

220525-4 Deu 31, Israel's Hope beyond Apostasy—CThurman

In chapter 31, first (vss.1-10), one day Israel shall call to mind all of the blessings and curses that they have endured throughout their history and why they are scattered into the furthest reaches of the world. Then the LORD will regather them *all* from *all* of those places back into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and save them. (Not all came out of Babylonian captivity. [cf. Ezr.1.4])

What an error it is in our eschatology to fail to understand that this shall come to pass for national Israel. Paul's very prayer for *national* Israel is that they might be saved.

Ro 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel (not the Israelite, not the Jew, but the nation of Israel) is, that they might be saved.

...

*Ro 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:
27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

Mic.7.18 Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

It is a fact that most of Christendom today doesn't believe that Israel exists; that there is a people of Jacob. If this was true why are the nations of the world so fixated upon that little country at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea? How do we account for the rise of all around this globe? But the Bible speaks of national Israel in the last days. The sons of Jacob shall return to Palestine and the nations shall be saved. The study through the book of Deuteronomy has stressed the reality of national Israel in the latter days, and has emphasized that they shall have this land one day. I hope that you have been following along with us in these lessons.

Better than half of the congregation is absent with us in the services on Wednesday nights. I understand the hindrance, the distance to travel to the services on a work night, the sicknesses, the weariness from laboring all day. But don't fail to follow along in the lessons. It is vital for all of us to learn the things which the OT Scriptures contain.

Second (vss.11-14), we learned about the function of the word of God.

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

The word of God proves faith or the absence of it. If there is faith the word of God, the commandments of Christ, will draw it out. But if there is no faith, then disobedience is all that remains and that will be manifested by the same word of God. The commandments of the LORD revealed the present condition of the *nation* of Israel. They were an unregenerate, disobedient, hardhearted, stiff-necked, unbelieving nation, though there was in the nation a very small, believing remnant. (cf. Ro.9.27; 11.1-5)

And finally (vss.15-20), the LORD set before Israel life and good, and death and evil. At this we showed how that they could in their present, unregenerate state only choose death and evil. So it is with every unregenerate sinner. Apart from the grace of God the fallen man, like Israel at this time, is in a continual state of enmity with God. He cannot, he will not choose life and good.

Joh 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Chapter 31 can be broken down into these five points:

- Moses encourages Israel with a future hope. (vss.1-6)
- Moses encourages Joshua. (vss. 7, 8)
- The observance of the year of release. (vss.9-13)
- The LORD testifies to Moses and Joshua by song of Israel's certain apostasy. (vss.14-22)
- Moses charges Joshua, the Kohathites, and the elders. (vss .23-30)

Chapter 31

Moses encourages Israel with a future hope. (vss.1-6)

1 ¶ And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.

and spake, to promise, to declare, to pronounce, etc.; Deu.27.9; 31.1, 28, 30; 32.1, and I will speak, 32.44, 48 and spake, Piel fut. verb, spake.

Meaning that Moses will say the following things to all the nation of Israel...

2 And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day;

Moses' life divides into three 40 years periods:

From Egypt to Midian (from birth to fleeing the wrath of Pharaoh):
23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

...

From Midian to Egypt (the exodus):
30 ¶ And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

...

From Egypt to the border of Canaan (the wilderness sojourn):
36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

I can no more go out and come in:

I can, יָכַל, yah-kal, tss. can, to prevail, to be able, to overcome, to have might.

Moses' appears to have suddenly diminished in health or natural strength.

De 34:7 And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

So the LORD strengthened Moses for service until his work was finished.

also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

De 1:37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither.

Nu.20.12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Ps.106.32 They (Israel) angered him (the LORD) also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

Nu.27.12 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel.

13 And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.

14 For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

3 The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them:

and shalt possess it, the verb שָׂרַשׁ, yah-rash, tss. to possess, to succeed, to enjoy, to inherit, etc.; cf. Due.17.14, and shalt possess it; Deu.19.1, and thou succeedest; Due. 26.1, and possesses it; Deu.30.5, possessed, and though shalt possess it; Deu.31.3, and thou shalt possess them.

Now, it is a matter of fact that the LORD will destroy these nations, but the question is, when will this be fulfilled? King David wrote of their failure to

possess the land. (Ps.106.34-48, v.47 David still prayed, *Save us, O LORD our God ...*; Jud.1.21, 26-36; i.e., Jos.16.10. etc.)

and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.

