

# Deuteronomy 4:30 Commentary

## A PROPHETIC PASSAGE: THE LATTER DAYS

Deuteronomy 4:30 When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, **in the latter days** you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice.

### SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE OF "THE LATTER DAYS"

As will be explained in more detail below **in the latter days** refers to the time at the end of this present age when the nation of Israel (and all Jews worldwide along with the rest of mankind) will be cast into the "Refiner's fire" known as **The Great Tribulation**. The result will be that one-third of the Jews living at that time will be purged, purified (Zechariah 13:8, 9, Daniel 12:10-[note](#)) and finally saved at the **Second Coming** of their **Messiah** (Ro 11:26, 27-note). At that time the Messiah will set up His **Millennial Kingdom** and the redeemed of Israel (and Gentile believers who survive the Great Tribulation) will enter into a 1000 year **Utopia**, which has long been sought in vain by the "Christ-rejecting" world but has long been longed for by all genuine "Christ followers" (see 2Ti 4:8-[note](#)). The phrase "**Latter days**" ("last days," "days to come") is found in a number of Old Testament prophetic passages (Isa 2:2, Jer 23:20, Jer 30:24, Jer 49:39, Ezek 38:8, 16, Da 10:14, Hos 3:5, Micah 4:1.) and all of these passages convey essentially the same meaning as described in this summary.

### SETTING THE CONTEXT

**Context** - Deut 4:26-31 sets the [context](#) for an incredible prophecy of Divine judgment and mercy concerning the nation of Israel. Let's [observe](#) the context verse by verse. Although, Habakkuk's prayer was many years after Moses' words below, it is a prayer that is "answered" in Deuteronomy 4:26-31 for this Jewish prophet prayed "**In wrath remember mercy.**" (Hab 3:2-[note](#)). As you study this section, you will see that while there is indeed divinely ordained wrath, when God has the final word, it will be "I will show mercy to my people!".

So let's look briefly at this great text (for more in depth analysis of Dt 4:25-31 [click here](#)).

**Deut 4:25** "When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to provoke Him to anger,

### THE CORRUPTION AND CONSEQUENCES OF IDOLATRY

In this section Moses is speaking as God's prophet. Recall that a [prophet](#) had the role of *forth*-telling and *fore*-telling and in this section Moses carries out both these functions.

**The land** - Referring to the promised land of Canaan.

**When...you act corruptly** - Note not "if" but "when" so the [Omniscient God](#) (speaking through His "*mouthpiece*" Moses) sees the future failure of His [Chosen People](#) Israel. He had just warned them when they entered the land to "**watch yourselves carefully.**" (Dt 4:15) The Hebrew word for "**watch carefully**" is [shamar](#) (08104) which means to be on one's guard and is rendered in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with the Greek verb [phulasso](#) a vivid word calling for one to set up a watchman to guard and protect from enemy incursions. It is fascinating that both [shamar](#) and [phulasso](#) are used in Genesis 2:15 where Adam was commanded by God guard ("keep") the garden against intruders! Adam failed to guard not only the Garden but also his wife and the rest is history!

Deut 4:16 goes on to explain that Israel was to be on guard so that they would "**not act corruptly**" ([shachath](#)) so that they would not be spoiled, ruined, perverted, destroyed or wiped out. This same verb describes the [corrupt](#), ruined (morally rotten) state of the world in Ge 6:11,12! In context the "corrupting agent" was idolatry and as Deut 4:25 teaches while idols may be "dead," they still exert a controlling effect on the human heart, resulting in evil in the sight of God thus provoking the "Refiner's Ire" and the "Refiner's

fire!" (cp Dt 32:16)

**Warren Wiersbe** - God made a covenant with His people and He expected them to keep it **Ed**: See [Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic](#). The word "covenant" is used at least twenty-seven times in Deuteronomy and comes from the Hebrew word [beriyth](#) which some scholars say means "to eat bread." In the East, when people broke bread together, they formed a covenant or treaty that they would help and protect each other (see Ge 26:26–35) (**Ed**: See [Table Summary of Biblical Covenants](#)). When God established His covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, Moses and the Jewish elders ate before God on the mountain (Ex. 24:11). The terms of the covenant were simple: if Israel obeyed God's laws, He would bless them; if they disobeyed, He would chasten them. He would show His love to them in both the blessing and the chastening, "for whom the Lord loves, He chastens" (Heb. 12:6-[note](#), NKJV). (Be Equipped)

**John Butler** rightly reminds us that "Idolatry corrupts. It leads to low morals and cruel deeds. Corrupt creed leads to corrupt conduct. This explains the corruption that prevails in our country. Bad doctrine precedes bad deportment." (Analytical Bible Exposition) [Have you done an "idol check" in your life lately?](#) You might consider praying Psalm 139:23, 24 periodically.

