

Session 3 The Forerunner Message in Deuteronomy 30 and 32

I. AN INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 29-30 AND DEUTERONOMY 31-32

- A. After being in the wilderness for 40 years, and just before his death and Israel's entry into the promised land, Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy—the introduction (Deut. 1-4), the main covenant text (Deut. 5-26), its summary messages (Deut. 27-30), the song of Moses (Deut. 31-32), Moses' prophecy over the tribes of Israel (Deut. 33), and the account of Moses' death (Deut. 34). Deuteronomy literally means "***the second law***," from the Greek *deuteros* (second) + *nomos* (law).
- B. God's blessing and judgments on Israel will result in Israel loving God with all of their heart (30:6) and ruling with Jesus over all the nations while living in garden of Eden conditions in Israel. These promises will ultimately be fulfilled in context to the return of Jesus and the Millennium.
- C. Moses proclaimed the message of promise, judgment, and victory in Deuteronomy 27-33 at the same time that Balaam gave 7 prophetic oracles to Balak in Moab about Israel in Numbers 23-24.
- D. **Outline of Deuteronomy 30**
- 30:1-10** The restoration of Israel to the Lord and the land
30:11-14 The power to love and obey God
30:15-20 The importance of obedience to the covenant
- E. **Outline of Deuteronomy 32**
- 32:1-4** The Song of Moses—revealing God's glory
32:5-6 The Song of Moses—indicting a corrupt nation
32:7-14 The Song of Moses—remembering past blessings
32:15-27 The Song of Moses—Israel's rebellion and judgment
32:28-33 The Song of Moses—Israel's lack of understanding
32:34-35 The Song of Moses—God's vengeance on His enemies
32:36-43 The Song of Moses—God's compassion on Israel
- F. Moses' message highlighting Israel's ultimate victory was given in Deuteronomy 29-30. Deuteronomy 29 includes Moses leading Israel in a *covenant renewal* with a historical prologue highlighting the Exodus, the wilderness wandering, and the conquest of various kings (29:2-9), leading to Israel committing to the covenant (29:10-15), followed by warnings about the terrible consequences of disobedience (29:16-29), followed by promises of national salvation (Deut. 30).
- G. In this national assembly each person was to commit themselves to the covenant. Each generation of Jewish people are bound to the terms of this national covenant with the Lord (29:14-15).
- ¹⁰*All of you stand today before the LORD...all the men of Israel, ¹¹your little ones and your wives ...¹²that you may enter into covenant...the LORD your God makes with you today...*
- ¹⁴*I make this covenant...not with you alone, ¹⁵but with him who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with him who is not here with us today. (Deut. 29:10-15)*

H. The consequences of covenant disobedience (29:16-29)

*¹⁸...that there may not be among you man or woman...whose heart turns away today from the LORD that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness...¹⁹and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, “I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart”—as though the drunkard could be included with the sober...²¹The LORD would separate him...for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant...²²that the coming generation...when they see the plagues...²⁴All nations would say, “Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does...this great anger mean?”²⁵Then people would say: “Because they have forsaken the covenant...²⁸The LORD uprooted them from their land...”²⁹The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.
(Deut. 29:18-29)*

I. **Secret things:** The “secret things” here are in context to the renewing of the covenant. Thus the things that God knows but has not revealed are specifically about how Israel would respond to this covenant throughout the future generations. The “things revealed” speak of the promises that God has revealed to motivate His people to love and obey the Lord and thus enjoy His blessings.

J. It is difficult for the nations to understand how Israel can possess eternal promises of national blessing from the Lord and yet be deported (29:28) and nearly destroyed. Part of this secret is clarified in Deuteronomy 30—it lies in Israel’s repentance and restoration, but when and how?

II. THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL TO THE LORD AND THE LAND (DEUT. 30:1-10)

A. After Israel is driven by God out of the promised land, they will recall God’s promises and judgments and will return to the Lord (30:1-2). Then the Lord will bring them back from captivity and gather them again from all nations to the promised land to greatly bless them (30:3-5; 28:1-14).

