

Deuteronomy 30 Commentary

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Moses on Mt Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1+)
Listen to [Mt Nebo](#) as you Ponder How Moses' [May Have Felt](#)

Deuteronomy by [Irving Jensen](#)- used by permission

deut

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Deuteronomy

Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19		Dt 27:1-34:12	
Moses' First Discourse	Moses' Second Discourse		Moses' Third Discourse	
Historical Review	Legal Exposition		Prophetical Promises	
Looking Back 40 Years	Looking Up What God Expected of Israel		Looking Ahead What God Will Do for Israel	
Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law		Ratification of Israel's Covenant	Historical Appendices
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Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands	Two Choices Affecting the Future	Moses' Parting Words

Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1- 30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
Plains of Moab							
ca. 2 Months Moses: Author (Except Dt 34)							

Deuteronomy 30:1 "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you,

KJV - And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

- **So it shall be** Dt 4:30; Leviticus 26:40-46
- **he blessing and the curse** Dt 30:15,19; 11:26-28; 27:1-28; 29:18-23; Leviticus 26:1-46
- **you call them to mind** Dt 4:29; 1 Kings 8:47,48; Isaiah 46:8; Ezekiel 18:28; Luke 15:17
- **where** Genesis 4:14; Jeremiah 8:3
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The Strong Appeal and Hope of the Covenant: Restoration—Repentance and Forgiveness, Deut 30:1-20.

1. The conditions of the covenant (Deut 30:1-2).
2. The promises of the covenant: restoration—forgiveness and acceptance (Deut 30:3-10).
3. The appeal of the covenant: the call to love and obey the Lord (Deut 30:11-16).
4. The final warning against breaking the covenant (Deut 30:17-18).
5. The final appeal to accept the covenant (Deut 30:19-20). (Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible)

Jack Deere's outline of Deuteronomy 30

Promised blessings after Israel's repentance (Dt 30:1–10)

1. RESTORATION TO THE PROMISED LAND (Dt 30:1–5)
2. THE PROMISE OF A NEW HEART AND ABUNDANT PROSPERITY (Dt 30:6–10)

A concluding charge to choose life (Dt 30:11–20)

1. THE CLARITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF THE LAW (Dt 30:11–14)
2. OBEDIENCE BRINGS LIFE (Dt 30:15–20)

[John Hannah's Outline](#): (excellent resource)

- III. The third discourse: ratification of the covenant (Deut 27:1-30:20)
 - A. The establishment of the law (Deut 27:1-26)
 1. The setting up of the law in the land (Deut 27:1-8)
 2. The benefit of covenant relationship (Deut 27:9-10)
 3. The declaration of Israel's commitment (Deut 27:11-26)
 - B. The responsibility of keeping the law (Deut 28:1-68)
 1. The blessings for obedience (Deut 28:1-14)
 2. The curses for disobedience (Deut 28:15-68)
 - C. The renewal of the covenant (Deut 29:1-30:20)

1. Introduction (Deut 29:1-9)
 2. The summons to enter into the covenant (Deut 29:10-13)
 3. The seriousness of adherence to the covenant (Deut 29:14-29)
 4. The ultimate fulfillment of the covenant (Deut 30:1-10)
 - a. The promise of dispersion (Deut 30:1)
 - b. The promise of national repentance (Deut 30:2)
 - c. The promise of return to the land (Deut 30:3-5)
 - d. The promise of conversion (Deut 30:6)
 - e. The promise of judgment on Israel's enemies (Deut 30:7)
 - f. The promise of blessing (Deut 30:8-10)
 5. The appeal of commitment to the covenant (Deut 30:11-20)
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CHOICE SET BEFORE ISRAEL AND EVERYONE!

Eugene Merrill has an interesting thought regarding the context of the truth in Dt 30:1-10 - The previous passage (Dt 29:16–29) ended with the proverbial aphorism about the secret things of the Lord (Dt 29:29), a secret about to be clarified in the present text. How Israel could be deported from the land and the very earth itself left desiccated and barren, on the one hand, and how the promises of God for Israel's eternal ongoing could continue in effect, on the other hand, now finds resolution. **It lies in Israel's repentance and restoration.** It was in this sense that “the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever” (Dt 29:29). What the nations could not understand on the basis of empirical historical evidence Israel could understand on the basis of God's covenant promises. ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#).)

[Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#) – The “secrets” of the previous verse (Dt 29:29) will remain so no longer, because in Dt 30:1-10 Moses reconciles the apparent contradiction between God's unconditional promise that Israel will forever be his people with the possibility that its favored status can be forfeited by her covenant defection. Should that defection occur and the nation experience God's curses—including deportation—they will be able to return ([shub/sub](#), “repent”) to Yahweh in full and complete renewal of faith and commitment (Dt 30:1-2).

[Reformation Study Bible](#) - Anticipating the real possibility of judgment and exile for Israel, Moses looks beyond the time of judgment to **Israel's future repentance, restoration, and divine blessing**. Significantly, this future blessing will include deliverance from slavery to sin. Moses' reference to the circumcision of the “heart” (v. 6; cf. 10:16) is foundational for the later prophetic expectation (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:25–27), and finds fulfillment in the New Testament (Rom. 2:29). (**COMMENT** - I disagree that this prophecy finds complete fulfillment in Ro 2:29 -- context is king in interpretation and the question posed by the context is has Israel returned to the LORD to obey Him with all their heart and soul? That is almost a rhetorical question because clearly the nation continues for the most part to exist in unbelief in their Messiah. I do however joyfully concur with the statement “**Israel's future repentance, restoration, and divine blessing**” The point is that it is just that YET FUTURE as even this resource recognizes!).

So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you- Note not “IF” but “WHEN” so this is a prophecy and it is related to obedience. The **NET Bible** has “When you have experienced all these things, both the blessings and the curses I have set before you, you will reflect upon them in all the nations where the LORD your God has banished you.”

Notice that this statement by Moses clearly anticipates (? prophesies) that Israel will indeed break her covenant with Yahweh, and this is indeed what came to pass. In other words it does not say IF but WHEN, for these things will transpire in God's perfect timing.

This (**when all of these things**) is a very important [expression of time](#). Clearly it begs the question “When is **WHEN?**” Moses explains that this time is when **ALL THESE THINGS** have come about, and then explains that **all these things** are “**the blessing and the curse which I have set before you.**”

NLT **In the future**, when you experience all these blessings and curses I have listed for you, and when you are living among the nations to which the LORD your God has exiled you, take to heart all these instructions.

While one might propose that there was a partial fulfillment when the remnant of Judah returned after 70 years of exile in Babylon, this would not fulfill Moses' description, for even after 70 years of discipline from God, Israel still did not obey Him with a whole heart. And so this prophecy awaits a final fulfillment that is yet future and will occur at the end of this age, at the terminus of the [Great Tribulation](#) (cf Mt 24:15+ and Mt 24:21+), the **time of Jacob's trouble** described in the book of Jeremiah, in the section often referred to as “**The Book of Consolation**” (Jeremiah 30-33), where we see God's promises of consolation and comfort to the disobedient nation...

Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is **the time of Jacob's distress**, **BUT** (A CRUCIAL TERM OF CONTRAST!) he will be saved from it. (Jer 30:7-commentary)

You - Who is **you**? Clearly Moses is speaking directly to the nation of Israel, not to Gentiles and not to the Church. Don't miss that truth, or you risk misinterpreting what Moses is actually saying. Now do not misunderstand. While God is speaking to Israel through Moses, the principles regarding repentance and the need for a circumcised heart (Dt 30:6) clearly are applicable to sinners of every age whether Jew or Gentile (cf Ro 2:28-29+, Col 2:11+).

Moses' earlier gave a prophecy that parallels this prophecy:

WHEN ([expression of time](#)) you are in distress (Lxx = [thlipsis](#); KJV, ESV = **in tribulation**) and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days (see [Last Days](#)) you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. (Dt 4:30+, cf notes on Dt 4)

Comment: [Thlipsis](#) is the same Greek word used by Jesus to describe the [Great Tribulation](#) in Mt 24:21+ (*thlipsis megale*) 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." (See [Daniel's seventieth week](#) where the last half or 3.5 years represents the [Great Tribulation](#)). The question is "When is then?" When does the alarm go off marking the beginning of this never seen before and never to be seen after [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 marks the beginning of this horrible time? In Mt 24:15 Jesus declared "Therefore **WHEN** (not IF but WHEN!) you see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet (Da 9:27+), standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)" (Mt 24:15-[see in depth analysis and commentary](#)). Then Jesus calls for an urgent response upon seeing this sign because it was the beginning of the distress, the Great Tribulation, the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7+), "a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time" (Da 12:1+).

The blessing and the curse which I have set before you - Set before you is a key phrase and truth in chapter 30 (Dt 30:1, 15, 19). It is notable that the **blessing** and the **curse** are analogous to the **TWO WAYS** in the great opening Psalm 1:1-6+ (cf Jesus' "two ways" in Mt 7:13-14+ and Mt 7:24-27+). The context refers to the choice before Israel, but the application is that this is the choice of every person ever born - either to bear the curse ourselves or let Christ bear the curse as our Substitutionary Sacrifice! (see Gal 3:13-14+) The literal Hebrew is striking "**set before your face**." Imagine looking in a mirror and seeing your face disfigured and gnarled by the wages of sin! That's the picture Moses is painting (or better contrasting) - a pretty face with an ugly face so to speak! The implication is that Israel was without excuse because the contrast was striking and it was clearly revealed (cf Dt 30:11-14). They could not claim that God had never warned them. He had set it right in front of their faces! This is a picture of willful rebellion, stubborn disobedience and wanton transgression.

THOUGHT - Israel knew the truth (which sets one free - cf Jn 8:32, 36 -- at least they HEARD the truth - they may not have UNDERSTOOD the truth because of their hardened heart - see Dt 29:4+) and they knew (or should have known) the reward for keeping it and the penalty for not keeping it! And yet they still did not keep it! Let's not be too hard on Israel! Is not OT Israel a picture of our fallen flesh (still present of course in believers), for we know the truth and yet we still choose to disobey!

You call ([shub/sub](#)) **them to mind** - Literally "bring back to your heart." This refers to that future day when Israel reads (and recalls) these words and their eyes are opened (by the Spirit) to perceive and understand (contrast Dt 29:4+) what Moses was saying to Israel centuries before! Has this happened to the nation of Israel yet? There is not evidence this has yet been fulfilled. Yes, individual Jews have believed but they are only a small minority of the nation which continues in unbelief in their Messiah! Deuteronomy 4:29+ says "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**." Israel's coming to their sense and calling these things **to mind** is like an answer to Habakkuk's prayer that in the midst of **wrath** Yahweh would remember **mercy** (Hab 3:2+)! And here we read of the prophetic mercy He will pour out on His "Estranged Wife" ([see explanation](#)) Israel.

MacArthur on call them to mind - Literally the Hebrew reads "you bring back to your heart" or "cause to return to your heart." (cf Dt 4:39YLT = turned it back unto thy heart;" 1 Ki 8:47 = "return to their heart;" Isa 44:19 - literally - "no one returns to his heart;" Isa 46:8 "recall it to mind" is literally "return it to your heart") Moses moved to the future when curses would be over and blessings would come. At some future time, after disobedience to the Lord brought upon Israel the curses of the covenant, the people will remember that the circumstances in which they found themselves were the inevitable consequence of their disobedience, and in repentance they will return to the Lord. This repentance will lead to a wholehearted commitment of obedience to God's commandments (Dt 30:8) and the consequent end of Israel's distress (Dt 30:3). This is the ultimate salvation of Israel by faith in Christ, spoken of by Isaiah

(Isa 54:4-8), Jeremiah (Jer 31:31-34+; Jer 32:37-42+), Ezekiel (Ezek 36:23-38+), Hosea (Hos 14:1-9), Joel (Joel 3:16-21+), Amos (Amos 9:11-15+), Zephaniah (Zeph 3:14-20+), Zechariah (Zech 12:10-13:9+), Malachi (Malachi 3:16-4:4+), and Paul (Ro 11:25-27). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

In all nations where the LORD your God has banished you- This speaks of Israel's exile from the promised land, first partially fulfilled in 722 BC (exile to Assyria) and 586 BC (exile to Babylon). Then Dt 4:27+ and Dt 28:64+ prophesy of a more widespread, global dispersion of Israel.

The LORD your God - Notice that despite Israel's disobedience Yahweh continues to refer to Israel as His possession as demonstrated by the repeated refrain "the LORD **YOUR** God" which occurs 15 times in 11 verses in chapter 30 -

Deut. 30:1; Deut. 30:2; Deut. 30:3; Deut. 30:4; Deut. 30:5; Deut. 30:6; Deut. 30:7; Deut. 30:9; Deut. 30:10; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 30:20 (compare 13x in 12v in Dt 28, 4x in 3v in Dt 29, and 6x in 6v in Dt 31) (**LORD your God** occurs 279 times in 239 verses in Deuteronomy, by far the most frequent use of this phrase in the Bible)

Wiersbe notes the tragedy of the fact that 'Israel enjoyed the blessings for less than 1,000 years. They entered Canaan about 1400 B.C., and Babylon conquered Israel about 587 B.C. In addition, many times during this period Israel disobeyed God and was chastened ([Be Equipped](#)) (**ED COMMENT: ISRAEL EXPERIENCED THE HORRIBLE DAYS OF THE JUDGES FOR ~300 YEARS - ~1350 BC to ~1050 BC = ABOUT 25% OF THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT!**) ."

Banished (driven, scattered) ([05080](#)) **nadach** meaning to expel from a place of residence to another place, to drive away, to scatter to be exiled, be cast out, thrust out. It is used in various ways to indicate the idea of forcefully removing, impelling, or driving out. **Nadach** repeatedly speaks of the dispersion or **scattering of Israel into exile** (Dt. 30:1, 4; Jer 23:2, 3, 8, 9, Jer. 40:12; 43:5; 46:28; Mic. 4:6, Da 9:7 **"have driven them"**, Isa 56:8 = **"dispersed of Israel"**). Of driving out something in a figurative sense (Job 6:13); Zion herself was considered an outcast, one driven out (Jer. 30:17). Dt. 22:1 = "your countryman's ox or his sheep **straying away**". It means to be impelled to do something, e.g., by the lure of idolatry and false gods (Dt. 4:19; 30:17); Pr. 7:21 = "With her many persuasions she **entices** him".

Uses of **nadach** in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:19; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 13:10; Deut. 13:13; Deut. 19:5; Deut. 20:19; Deut. 22:1; Deut. 30:1; Deut. 30:4; Deut. 30:17

Jehovah was the **"Husband"** of Israel as described in Je 31:31, 32₊, Isa 54:5 (cf Ho 2:2). Note that the word **"husband"** is **baal** (master, owner - see [baal](#), [ba'al](#), [ba'al](#)) and is the same word used for Israel's "lover" with whom she had an adulterous affair, for these idols were often named **"Baal!"** (cf Jdg 2:11-13+) In the **OT**, under the Old Covenant, Israel formally became Jehovah's "Wife" in the "ceremony" at the foot of Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:1,2₊) when God gave Moses the Law and Israel said **"Yes"** (cf marriage ceremony where bride says "I do" - Israel the "bride" of Yahweh said "We will do!" - Ex 24:3,7₊) to the vows. Note that the solemn, binding nature of their entrance into this covenant was ratified by the blood of the covenant (Ex 24:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8₊, see also Heb 9:18-21+). Israel was (repeatedly) an unfaithful, adulterous wife and was thus disowned by Jehovah, but will she will one day in the future repent (cf Zech 12:10-14₊) and be restored (Isa 62:4, 5 - where the verb **"married"** = **baal!**), a prophecy which will be fulfilled in the Messianic Age - see [\[a\] Events Leading up to the Millennium](#); [\[b\] OT Promises of God to Israel which will finally be fulfilled in the Millennium](#)).

Related Resource:

- See more complete discussion Israel the Wife of Jehovah.

Ajith Fernando introduces chapter 30 - R. A. Torrey (1856–1928) was a scholar, Bible teacher, and evangelist who exercised a wide teaching and preaching ministry all over the world. He was the first head (after founder D. L. Moody) of what became Moody Bible Institute and later president of what became Biola University. When he conducted evangelistic campaigns in a city, the city would often be saturated with posters and banners with the words, "Get Right with God." The people were confronted with the stark reality of the urgency of making peace with God. Such urgency is seen in Deuteronomy 30, which presents two major themes: the promise of restoration and the wrongness of rebellion. The chapter starts with a description of what will happen to the people after they return to God. ([Preaching the Word - Deuteronomy](#)).

ARTICLE FROM WIKIPEDIA ON JEWISH READINGS RELATED TO CHAPTER 30

Nitzavim, **Nitsavim**, **Nitzabim**, **Netzavim**, or **Nesabim** (נִצְבִּים – [Hebrew](#) for "ones standing," the second word, and the first distinctive word, in the parashah) is the 51st [weekly Torah portion](#) (פָּרָשָׁה, *parashah*) in the annual [Jewish cycle of Torah reading](#) and

the eighth in the [Book of Deuteronomy](#). It constitutes [Deuteronomy 29:9–30:20](#) (Deuteronomy 29:10 onwards in many versions of the [Hebrew Bible](#)).

[Jews](#) generally read it in September or, rarely, late August or early October, on the [Sabbath](#) immediately before [Rosh Hashanah](#).^[1] The [lunisolar Hebrew calendar](#) contains up to 55 [weeks](#), the exact number varying between 50 in common years and 54 or 55 in leap years. In some leap years (for example, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2025), Parashah Nitzavim is read separately. In common years (for example, 2017, 2020, 2023, 2024, 2026, and 2027), Parashah Nitzavim is combined with the next parashah, [Vayelech](#), to help achieve the number of weekly readings needed. The two Torah portions are combined except when two Sabbaths fall between Rosh Hashanah and [Sukkot](#) and neither Sabbath coincides with a [Holy Day](#).^[2] In the standard [Reform](#) prayer book for the High Holy Days (מחזור, *machzor*), parts of the parashah, [Deuteronomy 29:9–14](#) and [30:11–20](#), are the Torah readings for the morning [Yom Kippur](#) service, in lieu of the traditional reading of [Leviticus 16](#).^[3]

In the parashah, [Moses](#) told the [Israelites](#) that all the people stood before [God](#) to enter into the [covenant](#), violation of which would bring on [curses](#), but if they returned to God and heeded God's [commandments](#), then God would take them back in love and bring them together again from the ends of the world. Moses taught that this Instruction was not beyond reach, and Moses put before the Israelites life and death, [blessing](#) and curse, and exhorted them to choose life by loving God and heeding the commandments.

Deuteronomy 30:2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,

KJV - And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

- **and you return to the LORD your God** Dt 4:28-31; Nehemiah 1:9; Isaiah 55:6,7; Lamentations 3:32,40; Hosea 3:5; 6:1,2; 14:1-3; Joel 2:12,13; Zechariah 12:10; 2 Corinthians 3:16; 1 John 1:9
- **all your heart** Dt 6:5; 13:3; 1 Chronicles 29:9,17; Psalms 41:12; 119:80; Jeremiah 3:10; 4:14; 29:13; Ephesians 6:24
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Leviticus 26:40-45+ If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me— 41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or **if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity**, 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. 43' For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. 44 'Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. 45 'But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.'"

FUTURE REPENTANCE OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL

All in Dt 30:1, 2 - **all of these things... all your heart and soul...all that I command** - "God will send all His judgments among His people in **all** the nations (v. 1), so that with **all** their hearts and souls they will obey **all** He has commanded (v. 2). If we fail to deal with any sin, or if we ignore any word from God, our repentance will be incomplete." (Wiersbe [Be Equipped](#))

Eugene Merrill explains why they would **recall** to mind (Dt 30:1) and **return** to "(God) Who promised Israel to make them His people forever, would bring about a spirit of repentance and obedience among them (cf. Lev 26:40–45+; Jer 30:3+, Jer 30:18–22+; Jer 31:23–24+, Jer 31:31–34+; Ezek 34:11–16; Ezek 36:22–36-note). It was that prompting that would cause Israel to think upon their evil ways, to repent, and to enter once more upon faithful covenant compliance. Such conjunction of **divine sovereignty** and **human free will** is, of course, beyond the scope of rational harmonization; rather it is a matter that can be comprehended only as God sees fit to reveal his secrets (see Dt 29:29). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#))

As Israel returns to God, so He will "return" to them.

You return ([shub/sub](#)) to the LORD your God - Return is same Hebrew verb [shub/sub](#) as in Dt 30:1 "call them to mind" (literally "bring back to your heart"). This clearly describes a radical change of direction, turning from sin and rebellion and turning to Yahweh. In a word this is a description of "**repentance**" and it is available to any humble and contrite heart. And lest we think this was purely a result of their volitional choice recall that it is God Who even grants repentance. In Acts 5 Peter (speaking of the Messiah) declares

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. 31 "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, **to grant repentance to Israel**, and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:30-31+, and "to the Gentiles" in Acts 11:18+, cf 2 Ti 2:25+)

Return (restore, again, turn to) ([07725](#)) ([shub/sub](#)) is a common verb (over 1000x) meaning to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, etc, and 9 times is translated with the idea of repent or repentance, which is clearly the sense in the present passage. **Return** implies they had "left" God and gone have the gods of this world. In this context (cf Dt 30:6), this return is related to a change in their heart, a "circumcision" if you will, one performed not with hands, but by the Spirit, one that is related to their entrance into the New Covenant by grace through faith. This clearly has not been fulfilled for the nation of Israel. There has never been a time when they obeyed God with all their heart, but in the last days, after they go through the refining time of the Great Tribulation, a remnant of Israel will return to God with all their heart. At that time this prophecy will be fully fulfilled.

Shub/sub in Deuteronomy - Deut. 1:22; Deut. 1:25; Deut. 1:45; Deut. 3:20; Deut. 4:30; Deut. 4:39; Deut. 5:30; Deut. 13:17; Deut. 17:16; Deut. 20:5; Deut. 20:6; Deut. 20:7; Deut. 20:8; Deut. 22:1; Deut. 22:2; Deut. 23:13; Deut. 23:14; Deut. 24:4; Deut. 24:13; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 28:31; Deut. 28:60; Deut. 28:68; Deut. 30:1; Deut. 30:2; Deut. 30:3; Deut. 30:8; Deut. 30:9; Deut. 30:10; Deut. 32:41; Deut. 32:43

KEY WORD in Deuteronomy 30 = [shub/sub](#) - "**call** to mind" "cause to return to your heart, Dt 30:1, "you **return** to the LORD," Dt 30:2, "God will **restore** you from captivity," Dt 30:3, "**again**," Dt 30:3, 8, 9, "if you **turn** to the LORD," Dt 30:10

The [Septuagint](#) translates the Hebrew **return** ([shub](#)) with the Greek verb [epistrepho](#) (from [epí](#) = motion toward + [strepho](#) = twist, turn quite around or reverse) which means to revert, to turn about, to turn around, to turn toward, to return and figuratively to convert. The idea is a definite turn to God in heart and conduct. In the NT [epistrepho](#) is often associated with repentance and conversion (e.g., Mt 13:15, Mk 4:12, Lk 1:17, Jn 12:40, Acts 3:19, 11:21, 14:15, 15:19, 26:18, 20, 28:27, 2 Cor 3:16, 1 Th 1:9, 1 Pe 2:25).

Warren Wiersbe - The purpose of chastening is restoration, not ruination. God knows what His people will do, so He makes provision for them to repent and return. He has done this for His people today (1 John 1:5–2:2). ([Be Equipped](#))

Jeremiah explains why Israel would return to the LORD...

Jeremiah 24:7 **'I (JEHOVAH) will give them a heart to know Me**, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God (LANGUAGE OF COVENANT), for **they will return to Me with their whole heart**.

Comment: Notice that God initiates their repentance and He does so here in the context of words which clearly speak of the New Covenant in which Israel and Judah will receive a new heart. **How else could they possibly return to Jehovah, unless they received a new heart** (Ezekiel 18:31, Ezekiel 36:26+)? That is a rhetorical question because no man seeks after God if left to themselves and their sinful heart! And yet even though they would not return unless God gave them grace to return, He still calls out over and over in the OT "Return to Me," (Neh 1:9, Isa 44:22, Joel 2:12, Zech 1:3, Mal 3:7), so clearly we see **God's sovereignty** mysteriously working with **man's responsibility** (making a personal choice to return/repent).

