

Deuteronomy 11:22-32
The Blessing and the Curse
January 24, 2021

²² “For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him— ²³ then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. ²⁴ Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory. ²⁵ No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.

²⁶ “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. ²⁹ Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. ³⁰ Are they not on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? ³¹ For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it. ³² And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.

The idea of a curse is that of vilification. There are lots of words translated as “curse” in the Old Testament and together they come up to over 150 uses. All in all, the idea of the curse permeates the Old Testament writings.

Curses are mentioned in the New Testament as well, in various ways and with various Greek words. The story of the Bible is one of man falling under a curse, and how God is working to end that state.

It all started in Genesis 3 when the man disobeyed the Lord by following the lies of the serpent instead of obeying the command of God. But it was the command of God that made that possible. There is nothing wrong with God giving the command, and He had every right to do so. But without a law, no law could be broken.

As for the serpent, for what he did, he received the first curse of the Bible, and the ground that man would till would likewise be cursed, the second noted curse.

Working all the way through Scripture, these various words translated as “curse” are seen. But the most incredible one of all is the one Paul speaks of in Galatians 3:13. That will be cited during our sermon today.

It is an amazing thing that God has done in order to remove the idea of any remaining curse. We got ourselves into the mess we are in, and the Lord got us out of it. We know this is true

because the book is written, and on the last page of it, we are told the words of our text verse for today...

Text Verse: *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵ There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.” Revelation 22:1-5*

As we progress through our verses today, we will get to a point where Moses speaks of the blessing and the curse. It is only an introductory thought that will be greatly expanded on later. But the idea of these words is given in relation to the law.

As I said, without a law, there can be no infraction. It is by law that sin comes about, and with the coming of sin we see the coming of the curses. We just saw that the Bible ends with the thought of no more curse. But how does the Old Testament end? It ends with the words of Malachi –

*“And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:6*

Malachi was a prophet under the Law of Moses. He was there to call the people to a right standing before the Lord. If that didn't happen, then the earth would be struck with a curse. If the law brings about a curse, and a curse was promised at the end of the Old Testament, and yet there is no more curse at the end of the New Testament, then what does that tell us?

It tells us that what we need is grace, not the law. This is the continued lesson of the law. The curses that Moses will refer to today, and in the chapters to come, mean that grace is not at the forefront of the time of the law. In fact, the law and grace are mutually exclusive.

Let us remember this. It is a most important lesson that is to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Just as He Has Said to You (verses 22-25)

²² **“For if you carefully keep all these commandments**

It is singular, not plural: *ki im shamor tishmerun et kal ha'mitsvah* – “For if keeping you (certainly) keep all the commandment.” The word here, *shamar*, meaning to keep is repeated for emphasis. Further, it is accentuated with a paragogic nun – an additional letter at the end of the word to provide further stress.

Moses is being particularly emphatic that Israel must be extremely attentive and diligent to heed and to act. Further, being in the singular, he is speaking about a codified body that is a unified law. How this is done will be explained in the final clause of the verse.

For now, it is understood that the command is to be carefully *shamor*, or kept. It is a common word already seen many times. It signifies to watch over, take heed to, and so on. Moses is telling them that as a guard watches over a jail, or a gardener watches over a garden, so the people (it is plural – you all) are to watch over the observance of the commandment...

22 which I command you to do—

It is still plural – “you all.” “Each of you is to carefully watch over the words that I am now commanding you. The words I speak are given as authority to you, and they are binding upon you. And the substance of what I say to you is...”

22 (con't) to love the LORD your God,

The words complement what has been said several times concerning loving the Lord, in Deuteronomy 6, 7, 10, and now for the third of three times in Chapter 11. He has said it in both the singular (you Israel), and in the plural (you all). Here, it is in the plural. He then says...

22 (con't) to walk in all His ways,

These words complement what has been said in Deuteronomy 8 and 10. In those two references, Moses was speaking to Israel in the singular, but here he is speaking to them in the plural. In Chapter 8, he said, “in His ways.” In Chapter 10, he said, “in all His ways.”