*¹Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, ²and you return to the LORD...with all your heart...³that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations...⁵to the land...He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.
(Deut. 30:1-5)*

B. The Lord’s severe mercy in releasing the “discipline of the covenant” (28:15-68) along with His compassion and power of the Spirit will eventually result in Israel being radically transformed to be the first nation in history in which every person loves and obeys God (30:6; cf. Isa. 60:21).

⁶The LORD...will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart...⁷The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies...⁸And you will again obey...all His commandments...⁹The LORD...will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land...the LORD will again rejoice over you for good...” (Deut. 30:6-9)

- C. **Circumcise your heart:** This circumcision of the heart speaks of radical transformation of the heart referred to in the New Testament as *regeneration* (Titus 3:5) or as being *born again* (Jn. 3:3). The miraculous, regenerating nature of the circumcision of the heart empowers God’s people to love and obey the Lord with all of their heart (30:6) as declared in the Shema (6:4-5). As circumcision of the flesh spoke of the covenant (Gen 17:10), so circumcision of the heart (30:6) empowers God’s people to be loyal to the covenant. The prophets described this reality as the indwelling Spirit writing God’s laws on the fleshy tablets of the heart (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:26; Rom. 2:25-27).
- D. Jesus’ statement in Matthew 22:37-38 is one of the most significant statements in Scripture. It is God’s mission statement for the human race, and thus is the most reliable measurement of success.
³⁷“**You shall love the Lord...with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.**”
³⁸**This is the first and great commandment.**” (Mt. 22:37-38)
- E. God first *exhorted* Israel, through Moses, to love Him with all their heart (Deut. 6:5), and later Moses *prophesied* Israel would love God with all their heart in the end times (Deut. 30:1-6). In Matthew 22:37, Jesus’ statement about loving God was both an *exhortation* and a *prophecy*.
⁵**You shall love the LORD...with all your heart...and with all your strength.** (Deut. 6:5)
⁶**The Lord...will circumcise your heart...to love the Lord...with all your heart.** (Deut. 30:6)
- F. Jesus defined loving God as being rooted in a spirit of obedience (Jn. 14:15-21).
¹⁵“**If you love Me, keep My commandments.**” (Jn. 14:15)

III. THE POWER TO LOVE AND OBEY GOD (DEUT. 30:11-14)

- A. In Deuteronomy 30, Moses taught that the command to love and obey God was not *too mysterious* (too hard to understand), nor was not it *far off* (outside their ability to do it), nor did they need to *ascend to heaven* (have a heavenly encounter), nor *go overseas* (to receive it from others) to do it.
¹¹**This commandment...is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.** ¹²**It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us...?”** ¹³**Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us...?”** ¹⁴**The word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.** (Deut. 30:11-14)
- B. Speaking the truth to God engages our heart with Him. It is what we say to the indwelling Spirit about who we are in Christ. Truth changes our heart as it gets into our conversation with God. The word that contains God’s promises and releases His power is so near us. It is as close as speaking it. There is a connection with what we say with our mouth and what our heart believes, or is moved by, with confidence. In Romans 10, Paul referred to what Moses said in Deuteronomy 30:14.
⁸**The word is near you, in your mouth...that is, the word of faith...⁹that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart...you will be saved [from the penalty of sin].**
¹⁰**For with...the mouth confession is made unto salvation [freedom in this age].** (Rom. 10:8-10)
- C. Our words are powerful in causing faith or fear to grow in us. If our words agree with God’s Word, we release His power in our life. If our words agree with lies, we allow darkness to continue. Many have “faith” in the devil’s words. The war of words determines who has dominion in our heart.

