

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

DEUTERONOMY 27-30

In Deuteronomy 27 Moses schedules a *Promise Land Pep Rally*.

In just a few days the children of Israel will cross the Jordan River. When they do they're to proceed to the heart of the land - to the Valley of Shechem.

North of this slender valley is Mount Ebal - southward is Mount Gerizim.

Here's a **photo** from the east... Gerizim is on the left - Ebal on the right. The modern city of Nablus – the largest city on the West Bank - is in the middle.

Both mountain peaks rise about 3000 feet. Imagine a million people on each mountain. Half the tribes gathered on one mountain - half on the other mountain.

Think of a High School pep rally. The goal is to get the student body fired up - excited about that Friday night's game. Half the kids are in the bleachers on one side of the gym - half are in the bleachers on the other side of the gym...

The chant begins, "**We got spirit, yes we do, we got spirit, how about you...**" Back and forth it goes - with each exchange the volume and intensity rises.

That's the sort of thing that happened over the Valley of Shechem.

God gives to the nation a series of blessings and curses. From Mount Ebal the curses are shouted. From Mount

Gerizim come the blessings. It all actually occurs in Joshua 8. It must've been a spine-tingling, goose bump-producing experience.

But the plan for the pep rally is first discussed by Moses in Deuteronomy 27.

“Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today. And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. You shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you.”

Notice the first act upon entering the Promised Land was not a *celebration*, but a *dedication*. A memorial to the Law of God was to be established in the land.

Israel's entrance into the land was not just the end of slavery and wilderness wandering - but the beginning of a new age that was tied to God's Law. Their obedience would dictate their blessing. Disobedience would cause hardship.

God's Ten Commandments had been written on stone tablets... Thus, a memorial of stones was to be erected.

“Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime.

And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them. You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God. And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law."

Uncut stones were to be used. No iron tool was to be involved. Hey, there was nothing manmade about God's Law. It had come from the hand and heart of God.

Thus, no human ingenuity or human craftsmanship went into this memorial altar. When the people looked at the whitewashed stones He wanted them to remember that their salvation was His work and His work alone.

"Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, "Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the LORD your God.

Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

Verse 11, "And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, "These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali."

Six tribes on one mountain – six tribes on the other mountain... **photo**

Remember the word “Gerizim” means “fruitful harvest” – while “Ebal” means “barrenness.” I ran across a description of Mount Ebal and Gerizim that explains how one was chosen for the blessings, while the other was picked for curses...

Clarke writes, “Gerizim abounds with springs, gardens, and orchards, and it’s covered with a beautiful verdure, while Ebal is as naked and barren as a rock.”

I’ve never been to the Valley of Shechem. Today it’s located in Palestinian territory. But one of the most monumental events in Hebrew history took place there 3400 years ago. A prophecy of Israel’s future echoed from the peaks.

They say the Valley of Schechem is a natural amphitheater. The acoustics are incredible. What’s said on the mountain tops can be heard throughout the valley...

I want you to know upfront the colossal significance of tonight’s chapters.

Deuteronomy 27-28, reveal God’s Old Testament plan of evangelism. God intended to convert the pagan nations of the world by how He treated Israel.

If Israel obeyed His Law, God intended to bless Israel with prosperity beyond what any people before or since had enjoyed. He would lavish on His blessing.

But if Israel disobeys God’s Law, He promises to heap such curses on His people that the attention of the world will likewise be drawn to Israel.

The nations will either say, “Wow, look at Israel’s treasures... Their God must truly be the one, true God.” Or... “Wow, look at Israel’s troubles... Their God is a just and

righteous God who means what He says. Surely, Israel's God is the true God." But either way, God will be glorified through Israel – for better or worse.

Verse 14, "And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel: 'Cursed is the one who makes any carved or molded image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.'

And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who makes the blind to wander off the road.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's bed.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!' Remember the word "Amen" is not just a filler phrase... It's an affirmation... To say "Amen" is to say, "So be it! or Right On, or You betcha' or Absolutely, or You can take it to the bank"

Cursed is the one who lies with any kind of animal.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!' And I say, *amen and*

amen.

Cursed is the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.' Sex with a step-sister is incestuous.

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who lies with his mother-in-law.' I'm sorry, but this is one sin I cannot understand... *your mother-in-law?* You're not only cursed, you're stupid.

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who attacks his neighbor secretly.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.'