The reason for these changes is certainly to avoid any hint of manipulation concerning the precept on the part of the people. By speaking to them in the singular and the plural, nobody can say, "As long as the nation is obedient, my faults are excused." And, no one can say, "As long as I am obedient, I won't see any trouble in my life."

Further, nobody can say, "Moses said to walk in His ways, but not necessarily in 'all' of His ways." The wickedness of the human heart is what is being dealt with here. This is obvious from the manifold ways of saying basically the same thing by Moses.

It is, essentially, the lesson that Jesus spoke to the leaders of Israel concerning their attitude towards matters of the law –

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. ²⁴ Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" Matthew 23:23, 24

The weightiest matter of the law is first and foremost loving the Lord, followed by loving one's neighbor. The Pharisees failed, legalists in the church fail, and those who think they can manipulate the relationship between themselves and the Lord by simply straining out gnats prove their attitude is inexcusable. Understanding this, Moses proceeds....

²² (con't) **and to hold fast to Him—**

The word is *dabaq*, to cleave or hold fast to. One should get the sense of not just grabbing and holding on but doing so with the impossibility of letting go. It is used in this way concerning the relationship of Israel to the Lord four times in Deuteronomy.

The use of the word in those four times speaks to both Israel the nation, and to the individual Israelite. The nation cannot blame the individuals, and the individuals cannot blame the nation if the consequences of failure come upon them. But in obedience to the precept...

23 then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you,

The clause is still in the plural – you all. But the same thing has been said in the singular to the nation elsewhere – you, Israel. Again, it is important to see what Moses is doing by stating it in both ways.

Because it speaks of the people in the plural, it would be preferable to translate this as “peoples” instead of “nations.” The people of Israel will drive out the peoples of the land.

And more, as elsewhere, the word *yarash* is used, and it is used in both clauses of this verse. It signifies possession or inheritance. One might say, “And the Lord will disinherit all these peoples from before your faces.”

What they have owned as a possession will be removed from them by the Lord. But, in an act of synergy (two working as one), Moses then also acknowledges it is Israel who will do the task...

23 (con't) and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.

v'rishtem goyim gedolim va'tsumim mikem – “And you (all) will disinherit peoples greats and mighties from you.” Moses just said the Lord will disinherit the peoples. Now he says that Israel will do so. In this, some translations will say “drive out and dispossess,” “dispossess and possess,” and so on. But the thought is the same.

The idea is that the Lord is the force behind what is accomplished, and Israel does the accomplishing. If the Lord decides to not work with Israel, the objective will not be met – even if Israel strives to accomplish the task.

In other words, the action is synergistic and Israel's completion of it is wholly dependent on the Lord's will. As long as Israel works in accord with the will of the Lord, in the service of the Lord, then...

24 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours:

kal ha'maqom asher tidrok kaph raglekem bow lakem – “All the place which treads sole your (plural) foot therein yours.” Jewish writers of the past arrogantly said that this is an unconditional statement meaning that anywhere in the world that they walk becomes their possession. The notion is faulty on two levels.

First, it is not unconditional. The entire context of the passage clearly shows that the people must be obedient to the precepts laid before them. Secondly, the area is clearly defined in the following words, limiting them to a specific parcel of land, and no other.

If they fail to be obedient, whatever they possess will not be theirs. In other words, even if Jews live in another area of the world and own the land on which they live, it is still not the land belonging to them, meaning an Israelite land. It is the land of the nations that they simply dwell in.

The land they are given as a people is clearly defined as...

24 (con't) from the wilderness and Lebanon,

min ha'midbar v'ha'levanon – “From the wilderness, and to the Lebanon.” It is the southern and northern borders. The wilderness refers to the wilderness of Zin, as was defined in Numbers 34:2. That extended to the west along the wadi of Egypt which drains into the Mediterranean Sea. The northern border is the border of Lebanon. And further...

24 (con't) from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory.