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**Deut 4:26** I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you shall surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but shall be utterly destroyed.

### A SOLEMN WARNING

Moses acting as God's spokesman (prophet) begins this section with the solemn words "I call heaven and earth to witness".

**KJV Bible Commentary** on "I call heaven and earth" - (This) is in the accusative case, which means to give a witness against a person under oath. **Heaven and earth** are personified, not as the instruments of judgment if they disobey, but as witnesses that God had warned His people against idols.

**Bratcher** on calling **heaven and earth** - the punishment that Moses is about to describe is so severe that he calls the whole universe to listen to what he is about to say. Among other peoples at that time it was common to call upon the gods to witness to what someone was about to say or do; here the whole world, as God's creation, is to be witness. (Handbook on Deuteronomy)

**Bob Utley** on "I call heaven and earth to witness" - This was part of the Suzerain Hittite Treaties (need for powerful spiritual witnesses, cf. Intro. to Book, VII). These are the two most permanent things in physical creation. They are often called on by God to act as witnesses. It also reflects the Israeli legal system's need for two witnesses in a court case (cf. Ex 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15). The phrase is used often in connection with the ratification of the covenant with YHWH (cf. Dt 4:26; 30:19; 31:28).

**Treasury of Scripture Knowledge Notes** says this oath is "A most solemn method of [adjuration](#), in use among all the nations in the world; God and man being called upon to bear testimony to the truth of what was spoken, that if there was any flaw or insincerity it might be detected, and if any crime, it might not go unpunished. Such appeals to God shew at once the origin and use of oaths."

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**Deut 4:27** "And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations, where the LORD shall drive you.

### A SURE SCATTERING

**The LORD will scatter you** (see more detailed description of this punishment in Deut 28:64-68) - Compare similar promises in Deut 28:64-67. This is one of those promises we don't usually see in a collection like ["God's Promises for Your Every Need."](#)

**The LORD will scatter...shall drive you** - Jehovah Himself would in His sovereign control of the Gentile nations inflict this promised punishment.

**You shall be left few in number among the nations**(Gentiles) (see the contrast in Dt 28:62) - Jews are located throughout the world today but their numbers are relatively ([13.9 million in 2014](#)). The number of Jewish believers, while increasing in recent years, is still a small percentage of the population. However God had promised that there would always be a [remnant](#) of Jews who were genuine believers in the Messiah.

Israel's disobedience provoked the LORD's anger which brought His righteous punishment and the scattering of the nation among **the peoples** (the Gentile nations). The Hebrew verb **scatter** is translated in the Septuagint with the verb diaspeiro which means to scatter abroad which calls to mind the [Jewish diaspora](#). (see Greek word [diaspora](#) used in NT) This prophecy was first fulfilled when the 10 northern tribes were carried into exile in Assyria in 722BC (2 Kings 17:6) and the 2 Southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were taken into exile in Babylon in 586BC (2Chr 36:15-21 - note the tragic phrase "*until there was no remedy*" - no

'healing" in 2 Chr 36:16!). In addition, the nation of Israel was scattered from her land after her rejection of Christ, [this dispersion](#) occurring at the hands of the Romans.