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Halley's Bible Handbook makes this statement, "The 28th chapter of Deuteronomy placed alongside the history of the Hebrew nation, constitutes one of the most astounding and indisputable evidences of the Divine inspiration of the Bible."

The blessings and curses discussed in chapter 28 form uncanny parallels to the ups and downs of Hebrew history. It's like reading a history book before it happens. *Chapter 28 begins with the blessings and ends with the curses...*

"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His

commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.”

It is amazing how God has elevated Jewish people to positions of prominence far beyond their proportionate numbers. Of the 6 billion, 599 million people in the world today, only 13 million are Jews. That’s about one-half of one percent...

Yet 15% of the Nobel Prize winners have been Jewish.

Two of the nine US Supreme Court justices are Jewish – Breyer and Ginsberg.

Bud Selig commissioner of MLB - David Stern commissioner of the NBA - Paul Tagliabue commissioner of the NFL – all 3 big league commissioners are Jewish.

Sasha Cohen and Emily Hughes – the US Olympic figure skaters are Jewish.

Arthur Blank, owner of the Atlanta Falcons is Jewish.

Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx - even Groucho Marx - were Jewish.

Henry Kissinger, Paul Newman, Robert Zimmerman (aka Bob Dylan) are Jews

Elvis Pressley had a Jewish great-grandma.

Sandy Koufax, the greatest baseball pitcher who ever lived, is Jewish.

Chris – *he-could-go-all-the-way* – Berman is Jewish.

American Idol fans should know that Paula Abdul is Jewish.

It’s astonishing, that so many of our celebrities come from such a small population of Jews. Yet Moses said, “God will set you high above all the nations of the earth...”

“And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you 7 ways.”

Read of the exploits of Joshua, Gideon, Deborah, Samson, Samuel, David...

The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” In the days of King David, and afterwards under the reign of Solomon Israel was a world empire – the most prosperous country on earth.

Verse 9 “The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.” This is exactly what happened in 1 Kings 10. When the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon she marveled...

"It was a true report which I heard in my own land about

your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness." The queen of another nation saw Israel's prosperity and credited Israel's God.

And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if (and that proved to be a big IF) you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them.

So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

But in verse 15 the curses begin... If Israel disobeys God's Law, He will curse them!

A friend of mine once saw a documentary on the Holocaust. Various photos were shown, and under each image were verses from Deuteronomy 28. These verses contain some grizzly and ominous warnings Israel should've heeded.

Verse 15 "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country.

Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl." Famine will be frequent.

"Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

"The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.

The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron.” The land will become fallow and barren. The skies will produce no rain. Israel’s prayers will bounce off a bronze ceiling.

Verse 24, “The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee 7 ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away.”

If time permitted we could chart Jewish persecution through the centuries.

In 586 BC the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem and burned the Temple – then deported the Jews to Babylon. They returned 70 years later in the days of Ezra.

In 70 AD, again Jerusalem was razed and the Temple burned - this time by the Romans. A century later they drove the remaining Jews from their homeland into foreign lands. Jews became a dispersed people – scattered all over the world.

For several centuries it was illegal for a Jew to live in Jerusalem.

And for the two millenniums since those days - until recent times - the Jews have been hated and persecuted everywhere they’ve tried to settle. They literally have been

cursed “when they come in... and when they go out.”

When the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus, and called for His crucifixion, they sealed their fate when they cried out, “His blood be on us and on our children.”

The rejection of their Messiah unleashed the curses of Deuteronomy 28.

And for the last 2000 years the Jews have been pushed from one ghetto to the next – banished from country after country. They were victimized by Europe’s crusades, Spain’s inquisition, the pogroms in Russia - ultimately the death camps of Nazi Germany. Names like Aushwitz, Dachau, Ravensbruck conjure up horrific images. Six million Jews died in these camps. “*Holocaust*” means “*burnt offering*.”

And on behalf of the Church let me repent... *for the role Christians played in the torture of the Jewish people*. In the Middle Ages the Roman Church felt it was their duty to help God enact these curses. They devised ways to persecute Jews.

When Crusader armies left Europe to liberate the holy land from the Muslims - on the way to Palestine - they found clusters of Jews to torture and murder. They burned down whole neighborhoods. They called the Jewish race “*Christ-killers*.”

And here’s the result... they pushed the Jews away from their own Messiah.