To the east, the land is promised to extend all the way to the Euphrates. To the west, it extends to the Mediterranean Sea, here called *ha'yam ha'akharon*, or “the sea, the hindmost.” The meaning is that it is behind one who is looking to the east.

The land, as defined in Numbers 34, was only inclusive of Canaan and also the land settled by Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan. However, that could – and should – be extended even to the Euphrates as was promised to Abraham in Genesis 15 –

“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—” Genesis 15:19

It would not be until the time of Solomon that this would be realized, and not long after Solomon’s death, the land would begin to diminish due to disobedience. That is recorded in 1 Kings 4 –

“Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. ²¹ So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.” 1 Kings 4:20, 21

Only during the reign of Solomon is this recorded. What we have in this verse is poignantly and remarkably restated to Joshua –

“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.” Joshua 1:3, 4

There, in Joshua, the Lord says, “as I said to Moses.” And yet, that is not recorded anywhere but here where Moses has been speaking in the first person, or referring to the Lord in the third person. One can clearly see the doctrine of divine inspiration in these words.

²⁵ No man shall be able to stand against you;

The Hebrew is more expressive: *lo yiyatsev ish biphnekem* – “no shall stand man in your face” (meaning, “in your presence”). The pronoun remains second person plural, and so it is saying

that each person will be victorious over the foe he faces, or if the leader of another group comes against Israel, as the representative of his people, he would not be able to stand against them. The people of Israel would defeat the enemies they faced because...

25 (con't) **the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you**

Moses uses two words, both nouns, to describe how the Lord will affect the people. One is *pakhad*, signifying a state of alarm. It is something felt, and thus “dread.” The second is almost a synonym of the first, *mora*. It is a terror or a fear. And this will be...

25 (con't) **upon all the land where you tread,**

Again, the Hebrew is more expressive: *al pene kal ha'arets asher tidreku bah* – “upon face all the land which you tread in.” Moses then says...

25 (con't) **just as He has said to you.**

These words were first prophesied in Exodus 15:16, using one of the same words as here. That was in anticipation of Israel's arrival. It was then explicitly stated in Deuteronomy 2 –

“This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.” Deuteronomy 2:25

There, instead of *mora*, the word *yirah* was seen, another synonymous word. As has been seen before, the changing of words in this manner gives a clear evidence of Mosaic authorship. Anyone else would have carefully copied the first two words if they were claiming that the Lord had said them. Moses, however, felt free to speak in synonyms to convey his intent.

Great things I have promised to you

If you will be faithful to My word

*The promises shall stand; what I say is true
If you will faithfully attend to what you have heard
I shall bless you with a blessing in this land
And you shall prosper in accord with My word
None who come against you shall be able to stand
If you will faithfully attend to what you have heard*

*I shall be with you always and never forsake you
This is My promise, My spoken word
And it shall stand, because what I say is true
If you will faithfully attend to what you have heard*

II. Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (verses 26-32)

²⁶ “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse:

Moses now sums up his words, calling the people to careful attention with the words *raeh anoki noten liphnekem ha’yom berakah u-qelalah* – “Look! I set to your faces this day blessing and cursing.” The words shout out for attention and careful heeding of what is said.

With this openly stated and carefully worded, Moses now continues on with the Bible’s clear revelation of the doctrine known as free will. It takes us back to the very first recorded words from the Lord to man –

*“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
Genesis 2:16, 17*

In the statement set before Adam were words of blessing or cursing – blessing if he obeyed, cursing if he disobeyed. The choice was his, and the consequences were thus his. If this were not so, sin could not have been imputed. But it was. The same is true with Israel now. The law is given, and the choice of outcome is clearly set before the faces of the people...

²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments

The translation is lacking. It says, *asher tishmeru el mitzvoth* – “when you (all) hearken unto *the* commandments.” Using the word “if” makes the entire thought sound conditional in the doing. Rather it is in the receiving after the doing. The Lord will, in fact, give the blessing when the command is hearkened unto (meaning heard and applied).

