemiah—foreign wives, for example were put away. Also, we have no record of idolatry after the captivity—a sin that continually plagued them before.

JEHOVAH THY GOD WILL CIRCUMCISE THY HEART (v. 6)—See 10:16. As physical circumcision changed the outward man, circumcision of the heart (the mind, the whole inner person, the "self") would change the whole disposition and way of life. Its result would be TO LOVE JEHOVAH . . . WITH ALL THY HEART AND ALL THY SOUL, THAT THOU MAYEST LIVE (v. 6)—They weren't "living" as far as God was concerned, unless their hearts were totally given to Him. Nor would Israel long *physically* remain alive without such devotion. Cf. 6:4, 5.

GOD WILL PUT ALL THESE CURSES UPON THINE ENEMIES (v. 7)—See also 7:15, Ex. 15:26.

4. OBEDIENCE NOT IMPOSSIBLE (30:11-14)

11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? 14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 30:11-14

528. It is such an encouragement to know that God has never given a command man could not obey. Read Rom. 10:6-10 for a present day application of this text.
529. In what sense did Israel feel the word of God was far away from them?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 30:11-14

11 For this commandment which I command you this day, is not too difficult for you, nor is it far off.

12 It is not [a secret laid up] in Heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?

14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth, and in your mind and in your heart, so that you can do it.

COMMENT 30:11-14

IT IS NOT TOO HARD FOR THEE, NEITHER IS IT FAR OFF, etc.—Literally, *is not too wonderful for you*, i.e., not too hard to be understood or perform. Nor was it far off—though heavenly in its source (v. 12), it did not *remain* there, but was *revealed*. Cf. 29:29. In short, God had made his plan simple enough and easy enough for the *sincere* and *devoted* to observe it. It was not mysterious, ethereal, or occult. Rather, “the word is very nigh unto thee . . . etc.” (v. 14). And if such words describe the Mosaic law, how much *more* our relationship to Christ, Matt. 11:28-30, I Jn. 5:2, 3, Rom. 10:6-10.

The idea of keeping the Mosaic law perfectly, in every iota, and without ever failing, is not before Moses' eye here. On this side of the cross, we know that only our Savior did so, Rom. 3:9-12, 23-25, as one who was sinless, I Pet. 2:21, 22, II Cor. 5:21, Isa. 53:9.

5. FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO CHOOSE THE PATH OF BLESSING RATHER THAN THE CURSE (30:15-20)

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; 16 in that I command thee this day to love Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, that thou mayest live and multiply, and that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in the land whither thou goest in to possess it. 17 But if thy heart turn away, and thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; 18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish; ye shall not prolong your days in the land, whither thou passest over the Jordan to go in to possess it. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed; 20 to love Jehovah thy God, to obey his voice, and to cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 30:15-20

530. It hardly seems possible that anyone would knowingly choose death and evil. There must be another factor. What is it?
531. How much of life is suspended on the one word "obedience." And yet another factor must be present before we are willing to obey. What is it?
532. Could the Israelites have said, "for me to live is Jehovah"? Specifically how was this true?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 30:15-20

15 See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.

16 [If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which] I command you today, to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, then you shall live and multiply and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

17 But if your [mind and] heart turn away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them,

18 I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish, and you shall not live long in the land which you pass over the Jordan to enter and possess.

19 I call Heaven and earth to witness this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live;

20 To love the Lord your God, to obey His voice, and to cling to Him; for He is your life, and the length of your days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

COMMENT 30:15-20

Do not these verses practically summarize the whole story of Deuteronomy? Again and again Moses has made these points: Blessings when you love, obey and observe—innumerable, excruciating hardships and curses if you do not. And as we have seen in exhortation after exhortation, this "life" meant their very *existence* as a nation. Prosperity, strength, health, hope—all gained or lost depending on their obedience or disobedience.

Very literally for them and for us "God . . . is thy life"—the source of *all* life, physical and spiritual. If, then *they* would have life, the Lifesource must be heeded, v. 19. And so it is with *our* Lifesource, Jn. 1:4, 11:25, 26; 14:6, I Jn. 5:20.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY

Gracious promises are given to the penitent, 1-6. The Lord will circumcise their heart, and put all these curses on their enemies, if they hearken to his voice and keep his testimonies, 7-10. The word is near to them, and easy to be understood, 11-14. Life and death, a blessing and a curse, are set before them; and they are exhorted to love the Lord, obey his voice, and cleave unto him, that they may inherit the land promised to Abraham, 15-20.

QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY-TWO

(29:1—30:20)

CHAPTER 29

1. This chapter begins, "These are the words of the covenant . . ." Should the covenant made *here* be considered separate from the one made at Sinai?
2. Why had Jehovah not given them knowing hearts and seeing eyes (v. 4)?
3. What convincing evidences had God given of his love and power?
4. What promise, made to the patriarchs, were they now fulfilling?
5. Mention two groups of people, not now present, that must also keep this covenant.
6. Who or what is meant by "a root that beareth gall and wormwood"?
7. What would a person be doing if he "destroyed the moist with the dry"?
8. What two groups would denounce Israel's wickedness in this chapter? (Hint: Same answer as No. 5).
9. Israel's desolation and barrenness is described by the terms _____, _____, and a _____. (finish)
10. To what cities is this destruction likened?
11. What is brimstone?
12. To what factor(s) would other nations attribute Israel's failure?
13. Thoroughly memorize 29:29.

CHAPTER 30

14. How is Israel's condition pictured after *returning* from captivity?
15. What captivity especially fits the prophecy?
16. Of what does Moses remind them concerning their capability of keeping the law?
17. Now re-read vv. 11-14. Make a present day New Testament application of these words.
18. In what *very literal* way could Moses say, "I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" (v. 15), and "therefore choose life that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed" (v. 19)?