Joshua was one of two men which Israel sent out to search the land of Canaan for the best route to enter into the land Canaan. Caleb was the other. These two were the only ones of the twelve spies which returned with a good report to encourage Israel to go in and take possession of the land which the LORD had promised to them. (cf. Deu.1.35-38)

De 3:28 But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

4 And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed.

5 And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you.

6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them:

be strong, of the verb קָזַח, chah-zaq, tss. to force (Deu.22.25), to seize, to fasten, to take (Deu.25.11), to take hold, to be stout, to prevail, to confirm, to be strong (Deu.31.6, 7, 23); also tss. to be hard.

of a good courage, אָמַץ, ah-matz, tss. to be strong, to be stronger, to be of good courage, to be courageous, to prevail, to be obstinate, to establish, to confirm, to fortify, to harden, to increase, to make speed, and steadfastly minded. Piel Pret., Deu.2.30, to make obstinate –Piel Imper., Deu.3.28, to strengthen – Piel fut., Deu.15.7, to harden – Qal imper., Deu.31.6, to be of a good courage.

afraid, יָרָא, [g]ah-ratz, tss. to be terrified, afraid, to have dread, to shake terribly.

for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

he will ... fail thee, Hiphil fut. of the verb רָפָה, rah-phah, is tss. to forsake, to fail, to slack, to leave, to let alone, to let go; vss. 6, 8.

forsake thee, of the verb זָבַח, [g]ah-zav, tss. to forsake, to leave, to be destitute; vss. 6, Qal fut., forsake thee, 8, Qal fut., forsake thee, 16, Qal pret., and will forsake me, 17, Qal pret., and I will forsake them.

Moses encourages Joshua. (vss. 7, 8)

7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

thou shalt cause ... to inherit it, Hiphil fut. of the verb נָחַל, nah-chal, tss. to inherit, to possess, to distribute.

and thou shalt cause them to inherit it – Don't miss this point: Joshua's primary function is to see that the tribes of Israel receive their proper allotments of land.

8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

dismayed, Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of the verb חָתַח, chah-thath, tss. to be dismayed, to be amazed, to be afraid, to be broken down, to be broken in pieces, to be beaten down, to be abolished, to be scared, to be confounded.

The observance of the year of release. (vss.9-13)

9 ¶ And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD,

This law was given to the Levites, but we see here that it was specifically given to them that were responsible for carrying the ark of the covenant during the wilderness sojourn. These are the sons of Levi through Kohath. (cf. Nu.4.15; Ex.6.16; Nu.3.30, 31)

and unto all the elders of Israel.

This law – It is difficult to discern this absolutely but on the one hand this refers to the writing of this book, Deuteronomy. On the other, especially with reference to v. 24 this could refer to the entire compilation of Scriptures which Moses wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Genesis to Deuteronomy, otherwise called the Law of Moses, the Law, or the Penteteuch (πέντα five + τεῦχος tools, implements, books).

Deu.31.24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished ...

Ge.2.24 – Mk.10.4, 7, 8 : Genesis – Moses

Ex.3.2 – Mk.12.26: Exodus – Book of Moses

Lev.12.2-6 – Lk.2.22 : Leviticus – Law of Moses

Nu.21.9 – Jn.3.14 : Numbers – Moses

Deu.25.4 – 1Co.9.9 : Deuteronomy – Law of Moses

This is that law which was given to the Levites (notice here the Kohathites) and the elders of Israel. It is of these men that the lower courts were set up in the cities (cf. Deu.16.18; 19.17; 21.3-9; 19-23) and the highest court set up in Jerusalem. (cf. Deu.17.8-11; 21.2) But as we shall read in this chapter this compilation shall be stored next to the ark of the Covenant, not inside of it.

To be sure that we understand this correctly, after Moses descended mount Sinai the second time with the tables of stone, which had written upon them the Ten Commandments, he would place them inside of an ark of wood (cf. Deu.10.1) until the ark of the covenant was made. (cf. Ex.25.16)

10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release,

year of release – This refers to the time when the creditor or lender released the debtor or borrower from the indebtedness. (cf. Deu.15.1-7)

in the feast of tabernacles,

11 When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

Once every seven years the creditor was to release the borrower of his debt. The timing of this would coincide with the annual observance of the Feast of Tabernacles (also called Feast of Booths), which feast was to be observed in the city of Jerusalem on the 15th day of the 7th month. (cf. Le.15.34; Deu.16.15-16) The LORD would require at this time the reading of this law by those that are in authority (the Kohathites and the elders) in Israel. (Whether this means they read only the book of Deuteronomy or all five books of Moses it difficult to say for certain.)

the place which he shall choose [to put His name] – is a reference to the city of Jerusalem. (the clause '*the place which he shall choose*' is often in Deuteronomy, cf. Deu.12.5, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14.23, 24, 25; 15.20; 16.2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16; 17.8, 10; 26.2; 31.11 +) This place is finally revealed to be the city of Jerusalem. (1Ki.11.36; 2Ki.21.4, 7; 2Chr.33.7)

The feast of Tabernacles was one of three feasts in which the LORD required all the males to appear before him (Ex.23.14-17; 34.23; Deu.16.16) in the place where he would put His name (Which place will not be revealed to Israel until the time of the reign of King Solomon. [2Chr.8.17] That city is the city of Jerusalem). The other two feasts are Passover and Pentecost.

12 Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:

13 And that their children, which have not known any thing,

of Moses' words

may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

So, the LORD provides a national means for keeping the state informed of His Holy word.

The LORD testifies to Moses and Joshua by song of Israel's certain apostasy (vss.14-22)

14 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in [at] the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in [at]the tabernacle of the congregation.