²⁷ (con’t) of the LORD your God which I command you today;

Again, the synergistic (working together) nature of divine inspiration is seen here. These are the commands of Yehovah Elohim, and yet, it is Moses who is speaking them out as commands to Israel. It is what Peter clearly states to us –

“knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” 1 Peter 1:20, 21

²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God,

Here, “if” is correct: *im lo tishmeru* – “if no you (all) do hearken.” They will receive the blessing when they hearken unto the commandments. And they will receive the cursing if they do not hearken unto them. In other words, the expectation is obedience, even if both the Lord and Moses know that it will not be coming...

²⁸ (con’t) but turn aside from the way which I command you today,

The words, “if you do not hearken,” are now supplemented: “if you do not hearken...but turn aside from the way.” It is this which brings the cursing. There is the way which is right, and there is taking another path which must be punished. That is specifically a violation of the first commandment – “You shall have no other gods before Me.” As Moses says...

28 (con't) † to go after other gods which you have not known.

Of this, Matthew Poole says, “Which you have no acquaintance with, nor experience of their power or wisdom or goodness, as you have had of mine.” That is then supplemented with the words of Cambridge, saying they are gods, “in contradistinction to Jehovah, the revealed God, made known to them by word and deed.”

Israel may have, in fact, known other gods. But it was only as a head knowledge, not something experiential. Jehovah had revealed Himself through His deeds, and He had revealed Himself through His law. Both thoughts were expressed by Moses in Chapter 4 –

“For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? ⁸ And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?” Deuteronomy 4:7, 8

Jehovah was near to Israel in action, and He was near to Israel in law. To follow another path would be to reject the fountain of both of these marvelous flows of protection and life. To permanently set this in their minds, Moses next commands...

29 Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess,

The words of this verse move to the singular (you Israel). It is a marvelous transition, and an assurance that the nation as a whole will be brought into Canaan and the nation shall possess it.

But more, not all of the people who go into Canaan will participate in what will be directed. And some, who are not yet of Israel, will participate in it.

For example, the noted troublemaker of Israel in Joshua 7 will be dead by the time the events to be relayed by Moses will come about. And Rahab the harlot will be brought into Israel, specifically the tribe of Judah, by then. Thus, the transition of this verse to the singular speaks not of all before Moses now, but of the nation, Israel, before him now.

What is said here is a precursor to what Moses will more fully explain in Deuteronomy 27. They are also shown to be fulfilled, exactly, in Joshua 8. The instruction to Israel is...

²⁹ (con't) **that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.**

The Hebrew reads “give,” not “put.” As will be seen in Chapter 27, the blessings and the curses were written on the altar on Mt. Ebal. However, they were called out (given) by the people of selected tribes from both mountains.

The name Gerizim comes from the word *garaz* – to cut, cut up, or cut off. Being a plural word, the meaning is something like, “The Cutters Down.” It may refer to those who harvest, due to the fertility of the mountain.

The name Ebal comes from an unused root meaning to be bald. Probably signifying the bald appearance of the mountain. Thus, it means something like Bare or Heap of Barrenness.

Of these two facing mountains, Gerizim is to the south and Ebal is to the north. Or, in reference to the layout of directions in the Bible, Gerizim is to the right, and Ebal is to the left. Thus, it matches the scriptural pattern of the right hand of blessing and the left hand of cursing. For example –

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will

separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.” Matthew 25:31-33

In the state of the two mountains, one can see a contrast. The mount of blessing is the fertile mountain. The mountain of curse is the bald mountain. Thus, there is metaphor being conveyed. Obedience to the Lord will bring blessing to the land while disobedience will bring a curse.

It is further interesting that the altar where the law was to be inscribed on whitewashed stones, and as is stated in Deuteronomy 27:4-8, it was to be on Mt. Ebal, the mountain to the left. In other words, it anticipates Paul’s words of Galatians 3 –

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ ¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ ¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Galatians 3:10-14

The very words that will be spoken out by the people in Deuteronomy 27:26 are the same words Paul cites in Galatians 3. The law cannot justify, and only a curse results from the giving of the law.