IV. THE DUTIES OF ISRAEL'S LEADERS AND GOD'S PROVISION FOR THEM (DEUT. 31)

- A. God spoke to Moses about Joshua succeeding him (31:1-8) immediately before Israel entered the promised land. Moses charged the people (31:6) and Joshua (31:7-8) to be strong and courageous.
- ²And he [Moses] said: "I am one hundred and twenty years old... ³The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations...Joshua himself crosses over before you... ⁶Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them [the nations who attack you]; for the LORD...will not leave you..." ⁷Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land...and you shall cause them to inherit it. ⁸And the LORD...will be with you..." (Deut. 31:2-8)***
- B. Israel was commanded to renew the covenant in a national ceremony every 7 years (31:9-13). Israel had just recommitted to the covenant (29:10-15), and they invoked its blessings and curses as a testimony to their oath to honor the covenant. Moses wrote "this law" of the covenant and commanded the leaders to call a national assembly every 7 years to renew the covenant.
- ⁹So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests...¹⁰Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of every seven years...at the Feast of Tabernacles, ¹¹when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD...[in Jerusalem] you shall read this law...¹²Gather the people together, men and women and little ones...that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD... (Deut. 31:9-12)***
- C. God formally commissioned Joshua as Moses' successor at the tent of meeting (31:14-15). The tent of meeting was outside the encampment. It functioned like a personal "prayer tent" where Moses and other leaders sought counsel from the Lord (Ex. 33:7-11; 18:7-16; Num. 11:16, 24, 26; 12:4).
- ¹⁴The LORD said to Moses, "...call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him." So Moses and Joshua went...to the tabernacle of meeting. (Deut. 31:14)***
- D. Moses wrote a song that prophesied Israel's future rebellion and full restoration (31:16-30). The Lord commanded that all of Israel learn and repeat this song in every generation (31:19, 21). This song is a witness of God's commitment to bless and judge, and it testifies of Israel's rebellion.
- ¹⁶The LORD said..."Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people...will forsake Me... ¹⁷and many evils and troubles shall befall them...¹⁹Write down this song...and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me...²¹It shall be when many evils and troubles have come upon them [Israel], that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants..." ²²Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel...²⁹"After my death you will become utterly corrupt ...and evil will befall you in the latter days..." (Deut. 31:16-29)***
- E. The saints around God's throne will sing the song of Moses (Rev. 15:2; cf. Ex. 15; Deut. 32).
- ²I saw...those who have the victory over the beast...on the sea of glass...³They sing the song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works...just and true are Your ways...⁴All nations shall...worship You...for Your judgments have been manifested." (Rev. 15:2-4)***

V. THE SONG OF MOSES—REVEALING GOD’S GLORY (DEUT. 32:1-4)

- A. Moses taught all Israel the prophetic song that God gave him (31:22). This song contrasts the faithfulness of God with the unfaithfulness of His people yet concludes with Israel’s restoration. The descendants of Israel in every generation were to sing this song (31:21) to vocally commit themselves to the covenant and to willingly invoke God’s blessings and judgments on them.
- B. Moses called heaven and earth to witness this “song of the covenant,” and he magnified God’s greatness to assure Israel that He has the ability to fulfill His promises to bless and judge (32:1-4).
¹Give ear, O heavens...hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. ²Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as raindrops...as showers on the grass. ³For I proclaim the name of the LORD: ascribe greatness to our God. ⁴He is the Rock. His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He. (Deut. 32:1-4)
- C. *He is the Rock*: Comparing the Lord to a rock highlights His stability, permanence, reliability, and protection. This is the first time in Scripture that God is compared to a rock (32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31).
- D. *His work is perfect*: We can trust the Lord’s perfect leadership to lead history wisely with love to fulfill His promises. His works of blessing and judgment flow from justice, truth, and righteous.

VI. THE SONG OF MOSES—INDICTING A CORRUPT NATION (DEUT. 32:5-6)

- A. Moses compared Israel to a perverse generation and a foolish people (32:5-6). Jesus also described Israel this way (Mt. 17:17). Note the contrast between God’s perfection and Israel’s foolishness.
⁵“They have corrupted themselves...a perverse and crooked generation. ⁶Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father...? (Deut. 32:5-6)
- B. *Do you deal with the Lord?*: Moses pointed out how Israel responded to God’s goodness to them. They foolishly failed to respond in grateful love and to recognize the Lord as their loving Father.