**John MacArthur** sums up Deut 4:25-31 - In fact, this briefly outlined the future judgment of Israel, which culminated in the northern 10 tribes being exiled to Assyria (ca. 722 B.C.; 2Ki 17) and the southern two tribes being deported to Babylon (ca. 605–586 B.C.; 2Ki 24, 25). Although the Jews returned in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (ca. 538–445 B.C.), they never regained their autonomy or dominance. Thus, the days of promised restoration and return look forward to Messiah's return to set up the [millennial kingdom](#). (Study Bible)

**Warren Wiersbe** - During the closing years of Solomon's reign, to please his many wives he introduced idolatry into the land (1 Kings 11:1-12) and this led to God's judgment and the division and deterioration of the nation (1 Kings 12). In 722 B.C., Assyria captured the ten tribes that formed the Northern Kingdom of Samaria, and Babylon took the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C. From A.D. 70 until May 14, 1948, when the modern nation of Israel was recognized (Ed: [See summary of events leading to nationhood](#)), the Jewish people were **dispersed throughout the world** and had no national homeland. (Be Equipped)

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**Deut 4:28 "And there you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.**

## **GOTTA SERVE SOMEBODY! GOD OR IDOLS**

The title of this section comes from Bob Dylan's classic "[Gotta Serve Somebody!](#)"

It may be the devil or it may be the Lord, but you gotta serve somebody!

**You will serve gods** - What a pitiful description for God's Chosen People! Another divine promise. The truth of this passage applies to all men of all ethnicity. If man does not serve God, he will by default serve gods! Jesus made this quite clear when He declared

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You (absolutely) cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24-[note](#))

**Serve** - The Jews were set free from the bondage of slavery in Egypt so that they might serve Jehovah (Ex 7:16, 8:1, 20, 9:1, 13, 10:3, 7) but they rejected God as their Master instead choosing to serve dumb idols! In this passage God says in essence "If you want idols, not Me, then I will give you what you want!" That is personally my greatest fear when I commit a [presumptuous](#) ("[high handed](#)") sin against God (Ps 19:12-13-[note](#)) - that He may say "*Okay, you want it. Go for it!*" That would be horrible!

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**Deut 4:29 "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.**

## **A BLESSED "BUT"!**

**But** - Note this blessed [term of contrast](#)!!! This blessed contrast reminds us the wonderful "but God" in Ephesians 2:4-[note](#) where in the face of our spiritually dead condition, God, because of His rich mercy and great love, "made us alive together with Christ." (Ephesians 2:5-[note](#)).

**From there** - From where? From their worldwide dispersion.

**Seek the LORD** - Do you see God's great covenant mercy, His abundant lovingkindness? No man, Jew or Gentile, seeks for God (Ro 3:11, Ps 14:2), so in order for the dispersed Jews **in the latter days** to seek for Him, God Himself (His Spirit) must put that desire in their heart. Of course, they still have the responsibility to follow through and "seek for Him" -- this is a great mystery - God's sovereign provision, man's responsibility.

**With all your heart and all your soul** - Try accomplishing this in reliance on your natural strength, the [Old Man!](#) This description is of a heart which has been touched by God's grace and mercy (see Zech 12:10 in summary below).

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**Deut 4:30 "When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice.**

**English Translation of Septuagint (NETS)** - And all these words shall find you in the end of days, and you will return to the Lord your God and listen to his voice.

**KJV** - When thou art in **tribulation**, and all these things are come upon thee, even **in the latter days**, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

**NET** - In your **distress** when all these things happen to you **in the latter days**, if you return to the LORD your God and obey him

**ESV** - When you are in **tribulation**, and all these things come upon you **in the latter days**, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice.

**NIV** - When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then **in later days** you will return to the LORD your God and obey him.

**NLT** - "In the **distant future**, when you are suffering all these things, you will finally return to the LORD your God and listen to what he tells you.

**YLT** - in distress being to thee, and all these things have found thee, **in the latter end of the days**, and thou hast turned back unto Jehovah thy God, and hast hearkened to His voice;

## **IN THE LATTER DAYS IN TRIBULATION**

**When** - Note Moses does not say "if" but "**when**" -- Israel will be "**in distress**" and then he gives the time frame **in the latter days**. This is a key time phrase! Notice it is made more specific by the phrase "in the latter days" - so this is a prophecy that speaks of the "end times" prior to Messiah's return