And obey ([shama](#)) Him - This is the "fruit" in keeping with repentance (Mt 3:8+), that is spiritual attitudes and actions which demonstrate the authenticity of their return and repentance. In other words, Israel's turning back to God (repentance) is linked with obedience, which serves to underscore that their repentance is a real, godly repentance. This recalls the words of John the Baptist

Therefore **bear** fruits in **keeping with repentance**, and do not begin to say to yourselves (AS WAS SO COMMON IN HIS DAY), 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham . (Luke 3:8+).

In the Gospel of Mark Jesus said...

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand (BECAUSE the King was present!); **repent** ([present imperative](#) - repent as your lifestyle!) and **believe** ([present imperative](#) - keep on believing depending [on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the Gospel.

It is notable that **obedience** is a key principle in Deuteronomy 30 (Dt 30:2, 8, 10, 17, 20). To reiterate their obedience would not save them, but would serve to demonstrate that they were genuinely repentant and saved.

And obey ([shama](#)) **Him with all your heart and soul**: (cf "all your heart and soul" in Dt 30:10) - Obey is an idiom which the KJV renders more accurately "obey his voice." All your heart and soul is also an idiom which means with all of one's being, withholding nothing. "Wholehearted" obedience. Not partial. Not hesitating or delayed (aka "disobedience"). Notice it is not with your head knowledge and fleshly efforts, not with your man-made traditions and not with your empty rituals, but with a broken and contrite heart which God will not despise (Ps 51:17+). Ultimately this speaks of one who believes in Him, the One Who all day long has stretched out His hand to a disobedient and an obstinate people (Ro 10:21-[note](#) quoting Isa 65:2). And that belief is ultimately in their Messiah, not fully revealed in the OT, but still prophesied in their teachings (Ge 3:15+ Ge 15:6+ Ge 22:14, etc). The OT laws were never meant to be an end in themselves, but to be a tutor or schoolmaster to lead the Jews to their Messiah (Gal 3:23-24+).

All your heart is a key phrase in Deuteronomy and is also found elsewhere in the OT and in the NT - 21x in 21v - Note that almost one-half of all the uses in the Bible are in Deuteronomy - 9 of 17x in the OT) -- Deut. 4:29; Deut. 6:5; Deut. 10:12; Deut. 11:13; Deut. 13:3; Deut. 26:16; Deut. 30:2; Deut. 30:6; Deut. 30:10; Jos. 22:5; 1 Sam. 7:3; 1 Sam. 12:20; 1 Sam. 12:24; Prov. 3:5; Jer. 29:13; Joel 2:12; Zeph. 3:14; Matt. 22:37; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27; Acts 8:37

Robert Morgan - ALL YOUR HEART - The Bible nowhere allows partial devotion to the Lord. Instead it says:

Seek Him with **all** your heart and **all** your soul.... Love the Lord your God with **all** your heart, with **all** your soul, and with **all** your strength.... What does the Lord your God ask of you except to fear the Lord your God by walking in **all** His ways... and to worship the Lord your God with **all** your heart and **all** your soul?...

Return to the Lord your God and obey Him with **all** your heart.... Obey the Lord your God by keeping His commands and statutes that are written in this book of the law and return to Him with **all** your heart and **all** your soul.... Remain faithful to Him, and serve Him with **all** your heart and **all** your soul.... You know with **all** your heart and **all** your soul that none of the good promises the Lord your God made to you has failed....

If you are returning to the Lord with **all** your heart, get rid of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths that are among you, dedicate yourselves to the Lord, and worship only Him.... Above **all**, fear the Lord and worship Him faithfully with **all** your heart, considering the great things He has done for you....

Trust in the Lord with **all** your heart,... Think about Him in **all** your ways....

Believe with **all** your heart. (My All in All Devotional)

Moody and the Inquirer - A Man said to me the other night in the inquiry-room, "Mr. Moody, I wish you would tell me why I can't find the Lord." Said I, "I can tell you why you can't find him." "Why is it?" "Why, you haven't sought for him with all your heart." He looked at me, and said he thought he had. "Well," said I, "I think you haven't; because you will surely find him when you seek for him with all your heart. Now, my friend, I can tell you the day and hour you are going to be converted." The man looked at me, and I have no doubt thought I was a little wild. Said I, "The Scripture tells me, 'Ye shall find me when ye seek for me with all your heart.'" It don't take a man long to find the Lord when he makes his mind up to do it.

Deuteronomy 30:3 then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

KJV - That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

- **then the** Ps 106:45-47; 126:1-4; Isaiah 56:8; Jeremiah 29:14; 31:10; Lamentations 3:22,32; Romans 11:23,26,31
- **will gather you** - Ezra 1:1-4; Ps 147:2; Jer 32:37-44; Ezekiel 34:12,13; 36:24; Zech 8:7,8
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ISRAEL'S FUTURE RESTORATION AND REGATHERING

Then - [Then](#) is an important [expression of time](#), especially in prophetic passages as it helps identify the sequence of events. In this case, the "then" occurs after their repentance in Dt 30:2.

The LORD your God will restore you from captivity - **NET** = "reverse your captivity." **NIV** = "restore your fortunes" If sinners turn (i.e., repent), then God turns (i.e., restores). The Hebrew word word for **RESTORE** is the word [shub/sub](#), the same word translate **RETURN** in Dt 30:2. This recalls the words in Zechariah 3

Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "**Return to Me**," declares the LORD of hosts, "**that I may return to you**," says the LORD of hosts. Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets proclaimed, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "**Return** now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.'" But they did not listen or give heed to Me," declares the LORD (Zech 1:3-4)

Related Passages:

Isaiah 31:6 Return to Him from whom you have deeply defected, O sons of Israel.

Isaiah 55:6 Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.

Hosea 6:1+ "Come, let us **return** to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us.

Hosea 14:1 **Return**, O Israel, to the LORD your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity.

Joel 2:12+ "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "**Return** to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping, and mourning;13 And **rend your heart** and not your garments." Now **return** to the LORD your God, For (WHY? HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE FOR A SINFUL NATION OR INDIVIDUAL?) He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, And relenting of evil.

Malachi 3:7+ "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes, and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. "But you say, 'How shall we return?'

The [Septuagint](#) of Dt 30:3 has an interesting rendering of the Hebrew translating it as the '**Lord (kurios) will Himself (middle voice) heal/cure (iaomai) your sins (hamartia)**.' This makes sense because **sin** is a harsh master which keeps its victims in bondage and captivity (cf Ro 6:12-13+)! This was the very redemptive purpose for which Jesus came to earth as a Man, even as He announced at the "inauguration" of His ministry in the synagogue in Luke 4

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. (KJV adds "he hath sent me to heal [\[iaomai\]](#) the brokenhearted") HE HAS SENT ME TO **PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES**, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, (Luke 4:18-note, quoting Isaiah 61:1)

Have compassion (07355)([racham](#) from **rechem** = womb ~ suggesting a connection between the place of the developing child and the strong feelings of love a mother has toward her child) speaks a deep love of one for another rooted in some "natural" bond (cp rechem = womb). Racham manifests itself as an "emotional" response to one's needs. Racham means to feel another's pain so deeply that you are moved to do something about it. Racham means to have compassion, to have mercy, to find mercy. "The word pictures a deep, kindly sympathy and sorrow felt for another who has been struck with affliction or misfortune, accompanied with a desire to relieve the suffering." (Baker) The Septuagint translates racham here with the verb [eleeo](#) (from [eleos](#) [\[word study\]](#)) which means "to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy which manifests itself in action, less frequently in word." Describes the general sense of one who has compassion or person on someone in need. Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve. Mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve. Instead in mercy God gives us what we need.

Kalland - That a dispersion of Israel is still in effect can be seen by the population distribution of Jewish people. In 1990 according to various almanacs and encyclopedias, there were about 13 million Jews scattered throughout the world and only about 4.4 million in Israel--for a total of 17.5 million. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary)

Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible mean when it refers to the Diaspora?](#)
- [What happened to the lost tribes of Israel?](#)

And will gather you again from all the peoples - This divine promise is repeated in Dt 30:4. The Septuagint translates **gather** (**qabats**) with **sunago** which means to cause to come together.

TSK - This seems to refer to a more extensive captivity and regathering than that which the Jews experienced in Babylon.

Ezekiel 20 describes the gathering and winnowing of Israel

"As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out (cf [Great Tribulation](#)), I shall be king over you. 34 **I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out;** 35 and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and **there I will enter into judgment with you face to face.** 36 "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. 37 "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant (THE NEW COVENANT); 38 and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me (THOSE WHO DO NOT ENTER THE NEW COVENANT); I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 20:33-38 - See Dr Walvoord's comments below)

Arnold Fruchtenbaum comments: "In these verses God draws a simile with the Exodus. At the Exodus, under Moses, God brought the entire nation of Israel out of the land of Egypt and into the wilderness of the Sinai peninsula. God's plan and program for Israel in the Sinai was to accomplish two things: first, to receive the Law of Moses; and, secondly, to build the tabernacle through which much of the Law could then be maintained. With these two things accomplished, they were to press on and enter into the Promised Land itself. However, because of a long series of murmurings against God's revealed will, finally, in a place called Kadesh Barnea, right at the border of the Promised Land itself, God entered into judgment with His people. The judgment was that the entire nation that had come out of the land of Egypt would now have to continue wandering in the wilderness until a forty-year period was up. During that forty-year period everyone who came out of Egypt, except for two men (Joshua and Caleb) and those under the age of twenty, would die in the wilderness. Forty years later it would be a new nation, a nation that was born as free men in the wilderness and not as slaves in Egypt who would enter the Promised Land under Joshua. Ezekiel says that a similar thing was to occur in the future; God will begin to regather his people from all parts of the world, a regathering we have been observing with the present and modern Jewish State of Israel. However, at some point God will enter into judgment with His people. By means of the Tribulation judgments, the rebels will be purged out (**ED**: cf Da 11:35+, Da 12:10+), the unbelievers will be purged and regenerated. (**ED**: Ezek 20:37 says the Lord God will make them pass under the rod and enter the bond of covenant). They will turn away from seeking to establish their own righteousness and will seek the righteousness of God through Jesus the Messiah and that will bring about their national regeneration (**ED**: cf Ro 11:26-27+). It is going to be a new nation, a regenerate nation that will enter the Millennial Israel under King Messiah.

In **Zechariah** God says "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; 8 and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness (THIS IS COVENANT LANGUAGE - THE NEW COVENANT). (Zech 8:7,8)

Gather (06908). קָבַץ **qābats**: A verb meaning to gather, to collect, to assemble. The passive form is used to signify the gathering or assembling of people, especially for battle (Josh. 9:2; Neh. 4:20[14]; Jer. 49:14); and for religious and national purposes (1 Chr. 11:1; Ezra 10:1, 7). The word in an active form often signifies the gathering of materials: food into storehouses (Gen. 41:35); sheaves (Mic. 4:12); money and wealth (2 Chr. 24:5; Prov. 28:8); lambs by a shepherd (Isa. 13:14; 40:11; Jer. 23:3). The word also refers to God's gathering of nations for judgment in the end times (Isa. 43:9; 66:18; Joel 3:2); and especially to the gathering of His scattered people, Israel (Ps. 106:47; Jer. 29:14; 31:10; Hos. 1:11). **Qabats is used 3x in Dt** - Dt 13:16, Dt 30:3, Dt 30:4.

1) to gather, assemble 1a) (Qal) to gather, collect, assemble 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to assemble, gather 1b2) to be gathered 1c) (Piel) to gather, gather together, take away 1d) (Pual) to be gathered together 1e) (Hithpael) to gather together, be gathered together

Vine - First, **qabats** means "to gather" things together into a single location. The word may focus on the process of "gathering," as in Gen. 41:35 (the first occurrence): Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint overseers

to “gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh....” The verb may also focus on the result of the process, as in Gen. 41:48: “And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt....” Only in one passage does qabats mean “to harvest” (Isa. 62:9): “But they that have gathered [harvested] it [grain] shall eat it and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it [wine] together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.”

This verb is used metaphorically of things that can be “gathered” only in a figurative sense. So in Ps. 41:6, the enemy’s “heart gathereth iniquity to itself” while visiting—i.e., the enemy considers how he can use everything he hears and sees against his host.

Qabac is often used of “gathering” people or “assembling” them. This “gathering” is usually a response to a summons, but not always. In 1 Kings 11:24, David “gathered men unto him, and became captain over a [marauding] band.” This action was not the result of a summons David issued, but resulted from reports that circulated about him. The entire story makes it quite clear that David was not seeking to set up a force rivaling Saul’s. But when men came to him, he marshalled them.

Quite often this verb is used of “summoning” people to a central location. When Jacob blessed his sons, for example, he “summoned” them to him and then told them to gather around closer (Gen. 49:2). This same word is used of “summoning” the militia. All able-bodied men in Israel between the ages of 20 and 40 were members of the militia. In times of peace they were farmers and tradesmen; but when danger threatened, a leader would “assemble” them or “summon” them to a common location and organize them into an army (cf. Judg. 12:4). All Israel could be “summoned” or “gathered” for battle (as a militia); thus “... Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa” (1 Sam. 28:4). This military use may also signify “marshalling” a standing army in the sense of “setting them up” for battle. The men of Gibeon said: “All the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us” (Josh. 10:6). In 1 Kings 20:1, qabats carries this sense in addition to overtones of “concentrating” an entire army against a particular point: “And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.”

Ordered assemblies may include assemblies for covenant-making: “And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee ...” (2 Sam. 3:21). In several instances, assemblies are “convened” for public worship activities: “Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh.... And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day ...” (1 Sam. 7:5–6; cf. Joel 2:16).

When qabats appears in the intensive stem, God is often the subject. This usage connotes that something will result that would not result if things were left to themselves. The verb is used in this sense to refer to “divine judgment”: “As they gathered silver, and brass ... into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury (Ezek. 22:20). Qabats is also applied to “divine deliverance”: “... The Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee” (Deut. 30:3).

A special use of the verb qabats appears in Joel 2:6, namely “to glow” or “glow with excitement” or “become pale [white]”: “Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.”

Qabats - 120v - assemble(7), assembled(7), brought the together(1), collect(1), collected(2), gather(52), gathered(45), gathers(4), grown(1), meet(1), rally(1), regather(1), surely gather(1), turn(1). Gen. 41:35; Gen. 41:48; Gen. 49:2; Deut. 13:16; Deut. 30:3; Deut. 30:4; Jos. 9:2; Jos. 10:6; Jdg. 9:47; Jdg. 12:4; 1 Sam. 7:5; 1 Sam. 7:6; 1 Sam. 7:7; 1 Sam. 8:4; 1 Sam. 22:2; 1 Sam. 25:1; 1 Sam. 28:1; 1 Sam. 28:4; 1 Sam. 29:1; 2 Sam. 2:25; 2 Sam. 2:30; 2 Sam. 3:21; 1 Ki. 11:24; 1 Ki. 18:19; 1 Ki. 18:20; 1 Ki. 20:1; 1 Ki. 22:6; 2 Ki. 6:24; 2 Ki. 10:18; 1 Chr. 11:1; 1 Chr. 13:2; 1 Chr. 16:35; 2 Chr. 13:7; 2 Chr. 15:9; 2 Chr. 15:10; 2 Chr. 18:5; 2 Chr. 20:4; 2 Chr. 23:2; 2 Chr. 24:5; 2 Chr. 25:5; 2 Chr. 32:4; 2 Chr. 32:6; Ezr. 7:28; Ezr. 8:15; Ezr. 10:1; Ezr. 10:7; Ezr. 10:9; Neh. 1:9; Neh. 4:20; Neh. 5:16; Neh. 7:5; Neh. 13:11; Est. 2:3; Est. 2:8; Est. 2:19; Ps. 41:6; Ps. 102:22; Ps. 106:47; Ps. 107:3; Prov. 13:11; Prov. 28:8; Isa. 11:12; Isa. 13:14; Isa. 22:9; Isa. 34:15; Isa. 34:16; Isa. 40:11; Isa. 43:5; Isa. 43:9; Isa. 44:11; Isa. 45:20; Isa. 48:14; Isa. 49:18; Isa. 54:7; Isa. 56:8; Isa. 60:4; Isa. 60:7; Isa. 62:9; Isa. 66:18; Jer. 23:3; Jer. 29:14; Jer. 31:8; Jer. 31:10; Jer. 32:37; Jer. 40:15; Jer. 49:5; Jer. 49:14; Ezek. 11:17; Ezek. 16:37; Ezek. 20:34; Ezek. 20:41; Ezek. 22:19; Ezek. 22:20; Ezek. 28:25; Ezek. 29:5; Ezek. 29:13; Ezek. 34:13; Ezek. 36:24; Ezek. 37:21; Ezek. 38:8; Ezek. 39:17; Ezek. 39:27; Hos. 1:11; Hos. 8:10; Hos. 9:6; Joel 2:6; Joel 2:16; Joel 3:2; Joel 3:11; Mic. 1:7; Mic. 2:12; Mic. 4:6; Mic. 4:12; Nah. 2:10; Nah. 3:18; Zeph. 3:8; Zeph. 3:19; Zeph. 3:20; Zech. 10:8; Zech. 10:10

Where the LORD your God has scattered you - Israel's dispersion was the result of God's sovereign hand. The verb **scattered** (**pûṭṣ**) is used 3 times in Deuteronomy all prophesying of Israel's future dispersion! Here are the other two prophecies:

Deuteronomy 4:27+ **“The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD drives you.**

Deuteronomy 28:64+ **“Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth (NOT JUST EXILE TO ASSYRIA AND BABYLON BUT GLOBAL, A PROPHECY THAT HAS BEEN FULFILLED FOR JEWS ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD); and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.**

Warren Wiersbe - This chapter promises that God will “turn the captivity” of Israel and restore the nation to the land, if they will but return to the Lord and obey His voice. Of course, a **remnant** returned (**ED: MOST REMAINED IN BABYLON**) to the land in 536 B.C. (**ED: AND WE DO NOT KNOW IF ALL OF THEM HAD CIRCUMCISED HEARTS**), but this was not a great **national** return. Moses is here predicting the final return of the Jews to their land (see Isa. 11:10–12:6+). Of course, they return to the land in unbelief, even though they have turned again to the Law of God. Even today we see Jews going back to Palestine and returning to the “old ways” of their fathers. God is starting to bless the land once again with the former and latter rains, and the desert is starting to blossom like the rose. **When (ED: AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST) the nation sees their pierced Messiah, they will repent and be cleansed of all sin** (Zech. 12:9–13:1+). ([Be Equipped](#))

Scattered (06327) פָּזַר **pûṣ** : I. A verb meaning to scatter, to disperse. It describes spreading out, scattering something: of humanity on the earth (Gen. 10:18; 11:4); enemies (Num. 10:35; 1 Sam. 11:11); especially of Israel dispersed among the nations in fulfillment of God’s curse (Ezek. 34:5); pictured as a scattered flock (Zech. 13:7). In its passive sense, it means to be scattered, dispersed: of an army (2 Kgs. 25:5; Jer. 52:8); peoples in general (Gen. 10:18). It has the sense of causing something to be dispersed, scattered: peoples (Gen. 11:8, 9); especially among the peoples, nations (Deut. 4:27; 28:64; Jer. 9:16[15]; Ezek. 11:16). It is used figuratively of lightning being sent forth, scattering an enemy (2 Sam. 22:15; Ps. 18:14[15]).

Vine’s Lexicon - puts (06327 ,פָּזַר), “to scatter, disperse, be scattered.” This term is found in both ancient and modern Hebrew. Occurring some 65 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, the word is found for the first time in Gen. 10:18: “... The families of the Canaanites spread abroad.” The word is used 3 times in the story of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4, 8–9), apparently to emphasize how men and their languages “were spread” throughout the world.

Puts, in the sense of “scattering,” often has an almost violent connotation to it. Thus, when Saul defeated the Ammonites, “they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together” (1 Sa 11:11). Such “scattering” of forces seems to have been a common thing after defeats in battle (1 Kings 22:17; 2 Kings 25:5). Many references are made to Israel as a people and nation “being scattered” among the nations, especially in the imagery of a scattered flock of sheep (Ezek. 34:5–6; Zech. 13:7). Ezekiel also promises the gathering together of this scattered flock: “... I will even gather you from the people, ... where ye have been scattered ...” (Ezek. 11:17; 20:34, 41).

In a figurative sense, this word is used to refer to lightning as arrows which God “scatters” (2 Sam. 22:15). According to Job, “the clouds scatter his lightning” (Job 37:11, RSV). No harvest is possible unless first the seeds “are scattered” in rows (Isa. 28:25). ([Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Puts - 61 verses - disperse yourselves(1), dispersed(2), dispersed*(1), disperses(1), harry(1), pour(1), scatter(16), scattered(33), scattering(2), scatters(1), sow(1), spread(2). Gen. 10:18; Gen. 11:4; Gen. 11:8; Gen. 11:9; Gen. 49:7; Exod. 5:12; Num. 10:35; Deut. 4:27; Deut. 28:64; Deut. 30:3; 1 Sam. 11:11; 1 Sam. 13:8; 1 Sam. 14:34; 2 Sam. 18:8; 2 Sam. 20:22; 2 Sam. 22:15; 1 Ki. 22:17; 2 Ki. 25:5; 2 Chr. 18:16; Neh. 1:8; Job 18:11; Job 37:11; Job 38:24; Job 40:11; Ps. 18:14; Ps. 68:1; Ps. 144:6; Prov. 5:16; Isa. 24:1; Isa. 28:25; Isa. 41:16; Jer. 9:16; Jer. 10:21; Jer. 13:24; Jer. 18:17; Jer. 23:1; Jer. 23:2; Jer. 30:11; Jer. 40:15; Jer. 52:8; Ezek. 11:16; Ezek. 11:17; Ezek. 12:15; Ezek. 20:23; Ezek. 20:34; Ezek. 20:41; Ezek. 22:15; Ezek. 28:25; Ezek. 29:12; Ezek. 29:13; Ezek. 30:23; Ezek. 30:26; Ezek. 34:5; Ezek. 34:6; Ezek. 34:12; Ezek. 34:21; Ezek. 36:19; Ezek. 46:18; Hab. 3:14; Zeph. 3:10; Zech. 13:7

Deuteronomy 30:3 Why Remain Captive - Faith's Checkbook - C H Spurgeon

“The Lord thy God will turn thy captivity.”—Deuteronomy 30:3

GOD’S own people may sell themselves into captivity by sin. A very bitter fruit is this of an exceeding bitter root. What a bondage it is when the child of God is sold under sin, held in chains by Satan, deprived of his liberty, robbed of his power in prayer and his delight in the Lord! Let us watch that we come not into such bondage; but if this has already happened to us, let us by no means despair.

But we cannot be held in slavery forever. The Lord Jesus has paid too high a price for our redemption to leave us in the enemy's hand. The way to freedom is, "Return unto the Lord thy God." Where we first found salvation, we shall find it again. At the foot of Christ's cross confessing sin, we shall find pardon and deliverance. Moreover, the Lord will have us obey His voice according to all that He has commanded us, and we must do this with all our heart and all our soul, and then our captivity shall end.

Often depression of spirit and great misery of soul are removed as soon as we quit our idols and bow ourselves in obedience before the living God. We need not be captives. We may return to Zion's citizenship, and that speedily. Lord, turn our captivity!

John Walvoord describes The judgment of Israel. ([The Prophetic Context of the Millennium](#))

The Scriptures record many tremendous judgments of Israel which have been already historically fulfilled and predict a future purging during the time of the great tribulation when only one third of the living Jews in the land will survive (Zech 13:8-9). The remnant of Israel, however, surviving the tribulation and who are on earth at the time of the return of Christ, are the specific objects of a judgment described in Ezekiel 20:33-38. This passage, given in a context of predictions of judgment upon Israel, is obviously the climactic judgment of God upon that nation.

Like the predictions of judgment upon the Gentiles, this future event has its special characteristics which distinguish it from all past judgments upon the nation.

It is described as a part of a work of God in declaring Himself to be king over you (Ezek. 20:33).

The judgment itself follows the final regathering of Israel predicted in Ezekiel 20:34-35.

