

July 13

Scriptures: Read Deuteronomy 29 & 30

Key Verse: "... I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that... you... may live." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

Overview

As Moses was nearing his time of death, his appeal for his beloved people to follow the way of life became stronger and more urgent; he foresaw the fearful consequences of apostasy and could not warn them enough. It was now time for Israel's solemn oath of allegiance to God in the renewal of the covenant, which had been originally, made at Mount Horeb. Here, in the plains of Moab, Moses was asking all Israel (29:10-11), not just the elders, to ratify the covenant. It was a very important decision in which the whole nation was to be involved, since it would affect even their future generations was to be involve, since it would affect even their future generations (29:15), for God would be ever faithful to His promise to Abraham.

It is evident that the establishment of God's covenant with Israel was a gracious act of redemptive favor. In fact, as Moses reminded Israel, it was based upon God's redemptive act of delivering Israel from bondage in Egypt, as well as on His providence, protection and provision for Israel while in the wilderness. Even though during this time they had seen the miraculous power of God over and over again, they still did not understand the ways of God. This same hardness of heart and blindness later caused them not to recognize the Messiah when He came to them (Isa.6:9-10; Matt.13:14).

Once again, Moses warned against the great temptation of idolatry which he described as a bitter, poisonous root that would ruin them (29:18; cf. Heb.12:15). They were to understand that the curses would indeed be a reality, so Moses warned them about self-deception and becoming proud while living in sin. They might claim to have peace (29:19) but this would not be lasting, for God is a jealous God and would not spare the apostate in His judgments.

Moses explained to Israel that they were responsible for the things God had chosen to reveal to them, such as His revelation through the Law and teachings given to Moses. Secret and mysterious things, however, belong to God. With the ushering in of the New Covenant, believers today have had much more revealed to them than in the Old Covenant, such as what Moses spoke of as those "secret things" (29:29). We now have seen and experienced the fuller revelation of God through Jesus Christ. With this knowledge, however, we are even more responsible before God.

Moses prophesized that the curses he had pronounced would come upon Israel and that they would become scattered throughout the earth, yet they would one day be restored to their land when they turn to the Lord with all their hearts. A radical change in the spiritual condition of Israel is clearly indicated. God Himself would do an inner work of renewal in their hearts. Though Israel as a whole was not faithful to God, His redemptive plan for mankind will not be thwarted. There will indeed be an ultimate restoration (which was pictured in Israel's return from exile in Babylon) wherein God's elect, the faithful remnant of Jews together with the remnant of

the Gentiles, will be gathered from all parts of the earth and restored to the covenant Lord in Christ's glorious Kingdom (see Mark 13:12-17).

Moses called upon all Israel to make a decision regarding the covenant and keep the commands of God. He graphically explained that this was not something too hard or out of reach (30:11-14). They had two possibilities set before them: "life and good", or "death and evil" (30:15). Moses made the alternatives clear and strongly urged them to "choose Life" that they may "live", but they should not be forced; they were given free choice. Still today, the alternatives are made clear and God is offering life to all who will but accept it. "Life" consists in loving God, obeying His voice, and clinging to Him (30:20). Life in Jesus Christ is blessed and eternal. Oh, that all would choose life! (John 3:36; 6:35-40).

Prayer

Lord God, thank You for the abundant life in You we have chosen. Grant that we, like Moses, might present such a clear choice to others.