**When you are in distress** (KJV, ESV = **in tribulation**) - Not IF but WHEN - Israel will experience a time of national distress. Of course, as a general statement that distress could refer to many horrific events in Israel's history, including horrible carnage wrought by the so-called [Crusades in the Middle Ages](#) (who slaughtered whole villages of Jews ostensibly in the name of Christ [see documentation here](#)) -- clearly these Crusaders were **ABSOLUTELY NOT** born again, Christ followers but were manifesting a Satanically inspired Anti-Semitism! As an aside when you witness to a Jew, he may remind you of these "Christian Crusades" which you need to explain), the [Russian pogroms](#), the [Nazi holocaust](#), etc. Indeed, the Jews have been in **distress** for millennia! But this **time of distress** is unique because of (1) Its timing = in the latter days and (2) Its result = return to God, describing national repentance, an event which has not transpired in world history and which therefore describes a future event. In the context of the Bible this will come to pass in [Daniel's Seventieth Week](#), specifically during the time of the [Great Tribulation](#) (Begins - Mt 24:15-[note](#), named - Mt 24:21-[note](#)), described by Jeremiah as the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jeremiah 30:7-[note](#)), and described by Daniel as "**a time of distress**" - Da 12:1-[note](#).

**Distress** (ESV - **tribulation**) ([06862](#)) (**tsar** from **tsarar** = to bind, tie up, be restricted, be cramped; see related [tsarah](#)) is a masculine noun indicating narrowness, tightness, distress, application, misery. It refers to a narrow space or object, not wide, with a small distance across it, this meaning being vividly depicted when the Angel of the Lord confronted Balaam and stood in such a narrow space that Balaam could not pass by (Nu 22:26).

**Tsar** is used figuratively of the personal anguish one encounters in adverse circumstances; e.g. the great distress which comes from the death of a close friend (2 Sa 1:26) or from God's refusal to give help or direction (Job 7:11; cf 1 Sa 28:15; Isa 25:4; 63:9). **Tsar** describes a person's pain and distress; oppression, a feeling of being hemmed in (Dt 4:30; Job 7:11; 15:24). The Lord delivers the faithful from affliction and distress (Ps 4:1).

**Tsar** describes oppressive political, economic, and military conditions suffered by a group, a people, or a nation (Jdg. 11:7).

**Tsar** describes the threats and destruction that come on something, especially the Lord's house (1 Sa 2:32). It indicates conditions during times of judgment on Israel (Isa. 5:30).

**Tsar** refers to the time, trouble, and effort given to consider an issue (Esth. 7:4).

**Tsar** is used figuratively to describe an adulterous woman as a narrow well with no escape (Pr 23:27).

**Tsar** depicts a cry of destruction as one of great anguish (Jer. 48:5). Affliction may cause a person to seek God (Hos. 5:15).

The word for **distress** in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translation of Deut 4:30 for some reason is placed as the last phrase of the Greek translation of the previous passage Deut 4:29 (en te thlipsei sou = "in your distress"). But in English Dt 4:29 ends with the phrase "all your soul" not "in your distress," which is the first phrase in English in Deut 4:30. So more accurately the Greek translation of "in your distress" (en te thlipsei sou) should be included in the Septuagint translation of Dt 4:30. Hopefully this explanation makes sense to you. Here is the point -- The Greek noun **thlipsis** translates "**distress**" in Dt 4:30 and literally describes a pressing together, but figuratively as used in this passage refers to trouble that inflicts **distress**. In this case it will **distress** on the entire

nation of Israel in the future Great Tribulation.

And so it should come as no surprise that the same Greek word **thlipsis** is used by Jesus to describe the **Great Tribulation** (*thlipsis megale*) in Mt 24:21-[note](#) where Jesus warned His Jewish audience

*"For then there will be a **great tribulation**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will."*

**Comment:** See also Daniel's seventieth week where the last half or 3.5 year period represents the Great Tribulation.

The question then is "**When is then?**" When does the alarm go off (so to speak) giving the world (and especially Israel) a "wake up call," an alarm which clearly identifies the beginning of this never seen before and never to be seen again **Great Tribulation**? As usual, it pays to check the context, and in the preceding passages (Mt 24:16-20) Jesus clearly describes a situation demanding a sense of urgency. **So what is the sign that calls for such urgency and which marks the beginning of this horrible time for the nation of Israel?** In Mt 24:15 Jesus tells us...

"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)" (Mt 24:15-[see in depth analysis and commentary](#)).

Jesus calls for an urgent response (Mt 26:16-20) upon seeing this sign because it was the beginning of the distress, the Great Tribulation, synonymous with the "time of Jacob's trouble (Heb = [tsarah](#); Lxx = [stenos](#) = narrow space, figuratively here of distress)" (Jer 30:7-note), and synonymous with "a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time" (Da 12:1-note).