The judgment will take place in the specific geographic location described as the wilderness of the peoples (Ezek. 20:35). Though this is not clearly to be identified with any locality, the comparison with the dealings of God with Israel on the way from Egypt to the promised land seems to indicate that the judgment takes place just outside the area given to Israel for perpetual possession. Just as Israel because of failure at Kadesh-Barnea was condemned to wander in the wilderness until all the adults except the few faithful ones died, and only then the nation could enter the promised land, so the rebels will be purged out at that future time when the millennial kingdom is established. Only those who are not rebels, that is, those who are true believers in Christ as their Messiah and Savior, will be allowed to participate in the blessing of the millennial kingdom.

The description given does not mention any resurrection from the dead and it may be assumed in view of the fact that regathering is a prerequisite to the judgment that this applies only to the living Israelites in the world at the time of the second coming. Those who are resurrected have a different judgment entirely. Like other judgments at the second coming of Christ, the judgment of works will be prominent, but as in the case of the Gentiles it will be what the works indicate rather than their intrinsic moral character. In the prophecies of Malachi a refining of the sons of Levi is predicted at the time of His coming and their particular sins are dealt with at that judgment (cf. Mal. 3:2-5). This conclusion is confirmed by the statements and parables of Matthew 24 and Matthew 25 which seem, with the exception of Matthew 25:31-46, to deal primarily with God's judgments upon Israel. In each case, the works brought into view demonstrate whether the person is saved or not.

The result of the Ezekiel judgment is that the rebels are cut off and therefore do not enter the land. This is to be interpreted as a judgment of physical death, and they will be raised from the dead at the judgment of the great white throne after the millennium to participate in the destiny of all the wicked. Those who remain alive, however, are counted righteous and enter into the millennial blessing provided for them. In the words of Ezekiel, God says to them:

I will bring you into the bond of the covenant(Ezek. 20:37).

The covenant herein mentioned is no doubt the same as that revealed in Jer 31:31-34. (cf Dt 30:6, Jer 32:39, 40, Ezek 11:19-20, 16:60,61, 62-63, 36:26-27)

The blessings of that entrance into that promised land are summarized in Jer 31:10-13 as follows:

Taking in view all the divine judgments that pertain to this sequence of events, it may be concluded that as the millennium begins all the righteous are judged in one way or another and that the wicked are put to death and declared unworthy to enter the millennial kingdom. The church has previously been judged and rewarded in heaven. Living Gentiles and living Jews are judged in their respective judgments and those who are righteous are permitted to enter the millennial kingdom. The Old Testament saints and resurrected Israel are also raised from the dead and given their places of honor and privilege and are associated with Christ in His millennial government.

Walvoord ([source](#)) again writes:

According to Ezekiel 20:34-38, at the time of the second advent a regathering of Israel is brought about. It obviously takes considerable time-many weeks, if not months-to effect, but it is carried out precisely as the prophets indicate. Isaiah states that every means of transportation is pressed into use: "They shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an oblation unto Jehovah, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Jehovah..." (Isa 66:20). That the regathering is to be complete to the last man-obviously not fulfilled by previous regathering-is declared in Ezekiel 39:25-29. It is explicitly stated, "I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there," i.e., among the nations (Ezek. 39:28).

The regathering process completed, a judgment of Israel is described in Ezekiel 20:34-38. God declares: "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me...they shall not enter into the land of Israel..." (Ezek. 20:37-38).

In the light of the details of this judgment, it should be clear to any impartial observer that the judgment deals with Israelites still in the flesh, not translated or resurrected. Further, the process takes time because of the geographic regathering that is involved. It is an event related to the establishment of the millennial kingdom but is subsequent by some weeks or months to the actual second advent. It relates to Israel racially alone and includes both believers and unbelievers. The judgment consists in putting to death all the rebels or unbelievers, leaving only the believers to enter the promised land.

This multitude of details sets this judgment apart from the translation of the church as much as any two events could be distinguished. The translation takes place in a moment. The translation relates only to believers, and it leaves unbelievers exactly as they were before. The translation of the church has no relation to promises of the land of Israel. The Ezekiel judgment has the promises of possession of the promised land as a primary objective-determining those qualified for entrance. The translation of the church is followed by arrival in heaven. The believers of Ezekiel 20 enter the land, not heaven, in bodies of flesh, not immortal bodies. The translation concerns Jewish and Gentile believers alike. This judgment has to do only with Israel.

It should be further evident that, if the translation of the church took place simultaneously with, the second advent to establish the kingdom, the Ezekiel judgment would be both impossible and unnecessary as the separation of believers from unbelievers would have already taken place. It may therefore be concluded from the nature of the judgment of Israel that an interval is required between the translation of the church and the judgment of Israel during which a new generation of Israelites who believe in Christ as Savior and Messiah comes into being and who are waiting for His second advent to the earth to establish the millennial kingdom.

A similar conclusion is reached by the study of the judgment of the Gentiles described in Matthew 25:31-46. Taking the Ezekiel passage and the Matthew passage together, the whole population of the earth at the second coming of Christ is in view. If all Israelites are dealt with in Ezekiel, all the others described as the "nations" or the Gentiles are in the Matthew judgment. In the Matthew passage, like that of Ezekiel 20, no mention is made of either resurrection or translation, though both are often read into the passage by posttribulationists somewhat desperate to combine all the passages.

The separation of Matthew 25 is similar to that of Ezekiel 20. The unbelievers, described as the "goats," are cast into everlasting fire by means of physical death, whereas the "sheep" enter the kingdom prepared for them-the millennial kingdom.

While the judgment in Matthew 25, as in Ezekiel 20, is based on outward works, it is true here as elsewhere in Scripture that works are taken as evidence of salvation. The good works of the "sheep" in befriending the "brethren" (the Jewish people) is an act of kindness which no one but a believer in Christ would perform during the tribulation when Christian as well as Jew is hated by all the world. Ironside interprets the passage: "But this judgment, like the other, is according to works. The sheep are those in whom divine life is manifested by their loving care for those who belong to Christ. The goats are bereft of this, and speak of the unrepentant, who did not respond to Christ's messengers." The result of the judgment of the Gentiles is the purging of all unbelievers, with the believers, who are thereby left, granted the privilege of entrance into the kingdom.

The judgment of the Gentiles is an individual judgment, though some premillenarians have seen in it a description of national judgment. This misconception has arisen from the English translation where the Greek word *ethne* is rendered "nation." It is, of course, the same word precisely as would be used for Gentiles individually. Inasmuch as the nature of the judgment is individual, however, the use of "nation" in a political sense is misleading. No national group can qualify as a group as either a "sheep" or a "goat" nation, and no nation inherits either the kingdom or everlasting fire for its works. Eternal judgment must of necessity apply to the individual.

A comparison of this judgment of Gentiles again confirms the fact that this is an entirely different event than the translation of the church. This is, first of all, demonstrated by the time of the judgment. It occurs after the second advent and after a throne is set up in the earth. The translation of the church, according to all viewpoints, takes place before Christ actually arrives on earth. The judgment

of the Gentiles results in the purging of unbelievers out from among believers. The translation of the church takes believers out from among unbelievers, and leaves unbelievers untouched. This judgment also distinguishes the individuals involved on a racial basis.

The "brethren" refers to Israel. The "nations" refers to non-Israelites. At the translation of the church, by contrast, there are no racial distinctions whatever. The judgment of the Gentiles deals primarily with unbelievers who are cast into everlasting fire. The reward given to believers at the judgment of the Gentiles is entrance into the millennial kingdom. Christians in this present age enter a spiritual kingdom when born again, and are never brought into judgment relative to entrance into the millennium. Believers at the judgment of the Gentiles enter a millennial kingdom at the time of their judgment, following the second advent.

In the judgment of the Gentiles and the judgment of Israel, the mass of detail points to the fact that separation of saved from unsaved is accomplished by a series of judgments occurring chronologically after the second advent. The judgment deals only with those living on the earth at the time of the second advent. None of those involved are translated or resurrected. Their reward is entrance into the millennial kingdom. At every point of comparison the evidence points to the translation of the church as a prior event utterly different in character and which requires an interval of some years between it and the judgments of Israel and the Gentiles. It may be therefore concluded that the interval between the translation and the second coming is absolutely necessary for the creation of a new generation of believers in Christ, composed of both Jews and Gentiles who retain their national identification and who will await the second advent of Christ and the millennial kingdom to follow.

Harrison writes: After full conversion the Jews will never again turn from God, they or their descendants. This view of the conversion of Israel is supported by other evidences. Christ will not return to the Jews until they say **Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord**, (Matthew 23:39). It is when Christ returns and they see Him that they shall know that the crucified Jesus is their long expected Messiah (Zech. 12:9-14+; Ezek. 39:21-22+). It is in the day of His power that they will be willing (Ps. 110:3). This psalm surely points to the glorious advent of the Son of Man in power and glory (Luke 21:27+; 1 Tim. 6:14-16).

Deuteronomy 30:4 "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.

KJV - If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

- Dt 28:64; Nehemiah 1:9; Isaiah 11:11-16; Ezekiel 39:25-29; Zephaniah 3:19,20
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GLOBAL DIASPORA

If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth- **Outcasts** ([nadach](#)) = **banished** ([nadach](#)) in Dt 30:1. The ESV rendering is more accurate as "the uttermost parts of heaven." The Hebrew for **outcasts** is translated in the Lxx with the noun [diaspora](#) which strictly means scattering, as of seed, and when used of persons dispersion, in the NT specifically reflecting the Jews living outside Palestine.

The phrase **ends of the earth** or **the uttermost parts of heaven** would have to refer to more than the Babylonian exile in 586 BC (or the exile to Assyria in 721 BC). The clear implication is that this is a worldwide scattering of the Jews, which is a reality today (2021). But the day is coming according to the promise of the faithful God when **He will bring** them back to the Promised Land. This prophecy was not fulfilled in the return from Babylon and there has yet to be a return from Assyria, so clearly this speaks of a future time when God will fulfill this promise to Israel.

TSK echoes the preceding comment - As this promise refers to a return from a captivity among all nations, consequently it cannot be exclusively the Babylonish captivity which is intended; and the repossession of their land must be different from that which was consequent on their return from Babylon. Nor at that period could it be said that they were multiplied more than their fathers, or, as the Hebrew says made greater than their fathers, when after their return they were tributary to the Persians, and afterwards fell under the power of the Greeks, under whom they suffered much; nor have their hearts, as a nation, yet been **circumcised**.

Merrill writes - No distance would be so great as to cause him to overlook them or to prevent their return (cf. Isa 43:6; 48:20; 62:11). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#).)

Outcasts (driven, scattered)([05080](#)) [nadach](#) meaning to expel from a place of residence to another place, to drive away, to scatter to be exiled, be cast out, thrust out. It is used in various ways to indicate the idea of

forcefully removing, impelling, or driving out. Nadach expresses the idea of “being scattered” in exile, as in Jer. 40:12. **Nadach** repeatedly speaks of the dispersion or **scattering of Israel into exile** (Dt. 30:1, 4; Jer. 23:2, 3, 8, 9, Jer. 40:12; 43:5; 46:28; Mic. 4:6, Da 9:7 “**have driven** them”, Isa 56:8 = “**dispersed** of Israel”). Evil “shepherds” or leaders did not lead but rather “drove away” and scattered Israel (Jer. 23:2). Of driving out something in a figurative sense (Job 6:13); Zion herself was considered an outcast, one driven out (Jer. 30:17). Dt. 22:1 = “your countryman’s ox or his sheep **straying away**”. It means to be impelled to do something, e.g., by the lure of idolatry and false gods (Dt. 4:19; 30:17); Pr. 7:21 = “With her many persuasions she **entices** him”.

First use of **nadach** in Dt 4:19+ parallels Dt 30:17[±] - “And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and **be drawn away** (nadach) and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.”

COMMENT - Note the paradox that the very thing Israel is draw away (from Yahweh) will result in she herself being “drawn away” or exiled from the Promised Land!

Uses of **nadach** in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:19; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 13:10; Deut. 13:13; Deut. 19:5; Deut. 20:19; Deut. 22:1; Deut. 30:1; Deut. 30:4; Deut. 30:17

From there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back - Isa 27:13 Joel 3:1 Isa 11:12 Jer 23:3,8;30:3; 32:37 Mt 24:31 Jer 31:10; 50:19; Ezek 37:21. "Jehovah hath giveth, Jehovah hath taketh away. Blessed be the Name of Jehovah! (Job 1:21YLT). And so we see the same LORD Who dispersed Israel, is the same LORD Who will gather them in the future and bring them back! Back to where? To the "Promised Land" and all because of His covenant faithfulness and lovingkindness ([hesed](#)). Jehovah is a God Who keeps His covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob which is great news for we who are Gentiles and in the New Covenant. We may at times wander astray from our great, gracious God, but He always, always gathers us and brings us back (cf divine discipline in Heb 12:5-11). Thank you Jehovah-Jesus for your immutable love! Amen

This regathering is the reversal of the prophetic promised scattering in Dt 28:64

“Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.

MacArthur - The gathering of Jews out of all the countries of the earth will follow Israel's final redemption. Restoration to the Land will be in fulfillment of the promise of the covenant given to Abraham (see Ge 12:7; 13:15; 15:18-21; 17:8) and so often reiterated by Moses and the prophets. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Gather (06908). קָבַץ **qāḇaṣ**: A verb meaning to gather, to collect, to assemble. The passive form is used to signify the gathering or assembling of people, especially for battle (Josh. 9:2; Neh. 4:20[14]; Jer. 49:14); and for religious and national purposes (1 Chr. 11:1; Ezra 10:1, 7). The word in an active form often signifies the gathering of materials: food into storehouses (Gen. 41:35); sheaves (Mic. 4:12); money and wealth (2 Chr. 24:5; Prov. 28:8); lambs by a shepherd (Isa. 13:14; 40:11; Jer. 23:3). The word also refers to God's gathering of nations for judgment in the end times (Isa. 43:9; 66:18; Joel 3:2); and especially to the gathering of His scattered people, Israel (Ps. 106:47; Jer. 29:14; 31:10; Hos. 1:11). **Qabats is used 3x in Dt** - Dt 13:16, Dt 30:3, Dt 30:4.

Deuteronomy 30:5 "The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers

- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DIVINE MULTIPLICATION

The LORD your God will bring you into the land - Once again we see the clear teaching of the Sovereignty of God in the events of man and His faithfulness to fulfill His covenant promises to give the Land of Israel to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants.

Merrill - While the repossession of the land can be said to some extent to have been fulfilled by the return of the Jews following the Babylonian exile (cf. Jer 29:10–14; 30:3), the greater prosperity and population was not achieved in Old Testament times. In fact, it still awaits realization in any literal sense (cf. Hag 2:6–9; Zech 8:1–8; 10:8–12). As for the radical work of regeneration described

here as circumcision of the heart, that clearly awaits a day yet to come as far as the covenant nation as a whole is concerned. ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy.](#))

The land which your fathers possessed - partial fulfillment in the REBIRTH OF ISRAEL but ultimate fulfillment in the millennial, Messianic age: Note that births will occur in the Messianic Age. And (Dt 30:6) suggests possibly that the Jewish offspring would be BELIEVERS. [Rev 20:8+] says Satan will "deceive the nations" which implies GENTILE UNBELIEVERS, the children of the SHEEP in [Mt 25:31ff] who will be deceived.

He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers - While Israel is back in the Land (May 14, 1948), they are back not in belief but unbelief (for most of the nation) and they are not yet multiplied more than their fathers, so this speaks of a future fulfillment, one which corresponds with the end of this age when the Good Shepherd returns to gather His scattered sheep.

One could argue that the presence of the Jews in the land of Israel is a partial fulfillment of these promises. The problem with that view is that (1) they are not gathered from all the nations where they were scattered. In other words Jews are still scattered over the entire world. (2) The nation as a whole does not have a circumcised heart. Most of the Jews in Israel and those scattered around the world still have "uncircumcised hearts."

Keene - He will restore Israel's fortunes, a theme frequent in the prophets (cf., e.g., Jer. 30:18; 32:44; 33:11, 26; Joel 3:1). The prophets made it clear that this great restoration to the land would not take place until the Second Advent of the Messiah just before the beginning of His millennial reign on the earth (e.g., Isa. 59:20–62:12; cf. Jesus' teaching of the regathering in Matt. 24:31; Mark 13:27). This will be a time of spiritual and material prosperity greater than the nation has ever known (Deut. 30:5).

Deuteronomy 30:6 "Moreover 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, so that you may live

KJV - And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

- **will circumcise your heart** Dt 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:26; 32:39; Ezekiel 11:19,20; 36:26,27; John 3:3-7; Romans 2:28,29; 11:26; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:11
- **to love the Lord** Dt 6:5; Exodus 20:6; Matthew 22:37; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 8:3; James 1:12; 2:5; 1 John 4:7; 1 John 4:16-19; 5:3,4
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- See Excursus on [Circumcision](#)

PROPHECY OF CIRCUMCISION OF ISRAEL'S HEART

Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants An uncircumcised ear cannot hear and respond to Lord (Jer 6:10). This passage on "cardiac circumcision" is the key verse in this section because it describes what God will accomplish in the hearts of the nation of Israel in the end times. This spiritual circumcision is synonymous with their entry into the New Covenant (see [New Covenant in the Old Testament](#)).

In Acts 7:51+ Stephen describes an **uncircumcised heart** - "You men who are stiff-necked and **uncircumcised** in heart and ears are always (present tense - continually) resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did." What does an uncircumcised heart do? It resists the Holy Spirit. The clear implication of Stephen's description is that a circumcised heart is sensitive to the Holy Spirit (indeed is circumcised by the Spirit - see Ro 2:29+). So even though the Holy Spirit did not indwell men and women in the OT those who had circumcised hearts (a work of God, by grace their hearts were circumcised through faith - cf Ge 15:6+), He was active in the lives of those who had circumcised hearts. One thinks of David's prayer in Ps 51:11 "Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me." Clearly David's heart was circumcised and sensitive to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as were the hearts of Joshua and Caleb who followed the Lord fully! (Nu 32:12+, Nu 14:24+) How else could they possibly have followed the LORD fully? That's rhetorical of course, because without the Spirit's enabling power they as men with a sinful nature could never have fully followed Yahweh!

Related Resources:

- See more detailed discussion of Circumcision of the heart in the Old Testament.

- [What is circumcision of the heart? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Paul alludes to Israel receiving a circumcised heart from God in Romans 11 writing

"And so **all Israel will be saved**; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." 27"THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." (Romans 11: 26-27+)

Comment: The ALL is "all" of Israel that places their faith in the Messiah. Zechariah tells us that two-thirds will not and will be cut off but that there will be a remnant of one-third of the nation of Israel that cries out for deliverance and is saved by grace through faith in the Messiah, their Deliverer. (Zech 13:8-9+ "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That **two parts in it will be cut off and perish**; But the **third will be left in it**. "And I will bring **the third part** through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God. [This is "covenant language" indicating that they have entered into the New Covenant!]"")

Circumcision was always meant to be an external sign pointing to an internal change of heart resulting in a love for God (Cf to Jesus' rebuke of the spiritually blind Pharisee who focused on externals at the expense of internals [heart]: - Mt 23:26)

NET Note - Heb "circumcise" Reference to the Abrahamic covenant prompts Moses to recall the sign of that covenant, namely, physical circumcision (Gen 17:9–14). Just as that act signified total covenant obedience, so **spiritual circumcision** (cleansing of the heart) signifies more internally a commitment to be pliable and obedient to the will of God (cf. Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4; Jer 9:26).

Reformation Study Bible - he promised restoration and renewal will result from a sovereign work of God in the hearts of His elect. By circumcising (transforming) their hearts, He will replace their total inability and stubbornness (Dt 5:29; 10:16; 29:4) with the humility and repentance they need (cf. Dt 30:1, 2), purifying for Himself a people who will love and obey Him. (**ED**: NOTE THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED TO ISRAEL AS A NATION).

Related Resources:

- [Charles Baylis' paper on Repentance in Acts in Light of Deuteronomy 30](#)
- [John Meade - Circumcision Of The Heart In Leviticus And Deuteronomy: Divine Means For Resolving Curse And Bringing Blessing](#)

There are several OT parallel passages on circumcision:

Leviticus 26:40-45 (**see commentary**) (CONTEXT - follows the judgment described in Lev 20:14-39) 'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me— 41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or **if their uncircumcised heart** (UNREGENERATE, NOT SAVED) **becomes humbled** (cf Job 22:29) **so that they then make amends for their iniquity**, (cf "God will circumcise your heart" - Dt 30:6) 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well (cf [Abrahamic Covenant](#), UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT - COVENANT ENTERED BY FAITH), and I will remember the land. 43 'For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them (70 YEARS IN BABYLON - 1 YEAR FOR EACH MISSED SABBATH YEAR). They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. 44 'Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. 45 'But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD."

Moody Bible Commentary - Thus, even Israel's disobedience will not make God ever forget His covenant with Israel nor will He ever remove the land grant He gave to Israel.

Deuteronomy 10:16+ "So **circumcise your heart**, and stiffen your neck no longer.

Comment: Notice that God tell's Israel to do this, but note that here in Deut 30:6 tells us Who accomplishes this supernatural spiritual surgery. Here as so often in Scripture, we see the juxtaposition of the tension of man's will versus God's sovereignty - God calls them to carry out the circumcision of their heart, but only he can actually complete the "surgery." Can we fully understand this principle? I think not

and so we need to default to the great praise statement of Paul in Romans 11:33-36-[note](#) (see below) to help us accept what is not necessarily humanly comprehensible (Perhaps it will be when we all have glorified bodies and minds, but we will have to wait and see! Until then we walk by faith, not by sight!)

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 36For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Jeremiah 4:4; “**Circumcise** (a command) yourselves to the LORD And remove **the foreskins of your heart**, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Or else My wrath will go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds.”

Comment: Outward ritual must be replaced by inward reality. The heart was involved because outward worship was valueless unless the inner life was given over to God. External actions are meaningless without internal change. Their hearts must be spiritually receptive. **NOTE:** God would never give a command without providing the grace to be able to carry out the command. So this is not a meritorious act because clearly no human could literally circumcise their own heart. The only way to obey this command would be by grace through faith. But they would have to recognize their need and seek God for this circumcision to become a reality.

Jeremiah 9:26 Egypt and Judah, and Edom and the sons of Ammon, and Moab and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are (physically) uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are (spiritually) **uncircumcised of heart**.”

Paul removes any doubt that Moses is referring to **spiritual circumcision**, not physical circumcision:

Colossians 2:11-12-[note](#) and in Him you were also circumcised with a **circumcision made without hands**, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Romans 2:28-29-[note](#) For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit**, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Merrill - Just as circumcision of the flesh symbolized the **outward identification** with the Lord and the covenant community, so **circumcision of the heart** (a phrase found only here and in Dt. 10:16 and Jer. 4:4 in the OT) speaks of **internal identification** with Him in what might be called **regeneration** in Christian theology.....The classic example (of spiritual circumcision which Paul) cited is that of Abraham, whose **faith** and not his circumcision rendered him just and righteous before God (**ED**: Ge 15:6 preceded command to be circumcised in Ge 17). In effect, said the apostle, **Abraham was circumcised in the heart** before he ever was in the flesh, and it was that inner work that set him apart as a covenant son (Ro 4:1–12). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy.](#))

Wiersbe - The heart needs “spiritual surgery” if it is to love the Lord and obey Him (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; Ro 2:25–29). Every child of God has experienced this (Col. 2:11) and, by faith, can live victoriously....The heart of victory is the heart! ([Be Equipped](#))

Keil published in the mid-1800's has an interesting interpretation regarding the timing of the fulfillment of this heart circumcision to the Jewish people -

The Lord will then circumcise their heart, and the heart of their children (see Deut. 10:16), so that they will love Him with all their heart. When Israel should turn with true humility to the Lord, He would be found of them,—would lead them to true repentance, and sanctify them through the power of His grace,—would take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, a new heart and a new spirit,—so that they should truly know Him and keep His commandments (vid., Ezek. 11:19; Ezek 36:26; Jer. 31:33ff. and Jer 32:39ff.). “Because of thy life,” i.e., that thou mayest live, sc., attain to true life. The fulfillment of this promise does not take place all at once. It commenced with small beginnings at the deliverance from the Babylonian exile, and in a still higher degree at the appearance of Christ in the case of all the Israelites who received Him as their Saviour. Since then it has been carried on through all ages in the conversion of individual children of Abraham to Christ; **and it will be realized in the future in a still more glorious manner in the nation at large** (Ro 11:25-27-[note](#)). The words of Moses do not relate to any particular age, but comprehend all times. For Israel has never been hardened and rejected in all its members, although the mass of the nation lives under

the curse even to the present day.