As far as the location of Gerizim, the more favored mountain, that of blessing, it is not mentioned by name in the New Testament, but it is seen there nonetheless when it is referred to in John 4 –

The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on

this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:19-24

Mount Gerizim is the mountain she is referring to. For the Samaritans, this was their place of worship. For the Jews, Jerusalem was their place of worship. But the Lord corrected her, and any Jews who would pay heed.

Salvation is of the Jews because of the coming of Messiah, but Jerusalem was only a place that anticipated Him. What was there, and what occurred there only pictured His fulfillment of those things. It is in Him, and in any location that those who are in Him may be, that true worship of God – through Him – may be found.

Of these dueling mountains, Moses next says...

³⁰ **Are they not on the other side of the Jordan,**

The Hebrew doesn't say "the other side." It states "in side the Jordan." It can refer to either side, but it is then explained by the next words...

³⁰ (con't) **toward the setting sun,**

akhare derek mebo ha'shemesh – "after way going down the sun." What this might be saying is that one of the main roads going north and south through Canaan was known as the Way of the West, similar to another such road that would have run in the same manner on the east side.

The mountains were to the west of that way and so it means westward, toward the setting sun. This is a new noun in Scripture, *mabo*, or an entrance. In this case, it is an entrance in the sense that it is going down, as is stated in Malachi 1:11 where the last use of the word is seen –

*“For from the rising of the sun, even to its **going down**,
My name shall be great among the Gentiles;
In every place incense shall be offered to My name,
And a pure offering;
For My name shall be great among the nations,”
Says the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 1:11*

It may be, and this is a note of speculation, that this phrase could be figuratively showing that the law is merely a transitional part of the redemptive plan. The sun rises in the east, and it sets in the west with the greatness of the name of the Lord being proclaimed by the Gentiles throughout the entire extent of that happening.

This appears to be so based on the last use of *shemesh*, or “sun,” in the Old Testament, which is referring metaphorically to Christ the Lord –

*“But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise.” Malachi 4:2*

As the sun actually never sets, but simply disappears from view, this verse may be an allusion to the fact that Christ is the embodiment of this law that holds both the blessing and the cursing for Israel. The name of the Lord, Jesus, is great among the nations from the rising of the sun to its going down.

30 (con’t) in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh?

Here, it says, *ha’gilgal*, or “the Gilgal,” meaning, “the Wheel.” Thus, it is a known circle of stones that is referred to here. The importance of these words takes us back to Genesis 12. There, the Lord vowed to bless Abraham, and directed him to go to Canaan. After that it said –

“Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. ⁶ Abram passed

through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.'" Genesis 12:5-7

The Lord, through Moses, is calling to remembrance the promise made to Abraham. Despite the Canaanites dwelling there, He had promised it to Abraham. That promise was soon to be fulfilled through his descendants now being instructed by Moses.

As the Lord is faithful to remember His promise of the land, so He will then be faithful to remember His other dealings with Abraham, including – righteousness through faith, and not deeds of the law.

Thus, the law that is now being set forth, and which will be recorded on Mt. Ebal, cannot be the realization of the promise, except as it is found being fulfilled in Christ.

³¹ For you will cross over the Jordan

In verse 29, the pronouns were in the singular – for just that one verse. In verse 30, there were no pronouns referring to Israel. Now, through the end of the chapter, the pronouns return to the second person plural, you all.

Here it says: *ki atem overim eth ha'yarden* – “For you (all) are the crossers over the Jordan.” As has been seen elsewhere, a pun is probably being made. The word *overim*, or “crossers over,” is identical in spelling to the word *ivrim*, or “Hebrews.” Moses is telling them that they, the Hebrews, are the crossers over the Jordan.

As the Jordan is a picture and type of Christ, it is those who cross through Him that are the true Hebrews, or “crossers over.” It is they of whom Moses says will cross over...

³¹ (con't) and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it.