**Tsar** - 37x in 37v - afflicted(1), affliction(1), anguish(1), anguished(1), distress(17), privation(1), strait(1), trouble(7).

For completeness the KJV lists 102 uses of **tsar** but does not separate the words when it means narrow or affliction from when it is used to mean **enemy** or **adversary** - [Click here and look under KJV for these uses](#)

These are the 37 uses of **tsar** with the meaning of narrow, distress, etc -

Numbers 22:26 The angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a **narrow** place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left.

Deuteronomy 4:30 "When you are in **distress** and all these things have come upon you, **in the latter days** you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice.

1 Samuel 2:32 'You will see the **distress** of My dwelling, in spite of all the good that I do for Israel; and an old man will not be in your house forever.

1 Samuel 13:6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a **strait** for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits.

2 Samuel 22:7 "In my **distress** I called upon the LORD, Yes, I cried to my God; And from His temple He heard my voice, And my cry for help came into His ears.

2 Kings 6:1 Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "Behold now, the place before you where we are living is too **limited** for us.

2 Chronicles 15:4 "But in their **distress** they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him.

Esther 7:4 for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the **trouble** would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king."

Job 7:11 "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the **anguish** of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Job 15:24 "**Distress** and anguish terrify him, They overpower him like a king ready for the attack,

Job 36:16 "Then indeed, He enticed you from the mouth of **distress**, Instead of it, a broad place with no constraint; And that which was set on your table was full of fatness.

Job 36:19 "Will your riches keep you from **distress**, Or all the forces of your strength?

Job 38:23 Which I have reserved for the time of **distress**, For the day of war and battle?

Job 41:15 "His strong scales are his pride, Shut up as with a **tight** seal.

Psalms 4:1 For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David. Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my **distress**; Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

Psalms 18:6 In my **distress** I called upon the LORD, And cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of

His temple, And my cry for help before Him came into His ears.

Psalm 32:7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from **trouble**; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.

Psalm 59:16 But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength; Yes, I shall joyfully sing of Your lovingkindness in the morning, For You have been my stronghold And a refuge in the day of my **distress**.

Psalm 66:14 Which my lips uttered And my mouth spoke when I was in **distress**.

Psalm 102:2 Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my **distress**; Incline Your ear to me; In the day when I call answer me quickly.

Psalm 106:44 Nevertheless He looked upon their **distress** When He heard their cry;

Psalm 107:6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their **trouble**; He delivered them out of their distresses.

Psalm 107:13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their **trouble**; He saved them out of their distresses.

Psalm 107:19 Then they cried out to the LORD in their **trouble**; He saved them out of their distresses.

Psalm 107:28 Then they cried to the LORD in their **trouble**, And He brought them out of their distresses.

Psalm 119:143 **Trouble** and anguish have come upon me, Yet Your commandments are my delight.

Proverbs 23:27 For a harlot is a deep pit And an adulterous woman is a **narrow** well.

Proverbs 24:10 If you are slack in the day of distress, Your strength is **limited**.

Isaiah 5:30 And it will growl over it in that day like the roaring of the sea. If one looks to the land, behold, there is darkness and **distress**; Even the light is darkened by its clouds.

Isaiah 25:4 For You have been a defense for the helpless, A defense for the needy in his **distress**, A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; For the breath of the ruthless is like a rain storm against a wall.

Isaiah 26:16 O LORD, they sought You in **distress**; They could only whisper a prayer, Your chastening was upon them.

Isaiah 30:20 Although the Lord has given you bread of **privation** and water of oppression, He, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher.

Isaiah 49:20 "The children of whom you were bereaved will yet say in your ears, 'The place is too **cramped** for me; Make room for me that I may live here.'

Isaiah 59:19 So they will fear the name of the LORD from the west And His glory from the rising of the sun, For He will come like a **rushing** (narrow) stream Which the wind of the LORD drives.

Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction ([tsarah](#)) He was **afflicted**, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.

Jeremiah 48:5 "For by the ascent of Luhith They will ascend with continual weeping; For at the descent of Horonaim They have heard the **anguished** cry of destruction.