Criswell - This verse anticipates the New Covenant.

Here are some other OT passages that speak of the New Covenant:

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (commentary) "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a **NEW COVENANT** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (MOSAIC COVENANT - COVENANT OF THE LAW), My covenant which they broke, although I was a Husband to them (cf Jer 3:14KJV, Isa 54:5, Hos 2:19)," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the **COVENANT** which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "**I will put My law within them and on their heart** I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF COVENANT!). 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Jeremiah 32:37-44 (commentary) Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place (THE LAND OF ISRAEL) and make them dwell in safety. 38 "They shall be My people, and I will be their God (THE LANGUAGE OF COVENANT); 39 and **I will give them one heart and one way**, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. 40 "I will make an **EVERLASTING COVENANT** (NEW COVENANT) with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. 41 "I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land (LAND OF ISRAEL) with all My heart and with all My soul. 42 "For thus says the LORD, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them. 43 'Fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans." 44 'Men will buy fields for money, sign and seal deeds, and call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland and in the cities of the Negev; for I will restore their fortunes,' declares the LORD."

Ezekiel 36:24-27 (commentary) For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land (THE LAND OF ISRAEL). 25 "[Then](#) I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "Moreover, I will give you a **NEW HEART** and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Related Resource:

- [New Covenant in the Old Testament](#)

ISRAEL IS FINALLY ABLE TO FULFILL THE SHEMA

To love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul - The regenerate Jews of the nation will be able to fulfill the great command of the Shema...

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Dt 6:5+)

Note the phrase **LOVE THE LORD** is found by far most often in Deuteronomy (8/13 OT uses) -

Deut. 6:5; Deut. 11:1; Deut. 11:13; Deut. 11:22; Deut. 13:3; Deut. 19:9; Deut. 30:6; Deut. 30:16; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 23:11; Ps. 31:23; Ps. 97:10; Ps. 116:1 (cf NT uses Matt. 22:37; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27; 1 Co. 16:22)

Moses' point is that because of their circumcised hearts, Israel will finally have the **desire** and the **power** (cf Php 2:13NLT+) to truly obey this demand. This standard (all your heart, not part) was (and still is) **impossible** for fallen men to achieve, but can be supernaturally empowered and made **possible**.

One must beware of external obedience without any internal change - For example in Malachi 1, following the return from exile, there is an example of the people acting out their covenant obligations, but not having their heart in it (note **with all your heart and with**

all your soul). They would bring unhealthy animals for sacrifice. God stated:

"Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you."
(Malachi 1:10-note).

So that you may live: Real life is a life of obedience (enabled by grace not legalism). Ultimately fulfilled in Zech 13:9, Ro 11:26 (HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.)

Merrill comments - People can **love** God with all their heart only after the heart itself has been radically changed to a Godward direction. When that happens, not only is obedience possible but so is life (**so that you may live**). Here more than physical life on the land is in view. There is a glimpse of life that does not end, life that comes to birth with the supernatural work of grace that alone is sufficient to account for all of these aspects of Israel's future restoration (cf. Lev 18:5; Ezek 20:11–13; Luke 10:28; Rom 10:5–10).
([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#).)

EXCURSUS ON ROLE OF HOLY SPIRIT IN OT HEART CIRCUMCISION

Below are notes from Deuteronomy 10:16 (see commentary) where Israel was charged to "circumcise your heart."

- See also circumcision of the heart discussed in Joshua 22.

So circumcise (mul) your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer - While this is not actually a command in the Hebrew, the instruction nevertheless conveys that sense and a parallel passage in Jer 4:4 is definitely a command to the Jews to "**circumcise yourselves**." Clearly the reference to circumcision of one's **heart** signifies that this is a figure of speech and not literal circumcision as described and prescribed in Genesis 17. In short, this passage calls for "spiritual surgery," and of the type that only Yahweh Himself could accomplish. Keep in mind that God had given the Israelites five commandments in Dt 10:12+. However God never gives commandments without providing the means to obey His commandments. To say it another way God's commandments always include His enablements! In Dt 30:6+ we see it is the LORD Who says He will "circumcise" their heart. While this latter passage is a prophecy that will be filled at the end of this age, one can deduce that the call for Israel to circumcise their hearts in Dt 10:16 is a call for them to trust God to carry out this transaction. How does this take place? Look first at Stephen's sermon in Acts 7:51+ addressed to his non-believing Jewish persecutors...

"You men who are **stiff-necked** and **uncircumcised in heart** and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.

Notice how Stephen's words parallel the words of Moses in Dt 10:16. Specifically notice that they both passages allude to the **heart**, either **uncircumcised** and or as a call to **circumcise** your heart. Notice also that both passages speak of stiff-necked ("stiffen your neck no longer"). So what can we conclude from Stephen's words that helps explain the charge in Dt 10:16? Note that Stephen states that his hearers were **always resisting the Holy Spirit** and says this is what their **fathers** had also done. In context the phrase "**as your fathers did**" is a reference to their Jewish "**fathers**" in the Old Testament. Compare the continual resistance of the fathers to the Holy Spirit in Nehemiah 9:30 ("You bore with them for many years, and **admonished them by Your Spirit** through Your prophets, yet **they would not give ear**.") and Isaiah 63:10 ("they **rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit**"). Based on these observations, one can deduce that in the Old Testament it was the Holy Spirit Who was active in performing the radical spiritual surgery necessary to circumcise a heart. Paul supports the premise that was the Holy Spirit Who was the active Agent in spiritual circumcision, writing in Romans 2:29+ (cf Col 2:11+)

"But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit**, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."

And since we know from Genesis 1:2 (among many other OT passages) that the Holy Spirit was active in the OT, it follows that the charge to circumcise their hearts was a charge that only the Holy Spirit could accomplish. Further, it would seem to fair when comparing spiritual circumcision with other Scriptures, that circumcision of the heart is synonymous with genuine salvation. And so if we look at the "salvation" of Abraham in Genesis 15:6+ we read...

Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Abraham was declared righteous by God by faith. It therefore is Biblically logical to say that Abraham had a "circumcised heart" and that the only way the Israelites could "circumcise their hearts" in Dt 10:16 would be by faith, a faith just like Abraham's faith. How

many of the Israelites received circumcised hearts? It is difficult to say with certainty but OT history supports that most of the nation had uncircumcised hearts (were not saved, cf Dt 32:20+). One other point that should be made is that while the Spirit was active in the OT and in bringing about "salvation," the Spirit did not permanently indwell OT believers as He does every NT believer. As an aside we know the Spirit did occasionally indwell men in the OT including Joshua of whom God Himself said he was "**a man in whom is the Spirit.**" (Nu 27:18) Did the Spirit indwell Joshua for all or most of his life? The Bible does not say so we will have to wait until we arrive in Heaven to answer questions like that (cf Dt 29:29).

Related Resource:

- [What was the role of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? | GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org/What-was-the-role-of-the-Holy-Spirit-in-the-Old-Testament/)

C H Spurgeon - Deuteronomy 30:6 Mark of Covenant Grace - Faith's Checkbook

HERE we read of the **true circumcision**.

Note the author of it: "The Lord thy God." He alone can deal effectually with our hearts and take away their carnality and pollution. To make us love God with all our hearts and souls is a miracle of grace which only the Holy Ghost can work. We must look to the Lord alone for this and never be satisfied with anything short of it.

Note where this circumcision is wrought: it is not of the flesh, but of the spirit. It is the essential mark of the covenant of grace. Love to God is the indelible token of the chosen seed; by this secret seal, the election of grace is certified to the believer. We must see to it that we trust in no outward ritual, but are sealed in heart by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Note what the result is: "that thou mayest live." To be carnally minded is death. In the overcoming of the flesh we find life and peace (Ro 8:6) If we mind the things of the Spirit, we shall live.

Oh, that Jehovah, our God, may complete His gracious work upon our inner natures, that in the fullest and highest sense we may live unto the Lord. Amen

Israel's Restoration J. Orr Deuteronomy 30:1-10

The blackness of the picture of Israel's rejection and desolation is relieved by this rim of gold on the further edge. The verses seem to teach, not only that if Israel repent, mercy awaits it, but that Israel will repent; that a day of repentance is ordained for it - **a day in which the veil that has been so long left lying on Jewish hearts will be lifted off, and the nation will mourn for him whom it has pierced and has so long rejected** (Zechariah 12:9-14; Romans 11:25-33; 2 Corinthians 3:14-16). The result will be the incorporation of the Israelitish people into Christ's kingdom, with possibly (**ED: NOT POSSIBLY BUT DEFINITELY**) restoration to the land given them as a national possession, and blessings, temporal and spiritual, beyond those bestowed upon their fathers (ver. 5). In a wider regard, the passage teaches -

I. THAT IN MAN'S CONVERSION, IT IS THE SINNER, NOT GOD, WHO CHANGES. Israel is saved at last, not by any lowering of the standard of holiness, or by any change in God's requirements, or by any new and easier way of life being discovered than that originally provided, but by Israel coming round to God's way of thinking, and doing in the end what God pleaded with it to do at first (ver. 2). After all their sorrowful experiences, the people are brought to this: that they must submit to do what they were told in the beginning that they ought to do. It is so always. There can be no change on God's part. If the sinner is to be saved, it is he who must forsake his thoughts and his ways (Isaiah 55:7). He must do at last what he now feels he has not the least inclination to do - what, as years go on, he is getting the more disinclined even to think about. Will he do it? Is it likely? Is it certain? If ever it is to come about, what agonies of soul must be gone through before so great a revolution can be produced!

II. THAT CONVERSION IS SOMETIMES A RESULT OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HARDNESS OF TRANSGRESSION. It is in the far-off country, broken, peeled, and scattered, that Israel, like the prodigal (Luke 15:14-19), remembers the Father's house. Is not this a reason why God sometimes leaves a sinner to eat of the fruit of his own devices - to take the reins upon his own neck, and plunge wildly away into sin's wildernesses? - that he may taste the hardness of such courses, the bitterness, the emptiness, the essential unsatisfyingness of a life of evil, and so, if by no gentler methods, be brought back to ways of righteousness? The penalties which attend sin are, while retributive, also designed in this world for the sinner's correction (Hosea 2:6-23; Hosea 14.).

III. THAT THE MOMENT THE SINNER RETURNS, GOD IS READY TO FORGIVE HIM. We must not, indeed, post-date the mercy of God, as if that waited on the sinner's self-moved return as a condition of showing him any kindness. God's gracious action goes before conversion - leading, drawing, striving, enlightening, aiding; nay, it is this gracious action which leads to conversion. This is of itself a pledge that when conversion comes, he who has thus drawn us to himself will not say us "nay." But we have express

assurances, backed by numerous examples, that whoso cometh he will in no wise east out (Psalm 32:5; John 6:37; 1 John 1:9). There is:

1. Forgiveness, with reversal of sentence of rejection (ver. 3).
2. Redemption from bondage (vers. 3, 4; Colossians 1:13).
3. Restoration to inheritance (ver. 5; Ephesians 1:14).
4. A new heart and spirit (ver. 6).
5. Deliverance from enemies (ver. 7; 2 Thessalonians 1:5, 6).
6. Untold blessings (ver. 9; Ephesians 1:3). - J.O.

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

CIRCUMCISION is the sign of separation. It was enjoined on Abraham and his children that they might be God's peculiar people, chosen from all the nations of the earth. Similarly, the circumcision of Christ, which is made without hands, of which the Apostle speaks, is a putting off, a separation from the sins of the flesh, a participation in the grave and burial of Christ (Col. 2:12-[note](#)).

We must be separated from the spirit and temper of the world. Between us and its sins, ambitions, methods, there must be not only an outward, but a heart severance. We were separated in the purpose of God when Jesus was cast without the camp to die. But we must be separate in our personal behavior. Wouldst thou have this? Then claim that this promise should be fulfilled, and ask that God would circumcise thine heart--the seat of thine affections, the hearth of thy soul-life.

Then thou wilt love the Lord with all thine, heart. This is why we love God so little. The force of our love is spread over too wide a sur-face-it is like the river Orinoco, which is lost in swamps as it approaches the sea. If only we were really separated from all that is alien to God, and, given up to Him wholly, we should find all the capacity of our hearts becoming filled with His love. We should love all things and people with a tenderness and glow which were steeped in colors obtained from His.

You will never succeed in overthrowing the strongholds of Satan, Christian worker, till God has taken away your **self-reliance**, and has brought you down into the dust of death: then, when the sentence of death is in yourself you will begin to experience the energy of the Divine life, the glory of the Divine victory.

Spurgeon - The True Circumcision

I. THE AUTHOR OF IT. "The Lord thy God." He alone can deal effectively with our heart, and take away its carnality and pollution.

II. WHERE IT IS WROUGHT. It is not of the flesh, but of the spirit. It is the essential mark of the covenant of grace.

III. THE RESULT. "That thou mayest live." To be carnally minded is death. In the overcoming of the flesh we find life and peace.

Deuteronomy 30:1-20

Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved. - Psalm 80:3

TODAY IN THE WORD

Early one February morning while Leyla Nordby slept, her 13-month-old daughter Erika slipped quietly out the door of the home where they were staying and wandered off, clothed only in a diaper and a pink dress. Several hours later her frantic mother found her lying face down in the snow. Erika's body temperature had dropped by more than half, her veins were frozen, and a cardiac monitor failed to register any measurable pumping action by her heart. Clinically speaking, Erika was dead. Doctors had prepared a heart-lung bypass to try and warm her blood when something remarkable happened. Little Erika's heart suddenly began beating again on its own. "How that happened," the paramedic on the scene later observed, "is a mystery to everyone right now."

Moses foresaw a time when Israel would share a similar experience. He promised that after suffering the consequences of their own

disobedience, Israel's fortunes would be restored. Their cold hearts would begin to beat once again for God. Turning back to God, however, would require more than a mere act of the will. It would need intervention by God Himself. He would have to give them "a mind that understands," "eyes that see," and "ears that hear" (Deut. 29:4).

This promise of reconciliation was contingent on Israel's future repentance. Before it could come to pass, they would need to "take to heart" all the blessings and punishments they had experienced at God's hand (Deut. 30:1). Moses made it equally clear that such a repentance was itself a work of divine compassion. God alone was able to "circumcise" their hearts and create within them an ability to love Him with their hearts and souls (Deut. 30:6).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Read Deuteronomy 29:1-29. How did God expect Israel to respond to His Word? What did He expect them to learn from their experiences? One of Israel's problems seems to have been their inability to process their experiences through the grid of divine truth. Consider using a spiritual journal to keep you from making the same mistake. As you record your experiences, think about what God's Word has to say about your circumstances and try to discover the spiritual lessons He has hidden in the ordinary events of your day.

Deuteronomy 30:7 "The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.

KJV - And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

- Numbers 24:14; Ps 137:7-9; Isaiah 10:12; 14:1-27; Jeremiah 25:12-16,29; Jeremiah 50:33,34; 51:24-26,34-37; Lamentations 3:54-66; 4:21,22; Ezekiel 25:3,6,8; Ezekiel 25:12,15; Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13; Obadiah 1:10; Zechariah 12:3
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DIVINE RETRIBUTION FOR ANTI-SEMITES!

Note that Dt 30:7-10 repeats much of what has been stated in Dt 30:1-6, especially Dt 30:1-3.

The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies- All who have hated and persecuted Israel will be judged by God. Anti-Semitism will be judged and eradicated from the earth in that day.

This promise is God's faithful fulfillment of Genesis 12:3+

And I will bless those who bless you, **And the one who curses you I will curse.** And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Deuteronomy 30:8 "And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today.

KJV - And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.

- Dt 30:2; Proverbs 16:1; Isaiah 1:25,26; Jeremiah 31:33; 32:39,40; Ezekiel 11:19,20; 36:27; Ezekiel 37:24; Romans 11:26,27; Ephesians 2:16; Philippians 2:13
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

And you shall again (shub/sub) obey (shama) the LORD - KJV more literal = "thou shalt return and obey." Dt 30:2 "obey Him with all your heart and soul."

Observe all His commandments which I command you today - How could they do this? They could now do this because they had a "circumcised heart" and as God said in Ezekiel 36:27+

"I will put My Spirit within you and **cause you to walk in My statutes** (GOD'S PROVISION OF POWER), and **you will be careful to observe** My ordinances (MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT ENABLED BY THE

SPIRIT'S POWER).

Comment: This passage describing the Spirit's enabling the born again Jews to obey and observe is the counterpart of the NT passage in Philippians 2:

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you (THE SPIRIT), both to will (DESIRE TO OBEY) and to work (THE POWER TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION) for His good pleasure. (Phil 2:12⁺, Phil 2:13⁺)

Deuteronomy 30:9 "Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers

KJV - And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:

- **will prosper you** Leviticus 26:4,6,9,10
- **the LORD will again rejoice over you** Dt 28:63; Isaiah 62:5; 65:19; Jer 32:41; 33:9; Zeph 3:17; Luke 15:6-10,32; Jn 15:11
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then - **Then** is an important [expression of time](#), describes characteristics of the time of the [Messianic Age](#) inaugurated by the return of the Messiah. The covenant cursings will be reversed and replaced by covenant blessings associated with the Spirit enabled obedience.

God will prosper you abundantly (cf Dt 28:4,11-14) - This blessing is they have finally obeyed the LORD wholeheartedly.

This future prosperity of Israel is described for example in Amos 9+

"In that day (WHEN MESSIAH RETURNS) I will raise up the fallen booth of David, And wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins And rebuild it as in the days of old (The continuation of the Davidic dynasty is envisioned as alluded to in Isa 9:6-7; Jer 33:15, 17; Mic 5:2); 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom And all the nations who are called by My name," Declares the LORD who does this (James' used this in his argument in Acts 15:17+, cf Acts 15:12-21, as evidence that the Gentile were included in the redemptive program of God predicted in Amos 9:11-12) 13 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "When the plowman will overtake the reaper And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the mountains will drip sweet wine And all the hills will be dissolved. 14 "Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, And they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, And make gardens and eat their fruit. 15 "I will also plant them on their land, And they will not again be rooted out from their land Which I have given them," Says the LORD your God.

This prophetic promise is the fulfillment of the prophecies in Dt 28:1, 4+

"Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

"Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

The LORD will again ([shub/sub](#)) rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers - This is a reversal of the last part of the description in Dt 28:63

"It shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it.

The prophet **Zephaniah** described this glorious day (to be realized in the [Millennium](#)) for the redeemed remnant of Israel declaring

The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. **He will exult over you with joy**, He will be quiet in His love, **He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy**. (Zephaniah 3:17⁺)

Deuteronomy 30:10 if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul

KJV - If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

- **if you obey the LORD your God** Dt 30:2,8; Isaiah 55:2,3; 1 Corinthians 7:19
- **if you turn to the LORD your God** Nehemiah 1:9; Lamentations 3:40,41; Ezekiel 18:21; 33:11,14,19; Acts 3:19; 26:20
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

OBEDIENCE IS THE FRUIT EXPECTED OF SALVATION

If you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law- The blessings previously described are conditioned on Israel's obedience (key idea in Dt 30:2, 8, 10, 17, 20).

Obey (hear, listen, understand)(08085) **shama** means to **hear** (Adam and Eve hearing God = Ge 3:8, 10, Ge 18:10 = "overheard"), to **listen** (Ge 3:17, Ge 16:2 [= this was a big mistake and was the origin of Jews and Arabs!]) Ex 6:9,16:20, 18:19, Webster's 1828 on "listen" = to hearken; to give ear; to attend closely with a view to hear. To obey; to yield to advice; to follow admonition) and since hearing/listening are often closely linked to obedience, **shama** is translated **obey** (1 Sa 15:22, Ge 22:18, 26:5, 39:10, Ex 19:5, **disobedience** = Lev 26:14, 18, 21, 27) or to understand. KJV translates **shama** "**hearken**" (196x) a word which means to give respectful attention. Of God's hearing in general or hearing our prayers (Hab 1:2, Ps 66:18, click here for more in the Psalms, cf God's hearing in Zeph 2:8, Ge 16:11, 17:20, 30:17, 22, Ge 21:17, 29:33, 30:6, 17, 22; Ex 2:24, Ex 16:8, 9, 12, Nu 11:1, 12:2). **Shama** means "to hear intelligently and attentively and respond appropriately." In other words to hear does not convey the idea of "in one ear and out the other!" The most famous use is the so-called "**Shema**" in Dt 6:4

Shama is a key word in Deuteronomy 30 translated **obey (or obeying)** in all but Dt 30:12,13 where it is translated **hear** - Deut 30:2, 8, 10, 12, 13, 17, 20.

The greatest significance of the use of **shama** is that of relation of man to God, especially where the context speaks of **obedience**. **Obedience is the supreme test of faith and reverence for God.** (READ THAT AGAIN! IT IS THAT IMPORTANT!) The Old Testament conception of obedience was vital. It was the one important relationship which must not be broken. While sometimes this relation may have been formal and cold, it nevertheless was the one strong tie which held the people close to God. The significant spiritual relation is expressed by Samuel when he asks the question, "Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in **obeying** (shama) the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to **obey** (shama) is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sa 15:22). It was the condition without which no right relation might be sustained to Yahweh. This is most clearly stated in the relation between Abraham and Yahweh when he is assured "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast **obeyed** (shama) my voice" (Ge 22:18). In prophetic utterances, future blessing and prosperity were conditioned upon obedience: "If ye be willing and **obedient** (shama), ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa 1:19). After surveying the glories of the Messianic kingdom, the prophet assures the people that "this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently **obey** (shama) the voice of Yahweh your God" (Zec 6:15). On the other hand misfortune, calamity, distress and famine are due to their disobedience and distrust of Yahweh.

OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND HIS WORD
is never an option for believers.

if you turn (shub/sub) to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul - This is the second of two conditional statements ("If"). Both speak to the condition of obedience which must be met in order to enjoy the blessings (e.g., **the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand** - Dt 30:9), but in the context (esp Dt 30:6) now Israel would have the power to obey ("circumcised heart").

[Moody Bible Commentary](#) - All the blessings that would have been withheld because of disobedience would be reinstated. Still, once again these future blessings would depend on Israel's obedience to the Lord and their relating to Him with their whole **heart**

and soul.

[Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#) – The passage closes with what at first appears to be contrary to the message of grace just announced. Grammatically, Dt 30:10 begins with a conditional clause (ki, "if") and then goes on to suggest that all the aforementioned blessings will come *if* there is unequivocal obedience to the terms of the covenant (seper hattorah, "book of the law," clearly referring to the book of Deuteronomy) and *if* the people repent with all their being. There is, however, no conflict here, for it is true that fellowship with God depends on one's faith and obedience, but it is likewise crystal clear from this text that the ability to believe and to obey is an ability that God himself gives (cf. Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

Merrill comments - The syntax of v. 10 is different, however, for the dependent clause is highly conditional. The question here is not *when* Israel would obey and turn to the Lord but *if*. That is, the issue here (as opposed to Dt 30:1–6) is not the eternity of the covenant relationship itself—a matter never denied in Scripture—but the benefits and blessings attached to covenant obedience in the present. If Israel historically did all that the Lord required by way of covenant observance (Dt 30:10), they could expect all the results listed earlier (Dt 30:7–9). *When* Israel did eschatologically all that the Lord made possible by way of covenant observance (Dt 30:1–2), they could expect all the results that followed (Dt 30:3–6). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#).)

Deuteronomy 30:11 "For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach

KJV - For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

UBS Translation - Moses said to the people of Israel: "These commandments that I am giving you today are not too difficult to understand or obey.

- Ps 147:19,20; Isaiah 45:19; Romans 16:25,26; Colossians 1:26,27
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD'S LAW IS NOT TOO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND OR OBEY

For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you (commandment - 3x Dt. 30:10, 11, 16) - What is **this commandment** to which Moses refers? It is all the laws and teachings Moses had given them (cf Dt 5:31), not just a single specific commandment. However there is a sense in which it could all be summed up as love God and love your fellow man (cf Lk 10:26, 27, 28). **Kalland** says this refers to "all the revelation of God given through Moses in the covenant-treaty." (Expositor's Bible Commentary) **Keil** agree that **this commandment** is "used as in Deut. 6:1 to denote the whole law."