VII. THE SONG OF MOSES—REMEMBERING PAST BLESSINGS (DEUT. 32:7-14)

- A. Moses called Israel to remember and grasp the meaning of God’s blessings on them from the past years (32:7-14). Before Abraham, God set the boundaries lines of many nations. He ordained the promised land as His and Israel’s inheritance and Jerusalem as the place where Jesus will rule the nations forever. With such a high calling on their land, their rebellion was all the more grievous.
⁷“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you: ⁸when the Most High divided their [Israel’s] inheritance to the nations [Gentiles], when He separated the sons of Adam [the Gentile nations], He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. ⁹For the LORD’s portion is His people; Jacob [the land of Israel] is the place of His inheritance. (Deut. 32:7-9)
- B. *The Lord’s inheritance in His people* (32:9): The body of Christ as one New Man made up of individuals from Israel and from every Gentile tribe and tongue are His special inheritance.

- C. The Lord “found” Israel—in a national covenant relationship in the desert at Mt. Sinai (32:10-12). The apple of His eye is poetic for the pupil of the eye—the part we cherish and protect most.

¹⁰He found him in a desert land [Ex. 19] ... He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. ¹¹As an eagle stirs up its nest...spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings, ¹²so the LORD alone led him, and there was no foreign god with him. (Deut. 32:10-12)

VIII. THE SONG OF MOSES—ISRAEL’S REBELLION AND JUDGMENT (DEUT. 32:15-27)

- A. Israel’s rebellion against the Lord is set in contrast to God’s loving care (32:15-18). Jeshurun can mean “one who is upright.” This prophetic name of Israel was to remind them of their high calling.

¹⁵But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked...and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation. ¹⁶They provoked Him to jealousy...¹⁷They sacrificed to demons, not to God... (Deut. 32:15-17)

- B. The Lord promised to judge Israel by provoking them to jealousy and anger (32:19-25). Israel will be jealous because of God’s gracious and lavish care for “another nation.”

²¹“But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation...²³I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My arrows on them. ²⁴They shall be wasted with hunger, devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction...” (Deut. 32:21-24)

1. **Not a nation:** The inclusion of the Gentiles into the one body of Messiah, i.e., the corporate “one new man” (Eph. 2:15), reveals a mystery that was not understood in Moses’ generation. The one body of Jesus is both mysterious and visible, joined together by one Spirit. The body of Christ has government, but it is very different from the government that a nation has.

¹¹...but through their [Israel’s] fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles...¹³inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles...¹⁴if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. (Rom. 11:11-14)

¹“I was sought by those [Gentiles] who did not ask for Me...I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ to a nation that was not called by My name.” (Isa. 65:1)

2. **A foolish nation:** It is regarded as foolish in the sense of lightly esteemed and even dismissed by Israel because it is comprised mostly of Gentiles. This took Israel by surprise even though it was foretold by Moses and the prophets (32:21; Isa. 49:6; 52:15; 65:1, etc.).
3. **I will move them to anger:** Israel stumbled over the Lord entrusting revelation and authority in His salvation purpose to a corporate people that was mostly made up of Gentiles.
4. **I will heap disasters:** The Lord wants it clear that Israel’s suffering is not by happenstance of natural and human forces. God declared that He would heap or multiply troubles on Israel.

- C. God’s concern in destroying Israel was that their adversaries would claim that they did it (32:27).

*²⁶I would have said, “I will dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of them to cease...”
²⁷Had I not feared the wrath [provocation NAS, ESV] of the enemy, lest [Israel’s] adversaries should misunderstand...[and] say, “Our hand is high; and it is not the LORD who has done all this.” (Deut. 32:26-27)*

IX. THE SONG OF MOSES—ISRAEL’S LACK OF UNDERSTANDING (DEUT. 32:28-33)

- A. *A nation void of counsel:* Most agree that Israel is the nation referred to in 32:28. Moses longed for Israel to have discernment about the consequence of their sinful actions (32:29). They were unable to see and interpret the judgment events that God would permit to come to them;

²⁸*For they [Israel] are a nation void of counsel, nor is there any understanding in them.*

²⁹*Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!*

³⁰*How could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them and the LORD had surrendered them? (Deut. 32:28-30)*

- B. Moses spoke against false gods that he figuratively referred to as vines from Sodom (32:32). In the OT, Israel’s enemies were sometimes used as “judges” or instruments of God’s judgment on Israel.