Hosea 5:15 I will go away and return to My place **Until** they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their **affliction** they will earnestly seek Me.

**You will return to the LORD** - When? In the latter days, when they are in the Great Tribulation. Why? Because of His great compassion (Dt 4:31), not because they are good or they deserve it.

**Bible Knowledge Commentary**: "The later days (Dt 4:30) may refer to any time after the initial dispersions, but the ultimate reference is to the time when the Lord Jesus will return to earth to establish His 1,000-year kingdom (Rev. 20:4). At that time a repentant Israel will finally seek the Lord... look for Him with all her heart and... soul and will obey Him (Dt 4:29). (Bolding added)

**John MacArthur** on "**latter days**" - Lit. "the end of days." Moses saw in the distant future a time when repentant Israel would turn again to the Lord and obey Him. Throughout the Pentateuch, "the latter days" refers to the time when Messiah will establish His kingdom (see Ge 49:1, 8-12; Nu 24:14-24; Dt 32:39-43).

**John Calvin** on **when thou art in tribulation** - He here shews the advantage of punishments, on the ground of their usefulness and profit; for what the Apostle says is confirmed by experience, that "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12:11.) Lest, therefore, they should be provoked to wrath by God's stripes, he reminds them of their usefulness to them, because they would never turn to God unless aided by this remedy. He tells them that, after they shall have been afflicted by the curses of God, if they sought after Him, they should find Him: and further, he gives them grounds for hope both in God's nature and in His covenant. He assures them that God will be willing to be appeased, because He is by nature merciful; but he adds another confirmation of this, which is more certain and familiar, viz., because God had adopted them by a perpetual covenant.

**All these things have come upon you** - To what does Moses refer? In context all of the things that are associated with this time of distress. Ultimately, in the context of the blessings and cursings in the book of Deuteronomy, all these things speak of all the curses as a result of breaking their covenant promises.

In the latter days - Greek = "*ep eschato ton hemeron*" (eschatos) - More literally this reads "in the latter end of the days."

[Jamieson, Fausset, Brown](#) (one of the more literal pre-1900 commentaries) on **the latter days** - either towards the destined close of their captivities, when they evinced a returning spirit of repentance and faith, or in the age of Messiah, which is commonly called "the latter days," and when the scattered tribes of Israel shall be converted to the Gospel of Christ. The occurrence of this auspicious event will be the most illustrious proof of the truth of the promise made in Deuteronomy 4:31.

## SUMMARY OF INTERPRETATION OF DEUTERONOMY 4:30

In the **last days** prior to (and including) the return of Israel's Messiah, Israel will undergo a time of **distress** that Jesus referred to as the Great Tribulation in Matthew 24:21. He explained in Matthew 24:15 ([see excursus below](#)) a clear sign that would signal to the Jews the beginning of this time of distress, a time which would last for only 3.5 years (1260 days, 42 months or "time, times, and half a time"). Jeremiah 30:7 referred to this time period as the "**time of Jacob's trouble**." Daniel 12:1 said "there will be a **time of distress** such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your (Daniel's) people (in context clearly referring to Israel), everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued." Paul spoke of this "rescue operation" in Romans 11:26-27 explaining that "all Israel will be saved (or "rescued" as in Daniel 12:1); just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER (Messiah) WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. "AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." At that time Zechariah 12:10 says "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me (Messiah) Whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born." So the reason these Jews in the latter days will mourn is because they have been given the Spirit of grace. No man seeks for God and they would not be broken if they had not received God's great grace! Nor would you or I dear fellow believer! Zechariah 13:8-9+ goes on to explain that in **the latter days** "it will come about in all the land (Israel)," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it. 9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them (referring to the Jewish remnant who will be saved) as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested (cp Deut 4:30 "a time of distress"). They will call on My name (cf Dt 4:29+) (Why? Because they have received a Spirit of grace and supplication), And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God (This is clearly covenant language, and describes the remnant of 1/3 of the Jews in the latter days who will enter into the New Covenant by grace through faith) .'"