Eugene Merrill adds that **commandment** "is the **commandment** (mišwâ) of the Lord, that whole body of stipulation that Moses was commanding that very day (v. 11). This single word "**commandment**" occurs regularly in Deuteronomy as a term denoting the entire covenant text (cf. Dt 4:2; 5:29; 7:9; 8:2, 6; 11:8, 13, 22, 27; 13:4, 18; 15:5; 26:13, 18; 27:1; 28:1, 9, 13; 30:8). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#).)

Constable - The duty of obedience did not lie beyond the average Israelite's ability if he or she turned to Yahweh wholeheartedly (v. 10). God was not asking something impossible of His people (vv. 11-15; cf. Ro 10:6-8). He had given them the Mosaic Law so they could obey.

Is not too difficult for you - The NLT paraphrases it "This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you to understand, and it is not beyond your reach." It is not too complicated.

While the meaning of **not too difficult** seems to mean to be **not too difficult to understand**, there is also a sense in which the commandment is **not too difficult** to obey (Bratcher - UBS Handbook: Deuteronomy). Of course it is IMPOSSIBLE to obey in our strength. And that is where the teaching on "cardiac circumcision" comes into play.

HOW COULD ANY OT JEW LOVE GOD WITH A WHOLE HEART? SOME THOUGHTS

In Deuteronomy 10:16 Moses instructs Israel "**So** (See context - Dt 10:12-15) **circumcise your heart** (Literally, *the foreskin of your heart*), **and stiffen your neck no longer.**" Think about what he is telling them to do! Meade puts it this way "Given the full scope of redemptive history, this command is tantamount to telling a kleptomaniac to stop stealing without giving him or her any power to overcome the extreme desire to steal." ([Reference](#)) What Moses is saying in Deuteronomy 10:16 is literally impossible by reliance on

human power! But in Deut 30:6 Moses explains to them that it is not they themselves who can carry out this internal "cardiac circumcision" but it is **"the LORD your God (Who) will circumcise YOUR heart (ADDRESSED TO HIS HEARERS IN THE PRESENT) and the heart of your descendants (REFERRING TO THE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ISRAEL)."** Now imagine you are a Jewish man, you are physically circumcised, and you hear Moses teaching in Deuteronomy regarding circumcision of your heart. While we cannot know for certain their response, surely some of these Jewish hearers responded by asking Moses for further "exposition" regarding what he meant by "cardiac circumcision." (especially in light of how highly they held physical circumcision!) I would propose that there is but one way to attain the spiritual circumcision Moses alludes to in Dt 10:16 and Dt 30:6 and that is the one way God has provided for sinful mankind from Genesis to Revelation. **The one way** (cf Jn 14:6) is by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9) in the Gospel concerning the Messiah. We know that the Jews had "pictures" or "foreshadows" of Messiah Who was to come (cf Col 2:17), "shadows" going all the way back to the **proto-evangelium** in Genesis 3:15-note). Furthermore, we know that Abraham heard the proclamation of the "Gospel" (Gal 3:8-note) and by faith (Ge 15:6-note) he entered into the covenant God had cut with him in Genesis 15:12-18-note, especially Ge 15:18-note. Notice also that Paul in quoting from Deut 30:12-14 in Romans 10:6-7 uses the phrase **"the righteousness based on faith"** speaks thus, "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?' (that is, to bring Christ down), or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." By analogy, for an OT Jew to find **righteousness based on faith**, there is no need to ascend to heaven or descend to the abyss, since Messiah has been prophesied as the One in Whom that righteousness is attainable by grace through faith (in the Old Testament just as in the New Testament). The difference of course is that in Romans 10:6-7 Paul is alluding not to the prophesied coming of the Messiah but of the Messiah Who had come, had been crucified and had resurrected from the dead. The genuine believers in the OT were looking forward to the Messiah's substitutionary atonement on Calvary, whereas we in the Church age look back to the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of our Messiah. Both OT and NT saints are saved the same way, by grace through faith. For the OT saints "in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins" they committed as Paul explains in Ro 3:25-note. This I would propose is how a Jew would be able to love God with all his heart! This is the only way an OT Jew listening to (or reading) the words of Moses would have found **this commandment not too difficult to obey!**

[David Guzik](#) commenting on Ro 3:25-note explains that...

God, in His forbearance, had passed over the sins of those Old Testament saints who trusted in the coming Messiah. At the cross, those sins were no longer passed over, they were paid for. The idea is that through the animal sacrifice of the Old Testament, those who looked in faith to the coming Messiah had their sins "covered" by a sort of an **"IOU"** or **promissory note** (cp Acts 17:30). That temporary covering was redeemed for full payment at the cross. The work of Jesus on the cross freed God from the charge that He passed over sin committed before the cross lightly. They were passed over for a time, but they were finally paid for.

In Lev 26:40, 41-see in depth commentary God again prescribed the remedy for a hard heart was to circumcise one's heart, this time associated with humbling one's self:

"If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me—I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or **if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled** so that they then make amends for their iniquity..."

The point of all these passages in the Pentateuch that prescribe **"cardiac circumcision"** means that God was not merely teaching an outward form of religion in the OT, but was instructing Israel on their need for an internal change, which ultimately points to their need to place their faith in the promised Messiah and Kinsman-Redeemer. As discussed above, how much they understood of salvation by grace through faith, we cannot know. From Paul's writings we know that true circumcision is "of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter" (Ro 2:29-note, cf Col 2:11-13-note). And so we know that **there can be no heart circumcision without the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit**. We also know that there was always a [remnant](#) of Israel **who did place their faith in Messiah to come and whose hearts were circumcised by the Spirit**. For them this commandment would not be too difficult to keep.

The **ESV Study Bible** says "When the heart is circumcised, keeping the law is possible."

I tend to agree with the **ESV Note** but it is not a common interpretation. In the context Moses has just described **acircumcised heart** (Dt 30:6) is one that is able to obey ("to love the LORD" -**love** is synonymous with obedience or keeping God's words in John 14:15, 24). Could anyone with an uncircumcised heart obey the commandment (with a whole heart)? Of course not, certainly not perfectly! And we know that God always had a remnant of Israel that were true believers in Messiah, so surely some of those who heard Moses' teaching about the need for and the provision for a circumcised heart and came face to face with the truth that they had no excuse for not obeying God (they could not say I cannot understand, etc) would have sought God's grace to give them a circumcised heart ([as explained above](#)). I admit the text does not say that occurred, but how else could they possibly have kept the commandment? And we know that one of the purposes of the Law was to drive men to see their need for Messiah (Gal 3:24+).

John Meade in a detailed theological article on spiritual circumcision adds that

"There are two interpretive options regarding Deuteronomy 30:11-14 and its relationship to the preceding section: (1) Verses 11-14 return the reader to the present and teach that the Torah is not too difficult for Israel to keep. (2) Verses 11-14 continue the eschatological force of Dt 30:1-10 and therefore the ease of keeping the Torah accompanies heart circumcision upon the second stage of the return from exile. The present exegesis supports the second option: **the circumcision of the heart in Dt 30:6, which the people could not do themselves** (Dt 10:16+), **will free the people to love Yahweh**. When the prophets describe the heart change to occur in the **new covenant**, they typically include a description of the people keeping the Torah or God's commands (Ezek 36:27; Jer 31:33-34). In Deuteronomy, the connection between internal transformation and obedience of the Torah is not made explicit in Dt 30:6. However, if Dt 30:11-14 continues the thought in Dt 30:1-10 as a subordinate clause explaining the future implications of the circumcised heart, then Dt 30:11-14 clarifies that the internal transformation of heart circumcision leads to keeping the Torah commanded by Moses in Moab. The ease of keeping the Torah was not a reality tied to the (ED: PHYSICAL/NATURAL) **circumcision** of the Abrahamic and Sinai covenants; rather, it was a reality predicted to accompany the (ED: SPIRITUAL/SUPERNATURAL) **circumcision of the heart** and the **new covenant** at the second stage of the return from exile. At this time, the exile is ended and the blessed restoration commences. ([Circumcision Of The Heart In Leviticus And Deuteronomy: Divine Means For Resolving Curse And Bringing Blessing](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

William MacDonald adds another excellent thought - These verses are used by Paul in Romans 10:5-8 and are applied to Christ and the gospel. The covenant was not easy to keep (ED: HOW ABOUT "IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP!"), but God had made provision in case of failure. The people were then required to repent and to bring the appointed sacrifices. **Since the sacrifices were types of Christ, the lesson is that those who sin should repent and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.** ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

[Keil and Delitzsch](#) rightly states that "however near the law had thus been brought to man, sin had so estranged the human heart from the Word of God, that doing and keeping the law had become invariably difficult, and in fact **impossible**; so that the declaration, "**the word is in thy heart,**" only attains its full realization through the preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God **ED: AND WE KNOW THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED IN THE OT AS PAUL EXPLAINED IN Galatians 3:8-note)**, and the righteousness that is by faith (cf Ro 4:5-13-[note](#))."

Reformation Study Bible takes a slightly different approach commenting - Recalling his words in Dt 6:6, Moses maintains that the commandment God revealed through him and the righteousness it required were readily accessible to and attainable by Israel (Dt 30:11). He anticipates, however, that **those with uncircumcised hearts and ears** will raise questions denying these truths, and will seek to establish a righteousness of their own (Dt 30:12, 13). (ED: Or alternatively seek the righteousness in the same way their father Abraham attained righteousness in Genesis 15:6-note!) ([Deut 30:11-14](#))

[Keil](#) say it "is not too hard to grasp, or unintelligible."

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge note on **too difficult** - Or as the (Hebrew) word *niphlaith* implies, not too wonderful for thee to comprehend or perform; but easily to be acquainted with, and understood, because clearly revealed: neither is it afar off; it was proclaimed in you ears from mount Sinai, and is now proclaimed in the sanctuary: it is not in heaven; for it has been already revealed: neither is it beyond the sea; that you need travel for instruction, as the ancient philosophers did, or seek instruction from men, at immense labour and expense; but the word is very nigh to thee; brought to thy very doors; in thy mouth, and in thy heart; made so familiar as to afford a topic of common discourse, that it might be laid up in the memory and reduced to practice.

Merrill on **too difficult** - The point at issue here was not the ease or even possibility of keeping the word of the Lord (though theoretically the latter is so) but of even knowing what it was. Contrary to the inscrutable and enigmatic ways of the pagan gods, the Lord's purposes and will for His people are **crystal clear**. They are not "**too difficult**" (lō' niplē't, literally, "not too wonderful," i.e., beyond comprehension) or beyond reach (Dt 30:11). **That is, they can be understood by the human mind despite its limitations.** ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#))(Bolding added)

[Explore the Bible](#) - To say that His commandments are "not too difficult" does not "mean that obedience is easy but rather that it is simple. It is not complicated and distracted by obscure philosophies, complex rules, or esoteric religious rituals, accessible only to the privileged few. All those who are in the covenant relationship are deemed capable of understanding and obeying the covenant law [italics his]" (Wright, 291).

Difficult (wonderful) ([06381](#))([pala](#)) is a verb which means to be difficult, to be hard, to be extraordinary or amazing, be surpassing or to cause a wonderful thing to happen. To be beyond one's power to do. To do

something wonderful, extraordinary or difficult. The Septuagint translates **pala** in this verse with the adjective **huperogkos** (from hupér = over, + ógkos = bulky, swollen, a mass) which means oversized, overblown, of excessive bulk, swollen to a great size, high-sounding. In context this Greek word seems to mean something like excessive. The words of God's **commandment** are not excessive, not of such "great size" as to be too difficult to grasp or understand. The corollary is that anyone and everyone should be able to understand them. Another corollary is that no one has an excuse for obeying them!

Commandment (04687)(**mitsvah** from **tsavah** = to lay charge upon, command, order) is that which is commanded, even human (esp a king, e.g. 2 Chr 9:14) or divine (most often) . In short it is not a suggestion. In the Pentateuch, **mitsvah** speaks only of God's commands to men, never of men's commands. Note that commandment is coupled with "keep" some 69 times in the NAS, clearly indicating that a major emphasis of this **mitsvah** is human obedience to God. **Mitsvah** refers to God's orders, the direction in which to go or not to go. Pr 6:23 says God's **mitsvah** is a lamp giving light to the eyes so we can see where to walk or not walk. It is notable that the greatest frequency of **mitsvah** is in the book of Deuteronomy, the "second giving of the law" (where it occurs some 43 times). There are 22 uses of **mitsvah** in Psalm 119 (see discussion below of the one from Ps 119:10). The term **Bar Mitsvah** ("Son of the Commandment" or [here](#)) marks the coming of age for a young Jewish male who accepts his duties relating to the Law of Moses. The Jews compiled a listing of what they interpreted as God's commands coming up with **613 mitzvot** ([see also](#)).

Baker on mitsvah - In the singular, it may distinguish a certain commandment (1 Ki. 13:21); yet it appears most frequently in the plural to designate the entire corpus of divine law and instruction (Ge 26:5; Ex. 16:28; Dt. 6:2; 1 Ki. 2:3). It is also important to note that, in the plural, this word often appears in synonymous parallelism with such words as ḥuqqîm ([02706](#)); mišpāṭîm ([04941](#)); ʿēdōt ([05715](#)); tôrōt ([08451](#)). (The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament)

Gilbrant - mitwāh is concerned with the authority of the subject, and usually refers to orders from God, a ruler, a parent or a teacher. The latter is the source of commandments in Proverbs, where the root verb "to command" is never used. The master (literally, "father") in Proverbs instructs his pupil (literally, "son") to keep his **commandments**, which ultimately stem from God's commands. **Mitswāh** can be used of an obligation to do something (e.g., Neh. 10:32) or what is divinely commanded (Neh. 13:5). The instructions of God through Moses on a subject can be summed up in the singular, "**the commandment of Moses**" (2 Chr. 8:13). The NIV translates "according to the commandment of David" as "in the way prescribed by David" (2 Chr. 29:25). **Mitswāh** can refer to a specific order for a specific situation in time (Mal. 2:1), or it can refer to a principle or combination of principles of the eternal character and will of God (1 Sa 13:13). It seems that Ge 26:5f uses this and the other words for laws to summarize obedience to whatever God says. Eccl 12:13 summarizes the whole covenant relationship with God as fearing or reverentially responding to Him with the whole being, and keeping his commandments. Psalm 19:8-[note](#) says, "The **commandment** of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." We must never let the Word of God become to us as "a human commandment learned by rote" (Isa. 29:13, NRSB). (The Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

Eccl 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His **commandments**, because this applies to every person.

Comment: This is the summary of an old man, a man who has become wise by living life to the full (but not always in a godly manner), and so his (Solomon's) conclusion deserves our very close attention! Notice how fear, a reverential awe (a fear of sullyng the Name of God, etc) of God is a "precursor" to obeying or keeping His mitsvah! I fear the modern church has lost a sense of the vital importance of godly fear as a stimulus for a life of godliness.

Psalm 119:10 With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your **commandments**.

Comment: THIS IS A PRAYER WE SHOULD ALL PRAY DAILY! Notice that it was prayed by one who sought God with ALL his heart! If he needed to pray this how much more do we! The maturing man or woman of God grows increasingly aware of their need for God's power to live a Godward life! cf similar prayers of this genre - Ps 19:12-13 = "acquit...keep back"; Ps 25:15 = "My eyes are continually toward the LORD, for He will pluck my feet out of the net." David understood his vulnerability and his natural tendency to not keep God's commandments. We need to emulate his example of humble dependence on God's power to keep us from being ensnared! (Cf other uses Ps 119:6,10,19,21,32,35,47-48,60,66,73,86,96,98,115,127,131,143,151,166,172,176)

Vine - In the Pentateuch, God is always the Giver of the mitsvah (Dt. 8:1-2). The "commandment" may be a

prescription ("thou shalt do ...") or a [proscription](#) ("thou shalt not do ..."). The commandments were given in the hearing of the Israelites ([and with a conditional promise in] Ex 15:26; Dt. 11:13-14), who were to "do" (Lev. 4:2ff.) and "keep" (Deut. 4:2; Ps. 78:7) them. Any failure to do so signified a covenantal breach (Nu 15:31), transgression (2 Chr 24:20), and apostasy (1 Ki 18:18). The plural of *mišwâ* often denotes a "body of laws" given by divine revelation. They are God's "Word" (Ps 119:9). They are also known as "the commandments of God." Outside the Pentateuch, "commandments" are given by kings (1 Ki 2:43), fathers (Jer. 35:14), people (Isa 29:13), and teachers of wisdom (Pr. 6:20; cf. Pr. 5:13). Only about ten percent of all occurrences in the Old Testament fit this category. The Septuagint translation are: *entolē* ("commandment; order") and *prostagma* ("order; commandment; injunction"). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

John E Hartley on mitsvah - In a deed of purchase for a plot of land, *mišwâ* refers to the terms of the contract (Jeremiah 32:11). It is also the word used by the wisdom school for the instruction of a teacher to his pupil (Proverbs 2:1; Proverbs 3:1). More frequently the commandments are the particular conditions of the covenant. It is used for the Ten Commandments in Exodus 24:12. God clearly reveals his commandments in order that they be available to all the people. No one has to spend a lifetime in search of them (Deut. 30:11). They are right at hand. The Lord reaches out to man long before man seeks him. God's commandments are considered pure (Psalm 19:8 [H 9]), true (Psalm 119:151), reliable (Psalm 119:86), righteous (Psalm 119:172). The man of faith has his delight in God's commandments; and he is called blessed (Psalm 119:47; Psalm 112:1). The commandments of Yahweh provide insight into the meaning of life in order that it may be lived to its fullest significance (Psalm 19:8f. [H 9f.]; cf. Deut. 5:29; Deut. 6:2; Deut. 8:11). Following God's commandments gives one wisdom and the respect of his neighbors (cf. Deut. 4:5f.). Consequently the one who follows them often rises to a place of leadership. So too, Israel would become a leading nation if she remained true to the Lord's commandments (Deut. 28:13). The splendor which it experienced under David and Solomon bears witness to the validity of this affirmation. The reason Israel was to obey the commandments rests in God himself (Leviticus 22:31). By his very nature he knows what is best for his people and by his very position they are bound to serve him. The one who loves God keeps his commandments (Deut. 11:1). Thereby he shows his reverence for (or fear of) God and develops a walk with God (Deut. 8:6; Deut. 13:4 [H 5]). God extends his love (*hesed*) to those who obey him (Deut. 5:10). To do the commandments, man must remember them. The Hebrews were to make fringes (or tassels) on the corners of their garments to remind them of the law (Numbers 15:39). Also they were to bind God's words on their foreheads and on their hands and write them on the doorposts of their houses. The fathers were to teach them to their sons and to speak of them frequently (Deut. 6:6-9). And they were preserved by being written in the book of the law (Deut. 30:10). However, the commandments possess no real value if they are considered only a human document learned by rote (Isaiah 29:13f.). Furthermore, man in his depravity is tempted on the one hand to reject God's commandments and on the other hand to add to them by interpreting them very minutely. The latter leads to the sense of secure arrogance that one is even doing God a favor. Therefore God declares that one is not to add to or to diminish from the commandments given (Deut. 12:32 [H 13:1]; cf. Deut. 5:32). The violation of any commandment results in guilt and the need for atonement (cf. Leviticus 4). But whoever goes so far as to spurn God's commandments is cut off from God's people (Numbers 15:31). Solomon's failure to follow the commandments in his later life resulted in the division of the kingdom (1 Kings 11:31-39; 2 Kings 14:8). Then the continued disobedience of various kings, especially Manasseh, led to the end of David's dynasty. But God extended his mercy to Israel even in captivity (cf. Neh. 1:8f.). And he will fulfill his promise to David through the Messiah. In the postexilic period the scribal class developed. They were skilled in the commandments, i.e. they interpreted the law for the people (Ezra 7:11). The writer of Ecclesiastes searched every possibility for meaning to life and came to this conclusion: "The end of the matter, all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccles. 12:13). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Mitsvah - 186x in 177 v - command(15), commanded(7), commandment(34), commandments(118), commands(2), obligation(1), prescribed(2), terms(1), things(4), tradition*(1), what(1).

Gen. 26:5; Exod. 15:26; Exod. 16:28; Exod. 20:6; Exod. 24:12; Lev. 4:2; Lev. 4:13; Lev. 4:22; Lev. 4:27; Lev. 5:17; Lev. 22:31; Lev. 26:3; Lev. 26:14; Lev. 26:15; Lev. 27:34; Num. 15:22; Num. 15:31; Num. 15:39; Num. 15:40; Num. 36:13; Deut. 4:2; Deut. 4:40; Deut. 5:10; Deut. 5:29; Deut. 5:31; Deut. 6:1; Deut. 6:2; Deut. 6:17; Deut. 6:25; Deut. 7:9; Deut. 7:11; Deut. 8:1; Deut. 8:2; Deut. 8:6; Deut. 8:11; Deut. 10:13; Deut. 11:1; Deut. 11:8; Deut. 11:13; Deut. 11:22; Deut. 11:27; Deut. 11:28; Deut. 13:4; Deut. 13:18; Deut. 15:5; Deut. 17:20; Deut. 19:9; Deut. 26:13; Deut. 26:17; Deut. 26:18; Deut. 27:1; Deut. 27:10; Deut. 28:1; Deut. 28:9; Deut. 28:13; Deut. 28:15; Deut. 28:45; Deut. 30:8; Deut. 30:10; Deut. 30:11; Deut. 30:16;

Deut. 31:5; Jos. 22:3; Jos. 22:5; Jdg. 2:17; Jdg. 3:4; 1 Sam. 13:13; 1 Ki. 2:3; 1 Ki. 2:43; 1 Ki. 3:14; 1 Ki. 6:12; 1 Ki. 8:58; 1 Ki. 8:61; 1 Ki. 9:6; 1 Ki. 11:34; 1 Ki. 11:38; 1 Ki. 13:21; 1 Ki. 14:8; 1 Ki. 18:18; 2 Ki. 17:13; 2 Ki. 17:16; 2 Ki. 17:19; 2 Ki. 17:34; 2 Ki. 17:37; 2 Ki. 18:6; 2 Ki. 18:36; 2 Ki. 23:3; 1 Chr. 28:7; 1 Chr. 28:8; 1 Chr. 29:19; 2 Chr. 7:19; 2 Chr. 8:13; 2 Chr. 8:14; 2 Chr. 8:15; 2 Chr. 14:4; 2 Chr. 17:4; 2 Chr. 19:10; 2 Chr. 24:20; 2 Chr. 24:21; 2 Chr. 29:15; 2 Chr. 29:25; 2 Chr. 30:6; 2 Chr. 30:12; 2 Chr. 31:21; 2 Chr. 34:31; 2 Chr. 35:10; 2 Chr. 35:15; 2 Chr. 35:16; Ezr. 7:11; Ezr. 9:10; Ezr. 9:14; Ezr. 10:3; Neh. 1:5; Neh. 1:7; Neh. 1:9; Neh. 9:13; Neh. 9:14; Neh. 9:16; Neh. 9:29; Neh. 9:34; Neh. 10:29; Neh. 10:32; Neh. 11:23; Neh. 12:24; Neh. 12:45; Neh. 13:5; Est. 3:3; Job 23:12; Ps. 19:8; Ps. 78:7; Ps. 89:31; Ps. 112:1; Ps. 119:6; Ps. 119:10; Ps. 119:19; Ps. 119:21; Ps. 119:32; Ps. 119:35; Ps. 119:47; Ps. 119:48; Ps. 119:60; Ps. 119:66; Ps. 119:73; Ps. 119:86; Ps. 119:96; Ps. 119:98; Ps. 119:115; Ps. 119:127; Ps. 119:131; Ps. 119:143; Ps. 119:151; Ps. 119:166; Ps. 119:172; Ps. 119:176; Prov. 2:1; Prov. 3:1; Prov. 4:4; Prov. 6:20; Prov. 6:23; Prov. 7:1; Prov. 7:2; Prov. 10:8; Prov. 13:13; Prov. 19:16; Eccl. 8:5; Eccl. 12:13; Isa. 29:13; Isa. 36:21; Isa. 48:18; Jer. 32:11; Jer. 35:14; Jer. 35:16; Jer. 35:18; Dan. 9:4; Dan. 9:5; Mal. 2:1; Mal. 2:4

Out of reach - It is right there with them in Moses' speech and it is not in some distant land. See Ps 139:6 for a similar idiom.