Abraham was noted as the first Hebrew. He was promised the land, as were his descendants after him. But that is only a part of the promise. In Genesis 22, after not withholding his son Isaac, the Lord said to him –

“By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— ¹⁷ blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” Genesis 22:16-18

Paul then says in Galatian 3 –

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. ¹⁷ And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.” Galatians 3:16-18

Israel, a people under the law, are being told they will enter the land promised to their fathers. It is a land where the Lord will dwell among them.

Further, they are told that living in the land is conditional based on obedience to the law. But the promise of blessing cannot be because of the law if Abraham was given the promise long before the time of the law.

Therefore, the promise is not the land of Canaan, but only what the land of Canaan anticipates, a place where man will dwell with the Lord forever. That means that our final words of the passage today are to be instructive...

***32 (fin) And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.**

The verses today close out a section of Deuteronomy that deals with the relation of the people who were brought out of Egypt towards Yehovah their God. The next section, that goes from 12:1 to 16:17, will deal with the land as the seat of worship of the Lord.

For now, these words tie right back to verse 26. There Moses spoke of obeying the commandments. Now He explains that, saying, “the statutes and the judgments.” If they are to obey the statutes and judgments in order to remain in the land, then the land cannot be the sum of the promise.

As Paul noted, the law cannot annul the covenant made by God in Christ to Abraham, thus making the promise of no effect. But if disobeying the law can mean there will be punishment and exile from the land, then the promise cannot merely be the land.

The land is a promise, and it is based on conditions. But it is not the ultimate Promise which comes without conditions. The promise is Christ, and He is promised before and apart from the law. This is what Israel must come to understand. Until they do, they will continue to flounder in a world without any true hope.

Only in coming to Christ can the fulfillment of all of God’s promises be fully realized. The law was given to show them this. And as the law was only given to Israel, it is meant as an instructive tool for them, and for everyone else.

The world doesn’t need more laws. One was enough to condemn all of humanity. What the world needs is the grace of God in Christ Jesus. He is the One who is sufficient to save all of humanity, if they are but willing to come to Him. The adding of the Law of Moses was to teach us this in a poignant way.

Those of Israel who were considered right before the Lord were those who loved the Lord beyond the precepts of the law, not because of the precepts of the law. The law, as noble as it is, is only a reflection of the Lord. But to seek the Lord goes beyond rote observance to the very heart of man desiring intimacy with his Creator – something man can employ toward the Lord apart from the law.

However, that can only come about when the sin of man is dealt with. There may be people who seek after God, but they do so apart from the mediation of Christ. God cannot accept this. Only in the covering of man with the righteousness of Christ can God then accept him. The problem is sin, sin comes by law, and therefore man must be given grace – the grace of God which is found in the giving of Christ for the sin debt.

This is the continued lesson of the law. May we be wise and pay heed. It is through Christ and Christ alone that we stand justified before the Holy God. May today be the day you realize this and call out to Him for cleansing.

Closing Verse: *“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4, 5*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 12:1-7 *It’s not intended for the one who refuses, meaning any-one...*
(The Place Where the Lord Your God Chooses, Part I) (39th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Blessing and the Curse

“For if you carefully keep all these commandments
Which I command you to do
To love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways
And to hold fast to Him; pay heed my word is true

Then the LORD will drive out
All these nations from before you; like cleaning pantry shelves
And you will dispossess nations
Greater and mightier nations than yourselves

Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours:
From the wilderness and Lebanon in its glory
From the river, the River Euphrates
Even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory

No man shall be able to stand against you
The LORD your God will put the dread of you
And the fear of you upon all the land where you tread
Just as He has said to you, so He shall do

“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse:
The blessing, if you obey
The commandments of the LORD your God
Which I command you today

And the curse, if you do not obey the commandments
Of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way
Which I command you today
To go after other gods which you have not known
-----if you so go astray

Now it shall be, when the LORD your God
Has brought you into the land which you go to possess
That you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim
And the curse on Mount Ebal, so to you I address
Are they not on the other side of the Jordan
Toward the setting sun just as I say
In the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain
Opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh?

For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you
And you will possess it and dwell in it
So you shall do