³¹*For their rock [false gods] is not like our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.*

³²*For their vine is of the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah... (Deut. 32:31-32)*

X. THE SONG OF MOSES—GOD’S VENGEANCE OVER HIS ENEMIES (DEUT. 32:34-35)

- A. Moses speaks clearly about God’s judgments being released through human armies (32:34-35). Israel was ultimate responsibility for the judgment in 32:30 because of covenant unfaithfulness.

³⁴*“Is this [judgment from 32:23, 30] not laid up in store with Me, sealed up among My treasures?*

³⁵*Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; their foot shall slip in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them.” (Deut. 32:34-35)*

- B. *Vengeance is Mine:* God’s judgments on Israel and the nations are decided only by Him (32:35). The heaping up of disasters in 32:23 only seemed to have come from forces outside of God (32:27). The Lord wanted it understood that human armies are only instruments of His discipline (32:30). He stores up or seals up His judgment until the exact method and time is determined by Him alone.

- C. *Their foot shall slip in due time:* Jonathan Edwards used this phrase in a famous sermon that he preached in 1741 called, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Edwards rightly interpreted this verse as intended for rebellious Israelites, but he applied to unbelievers seated in his meetings.

XI. THE SONG OF MOSES—GOD’S COMPASSION ON ISRAEL (DEUT. 32:36-43)

- A. God will judge and have compassion on Israel (32:36-38). Eventually, Israel will experience God’s compassion, full restoration, and national salvation.

³⁶*The LORD will judge His people and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone...³⁷*He will say: “Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge?” (Deut. 32:36-37)**

- B. *When He sees that their power is gone:* Israel will only experience God’s compassion after they are totally finished relying on their own strength (32:36; Lev. 26:19; Dan. 12:7). Their confidence in human strength must be removed so that they may see their need of God’s strength.

- C. The nature and power of God is in sharp contrast to the powerlessness of false gods (32:39-43). The Lord swore to punish the Gentile nations who hate Him (32:41) and to avenge Israel (v. 43).
³⁹“Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive... nor is there any who can deliver [in battle] from My hand. ⁴⁰For I raise My hand...and say, ‘As I live...,’ ⁴¹if I whet [sharpen] My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies and repay those who hate Me. ⁴²I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh...from the heads of the leaders of the enemy.” ⁴³Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people. (Deut. 32:39-43)
- D. **Even I am He:** Only the God of Israel has power over life and death and victory in war. Death and military defeat were part of God’s sovereign dealings with national Israel. Many in Israel believed that their military defeats were attributed to nations that were more powerful than they were. When Israel was defeated by an ungodly nation, it did not indicate any lack in God’s power or wisdom.
- E. When God’s blessing on a nation is withdrawn, their leaders of that nation should not question God’s power or love, but they should examine the condition of their response to His leadership.
- F. **My glittering sword:** With His sword God renders vengeance against His enemies who hate Him.
- G. **Rejoice, O Gentiles:** In response to God’s righteous judgments, the Gentile nations were called to rejoice together with Israel (32:43) that God’s vengeance was at last fully manifest. As a result of God’s vengeance being released on wicked nations, God’s people would praise Him (Rev. 19:1-4).
- H. John receive revelation of many (Gentile) rejoicing in God's end-time judgments on wickedness.
²⁰“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her [harlot Babylon]...” ²⁴In her was found the blood of prophets and saints...” (Rev. 18:20-24)
¹After these things [judgments on wicked nations in Revelation 17-18] I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia...” ²For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.” ³Again they said, “Alleluia!” (Rev. 19:1-3)
- I. **He will provide atonement:** Though wickedness will seem to prevail in Israel and the nations, the Lord’s purpose will fully triumph as He atones for His land and people through Jesus.
- J. Immediately after this prophetic song, Moses concluded with an exhortation to Israel to obey the Lord (32:45-47). Deuteronomy 32 ends with the Lord giving instructions related to Moses’ death (32:48-52). The Lord addressed words personally to Moses as in Numbers 27:12-14.