**Deuteronomy 4:31 "For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.**

## GOD REMEMBERS MERCY IN WRATH

For - [term of explanation](#)

**A compassionate God** (cp the "moral definition" of God in Exodus 34:6) - **Compassionate** is the adjective [rachum](#) (see in depth study of the noun [racham](#)) The psalmist records that

But He, being **compassionate**, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them;  
And often He restrained His anger  
And did not arouse all His wrath. (Psalm 73:38)

**Nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them**- This is not the conditional Mosaic Covenant, the covenant of law which Israel could not keep, but repeatedly broke, but is a reference to the unconditional promises of the Abrahamic Covenant which was made first with Abraham and then reaffirmed both to Isaac and then to Jacob ("with your fathers."). The New Covenant is in a very real sense an extension of the Abrahamic Covenant, which Abraham entered by faith in Genesis 15:6 and thus was reckoned as righteous, just as we were when we believed the Gospel and entered into the New Covenant.

**MacArthur** - God mercifully, not because they deserve it, will fulfill the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with repentant Israel in the future. God will not forget the Word that He has given to Abraham and his seed (cf. Ro 11:25–27).

**Nelson Study Bible** - The future of God's people depends on God's love. The emphasis on God's mercy in this verse is a

necessary balance to the emphasis that Moses placed on God's refining wrath (Dt 4:24). not forsake ... nor forget: The Lord was free to scatter His people. But after His discipline, He would regather them and show them His favor. God was and is faithful to His promises. The covenant of your fathers is God's solemn commitment to fulfill the promises He made to the patriarchs (Gen. 17:6-8; 22:16, 17; Ex. 3:15-17).

**ESV Study Bible** has an excellent note - In Deuteronomy, mercy is grounded in the Lord's faithfulness to the Abrahamic promises (Dt 9:27; 30:5, 20). God will maintain his covenant with Abraham, even if Israel forgets it (4:23; see Rom. 3:3-4). God also swore those promises under oath (Gen. 22:16; Heb. 6:13, 17-18). Cf. note on Deut. 1:8 [The promise of land was made first to Abraham (Gen. 12:7; 15:18-21), reiterated to Isaac (Gen. 26:4), and then to Jacob (Gen. 28:13; 35:12; cf. Deut. 6:10; 9:5; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4). The promises to the three patriarchs included land for their offspring after them.]

## EXCURSUS ON THE INTERPRETATION OF MATTHEW 24:15

**Explanation** - The interpretation that follows is based on a literal approach to the Scriptures and a careful comparison of Scripture with Scripture, especially a similar but not identical passage in Luke 19. If you click on the "±" signs you will see expanded notes related to the associated verse.

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Jesus has just ended Mt 24:14-note with the words "the end" (the very last Greek word in Mt 24:14) and now responds to the disciples' initial request for a sign (Mt 24:3+) by giving them a very unique sign which will mark the beginning of **the end** of this age (Mt 24:3+). And so Jesus describes a specific sign, one which has not occurred in the past (but which had been foreshadowed-see Da 8:13, Da 11:31), and which will literally be fulfilled in the future. Recall that a sign is something that one can see which points to something else. In Mt 24:15 Jesus says "when you see" indicating that this is a visible sign. He explains that the sign is the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. He also explains that study of the book of Daniel will help the reader understand the sign. The Temple was destroyed in 70AD, but Jesus says the sign is of some one or some thing standing in the Temple (holy place). Of course the problem with Jesus' prophecy is that there is currently no Temple. It follows that the Jewish Temple must be rebuilt in Jerusalem ([see note](#)). If God can cause the nation of Israel to be reborn in May, 1948 against all odds, then a rebuilt Temple will not be too difficult for Him (Jer 32:17+, Jer 32:27+). Does this take faith to accept? Of course it does, but the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen (a rebuilt Temple, Heb 11:1+) are based not on an active imagination but on our faithful God (Lam 3:23) and His faith producing Word (Ro 10:17+, cf Rev 11:2±, future Antichrist in the rebuilt Temple in 2Th 2:3+, 2Th 2:4+). Daniel 9:27+ describes a prince who is to come (Da 9:26+) who will make a 7 year covenant ("one week" - see Daniel's Seventieth Week) with the "many," the "many" clearly being the Jews in context ("your [Daniel a Jewish man's] people" Da 9:24+). This "prince" is the Antichrist (name used only in 1Jn 2:18+) who Daniel identifies as the "Little Horn" and who rises to power out of a 10 nation confederacy (Daniel 7:8+, cp Da 2:44-45+ where "the days of those kings" = "10 toe stage" [Da 2:42+] = 10 horns = 10 kings - cp Da 7:24+). The first 3.5 years, his devilish character is not obvious (see [note](#) on Rev 6:2), but in the middle of the 7 year "peace" covenant, he breaks the covenant with Israel and puts a stop to sacrifices and offerings in the [rebuilt Temple](#) (Da 9:27+) fulfilling Jesus' prophecy in Mt 24:15. Daniel says he also (as the "Little Horn") will overpower 3 of the original 10 members of the confederacy (Da 7:8+, Da 7:20+). Paul adds that the Antichrist (aka "man of lawlessness...son of perdition") will go into the "holy place," the [rebuilt Temple](#), and take "his seat in the Temple of God, displaying himself as being God." (" 2Th 2:3+, 2Th 2:4+, cp Da 11:36 2Th 2:3- 2Th 2:3- 2Th 2:3+) In so doing he will commit the abomination that makes the Temple desolate. Note that this sign is *not* the Roman army surrounding Jerusalem in the past (70AD - cp Lk 21:20+), but a real person who will commit a real act of defilement (abomination) of the Jewish Temple in the future. At this same time, in the midpoint of the 7 year covenant, the Antichrist (aka "[The Beast](#)") is empowered by the dragon (the devil) for 42 months or the last 3.5 years of the 7 year period (Rev 13:4-5±) However, since it is unlikely the Antichrist will personally remain standing in the holy place, it is more likely that it is his image which the false prophet creates and commands the world to worship, which will remain standing in the holy place (cp Rev 13:14-15±, Rev 14:9, 11±, Rev 16:2±, Rev 19:20±, contrast Rev 20:4±)