Today, most Jews have the wrong impression of Christianity. Rather than a message of love and redemption, they view it

as a religion of hate. To most Jews - Billy Graham is a good Christian - Hitler a bad Christian - but both are Christians.

Hey, as a Christian, I'm a spiritual Jew. I've been grafted into a Jewish Covenant. My Savior is the Jewish Messiah. My future is tied to Israel's.

And it's my desire to draw Jews to Jesus by showing them His love.

God saw to it that a disobedient Israel was cursed. The Church didn't need to help. Verse 27, **“The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you.**

Over and over these curses came upon the Jews... **“You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue them.”**

“Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no strength in your hand.” This is what the Nazis did when they split families apart, and

packed the Jews onto trains that were headed for the concentration camps.

“A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually.

So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see.

The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods - wood and stone.” This happened when the Jews were exiled to Babylon - the birthplace of idolatry.

“And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you.” “*Israel*” became a synonym for the word “*curse*”.

Verse 38-42 warns the locust will eat the seed – the worms will spoil the crops and wine. Olives will drop off the trees. Jewish children will be taken captive.

Gentiles will become more prosperous than Jews. Verse 44, “He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.”

Verse 45, “Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He

commanded you.

And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever. "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you."

Verse 49 "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young." Both Babylon and Rome marched under the emblem of an eagle.

The next few verses describe how their respective sieges wiped out Israel.

Verse 53, "You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you." In both sieges - the Roman and Babylonian - people became so hungry they resorted to cannibalism.

In 70 AD the Romans surrounded Jerusalem and cut off the supply lines.

The goal was to starve the Jews into surrender. Great numbers of people scaled the wall to forage for food. Most Jews were captured and crucified – as many as 500 per day. More than 600,000 people starved to death during the siege.

In all over a million people died, and 97,000 were taken captive.

Verse 54 “The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.”

"If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues - great and prolonged plagues - and serious and prolonged sicknesses.

Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. You shall be left few in number, whereas you

were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

And let me suggest the greatest Holocaust is yet to come. All the persecution that's gone before - pales in comparison to the hatred of the last days Antichrist.

“And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.

Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known - wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life.”

For 2000 years this has been the Jewish headline. Even today – in their own homeland – the Jews still live in fear of a nuclear holocaust - an Islamic bomb.

Verse 67, “In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.

And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, 'You shall never see it again.' And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you." After the sacking

of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Romans sold 97,000 Jews in the Egyptian salt mines. There were so many slaves the supply exceeded the demand.

In chapter 29 Moses reminds the Hebrews they're going into this new land to uproot a wicked people. They are His instrument of judgment. But he warns them not to adopt the practices for which the Canaanites are about to be destroyed. Irony of all ironies would be for God to judge the people who were sent to be His judges.

He begins the chapter with a history lesson. From the miracles in Egypt – to the covenant on Mount Horeb – to God's provision in the wilderness – to their initial victories east of the Jordan... God was faithful despite their hard heartedness.

Verse 14 "I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, but also 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 (for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, and you saw their abominations and their idols which were among them - wood and stone and silver and gold)...

So that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; and 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 walk in the

imagination of my heart' - as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.”

Have you noted the delusional and numbing effect worldly pleasures have on a person? Like a man who gets fired, his wife divorces him, his kids can't stand him, his dog bites him... *yet after a bottle of wine he's doing fine*. He's happy as a lark.

Hey, it's a delusion. Don't ever use your feelings to measure your spiritual condition. Feelings are too fickle. They're dependent on too many variables.

If you want to analyze where you're at with God - check His Word.

And God's Word assures the man who follows other gods, verse 20, “The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven.”

In fact, God's plagues upon the idolater will remind us of what He did to Sodom, verse 23, “which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.”

And the next few verses again emphasize God's Old Testament plan of evangelism. God's judgment of Israel will get the attention of the nations.

They'll ask, “Why did God uproot Israel from the land in anger, and cast them to another land?” They'll be told how Israel worshipped false gods.

Verse 29 is an interesting verse, "The 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." In other words, "never let what you don't know, distract you from what you do know." There are a million mysteries in life – most of which won't get unraveled until we get to heaven. God has His secrets.

Remember Job never read the first two chapters of the book of Job. The reason for his calamity was a mystery. Yet God still expected Job to trust in His sovereignty.