Moses is a Kohathite. Joshua is of the tribe of Ephraim. (cf. Nu.13.8) As I understand this the command for Moses and Joshua to present themselves *in* the tabernacle of the congregation means that they presented themselves *at* this place. Joshua, not being a Levite, but particularly not of the sons of Aaron, would not be allowed to enter into the tabernacle. (cf. Ex.28.33, 43; 35.19) For example, the Kohathites, which were responsible for transporting the furniture of the tabernacle, could only enter after Aaron and his sons had prepared everything beforehand for transport. (cf. Nu.4.15, 17-20)

15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

see also the Hebrew זָנָה, zah-nah, tss. *to play the harlot, to go whoring, to commit fornication, to commit whoredom, to play the whore, to fall to whoredom; Due.31.16; v.18, whore.*

17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?

18 And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

19 Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.

20 For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.

21 And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear.

Given what the LORD just revealed to Joshua why didn't Joshua just throw up his hands and say something to the effect, 'What's the use! They're going to do this and I can't do a thing about it?'

Both you and I know well that folks, many of whom profess faith in Christ, look at the doctrines of sovereignty, omniscience, foreknowledge, election, predestination in the same way. Most of us have heard something to the effect, 'If these doctrines are true, then why preach? why cast the net of the gospel? why witness? why live for Christ? God is going to do what He will and no one can change that.' To the last statement I agree. God changes not. (cf. Mal.3.6; Is.46.10; Dan.4.35)

First of all, God being God, if we will receive God as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures, God can't know anything that He doesn't already know. His children, me, you, Moses, Joshua, are servants to this great God. It is for servants to obey and do the will of God. And by so doing so He blesses them. Why is it so difficult to understand that the LORD knows all that the unbelieving will do? Is it so difficult to understand that He knows all that I

will do as His own elect? that He has predestinated us? All that the LORD did in this text was tell Joshua the truth about what this unbelieving nation would do. And in this same vein of thought the LORD has revealed to us through His word all that an unbelieving world will do. Wasn't Joshua better suited, isn't the child of God better suited to live for the LORD knowing the truth of God's word? And this leads us to understand something that is very helpful to us. As there was a small, unbelieving remnant in the nation of Israel, so there is a small flock in the kingdom of God today.

22 *Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.*

wrote, is Qal fut. of the verb כָּתַב, *to write*.

and taught, Piel (intensive act.) fut. of לָמַד, lah-mad, tss. *to learn, to teach, instruct, to become expert*. The Piel gives the idea that Moses busied himself, repeated the effort of instructing the nation of Israel this song.

Song referring to v.19. The words to this are given in the next chapter, ch.32.1-43.

Moses charges Joshua, the Kohathites, and the elders (vss .23-30)

23 ¶ *And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage:*

be strong, of the verb צָחַק, chah-zaq, tss. *to force* (Deu.22.25), *to seize, to fasten, to take* (Deu.25.11), *to take hold, to be stout, to prevail, to confirm, to be strong* (Deu.31.6, 7, 23).

Joshua was commanded to be strong. In light of the certain apostasy that was already working in the nation of Israel, before they had even cross over the Jordan River, Joshua is best suited; His mind is strengthened by knowing the truth of the word of God.

for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee.

24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished,

Which very likely refers to the compilation of the first five books of the OT, Genesis to Deuteronomy. (see v.9)

25 That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying,

26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.

27 For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?

28 Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears,

[of this song, v.30]

These that Moses would have assembly before him are those of authority in Israel. Leaders are the face of the people. They are a reflexion of the attitude of the nation.

and call heaven and earth to record against them.

to record, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb **עָוָה**, [g]ood, tss. *to take to witness, to witness, to protest, to charge, to admonish, to call to record (Deu.30.19; 31.28), to bear witness, to give warning; to testify (Deu.32.46, Hiphil part.).*

29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves,

corrupt, of the verb **שָׁחַת**, shah-chath, tss. *to corrupt, to mar, to spill, to perish, to destroy.*

and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you;

and turn aside, סִוּר, soor, a verb tss. to turn aside, to depart, to go, to be past, to remove, to take away, to turn away; Deu.17.11, thou shalt ... decline, 17, turn ... away; 20, that he turn ... aside; Deu.21.13, And she shall put; Deu.28.14, thou shalt ... go aside.

and evil will befall you in the latter days;

Latter days refer to the days which fall between Christ's first and second comings.

because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

30 And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

Moses gathered all of the governing officials in the nation of Israel before him to recite the words of this song. (cf. Deu.32.1-43) The Lord willing we'll look at it in the next lesson.

Though Israel's future history is very gloomy, troubled, and tragic, yet He will fulfill His word and finish the work that He has determined for them. Then they will be blessed.

La 3:22 It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

...

La 3:32 But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

The same could be said of the whole of the history of mankind. The history of mankind is one long, sad, dark story, but when He is finished they that have faith in Jesus Christ shall be everlastingly blessed!