During this last 3.5 years, the Antichrist will begin to pursue and persecute the Jews, which is the impetus for Jesus taking five verses to command and convince the Jews to flee when they see the sign of the abomination of desolation! During his last 3.5 years of the Seventieth Week, the Antichrist "will speak out against the Most High (beginning in Mt 24:15, 2Th 2:4 2Th 2:4, blaspheming God - Rev 13:6±, cp his great, boasts - Da 7:8+, Da 7:11+, Da 7:20+) and wear down the saints of the Highest One, with the intent to make alterations in times and in law (cp Da 9:27+ "stop to sacrifice and grain offering"); and they (the Jews) will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time." (Da 7:25+ = Da 7:21+ = the Little Horn who "was waging war with the [Jewish] saints and overpowering them") In other words, after the Antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jews, they will be given into his hand for "time,



times and half a time" (3.5 years, John says 1260 days in Rev 12:6±, which he repeats in Rev 12:14± = "time, times, and half a time" = 42 months). John records "it was given to him (the Antichrist) to make war with the saints (the Jews first, but then to all who refuse to worship his image - Rev 13:15±) and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him." (Rev 13:7±) For how long? Three and one-half years beginning with the unmistakably clear sign in Mt 24:15 which inaugurates the time Jesus calls the "Great Tribulation" (Mt 24:21+ = Mk 13:19 = the "time of Jacob's distress" = Jer 30:7+) a time "such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall," a time which Daniel describes as "a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time" (Da 12:1+) but a time which "shall be cut short" (Mt 24:22) after "a time, times, and half a time" (Da 12:7+), during which "many (Jews) will be purged, purified and refined." (Da 12:10+, cf Zech 13:8, 9, Zech 12:10, Ro 11:26-27+) God will allow the Antichrist 1260 days (42 months) to do his worst, but not one day longer, because the true Christ will return and bring that Lawless One "to an end by the appearance of His coming" (2Thes 2:7-8, 9-10). Then the true Christ will fulfill many OT prophecies (Amos 9:11,12, Jer 30:9+, Jer 31:28+, Jer 32:42, 43+, Jer 33:14, 15, 16+, Ezek 37:22, 23, 24, 25+, Zech 14:11, 16, 17), and set up His 1000 year Kingdom on earth (cp Acts 1:6, 15:13-14, 15-18, Lk 19:11 Rev 20:4-5±), demonstrating God's *best* after 3.5 years of Satan's *worst*! Indeed, "Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him." (Da 7:27+)