Here is a level of faith we all need to reach - where we accept God as God... God doesn't owe me an explanation for what He does, nor does He need my permission to do it. God can do whatever He wants and I'll still worship Him.

I love the quote, "What's over my head is still under God's feet."

Hey, an *infinite* God shouldn't be expected to explain His every move to *finite* minds to expect us to trust Him and reverence Him. In fact, I'm thankful for a God who maintains some mysterious – Who's impossible to decipher. If puny creatures like you and me could figure God out, He wouldn't be much of a God.

Remember Isaiah 55:8-9, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Here's the point of verse 29, don't let God's secret mysteries divert you from His clear commands. Let God have His

secrets. What He reveals you obey.

As Mark Twain once said, “It ain’t those parts of the Bible I don’t understand that bother me – it’s the parts I do understand, and need to obey.”

Chapter 30, "Now 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, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul...

That the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.””

In Nehemiah 1:8-9, Nehemiah quotes these verses - then reminds God of His promise to bring back Israel. In his day, Israel returned from Babylon in three waves – under Zerubbabel, under Ezra, and under Nehemiah.

But we’ve seen another return of Jews in modern times. After 2000 years God is again bringing His people back to the land. At the end of World War 2 boat loads of European Jews - Holocaust survivors - sailed into Israel’s harbors.

In the 1980s airplanes packed with Soviet Jews landed in Tel Aviv.

Ethiopian Jews were also airlifted to Israel.

In the modern era the scattered Jew is also returning to the land.

Verse 5, “Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it.” After the holocaust the British offered the Jewish people what is today, Uganda, as a potential Jewish homeland.

They refused, and here’s why... God promised to bring Israel back to the land which their fathers possessed. It had to be the land God gave to Abraham.

“He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.” This is also happening today. I read where Israel’s population is about to hit 7 million.

“And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” Eight days after birth Jewish males are circumcised.

To be circumcised of heart speaks of new birth - of being born again. When we embrace Jesus as our Lord, His Spirit operates on our spirit. He circumcises, or cuts back the old sin nature. He makes us sensitive of heart - spiritually compliant.

Sadly, this kind of circumcision has not yet happened to the Israeli people.

Today, despite God’s obvious and bountiful blessing, Israel is largely a secular state. Israelis respect the Bible, and they acknowledge the role religion has played in the nation’s past,

but the people haven't experienced the spiritual revival predicted here.

Yet they will! Revelation tells us that 144,000 Jewish witnesses will emerge in the final days. They'll testify of Jesus. Obviously, revival will take place in Israel.

But the return to the land takes place first. The New Covenant involves three promises – a **regathering**, **regeneration**, and **reestablishment** of God's earthly kingdom. But it takes place in that order... the *regathering* precedes the *revival*.

Verses 7-10 assure us the day will come when God again curses Israel's enemies, and rejoices over His people. He will restore blessing to an obedient people.

Verse 11 "For this commandment which I command you today, it is not too mysterious for you," The challenge God is about to present to Israel is not too deep for them to understand. "Nor is it far off." It's not too high for them to grasp.

Some people think of God and religion... Oh, that's too complicated. That's for theologians and preachers. NOT SO! It's more simple than you realize...

Verse 12 "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' "Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' "But the word is very near you, in your

mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.” God’s salvation is as close as the tip of your tongue.

God’s challenge to Israel is very simple – extremely clear... It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to follow God... It’s so simple a child can come to God...

Moses spoke these words as he delivered the Old Covenant to Israel, but Paul quotes this same passage in Romans 10 as he challenges us to accept the New Covenant. A relationship with Jesus is also as close as the tip of your tongue...

You don’t have to learn ancient secrets or climb a mountain of enlightenment. Just speak the word of faith. Agree with God. Say **“Yes Lord.”** Repent and trust in Jesus.

Verse 15, **“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil...”** Moses makes the choice simple... its life or death... good or evil...

“In that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.” Obey God and live... you’ll experience victory. You’ll be blessed.

“But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.” Obey and live, or disobey and die...

Moses tell them, verse 19, "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Moses made the choice plain - but he provided no power to follow through.

And this is why Jesus is so much better than Moses. Jesus doesn't just tell us what to do - as much as, He puts it in our hearts to do it. He creates within us the will to obey. Jesus is a better deliverer than Moses because He empowers us.

Only through Jesus can we experience God's peace, and enter His rest.