Grant – What the Lord was asking Israel was not beyond their understanding. They could not argue that He was asking them to do what they were unable to appreciate. The commandment was not hidden from them. He had made it very clear. It was not far off, in the sense that it was beyond their comprehension. The word of the Lord originated in heaven, but that does not mean that it is necessary to go up to heaven to get understanding of it. It was not necessary to send a representative to some far-flung corner of the earth to receive it or come to an understanding of its requirements. It was common in many pagan cults for individuals to travel to a cult "temple" to be initiated into the secrets of the cult. Even this was restricted to a favoured few. This was an attempt to surround the teachings of the cult with a mystical authority centred on secrets known only to the elite of that cult. The Lord did not deal with His people in that way. **His law was known, available to all, and clear in its teaching. He did not claim that it would be easy to practise. He did claim, and rightly so, that no one was disadvantaged because its teaching was beyond them.** What an honoured people they were. ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

G Campbell Morgan Deuteronomy 30:11

This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. Deut. 30:11

Continuing his discourse concerning the covenant, Moses uttered words thrilling with tenderness, and urgent in their appeal. In the first ten verses of this chapter we have the long look ahead of love. He seems to have seen the people in the conditions which he had told them would result from their disobedience. He looked on, and saw them scattered, far off from the land which they were then about to enter. Yet he saw them returning to God as the result of the sore discipline through which they would pass. But, best of all, he saw God ready to receive and pardon them. It was a great prophetic evangel, the value of which Israel has even yet not learned, but the message of which is true for her to-day. Then, renewing his appeal, he uttered these particular words. They constitute a statement of the reasonableness of the commandments of God. His law is never too hard for man. It is based upon God's knowledge of human nature. He asks of man nothing other than the true realization of his own nature. Every word of the Divine law is an interpretation of human life. When a man breaks the law of God, he is not sinning against a requirement superimposed upon him, and for the doing of which he is not fitted. He is sinning against his own life. Moreover, the law of God is easy because it is made known. Man is not left to grope in the dark mysteries of his own being, seeking for it. Over against those mysteries, God has made the light of His revealed will to shine. As a man walks in that light, he is walking according to his deepest powers and possibilities. (G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

Deuteronomy 30:11 No Fine Print

Writing in the Wall Street Journal, Missy Sullivan noted that many user agreements, warranties, and disclaimers that come with products are nearly unreadable. Intentionally set in very small type, they actually discourage people from understanding them. Because of this, many people don't read all the terms of contracts before signing them. A university professor of graphic communication pointed to a 32-page user agreement that came with his new smart phone, and said of the company, "They don't want you to read it."

In contrast, the Lord is always seeking to communicate with His people in clear and compelling ways, with no attempt to confuse or deceive. When Moses spoke to the Israelites just before they entered the Promised Land, he said, "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off... I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deut. 30:11,19).

The Lord wants us to understand His plan and purpose clearly, so that we may love, obey, and cling to Him—for He is our “life and the length of [our] days” (v.20). That’s plain to see. — by David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, we want to learn and experience more of who
You are in our relationship with You. Teach us so that
we will grow in our understanding of You and
Your plan for our lives.

There is no fine print in God’s communication with us.

Deuteronomy 30:11–14; 2 Corinthians 4:1–2 No Secret Codes Here

The Voynich Manuscript is a 204-page volume in an unknown alphabet. It was purchased in 1912 by a British book dealer, who gave copies to anyone wanting to decipher it. Many tried and as many failed. Finally, in 1921, a professor from the University of Pennsylvania said he had broken the manuscript’s code: it was the work of Roger Bacon, the thirteenth-century inventor. Though his findings made him a celebrity among scholars at the time, later evidence discredited his theory. In 1969 the manuscript was given to Yale University, where it remains, an enigma to all who view it. God revealed himself with unmistakable clarity, so anyone could understand him. No one can complain that we do not know what is true, right, or moral. The Bible has made itself much too plain for anyone to claim ignorance. It speaks powerfully of judgment against sin but just as forcefully promises forgiveness of sin. No, spiritual ignorance cannot be excused, nor can it be explained on the basis of the Bible’s difficulty. The problem is that while the Bible remains a yearly best-seller, it goes largely unread! God has purposely written his book to enchant all levels of intelligence and spiritual growth—what he has written demands to be read. -Speaker’s sourcebook of new illustrations

NO FINE PRINT

For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. —Deuteronomy 30:11

A writer for a financial newspaper noted that many user agreements and small prints that come with products are nearly unreadable. Because the text is so small, it actually discourages people from understanding them. Because of this, many people don’t read all the terms of contracts before signing them.

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THERE IS NO SMALL PRINT IN GOD’S COMMUNICATION WITH US.

Deuteronomy 30:12 "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?"

- Proverbs 30:4; John 3:13; Romans 10:6,7
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it? - (see picture) It is not beyond normal human capacity to acquire. True, the Law originated from God and God was in Heaven, but He gave His Law through Moses as His Word which was both spoken and written. Thus there is no need for anyone to ascend to heaven to get it. They already have it!

Notice the verbs **go...get...make us hear...observe** ([shama](#)) - You have to have the Word to obey the Word, but they in fact did have the Word. But it is not enough to just **hear** it but one must **observe** it.

Keil say regarding the **commandment** that it is not "too far off: it is neither in heaven, i.e., at an inaccessible height."

Coakley - Paul quoted vv. 12–14 in Rm 10:6–8 (see the comments there). The Jewish people could not say that the law was too obtuse or inaccessible to them in Moses' day and thereafter. God made every provision to make it readily available to them. Paul's point in citing this text was to draw a parallel with the gospel of Jesus Christ. God, through Paul and the other apostles, had made the gospel available and accessible. The problem was not that God had not done enough; the problem was (and remains) the refusal of people to embrace Jesus as their Messiah. (Moody Bible Commentary)

Deuteronomy 30:13 "Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?"

KJV - Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

- **Who will** Acts 10:22,33; 16:9; Romans 10:14-15
- **the sea** Proverbs 2:1-5; 3:13-18; 8:11; 16:6; Matthew 12:42; John 6:27; Acts 8:27-40
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD'S COMMANDMENT NOT BEYOND THE SEA

Nor is it beyond the sea ([see picture](#)) Similar to the explanation in Dt 30:12, there is no need to travel across the ocean to get God's commandment. They have it. Now they are to "DO" it, to obey it, to observe, to keep it.

And make us hear it - ESV = "that we may hear it and do it?" They did not need anyone to tell them about it. They had already heard it.

Keil say regarding the command that it is not "beyond the sea, i.e., at an unattainable distance, at the end of the world, so that any one could say, Who is able to fetch it thence?"

Hear ([08085](#)) (**shama**) means to **hear** (Adam and Eve hearing God = Ge 3:8, 10, Ge 18:10 = "overheard"), to **listen** (Ge 3:17, Ge 16:2 [= this was a big mistake and was the origin of Jews and Arabs]) Ex 6:9, 16:20, 18:19, Webster's 1828 on "listen" = to hearken; to give ear; to attend closely with a view to hear. To obey; to yield to advice; to follow admonition) and since hearing/listening are often closely linked to obedience, **shama** is translated **obey** (1 Sa 15:22, Ge 22:18, 26:5, 39:10, Ex 19:5, **disobedience** = Lev 26:14, 18, 21, 27) or to understand. KJV translates **shama** "**hearken**" (196x) a word which means to give respectful attention. Of God's hearing in general or hearing our prayers (Hab 1:2, Ps 66:18, [click here for more in the Psalms](#), cf God's hearing in Zeph 2:8, Ge 16:11, 17:20, 30:17, 22, Ge 21:17, 29:33, 30:6, 17, 22; Ex 2:24, Ex 16:8, 9, 12, Nu 11:1, 12:2). **Shama** means "to hear intelligently and attentively and respond appropriately." In other words to hear does not convey the idea of "in one ear and out the other!"

The most famous use is the so-called "**Shema**" in Dt 6:4 "**Hear**, (a command, in Greek Lxx = [present imperative](#) - habitually, continually) O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

The greatest significance of the use of **shama** is that of relation of man to God, especially where the context speaks of **obedience**. Obedience is the supreme test of faith and reverence for God. The Old Testament conception of obedience was vital. It was the one important relationship which must not be broken. While sometimes this relation may have been formal and cold, it nevertheless was the one strong tie which held the people close to God. The significant spiritual relation is expressed by Samuel when he asks the question, "Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in **obeying** (shama) the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to **obey** (shama) is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sa 15:22). It was the condition without which no right relation might be sustained to Yahweh. This is most clearly stated in the relation between Abraham and Yahweh when he is assured "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast **obeyed** (shama) my voice" (Ge 22:18). In prophetic utterances, future blessing and prosperity were conditioned upon obedience: "If ye be willing and **obedient** (shama), ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa 1:19). After surveying the glories of the Messianic kingdom, the prophet assures the people that "this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently **obey** (shama) the voice of Yahweh your God" (Zec 6:15). On the other hand misfortune, calamity, distress and famine are due to their disobedience and distrust of Yahweh.

Wendell G Johnson - OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND HIS WORD is never an option for believers. The term obedience and related terms occur more than 250 times in the New International Version. The majority of these occurrences are in the Old Testament. The

predominant Hebrew word is **shama'** which means "to hear intelligently and attentively and respond appropriately." The corresponding words in the New Testament, *akouo* and *hypakouo*, are closely related to the Old Testament meaning. In the Old Testament, the concept of obedience is built on the premise that God has spoken and that He expects His people to hear and to do as He commanded. Obedience was the main issue when God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden. Because they failed to obey, their sin brought condemnation on the entire human race and they became separated from God (Rom. 5:12). God expected Adam and Eve to hear His warning and to obey His instructions. The capstone of Old Testament teaching on obedience is in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Because God revealed His true character, the people were expected to love Him totally. Obedience is to come from the heart, so that a person's actions are an integral part of his life. God's commands were to be the first thing they thought about in the morning and the last thing at night (Dt 6:7). Obedience is always a spiritual issue. It begins in the heart (Dt 30:1-2) and is an act of faith. The people were to obey God with all their heart (Dt 30:2). God said this was not too difficult for them to comprehend nor was it beyond their reach, for He had made His commands known and they had access to them (Dt 30:11-14). Paul referred to this in Romans 10:1-11. Obedience was more than executing specific requirements. This could be done superficially, which sadly was true of Israel (Dt 10:3). Thus ultimate obedience in the Old Testament was based on faith in God. Abraham is an example of an obedient believer. God told him to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, and he obeyed and went. His obedience was because of His faith in God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6-10). (The Theological Wordbook)

James Swanson summarizes **shama** -

1. (qal) hear, i.e., use the perception of hearing with the ears to process information (Ps 44:2[EB 1]); (nif) be heard (Ex 23:13); (hif) cause to hear (Dt 4:10);
2. (qal) able to hear, i.e., have the faculty of hearing in contrast to being deaf (Isa 29:18);
3. (qal) receive news, i.e., receive information about something (Ge 29:13); (nif) be reported (Ne 6:6); (hif) proclaim, pronounce, declare, announce, tell, raise voice, bring word, make known (Ps 26:7);
4. (qal) listen, take heed, pay attention, hear, i.e., believe information and respond on the basis of having heard (Ex 4:1); (nif) be heeded (Ecc 9:16, 17);
5. (qal) obey, formally, hear, i.e., submit to an authority and so do what is asked or required (1Sa 12:14); (nif) obey (2Sa 22:45);
6. (qal) understand, formally, hear, i.e., hear and comprehend information or a situation (Ge 11:7);
7. (qal) hear a legal case, i.e., give a legal hearing (Dt 1:16);
8. (piel) summon, call together, i.e., communicate with others, usually at some distance to gather in a place (1Sa 15:4; 23:8+); (hif) summon (1Ki 15:22; Jer 50:29; 51:27+);
9. (hif) make music, formally, cause to hear, i.e., make a vocal or instrumental sound for musical songs (1Ch 15:16, 19, 28; 16:5, 42; 2Ch 5:13; Ne 12:42+), note: either as purely instrumental sounds, or singing with verbal content, see also domain (A Dictionary of Biblical Languages - Hebrew)

W E Vine on **shama** - Basically, this verb means to "**hear**" something with one's ears, but there are several other nuances. In Ge 37:17, a man told Joseph that he "heard" Joseph's brothers say, "Let us go to Dothan"; in other words, he unintentionally "overheard" them say it. **Shāma'** can also be used of "eavesdropping, or intentionally listening in on a conversation; so Sarah "overheard" what the three men said to Abram (Ge 18:10). Joseph asked his brothers to "please **listen**" as he recounted what he had dreamed (Ge 37:6). In 1 Chr 28:2, David told his audience to "**listen**" as he spoke; they were to give him their undivided attention. To "**hear**" something may imply to "have knowledge," as when Abimelech told Abraham that he did not know about the controversy over the wills because no one had told him and neither had he "heard" it ("nor did I hear of it until today" = Ge 21:26). **Shāma'** may also imply to "**gain knowledge**" or to "**get knowledge**": "Chaldeans who had been besieging Jerusalem **heard** the report about them, they lifted the siege from Jerusalem." (Jer. 37:5). Again, the word may mean to "come into knowledge about." Moses told the unclean men to wait while he "listened" to what the Lord would command regarding them (Nu 9:8). His intent clearly was more than just to "hear" something; he intended to "gain some knowledge" from the Lord. The verb can represent the mere "**hearing**" of something, as when Adam and Eve "heard" the sound of God walking in the garden (Ge 3:8, first biblical occurrence). To "make someone hear" something (without any specification of what was heard) suggests "summoning" the person (1 Ki 15:22). "**Hearing**" can be both intellectual and spiritual. Spiritually, one may "hear" God's Word (Nu 24:4), or "learn" it from God. Conversely, God told Abraham that He had "**heard**" his prayer and would act accordingly (Ge 17:20). In this context, to "**hear**" means not only to hear what is said, but to agree with its intention or petition (cf. Ge 16:11). In the case of hearing and hearkening to a higher authority, **shāma'** can mean to "**obey**." In Abraham's seed, all nations would be blessed because he **obeyed** God's voice (Ge 22:18). Another nuance of intellectual "hearing" appears in Ge 11:7, in which we are told that God planned to confuse human language, "that they may not understand one another's speech." To have a "hearing heart" is to have "discernment" or

"understanding" (1 Ki 3:9 = "So give Your servant an **understanding** heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil."). Certainly when Moses told Israel's judges to "**hear**" cases, he meant more than listening with one's ear. He meant for them to examine the merits of a case, so as to render a just decision (Dt. 1:16). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Baker - A verb meaning to hear, to obey, to listen, to be heard of, to be regarded, to cause to hear, to proclaim, to sound aloud. The verb basically means to hear and in context expresses various connotations of this. The most famous use of this word is to introduce the Shema, "**Hear**, O, Israel," followed by the content of what the Israelites are to understand about the Lord their God and how they are to respond to Him (Dt. 6:4). In a parallel usage, the heavens are commanded to "**Hear**, Oh heavens!" to the prophet's message about Israel (Isa. 1:2). The word calls attention to hear various things: It means to hear another person speaking (Gen. 27:6); the Lord's voice (Gen. 3:10); or anything that can be perceived by the ear. Used with or without the preposition 'el following, the word means to listen to someone. The house of Israel was not willing to listen to Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:7); the Lord was not willing to listen to the beautiful worship services of God's people, for they were not following justice (Gen. 27:5; Amos 5:23). The word takes on the **connotation of obedience** in certain contexts and with certain Hebrew constructions: It can mean to heed a request or command, such as Abraham's request concerning Ishmael (Ge 17:20). The Lord listened to Hagar's prayer and gave her a son (Gen. 16:11; 30:6). It means to **obey** in certain contexts (Gen. 3:17; 22:18; Ex. 24:7; 2 Ki. 14:11). The word is used to connote the idea of **understanding**. God confused the speech of the people at the Tower of Babel so they could not understand each other (Gen. 11:7; Isa. 33:19). Solomon wanted a heart of **discernment and understanding** (hearing) to govern his people (Deut. 1:16; 1 Ki. 3:9); to be able to decide between good and evil (2 Sam. 14:17). In the passive stem, the word means **to be heard**. Pharaoh heard the news that Joseph's brothers had arrived in Egypt (Gen. 45:16). No sound of a tool was heard as the Temple was being built (Deut. 4:32; 1 Ki. 6:7). It also meant to be obedient to King David (2 Sam. 22:45); or to make hear, to call, or to summon as when Saul summoned his soldiers (1 Sam. 15:4; 23:8). The word is used often in the causative stem to mean to cause to listen, to proclaim, to announce. When Israel assembled at Mount Horeb (Sinai), the Lord caused them to **hear** His words (Deut. 4:10; Josh. 6:10). It also means to proclaim, to summon; Isaiah spoke of those who proclaim peace (1 Ki. 15:22; Isa. 52:7); and the psalmist proclaimed the praise of the Lord (Ps. 26:7). (The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament)

Herman Austel -

The verb **shāma'** is used 1050 times in the Qal, Niphal, Piel (twice), and Hiphil. Cognates are found in Akkadian, Aramaic, Arabic, Ugaritic, and Ethiopic. The basic idea is that of perceiving a message or merely a sound. Synonyms are qāshab in the Hiphil, "give attention," "be attentive," 'āzan "give ear," a denominative from 'ōzen "ear" (hence "use the ear"), and 'ānâ "answer." **Shāma'** has the basic meaning "to hear." This is extended in various ways, generally involving an effective hearing or listening: 1) "listen to," "pay attention," 2) "obey" (with words such as "commandment" etc.), 3) "answer prayer," "hear," 4) "understand" and 5) "hear critically," "examine (in court)." The derived stems have appropriately modified meanings. Instances of the basic use of the verb are numerous. Examples are Numbers 12:2 (the Lord **heard** Miriam's and Aaron's grumbling), Dt. 4:12 (the Israelites **heard** the sound of God's voice but saw no form) and Genesis 3:8 (Adam and Eve **heard** the voice of God in the garden). The object of the hearing may be expressed in a dependent clause, such as in Ge 37:17 "**heard** (them) saying," Genesis 14:14 "**heard** that his brother had been taken captive," Judges 7:11 "**hear** what they say."

The meaning "**listen to**" is illustrated in Ge 3:17 (Adam "**listened** to the voice of" his wife, i.e. he followed her lead), 1 Ki 22:19, "**Hear** thou the word of the Lord," Ps 81:11, "My people would not **listen** to my voice" and Pr 12:15, "He that **listens** to counsel is wise." This usage shades into that of "**to obey**," such as in Ex 24:7; Isa 42:24 "**obey** his law"; Neh. 9:16, "They did not **obey** Thy commandments"; and Jer 35:18, "You have **obeyed** the commandment of Jonadab."

In Judges 13:9 God "**hears** the voice of Manoah" in the sense of responding to, answering his prayer. Similar usage is found in Ezekiel 8:18 ("I will not **listen** to them."); Ps 4:1, "**Hear** my prayer," which is parallel to "answer me ('ānâ) when I call"; and Ps34:17, "The Lord **hears** the cry (of the righteous)." In connection with answered prayer, God states a very important and sobering principle in Jer 11:10-11 ("refused to **hear** My words"). Because Israel has refused to listen to the words of God when he spoke to them, they will find that when they cry to him in time of trouble he will not **hear** (respond to) their cry. Micah 7:7 expresses the confidence of the righteous, the one who himself heeds the voice of God, that God will indeed hear his prayer ("My God will **hear** me"). A further strong word of encouragement is given us in Ps 94:9, "He who planted the ear, will he not **hear**?"

Effective hearing involves also the idea of "**understanding**." Thus in Ge 11:7 in response to the tower of Babel God said, "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not **understand**

Shama - 1072 verses - NAS = announce(2), announced(3), announces(3), completely(1), comprehends(1), diligently(1), discern(1), disregarded*(1), gave heed(2), give earnest heed(1), given heed(2), **hear(270)**, **hear*(1)**, **heard(363)**, heard for certain(1), hearing(5), hears(33), heed(5), heeded(2), indeed obey(1), keep on listening(1), **listen(226)**, listen attentively(1), listen carefully(3), listen closely(1), listen obediently(2), listened(52), listening(12), listens(7), loud-sounding(3), made a proclamation(1), make his heard(1), make their heard(1), make them known(1), make themselves heard(1), make your heard(1), obedient(1), obey(32), obey*(14), obeyed(21), obeyed*(5), obeying(6), obeys(1), overheard(1), pay heed(1), proclaim(15), proclaimed(6), proclaims(1), reported(3), sang(1), show(1), sound(2), sound*(1), sounded(1), summon(2), summoned(2), surely hear(1), surely heard(1), truly obey(1), understand(7), understanding(1), understood(1), witness(1).

