

Deut. 30:1 ¶ 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 the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

Deut. 30:2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

Deut. 30:3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

The first thing that jumps out to me again is that this is a “when” statement regarding the eventual dispersion of God’s chosen people throughout the nations. Implied is the fact that the people will get to experience times of blessing; but, sadly, history shows that the times of cursing have far exceeded those times of blessing. When you read through Judges, Kings and Chronicles, one can’t help but notice that the times of blessing coincide with their kings/leaders that did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord.

I am reminded that it is through the preservation of God’s Word that His people have retained knowledge of these blessings and curses. Just as surely as the “when” applies to their dispersion, it also applies to the time that they will repent and turn back to YHWH in obedience. “When” that time comes, God promises to demonstrate His compassion and gather His people back into their land. I personally believe this to be a reference to the believing remnant of Israel that will emerge from the refining fires of the tribulation that will precede the return of Jesus, their Messiah, as King. The return to Israel after the Babylonian captivity was from a specific land, not from “all the nations.”

Deut. 30:4 If *any* of thine be driven out unto the outmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

Deut. 30:5 And the LORD 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.

Moses goes on to relate that no matter how far away a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob might be located when that time of regathering comes, God will personally see to it that he/she returns to the land of Israel. I remember in my study of Isaiah how God declared that He would cause the Gentile nations to facilitate this return.

Isaiah 49:22-23 “Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.”

Isaiah 66:19-20 “And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my

fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD."

Deut. 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

This prophecy goes hand-in-hand with the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that 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 bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Ezekiel 11:17-20 "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Ezekiel 36:24-28 "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

I know that I have used these verses several times, but I think it is important for us to understand that God has not permanently cast off the nation of Israel; they figure prominently in His plans for the future. The "church" has not replaced

Israel; we have been grafted into the nation as part of “spiritual” Israel. (See journal on Romans 9-11.)

Circumcision is a cutting away of the flesh. Circumcision of the heart is a word picture of separating oneself from the sins of the flesh. The prophet Jeremiah used this analogy.

Jeremiah 4:4 “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart,”

It pictures a choice to get rid of the sins of the flesh that keep you from having a clean heart before God. Point is made in this verse, however, that God is going to perform this circumcision on His people. Paul made reference to this circumcision in the life of the believer in his letter to the Colossians.

Colossians 2:11 “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ....”

Deut. 30:7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

This verse is a declaration that the enemies of Israel will experience the curses for disobedience because of their mistreatment of the people of Israel. This again points out Israel’s unique position before God among the nations. God will judge His people by scattering them throughout the nations, but He will also hold the nations accountable for the way they treat them.

I believe that much of history would read quite differently if the Jewish people had been treated with respect. It is interesting to me that the nations have recognized the disproportionately amazing abilities of Jewish scientists, mathematicians, and businessmen and have profited greatly from their expertise; yet still today they are the least respected as a people throughout the nations. Following is an interesting excerpt from an April 2007 article by Charles Murray at www.commentarymagazine.com.

“...From 1870 to 1950, Jewish representation in literature was four times the number one would expect. In music, five times. In the visual arts, five times. In biology, eight times. In chemistry, six times. In physics, nine times. In mathematics, twelve times. In philosophy, fourteen times.

Disproportionate Jewish accomplishment in the arts and sciences continues to this day. My inventories end with 1950, but many other measures are available, of which the best known is the Nobel Prize. In the first half of the 20th century, despite pervasive and continuing social discrimination against Jews throughout the Western world, despite the retraction of legal rights, and despite the Holocaust, Jews won 14 percent of Nobel Prizes in literature, chemistry, physics, and medicine / physiology. In the second half of the 20th century, when Nobel Prizes began to be awarded to people from all over the world, that figure rose to 29 percent. So far, in the 21st century, it has been 32 percent. Jews constitute about two-tenths of one percent of the world’s population. You do the math.”

Deut. 30:8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.

This verse again emphasizes the truth that the people of Israel will one day turn back to God in faith and obedience.

Deut. 30:9 And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:

Deut. 30:10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

Considering the fact of their special intellectual gifting as related above, just imagine how amazing will be the impact they make on the world as a nation in complete submission and obedience to the LORD God. God will bless their every endeavor. Instead of just impacting the world as individuals, they will stand out prominently among the nations as a whole. The sad fact is that this could have been descriptive of the nation since its inception had they just kept covenant with YHWH.

Deut. 30:11 ¶ For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

Deut. 30:12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

Deut. 30:13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

Deut. 30:14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

Reading the other translations helped clarify the message of these verses. YHWH is declaring through Moses that His commandments are not beyond their understanding or their abilities to obey. Verses 12-13 are using a word picture to make this point. They don't need a special messenger from heaven or from unknown foreign lands to translate the meaning of God's covenant conditions. Moses is delivering God's message in very clear and common language. Their job is to memorize it and make it a part of their beings as they follow its directives in their daily lives.

I thought about how we have such a propensity to find excuses for our sins. I believe it is a genetic trait handed down from Adam and Eve. When confronted by God with having to admit their disobedience in the Garden of Eden, their first responses were of excuse and blame-shifting.

Genesis 3:11-13 "And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

God is declaring through Moses that there is no acceptable excuse for disobedience.

Deut. 30:15 ¶ See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

God is making it very clear that the choice is either/or—life and good OR death and evil. (Personal smile: I just had to correct a typo—death and devil ☺)

Deut. 30:16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

This verse accompanies “life and good.” If the people will submit to the LORD in faith and obedience, they will live long in the land and will experience great blessing and growth as a nation.

Deut. 30:17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

Deut. 30:18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong *your* days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

These verses accompany “death and evil.” If the people reject God in disobedience and choose to serve idols, they will lose the land and their identity as a nation.

Deut. 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Deut. 30:20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Moses closes this section with God’s call for the heavens and earth to serve as witnesses to this covenant between Him and His people. This is obviously a word picture that declares the eternal nature of this covenant since heaven and earth will continue though people will continue to die. God urges His people to choose life and blessing through obedience and submission to Him as Lord. God is reminding them that the effects of their choice will extend to the generations that follow. Proof of the truth of this statement is in the historical record.

Your sin always hurts someone else—if not immediately, then surely in coming hours, days, weeks, months or years.