Gen. 3:8,10,17; 4:23; 11:7; 14:14; 16:2,11; 17:20; 18:10; 21:6,12,17,26; 22:18; 23:6,8,11,13,15-16; 24:30,52; 26:5; 27:5-6,8,13,34,43; 28:7; 29:13,33; 30:6,17,22; 31:1; 34:5,7,17,24; 35:22; 37:6,17,21,27; 39:10,15,19; 41:15; 42:2,21-23; 43:25; 45:2,16; 49:2; Exod. 2:15,24; 3:7,18; 4:1,8-9,31; 5:2; 6:5,9,12,30; 7:4,13,16,22; 8:15,19; 9:12; 11:9; 15:14,26; 16:7-9,12,20; 18:1,19,24; 19:5,9; 20:19; 22:23,27; 23:13,21-22; 24:7; 28:35; 32:17-18; 33:4; Lev. 5:1; 10:20; 24:14; 26:14,18,21,27; Num. 7:89; 9:8; 11:1,10; 12:2,6; 14:13-15,22,27; 16:4,8; 20:10,16; 21:1,3; 22:36; 23:18; 24:4,16; 27:20; 30:4-5,7-8,11-12,14-15; 33:40; Deut. 1:16-17,34,43,45; 2:25; 3:26; 4:1,6,10,12,28,30,32-33,36; 5:1,23ff; 6:3-4; 7:12; 8:20; 9:1-2,19,23; 10:10; 11:13,27-28; 12:28; 13:3-4,8,11-12,18; 15:5; 17:4,12-13; 18:14-16,19; 19:20; 20:3; 21:18,20-21; 23:5; 26:7,14,17; 27:9-10; 28:1-2,13,15,45,49,62; 29:4,19; 30:2,8,10,12-13,17,20; 31:12-13; 32:1; 33:7; 34:9; Jos. 1:17-18; 2:10-11; 3:9; 5:1,6; 6:5,10,20; 7:9; 9:1,3,9,16; 10:1,14; 11:1; 14:12; 22:2,11-12,30; 24:10,24,27; Jdg. 2:2,17,20; 3:4; 5:3,16; 6:10; 7:11,15; 9:7,30,46; 11:10,17,28; 13:9,23; 14:13; 18:25; 19:25; 20:3,13; Ruth 1:6; 2:8; 1 Sam. 1:13; 2:22-25; 3:9-11; 4:6,14,19; 7:7; 8:7,9,19,21-22; 9:27; 11:6; 12:1,14-15; 13:3-4; 14:22,27; 15:1,4,14,19-20,22,24; 16:2; 17:11,23,28,31; 19:6; 22:1,6-7,12; 23:8,10-11,25; 24:9; 25:4,7,24,35,39; 26:19; 28:18,21-23; 30:24; 31:11; 2 Sam. 3:28; 4:1; 5:17,24; 7:22; 8:9; 10:7; 11:26; 12:18; 13:14,16,21; 14:16-17; 15:3,10,35-36; 16:21; 17:5,9; 18:5; 19:2,35; 20:16-17; 22:7,45; 1 Ki. 1:11,41,45; 2:42; 3:9,11,28; 4:34; 5:1,7-8; 6:7; 8:28-30,32,34,36,39,42-43,45,49,52; 9:3; 10:1,6-8,24; 11:21,38; 12:2,15-16,20,24; 13:4,26; 14:6; 15:20-22; 16:16; 17:22; 19:13; 20:8,12,25,31,36; 21:15-16,27; 22:19,28; 2 Ki. 3:21; 5:8; 6:30; 7:1,6; 9:30; 10:6; 11:13; 13:4; 14:11; 16:9; 17:14,40; 18:12,26,28,31-32; 19:1,4,6-9,11,16,20,25; 20:5,12-13,16; 21:9,12; 22:11,13,18-19; 25:23; 1 Chr. 10:11; 14:8,15; 15:16,19,28; 16:5,42; 17:20; 18:9; 19:8; 28:2; 29:23; 2 Chr. 5:13; 6:19-21,23,25,27,30,33,35,39; 7:12,14; 9:1,5-7,23; 10:2,15-16; 11:4; 13:4; 15:2,8; 16:4-5; 18:18,27; 20:9,20,29; 23:12; 24:17; 25:16,20; 28:11; 29:5; 30:20,27; 33:13; 34:19,26-27; 35:22; Ezr. 3:13; 4:1; 9:3; Neh. 1:4,6; 2:10,19; 4:1,4,7,15,20; 5:6; 6:1,6-7,16; 8:2,9,15; 9:9,16-17,27-29; 12:42-43; 13:3,27; Est. 1:18,20; 2:8; 3:4; Job 2:11; 3:18; 4:16; 5:27; 13:1,6,17; 15:8,17; 16:2; 20:3; 21:2; 22:27; 26:14; 27:9; 28:22; 29:11,21; 31:35; 32:10; 33:1,8,31,33; 34:2,10,16,28,34; 35:13; 36:11-12; 37:2,4; 39:7; 42:4-5;

Study these uses in Psalms many of which refer to hearing in the context of prayer - Ps. 4:1,3; 5:3; 6:8-9; 10:17; 17:1,6; 18:6,44; 19:3; 22:24; 26:7; 27:7; 28:2,6; 30:10; 31:13,22; 34:2,6,11,17; 38:13-14; 39:12; 40:1; 44:1; 45:10; 48:8; 49:1; 50:7; 51:8; 54:2; 55:17,19; 58:5; 59:7; 61:1,5; 62:11; 64:1; 65:2; 66:8,16,18-19; 69:33; 76:8; 78:3,21,59; 81:5,8,11,13; 84:8; 85:8; 92:11; 94:9; 95:7; 97:8; 102:1,20; 103:20; 106:2,25,44; 115:6; 116:1; 119:149; 130:2; 132:6; 138:4; 141:6; 143:1,8; 145:19;

Prov. 1:5,8,33; 4:1,10; 5:7,13; 7:24; 8:6,32-34; 12:15; 13:1,8; 15:29,31-32; 18:13; 19:20,27; 20:12; 21:28; 22:17; 23:19,22; 25:10,12; 28:9; 29:24; Eccl. 1:8; 5:1; 7:5,21; 9:16-17; 12:13; Cant. 2:12,14; 8:13; Isa. 1:2,10,15,19; 6:8-10; 7:13; 15:4; 16:6; 18:3; 21:3,10; 24:16; 28:12,14,22-23; 29:18; 30:9,19,21,30; 32:3,9; 33:13,15,19; 34:1; 36:11,13,16; 37:1,4,6-9,11,17,26; 38:5; 39:1,5; 40:21,28; 41:22,26; 42:2,9,18,20,23-24; 43:9,12; 44:1,8; 45:21; 46:3,12; 47:8; 48:1,3,5-8,12,14,16,20; 49:1; 50:4,10; 51:1,7,21; 52:7,15; 55:2-3; 58:4; 59:1-2; 60:18; 62:11; 64:4; 65:12,19,24; 66:4-5,8,19; Jer. 2:4; 3:13,21,25; 4:5,15-16,19,21,31; 5:15,20-21; 6:7,10,18-19,24; 7:2,13,16,23-24,26-28; 8:6,16; 9:10,13,19-20; 10:1; 11:2-4,6-8,10-11,14; 12:17; 13:10-11,15,17; 14:12; 16:12; 17:20,23-24,27; 18:2,10,13,19,22; 19:3,15; 20:1,10,16; 21:11; 22:2,5,21,29; 23:16,18,22,25; 25:3-4,7-8; 26:3-5,7,10-13,21; 27:9,14,16-17; 28:7,15; 29:8,12,19-20; 30:5; 31:7,10,15,18; 32:23,33; 33:9-10; 34:4,10,14,17; 35:8,10,13ff; 36:3,11,13,16,24-25,31; 37:2,5,14,20; 38:1,7,15,20,25,27; 40:3,7,11; 41:11; 42:4,6,13-15,21; 43:4,7; 44:5,16,23-24,26; 46:12,14; 48:4-5,29; 49:2,14,20-21,23; 50:2,29,43,45-46; 51:27,46,51; Lam. 1:18,21; 3:56,61; Ezek. 1:24,28; 2:2,5,7-8; 3:6-7,10-12,17,27; 6:3; 8:18; 10:5; 12:2; 13:2,19; 16:35; 18:25; 19:4,9; 20:8,39,47; 25:3; 26:13; 27:30; 33:4-5,7,30-32; 34:7,9; 35:12-13; 36:1,4,15; 37:4; 40:4; 43:6; 44:5; Dan. 1:14; 8:13,16; 9:6,10-11,14,17-19; 10:9,12; 12:7-8; Hos. 4:1; 5:1; 9:17; Joel 1:2; Amos 3:1,9,13; 4:1,5; 5:1,23; 7:16; 8:4,11; Obad. 1:1; Jon. 2:2; Mic. 1:2; 3:1,9; 5:15; 6:1-2,9; 7:7; Nah. 1:15; 2:13; 3:19; Hab. 1:2; 3:2,16; Zeph. 2:8; 3:2; Hag. 1:12; Zech. 1:4; 3:8; 6:15; 7:11-13; 8:9,23; Mal. 2:2; 3:16

KJV - But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

- very Ezekiel 2:5; 33:33; Luke 10:11,12; John 5:46; Acts 13:26,38-41; 28:23-28; Hebrews 2:1-3
- mouth Jeremiah 12:2; Ezekiel 33:31; Matthew 7:21; Romans 10:8-10
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE TRUTH WAS IN ISRAEL'S HEART AND MIND

The word is very near you - Moses is telling them these truths had already become clearly taught to them in the assembly and implies that they had lodged firmly in the minds of the people so that they could be verbally articulated by them.

That you may observe it - The purpose of having the Word on our lips and in our mind is so that we can obey it or follow it. There is always the danger of being self-deluded, thinking that we have heard the truth, that we possess the truth and even to be able to articulate it and yet never allowing the truth to percolate from our head to our heart so that the truth really "possesses" us to the point that we desire to obey it. The knowing needs to be coupled with the doing! James said it this way

But **prove** yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who **delude** themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. (James 1:22-24-note)

Kalland - the word is in their mouth (they can repeat it) and in their heart (they can think it and understand and react to it). Obedience is possible!

Explore the Bible - Here we must remember, however, that such obedience to the Law "was not the means of achieving salvation but the response to a salvation that was already experienced [italics added]" (Wright, 290).

Keil say regarding the command that it is not "too far off: it is neither in heaven, i.e., at an inaccessible height; nor beyond the sea, i.e., at an unattainable distance, at the end of the world, so that any one could say, Who is able to fetch it thence? but **it is very near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart to do it**. It not only lay before the people in writing, but it was also preached to them by word of mouth, and thus brought to their knowledge, so that it had become a subject of conversation as well as of reflection and careful examination. But however near the law had thus been brought to man, sin had so estranged the human heart from the Word of God, that **doing and keeping the law had become invariably difficult, and in fact impossible**; so that the declaration, "**the word is in thy heart**," only attains its full realization through the preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God, and the righteousness that is by faith (**Ed**: cf "circumcision of the heart" which is an act done by the Spirit in response to repentance and belief);

Paul quotes from this passage in Deuteronomy 30 to explain how true God pleasing, God accepted righteousness is attained writing..

For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness (THAT IS FILTHY RAGS BEFORE GOD - cp Isa 64:6). 6 But the **righteousness based on faith** speaks as follows: "**DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?'** (that is, to bring Christ down) (GOD HAD ALREADY SENT HIM INTO THE WORLD AS A MAN), 7 or '**WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?'** (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead) (HE HAS ALREADY BEEN RESURRECTED)." 8 But what does it say? "**THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART**"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "**WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.**" (Romans 10:5-11)

MacArthur comments - Paul speaks of the righteousness based on faith as if it were a person and puts in its mouth a quotation from Dt 30:12, 13. His point is that the righteousness of faith does not require some impossible odyssey through the universe to find Christ. (Regarding **confess with your mouth**) Not a simple acknowledgment that He is God and the Lord of the universe, since even demons acknowledge that to be true (Jas 2:19). This is the deep personal conviction, without reservation, that Jesus is that

person's own master or sovereign. This phrase includes repenting from sin, trusting in Jesus for salvation, and submitting to Him as Lord. This is the volitional element of faith ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Moody Bible Commentary - In Ro 10:6-8, Paul cited Dt 9:4 and Dt 30:11-14, where Moses commanded the people to obey the Lord. As in Moses' day when God graciously took the initiative to make the law readily available to the Jewish people so they could obey it, so also in Paul's day He made the gospel accessible as well.

HCSB Study Bible - Paul cited this text with reference to the proximity of the gospel and the ease with which it could be understood and appropriated; like the words of the OT covenant, those of the NT message of salvation are ready at hand and made available to all who will believe (Ro 10:6-10).

Deuteronomy 30:14 Do Angels Sleep?

The word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. —Deuteronomy 30:14

A friend of mine has a 5-year-old daughter who is on her way to becoming a theologian. One day she asked her father, "Do angels sleep?" After pondering the theological dimensions of her question, he answered, "Yes, I think they might." His daughter moved in with a follow-up question, "Well, then, how do they get their pajamas on over their wings?"

We may be more like that little girl than we think. We never seem to outgrow asking interesting questions that do not need to be answered. It's healthy to be inquisitive, but it isn't healthy to obsess over matters that don't really matter. Such questions may sidetrack us from our faith.

What we need to know about God and His will for us is clearly spelled out in Scripture. The words He spoke through Moses to His people are true for us today. "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off... But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it" (Deuteronomy 30:11,14).

The Bible isn't a riddle; it's a revelation. It tells us all we need to know to be all that God wants us to be in every situation in life. —Haddon Robinson (Our Daily Bread)

God's Word reveals what we should know
To live for Him each day;
His principles we must commit
To study and obey. —Sper

The Bible is as wise in what it leaves unsaid as in what it says.

Deuteronomy 30:11-20 | Choose Life

What is God's will for my life? The question haunted me when I was growing up. What if I couldn't find it? What if I didn't recognize it? God's will seemed like a needle in a haystack. Hidden. Obscured by lookalikes. Outnumbered by counterfeits.

But my view of God's will was wrong because my view of God was wrong. God takes no pleasure in seeing us lost, wandering, searching. He wants us to know His will. He makes it clear, and He makes it simple. He doesn't even make it multiple-choice. He gives just two choices: "life and good" or "death and evil" (Deut. 30:15). In case the best choice isn't obvious, He even says which one to choose: "Choose life" (v.19). To choose life is to choose God Himself and obey His Word.

When Moses addressed the Israelites for the last time, he pleaded with them to make the right choice by observing "all the words of this law... Because it is your life" (32:46-47). God's will for us is life. His Word is life. And Jesus is the Word. God may not give a prescription for every decision, but He gave us a perfect example to follow—Jesus. The right choice may not be easy, but when the Word is our guide and worship is our goal, God will grant us the wisdom to make life-affirming choices.

Lord Jesus, we know that true wisdom comes

from leaning on You. Help us to trust in

You and to seek Your face and Your will

that we find in Your life-giving Word.

The evidence of God's guidance can be seen more clearly by looking back than by looking forward.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 The Choice

You've heard the infamous name of John Wilkes Booth. He assassinated President Abraham Lincoln in 1865. But have you heard about Edwin Booth, John's eldest brother? Edwin, a well-known actor, was waiting at a Jersey City train station when he saw someone slip and fall off the platform. Edwin quickly grabbed the man's collar and pulled him to safety—rescuing him from serious injury or death. Who was the man he saved? Abraham Lincoln's son Robert, a soldier in the Civil War.

How ironic that the man who saved Lincoln's son had a brother who would soon kill the president. One saved a life; one took a life. One chose life; the other chose death.

The Lord gave His people a choice between life and death: They could love Him and obey His commands (Deut. 30:16), or they could worship and serve other gods (Dt 30:17). He told them, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life" (Dt 30:19).

We too have a choice between life and death. We can receive Jesus as our Savior and live with Him forever, or we can reject Jesus and be in darkness forever without Him. The best choice is clear. Receive God's gift of His Son Jesus. Choose life! —Anne Cetas (Our Daily Bread)

The choice we make determines our
Eternal destination;
One leads to everlasting life;
The other, condemnation. —Sper

The choices you make today will determine your tomorrows

Deuteronomy 30:15 "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity

KJV - See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

NLT "Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster.

- Dt 30:1,19; 11:26; 28:1-14; 32:47; Mark 16:16; John 3:16; Galatians 3:13,14; 5:6; 1 John 3:23; 5:11,12
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**SEE THAT THERE ARE
ONLY TWO PATHS!**

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity- Jesus also described essentially these same two paths for all mankind

Enter through the narrow gate; (WHY?) for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction ([apoleia](#)), and there are many who enter through it. 14"For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Mt 7:13-14-[note](#))

Comment: Note that the wide gate and the broad way lead to [apoleia](#), which means utter and hopeless loss of all that gives worth to existence. Note that contrary to popular opinion **apoleia** does not refer to extinction or annihilation or an end of existence, but to total ruin so far as the purpose of existence is concerned.

Serving God is the way of **life**; serving idols leads to certain **death**.

This passage repeats what Moses had declared in chapter 11

"See, I am setting before you today a **blessing and a curse**: 7 the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; 28 and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known. (Deut 11:26-28+)

In both Dt 11:26 and Dt 30:15 the Hebrew command to **"See"** is translated in the [Septuagint](#) with the Greek word [idou](#) ([2400](#)) which means **"Behold!"** **Idou** means to see, perceive, look at and draws attention to what follows. **Idou** in the [middle voice](#) means "you

yourself look, see, perceive!" The [aorist imperative](#) is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

In fact this book begins with the command to **SEE** -- and so in a sense the Spirit "bookends" Deuteronomy with the command to SEE! Have you seen Jesus? Do you see Him each morning? Do you see now by faith as you venture out each day walking by His Spirit? This is the way of the Lord. Walk ye in it! Be faithful and fruitful for the King! Do you see?

See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them.' (Deut 1:8)

See, the LORD your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.' (Deut 1:21)

See, I have set before you today - (**Today** - 7x in 7v - Dt 30:2, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19) **Today** is mentioned here and immediately repeated in Dt 30:16. Clearly, God's Spirit intends to show the hearer that there is some sense of urgency, for **tomorrow** may be too late (cf James 4:13, 14). One is reminded of the words addressed to first century Jews (and to every individual alive for that matter) in the letter to the Hebrews...

Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS...**"¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "**Today**," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end; ¹⁵ while it is said, "**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME...**"⁷ He again fixes a certain day, "**Today**," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.**" (Hebrews 3:7-8 [note](#), Hebrews 3:13-15 [note](#), Hebrews 4:7 [note](#))

The words of the apostle Paul also come to mind...

And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain--² for He says, "**AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU**"; behold, now is "**THE ACCEPTABLE TIME**," behold, now is "**THE DAY OF SALVATION**"-- (2 Cor 6:1-2)

[Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#) – The truth here is precious and profound. The infinite and omniscient God of Israel can reveal and has revealed the mysteries of his saving purposes to a lowly, undeserving, and often hardhearted and unresponsive people. There is no need for any angelic or even human intermediation apart from the inspired prophets, like Moses, through whom the revelation came. The truth is not so obscure or elusive as to require interpretive savants. Israel's opportunities and responsibilities before Yahweh are not so esoteric that they cannot be apprehended and carried out. Rather, they are transparently clear and personalized. The community and all its members have unfettered access to the very mind and plan of the Almighty....But there must be a response to the proffer of grace. Moses therefore called the assembly to make a decision as to how they would respond to this gracious word of revelation. Using a figure of speech (a metonymy), in which the effect stands for the cause, Moses presented the options of life and good or death and disaster (so the Hebrew text)—that is, he extended choices which, when made, will result in one pair or the other. The choices are either to love the Lord or to reject him.

Eugene Merrill - The challenge presented here is precisely the same as that given to the first generation of Israelites at Sinai (Exod 19:5–8) and is typical of the choices offered to those whom the Lord would call to salvation and service (cf. Josh 24:14–18; 1 Sam 12:19–25; 1 Kgs 18:21, 39; Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 18:22).... "**life and prosperity**," by way of metonymy, represent blessing in its most significant forms—quantity and quality of life (cf. Dt 4:1; 5:33; 8:1; 16:20; 30:6, 19–20). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy.](#))

Keil summarize Deut 30:15-20 - In conclusion, Moses sums up the contents of the whole of this preaching of the law in the words, "life and good, and death and evil," as he had already done at Deut. 11:26, 27, in the first part of this address, to lay the people by a solemn adjuration under the obligation to be faithful to the Lord, and through this obligation to conclude the covenant afresh. He had set before them this day life and good ("good" = prosperity and salvation), as well as death and evil (וָצָר, adversity and destruction), by commanding them to love the Lord and walk in His ways. Love is placed first, as in Deut. 6:5, as being the essential principle of the fulfilment of the commandments. Expounding the law was setting before them life and death, salvation and destruction, because the law, as the word of God, was living and powerful, and proved itself in every man a power of life or of death, according to the

attitude which he assumed towards it (vid., Deut. 32:47). הֵיטֵל, to permit oneself to be torn away to idolatry (as in Deut. 4:19).

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 The High Cost of Living

When I was young, I thought the cost of living in my parents' home was too high. Looking back, I laugh at how ridiculous it was to complain. My parents never charged me a cent for living at home. The only "cost" was obedience. I simply had to obey rules like clean up after myself, be polite, tell the truth, and go to church. The rules weren't difficult, but I still had trouble obeying them. My parents didn't kick me out for my disobedience, however. They just kept reminding me that the rules were to protect me, not harm me, and sometimes they made the rules stricter to protect me from myself.

The cost of living in the Promised Land was the same: obedience. In his final address to the nation, Moses reminded the people that the blessings God wanted to give them depended on their obedience (Deut. 30:16). Earlier he had told them that a good life would be determined by obedience: "Observe and obey ... that it may go well with you" (Dt 12:28).

Some people think the Bible has too many rules. I wish they could see that God's commands are for our good; they allow us to live in peace with one another. Obedience is simply the "cost" of being part of God's family on this glorious globe He created and allows us to call home. — by Julie Ackerman Link (Our Daily Bread)

Heavenly Father, may we not see obedience as a burden but as a privilege. Help us to be grateful for Jesus, who shows us how to live, and for the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to obey.

The Bible is not a burden but a guide to joy-filled living.

Deuteronomy 30:16 in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it

KJV - In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

- **to love** Dt 30:6; Matthew 22:37,38; 1 Corinthians 7:19; 1 John 5:2,3
- **to keep** John 14:21
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LOVE AND OBEY AND BE BLESSED

In that I command you today to love the LORD your God- (a "paraphrase" of the "Shema" in Dt 6:5) Loving God (from the heart) was the way of **life and prosperity**.

To walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments- Walking and keeping are descriptions of obedience. Obedience is equated with loving God. In other words as it would be by their obedience to God that they would demonstrate they truly loved God. Jesus stated the same principle in John 14:15 declaring "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Keep His commandments - This phrase is scattered through the Old and New Testaments (see especially passages in 1 John)...

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and **keep His commandments**;

Deuteronomy 8:2 "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would **keep His commandments** or not.

Deuteronomy 13:4 "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall **keep His**

commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

Deuteronomy 30:10 if you obey the LORD your God to **keep His commandments** and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

Deuteronomy 30:16 in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to **keep His commandments** and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.

Joshua 22:5 "Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and **keep His commandments** and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

1 Kings 8:58 that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways and to **keep His commandments** and His statutes and His ordinances, which He commanded our fathers.

1 Kings 8:61 "Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to **keep His commandments**, as at this day."

2 Kings 23:3 The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to **keep His commandments** and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant.

2 Chronicles 34:31 Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD to walk after the LORD, and to **keep His commandments** and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant written in this book.

Nehemiah 1:5 I said, "I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and **keep His commandments**,

Psalms 78:7 That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But **keep His commandments**,

Ecclesiastes 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and **keep His commandments**, because this applies to every person.

Daniel 9:4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and **keep His commandments**,

1 John 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we **keep His commandments**.

1 John 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not **keep His commandments**, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1 John 3:22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we **keep His commandments** and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we **keep His commandments**; and His commandments are not burdensome.

Merrill - The linkage between this passage and the Shema and its context, already noted earlier (v. 14), is confirmed by the appeal to "love the Lord your God," a command that lies at the very center of the covenant relationship (Deut 6:5; cf. 5:10; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 20; Josh 22:5; 23:11). What this means, as always, is to "walk in his ways and to keep his commands [mišwôt], decrees [ḥuqqôt], and laws [mišpāṭim]" (v. 16), that is, the covenant in all of its particulars (for the same three terms, cf. Dt 6:1; 7:11; 8:11; 11:1). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#).)

HERE IS THE PURPOSE: THAT YOU MAY LIVE

That you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you - This is the fruit of obedience from the heart. In John 14:21 Jesus took the physical blessings Moses described to the ultimate spiritual blessing declaring

"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

Comment - A greater revelation or manifestation of Jesus Himself, regarding which there could be no

greater blessing!

In the land where you are entering to possess it- The promised land is possessed by love/obedience to God. In a similar way today the many promises of our Father are obtained by our obedience. We don't earn them, but God's grace bestows them to the obedient heart.

Deuteronomy 30:17 "But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them

KJV - But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

- **if your** Dt 29:18-28; 1 Samuel 12:25; John 3:19-21
- **heart** Dt 17:17; 1 Kings 11:2; Proverbs 1:32; 14:14; 2 Timothy 4:4; Hebrews 3:12; 12:25
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

BEWARE OF A CHANGE OF YOUR HEART!

But ([term of contrast](#)) - In this contrast he is continuing the explanation of how to obtain the blessing and the curse, in this case how to obtain the curse.

Notice that this is not a **head** issue, but a **heart** issue. The heart of the problem is usually the heart! The choice to live or to die, to be blessed or to be cursed is a choice of the **heart**, reflected in loving obedience or rebellious disobedience, but it always reflects a person's (volitional - of their own will) choice! And beware and do not be deceived for mere outward obedience will not please God, Who alone sees our heart (1 Sa 16:7). God pleasing obedience must come from within and is a reflection of faith that pleases Him (Hebrews 11:6-[note](#)).

If your heart turns away - We **turn away** from God first in our **heart** and then with our actions. Isaiah used this same verb for turns away (Heb - panah) in describing all of us..

All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has **turned** to his own way (our selfish desires, not God's desires for us); But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. (Isa 53:6+, cf Isa 56:11, Jer 2:27, 32:33, 46:21,)

We all need to continually heed the words of Solomon to...

Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. (Pr 4:23-)

Turns away ([06437](#)) (**panah**) means basically to turn, usually physically turning (first use - Ge 18:22, Ex 7:23, 10:6, 32:15), but it has a number of meanings depending on the context. Vine has "to turn towards, turn back, turn around (Dt 1:40, 2:1, Dt 9:15), attach to, pass away, make clear." Of Moses looking this way and that (turning) (Ex 2:12, cf "looked toward the wilderness" Ex 16:10) before he kill the Egyptian! Figuratively of **turning to** idols, mediums, etc (Lev 19:4, 31, 20:6), of God **'turning toward'** Israel (favorably look upon them - Lev 26:9). To **regard** (turn to) an offering (Nu 16:15, cf Ps 102:17 = " He has **regarded** [turned to] the prayer"). Of **circling** Mt Sinai (Dt 2:3). Moses asking God not to **'look at'** (turn to) the sin of Israel (Dt 9:27). Of God turning (in a good sense) toward someone (Ps 119:132 = "**Turn** to me and be gracious," cp Ps 25:16, 69:16, 86:16). Of evening approaching (turning) (Dt 23:11, cf morning dawning - Ps 46:5; "days have declined [turned]" = Ps 90:9, cf Jer 6:4). Of one's heart turning away from Jehovah (Dt 29:18, Lxx = ekklineo = morally deviate from a righteous path.) Of God not turning to the proud (Ps 40:4). Solomon "turned to consider wisdom" (Eccl 2:12, because of Eccl 2:11 = "I considered or looked") Of preparing the way for the Lord ("**Clear** [panah] the way for the LORD" = Isa 40:3, cf Isa 57:14, 62:10, Mal 3:1). "Father have not turned back to their children" (Jer 47:3). Of the gate of the Lord's house which **"faced** eastward" (Ezek 11:1, cf Ezek 43:1, 17, 44:1, 46:1, 12, 19, 47:2)

Panah is the Hebrew word the Spirit of God used to save **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** ([see his testimony](#)) when on a cold, winter day his heart was warmed by the command...

"**Turn** ([epistrepho](#)) to Me and **be saved**, ([sozo](#)) all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.

(Isa 45:22)

Here in Dt 30:17 the Lxx translates **panah** with the Greek verb **methistemi** (from **meta** = denoting change of place or condition + **histemi** = place, stand) which literally means to remove or transfer from one place to another and figuratively (as in Dt 30:17), as causing someone to change sides mentally or spiritually and in a bad sense (e.g., in Lxx of Josh 14:8 "made the heart of the people melt with fear" - changed the condition of their heart)

The derivative word **panim** means face.

Victor Hamilton - The basic meaning of the verb (**panah**), which appears most frequently in the Qal stem, is "to turn," but here it may assume a number of nuances. For example pānâ may mean "to turn towards" a direction (Deut. 2:3); a person (Jeremiah 50:16); a thing (Exodus 16:10). It may mean "to turn back" (Joshua 8:20); "to turn from" (Genesis 18:22); "to turn around" (Exodus 2:12); "to look for, expect" (Haggai 1:9); "to pay attention to, consider" (Job 6:28). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Gilbrant on panah - The verb pānâh, "to turn toward," "to prepare," is well attested in cognate languages. It literally refers to turning or heading in a particular direction (Deut. 2:3; Josh. 15:2, 7; 1 Sam. 13:17; 1 Ki. 17:3), though it also denotes changing direction (Deut. 10:5; 2 Sam. 1:7), facing a certain direction (1 Ki. 7:25; Ezek. 8:3; 43:1) and turning toward a person (Judg. 6:14; Job 21:5; Isa. 13:14; Jer. 50:16).

Pānâh is associated with spiritual bearings as well. It rarely illustrates turning toward God (Isa. 45:22), instead indicating turning toward idols (Lev. 19:4; Deut. 31:18, 20; Hos. 3:1) or turning to one's own way rather than God's (Isa. 53:6). The Israelites were warned against turning to mediums and spiritists (Lev. 19:31; 20:6) or turning their hearts away from the Lord (Deut. 29:18). Later, they were accused of turning their backs, and not their faces, toward God (Jer. 2:27).

The psalmist used pānâh in prayer in the sense of attentiveness (Pss. 25:16; 69:16), including several times as a plea to God for mercy (86:16; 119:132). God does not pay attention (pānâh) to the offerings of some (Num. 16:15; Mal. 2:13), but He will always respond (pānâh) to the prayer of the destitute (Ps. 102:17).

In the Piel stem, pānâh means "to prepare" in the sense of clearing the way. Isaiah used pānâh in his prophecy, "Prepare the way of the Lord" (Isa. 40:3), which was quoted by John the Baptist in response to an inquiry as to his identity ([John 1:23](#)). John was the one who was sent to clear the path for Jesus' ministry.

W E Vine on panah - Most occurrences of this verb carry the sense "to turn in another direction"; this is a verb of either physical or mental motion. Used of physical motion, the word signifies turning so as to move in another direction: "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward" (Deut. 2:3). Pānâh can also mean to turn so as to face or look at something or someone: "And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness..." (Exod. 16:10). "Turning toward" something may also signify looking at, or seeing it: "Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto [do not see] the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin" (Deut. 9:27). A further extension in meaning is seen in Hag. 1:9, where pānâ means "to look for," or to expect: "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little..." Another focus of meaning is "to turn back" so as to see. This is found in Josh. 8:20: "When the men of Ai turned back and looked, behold..." (nasb). In other passages the verb means "to turn around," in the sense of to look in every direction. So Moses "looked this way and that way, and when he saw there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand" (Exod. 2:12).

In the sense of "to turn around" pānâ is used of changing one's direction so as to leave the scene. So "the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom..." (Gen. 18:22, the first biblical occurrence of the verb). Used of intellectual and spiritual turning, this verb signifies attaching oneself to something. God commanded Israel: "Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods..." (Lev. 19:4); they should not shift their attention to and attach themselves to idols. In an even stronger use this verb represents dependence on someone: "... Which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after [depend on] them ..." (Ezek. 29:16). "To turn towards" sometimes means to pay attention to someone. Job tells his friends: "Now... look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie" (Job 6:28).

In a still different emphasis the word connotes the "passing away" of something, such as the turning away of a day: "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide...", he went out "at turning of the evening" (Gen. 24:63). Similarly the Bible speaks of the dawn as the "turning of the morning" (Exod. 14:27). The "turning of the day" is the end of the day (Jer. 6:4).

Used in a military context, pānâ can signify giving up fighting or fleeing before one's enemies. Because of

Achan's sin the Lord was not with Israel at the battle of Ai: "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed..." (Josh. 7:12).

In the intensive stem the verb means "to remove," to take away: "The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy..." (Zeph. 3:15). "To clear a house" (to set things in order) is often the means by which conditions are prepared for guests: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house..." (Gen. 24:31). Another nuance is "to prepare" a road for a victory march; Isaiah says: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40:3; cf. Matt. 3:3). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Panah - 124v - Usage: approaches(1), clear(3), cleared(1), cleared away(1), considered(1), dawn*(1), dawns(1), declined(1), declines(1), empty(1), face(2), faced(2), faced*(1), faces(3), facing(11), facing back(1), have regard(2), look(4), looked(9), prepare(1), prepared(1), regard(2), regarded(1), regards(1), return*(1), toward(1), turn(26), turn back(2), turned(40), turned around(1), turned away(1), turned back(2), turns(3), turns away(2), turns back(1). Gen. 18:22; Gen. 24:31; Gen. 24:49; Gen. 24:63; Exod. 2:12; Exod. 7:23; Exod. 10:6; Exod. 16:10; Exod. 32:15; Lev. 14:36; Lev. 19:4; Lev. 19:31; Lev. 20:6; Lev. 26:9; Num. 12:10; Num. 14:25; Num. 16:15; Num. 16:42; Num. 21:33; Deut. 1:7; Deut. 1:24; Deut. 1:40; Deut. 2:1; Deut. 2:3; Deut. 2:8; Deut. 3:1; Deut. 9:15; Deut. 9:27; Deut. 10:5; Deut. 16:7; Deut. 23:11; Deut. 29:18; Deut. 30:17; Deut. 31:18; Deut. 31:20; Jos. 7:12; Jos. 8:20; Jos. 15:2; Jos. 15:7; Jos. 22:4; Jdg. 6:14; Jdg. 15:4; Jdg. 18:21; Jdg. 18:26; Jdg. 19:26; Jdg. 20:40; Jdg. 20:42; Jdg. 20:45; Jdg. 20:47; 1 Sam. 10:9; 1 Sam. 13:17; 1 Sam. 13:18; 1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam. 1:7; 2 Sam. 2:20; 2 Sam. 9:8; 1 Ki. 2:3; 1 Ki. 7:25; 1 Ki. 8:28; 1 Ki. 10:13; 1 Ki. 17:3; 2 Ki. 2:24; 2 Ki. 5:12; 2 Ki. 13:23; 2 Ki. 23:16; 2 Chr. 4:4; 2 Chr. 6:19; 2 Chr. 13:14; 2 Chr. 20:24; 2 Chr. 26:20; Job 5:1; Job 6:28; Job 21:5; Job 24:18; Job 36:21; Ps. 25:16; Ps. 40:4; Ps. 46:5; Ps. 69:16; Ps. 80:9; Ps. 86:16; Ps. 90:9; Ps. 102:17; Ps. 119:132; Prov. 17:8; Eccl. 2:11; Eccl. 2:12; Cant. 6:1; Isa. 8:21; Isa. 13:14; Isa. 40:3; Isa. 45:22; Isa. 53:6; Isa. 56:11; Isa. 57:14; Isa. 62:10; Jer. 2:27; Jer. 6:4; Jer. 32:33; Jer. 46:5; Jer. 46:21; Jer. 47:3; Jer. 48:39; Jer. 49:8; Jer. 49:24; Jer. 50:16; Ezek. 9:2; Ezek. 10:11; Ezek. 11:1; Ezek. 17:6; Ezek. 29:16; Ezek. 36:9; Ezek. 43:1; Ezek. 43:17; Ezek. 44:1; Ezek. 46:1; Ezek. 46:12; Ezek. 46:19; Ezek. 47:2; Hos. 3:1; Nah. 2:8; Zeph. 3:15; Hag. 1:9; Mal. 2:13; Mal. 3:1

The same verb **panah** used above for **their hearts turning away from God** is used in the following passages to describe them turning to other gods. The principle is clear - when one turns from the true God, he turns to idols! There is no middle ground!

Deuteronomy 31:18+ "But I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will **turn** to other gods.

Deuteronomy 31:20+ "For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will **turn** to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant.

Hosea 3:1+ Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the sons of Israel, though they **turn** to other gods and love raisin cakes."

And you will not obey ([shama](#)) - KJV = "thou wilt not **hearken**." ESV = "you will not **hear**," which is the more literal rendering of the Hebrew verb [shama](#) (to hear). The idea of [shama](#) is not simply to listen/hear, but to listen with intent to obey what is heard. The idea is to **hear** and to **heed**!

But - Term of contrast. It signifies a change of direction, in this case from holiness to godlessness.

Are drawn away - The power of idols is to draw one away from God. The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) uses the verb [planao](#) (for the Hebrew verb [nadach](#) = drawn away) which is from [plane](#) which describes "a wandering" and gives us our English word "planet". Thus [planao](#) means literally made to wander and so to be led (passive voice here in Dt 30:17) astray. [Planao](#) in the [passive voice](#) (the Hebrew stem of [nadach](#) is Niphal which is also passive) which indicates an outside force or influence (e.g., the **unregenerate heart** in unbelievers in this context, but in other contexts referring to the power of sin) is causing the deception that leads one down the wrong path. The same verb **drawn away** ([nadach](#)) used in Dt 30:17 is also used earlier in a similar warning. Notice what it is that has the "drawing away" power:

Deut 4:19 "And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven (IN ORDER TO WORSHIP THEM!), and **be drawn away** and **worship** them and **serve** them (NOTE SAME ORDER - LOOK, BE ENTICED, BOW DOWN AND BE MASTERED! cf Achan in Josh 7:21),

those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

Drawn away (seduced) ([05080](#)) **nadach** meaning to expel from a place of residence to another place, to drive away, to scatter to be exiled, be cast out, thrust out. In this passage in the Hebrew stem niphal, it means to be enticed, lured, drawn away, i.e., led astray to a sinful behavior and is used in this sense in Dt 30:17 and Dt 4:19+ = " "And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and **be drawn away** (nadach in niphal stem) and worship (Lxx = [proskuneo](#)) them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven."

And worship other gods and serve them - **Worship** is **shachah** rendered with the picturesque verb [proskuneo](#) in the Greek. Notice the timeless principle that what you **worship** will master you and you will become its **slave**! Do not be deceived!

As the apostle **John** says "Little children, **guard** ([phulasso](#) in [aorist imperative](#) carries a sense of urgency and calls for [dependence on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves from **idols**." (1 John 5:21+)

Paul adds that believers are to **"flee** ([pheugo](#) in [present imperative](#) = make this your habitual practice - but only possible as we are filled with and [enabled by the Holy Spirit](#) enabled by the Spirit!) from **idolatry**." (1 Cor 10:14+)

Worship (Bow down, prostrate) ([07812](#)) (**shachah**) means to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship. The idea is to assume a prostrate position as would in paying homage to royalty (Ge 43:28) or to the true and living God (Ge 24:26, Ps 95:6) or to dead "gods" (Dt 30:17). The English word **prostrate** is defined as being stretched out with one's face on the ground in adoration or submission. It is not just that the person has fallen down but pictures them lying at length or with their body extended on the ground and so lying in a posture which is reflective of genuine humility and adoration.

Deuteronomy 30:18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it

KJV - I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

- Dt 8:19,20; Dt 31:29; Joshua 23:15,16; Isaiah 63:17,18
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DIVINE "EVICITION" DECREED!

I declare to you today - (**Today** - 7x in 7v - Dt 30:2, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19) these words introduce a formal, important statement.

That you shall surely perish (repeated for emphasis - [abad abad](#)) - The Septuagint translates **perish** ([abad](#)) with [apollumi](#) which means to destroy utterly but not to caused to cease to exist. This divine, prophetic promise was conditioned on Israel's disobedience, which came to pass. This warning should have given them "holy chills" for it was the same solemn declaration Moses had declared earlier:

"It shall come about if you ever **forget** (Literally "if forgetting, you forget" for emphasis) ([shakach/shakah](#)) the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them (cf Dt 6:14+, Dt 7:4+), I (solemnly warn) testify against you today (The idea is "I want you to listen care fully to what I am saying") that **you will surely perish**. (this is very strong in Hebrew) (Deut 8:19+)

Comment: In Deut 30:17 the pathogenesis of the apostasy was that their **hearts would turn away**. In Dt 8:19 the problem is that would become **forgetful** (see this Hebrew word [shakach/shakah](#))

Moses predicted their apostasy

"For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands." (Deut 31:29+)

Nelson's NKJV Study Bible - The emphasis on **today** is remarkable in this passage (Seven times - Dt 30:2, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19).

Moses establishes here the best pattern for the preaching of the Word of God. Responses to God should not be delayed. Assuming that there will be a later day to respond to Him is dangerous thinking.

Joshua in his last words shortly before dying issued these words of warning to the children of Israel...

Joshua 23:15; "It shall come about that just as all the good words which the LORD your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the threats, **UNTIL** He has destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you. 16 "**WHEN** (NOT "IF") you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, **THEN** the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you will perish quickly from off the good land which He has given you."

Perish (lost, destroy, ruin; Lxx = [apollumi](#) = ruined) (06) **abad** is a verb meaning to to be destroyed, to be ruined, to be lost, to in a state of ruin and destruction pertaining to an object, including the death (Ex 10:7). Abad can mean literally to die, or, in the case of things, reputation, etc., to pass away. In a causative sense, abad means to destroy, to reduce to some degree of disorder. God's destruction of evil, both threatened (Lev. 26:38) and realized (Nu 17:12); Israel's destruction of the Canaanites and their altars (Nu 33:52; Dt. 12:2, 3); the perishing of natural life (Ps. 49:10; 102:26; Eccl. 7:15); the perishing of abstract qualities such as wisdom and hope (Isa. 29:14; Lam. 3:18); and an item or animal being lost (Dt. 22:3; Eccl. 3:6)

Stephen Renn - Abad - It is first of all predicated of God's people under divine judgment for rebellion against him, under the covenant curse. In particular, abad constitutes the inevitable fate of the Israelite people, who will perish in the process of being sent into exile (cf. Lev. 26:38; Dt 4:26; 8:20; 30:18; Jos. 23:13; Jer. 4: 9; 27:10; Eze. 25: 7). The people will also perish on account of their idolatry (cf. Dt 8:19; Jos. 23:16). Individuals or groups of people are also said to "perish" at the hand of God - Korah (Nu. 16:33); Ahab's dynasty (2Ki 9: 8, cp Ps 2:12; Jer. 6:21; Mic. 4: 9; Jon. 3: 9. Nu 17: 2 expresses the fear of perishing. The enemies of Yahweh are said to perish as a consequence of judgment pronounced on them (cf. Nu 21:30; Jdg 5:31; Ps 9: 3, 6; 37:20; Isa. 41:11; Jer. 51:18 [Babylon]; Amos 1: 8 [Philistia]).

Abad in Deuteronomy (note 4 times in chapter 28!) - Deut. 4:26; Deut. 7:10; Deut. 7:20; Deut. 7:24; Deut. 8:19; Deut. 8:20; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 11:4; Deut. 11:17; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 22:3; Deut. 26:5; Deut. 28:20; Deut. 28:22; Deut. 28:51; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 30:18; Deut. 32:28;

You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it - In short, their possession would not be prolonged. Prolongation of their days in the land was conditioned on their obedience. Here Moses prophesies their disobedience will result in their failure to prolong their days. God's word was fulfilled. It always is! The 10 northern tribes (so-called "[lost tribes](#)") were taken to exile in Assyria in 722 BC and the remaining 2 southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin) were taken into Babylon in 586 BC for a 70 year exile.

Deuteronomy 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you **today**, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,

KJV - I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

CEV - Right now I call the sky and the earth to be witnesses that I am offering you this choice. Will you choose for the Lord to make you prosperous and give you a long life? Or will he put you under a curse and kill you? Choose life!

NLT "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!

- **I call heaven** Dt 4:26; Dt 31:28; 32:1; Isaiah 1:2; Jeremiah 2:12-13; 22:29,30; Micah 6:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:21
- **that I have** Dt 30:15; Dt 11:26
- **choose life** Joshua 24:15-22; Psalm 119:30,111,173; Pr 1:29; 8:36; Isa 56:4; Luke 10:42
- **that** Jeremiah 32:39; Acts 2:39
- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

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

Deuteronomy 11:26+ "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse:

Deuteronomy 31:28+ "Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them.

Joshua 24:15 "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, **choose for yourselves** today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Proverbs 1:29+ Because they hated knowledge And did not **choose** the fear of the LORD.

JUDGMENT IS COMING: CHOOSE LIFE

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today (cf Dt 4:26, 31:28; 32:1; Isa 1:2; Mic 1:2) - Essentially all creation! One pictures the heavenly courtroom and witnesses are called to testify against the Chosen People!

Heaven and earth in Deuteronomy - Deu 3:24 Deu 4:26 Deu 4:39 Deu 5:8 Deu 10:14 Deu 28:23 Deu 30:19

[Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#) – Everyone and everything that God had made would bear witness to Yahweh's gracious offer and Israel's response. Never in the future could Israel deny with any credibility the decision she had made at this moment of truth.

Bratcher on **call heaven and earth to witness** - 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.

Merrill - In similar ancient Near Eastern legal transactions the witnesses usually were the gods of the respective litigants, but the monotheism of Israel's faith dictated that such appeal be to creation, to heaven and earth, for only it would endure into future ages. Such appeal to creation is attested elsewhere in the Old Testament when the Lord enters into some kind of formal legal encounter with his people (cf. Deut 4:26; 31:28; 32:1; Isa 1:2; Mic 1:2). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy](#))

[Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#) on **today** (**Today** - 7x in 7v - Dt 30:2, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19) – To underscore the urgency of the need to make a choice and to be prepared to live with its consequences, Moses once more drew attention to the present moment by using the word "**today**". No longer could Israel vacillate; the day of decision had come, the time when the destiny of individuals and, indeed, of the whole covenant community was to be settled one way or another.

TODAY reminds me of Paul's solemn exhortation in 2 Cor 6:1-2+

And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— 2 for He says, "AT THE **ACCEPTABLE TIME** I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE **DAY** OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE **ACCEPTABLE TIME**," **behold**, now is "THE **DAY** OF SALVATION"

THOUGHT - Is **TODAY** the day you choose life in Christ and change your eternal destiny in the "twinkling of an eye?"

Heaven and Earth - In ancient Near Eastern treaties the gods are typically called to witness as ones who would be able to adjudicate any failures to adhere to the terms. Here heaven and earth are not understood as deified, but, representing the entire created universe, they signify that the agreement is intended to endure long beyond human life spans. A clearer indication of the implications can be seen in the fuller wording of Psalm 89:28–29, 34–37 (see also Jer 33:20–21). ([The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#))

That I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse - Life and blessing for obedience. Death and curse for disobedience! These are in essence the only two options not just for Israel but for every person ever born! In Psalm 1:6 (cf Jesus' two roads Mt 7:13-14 [noted above](#)) we see these two **ways** leading to two eternal destinies, eternal life or eternal death:

For the LORD knows **the way of the righteous**, But the **way of the wicked will perish**.

Merrill has an interesting comment - Obedience brings life in all its fullness whereas disobedience causes the greatest curse of all,

death now and forever (v. 19). The appeal, therefore, was to choose life so that life might result. Underlying this rather cryptic way of expressing the matter is the expanded idea of choosing to obey God, for doing that brings the greatest of all blessings, life itself. One cannot choose life (or even death), but he can choose a path that will lead to one or the other (cf. Matt 7:13). ([New American Commentary – Volume 4: Deuteronomy.](#))

So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants - Moses in kindness forces the decision, urging them to choose life! Note how their decision to obey or disobey would impact subsequent generations! Beloved, do not be deceived, for your and my decisions (good and/or bad) **today** will impact those who come after us in the future!

Whybray - The notion of choice, with its implication of freedom to determine one's own actions or mode of life, is one which is characteristic of Deuteronomy. God chooses, but human beings also have that freedom.

MacArthur - Choosing life or death was also emphasized by Jesus. The one who believed in Him had the promise of eternal life; while the one who refused to believe faced eternal death (cf. Jn 3:1-36). Every person faces this same choice. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Deuteronomy 30:19–20; Acts 16:6–7 On the Turn of a Mere Choice

On Christmas Day, 1849, a party of twenty-seven wagons broke over a barren ridge and skidded downhill into the desolation southeast of Mt. Whitney. A scorched, tormented land burned before the pioneers. Their caravan decided to split up. One group of bachelors called Jayhawkers went north, and two families and a few single men moved south. In two or three days the Jayhawkers found their way out of the desolate valley. The other group found themselves trapped, trudging through misery day after day only to reach impassable mountains. Two of the men went for help in California. Three hundred miles later, at the nearest store, they acquired supplies and returned for the families. When the survivors finally left the valley, they looked back and muttered, “Good-bye, Death Valley”—an appropriate and lasting name. We need to make our choices carefully, especially those that affect our moral and spiritual lives. God has determined the limits of acceptable behavior, but he gives us the freedom to accept or defy those limits. He gives us the privilege of accepting him freely or rejecting him. And while wisdom would dictate that we exercise our privilege—not our right—the choice is ours. What will it be for us: escape by grace into life or entanglement by self-will in spiritual death? - Speaker's sourcebook of new illustrations

[It Is Decision That Determines Destiny - Adrian Rogers](#) ([See also](#))

“...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for He is thy life, and the length of thy days...” Deuteronomy 30:19b-20a.

The passage above relates an episode in the history of Israel. What would happen to you if you were in the same valley of decision between these two mountains? Let me help by giving you seven principles of choice. Your choices — your decisions — will determine your destiny.

1. You Are Free to Choose

Every day God gives us the freedom to make choices about what we think is going to be good, or even best for us.

2. You Are Not Free to Not to Choose

To decide not to choose is a choice. Am I making any sense? Let me make it very clear — to decide not to choose good is always a choice to choose evil.

Jesus said, “He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad” (Matthew 12:30). If you do not crown Jesus, you crucify Him. There is no middle ground.

3. You Are Not Free to Choose the Consequences of Your Choice

Let me illustrate.

Stand beside an open window on the tenth floor of a building. You're free to jump. Now, that's a foolish thing to do, but if nobody is there to restrain you, you can choose to do so. Stay in the room or jump out. Now, if you decide to jump, then you must be ready to face the consequences of that choice.

4. You Are Free to Choose, but Not Free to Achieve

What does that mean? Well, suppose I chose to achieve as a professional basketball player. Well, you look at my frame and you say to yourself, "How can he even hope of achieving success?" And you're probably right.

You see, I can make all the choices I want. I can even have all the hopes and dreams I want. But I have to be realistic to see that I might not achieve success simply because I have chosen to do something.

5. One Big Choice Will Take Care of a Lot of Little Ones

How does this work? We see it played out every day.

Let's say you are a man who has made up his mind that you're going to be loyal to your wife. Then, you see, you don't have to worry when you check into a hotel whether to watch pornography or not. You don't have to be concerned whether you're going to flirt with another woman.

You don't have to keep making that decision to be loyal to your wife. You already made that decision, and that one big decision takes care of a lot of the other little decisions.

6. God Has Already Chosen You, that You Might Choose Him

That's why we're called His elect. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Had God not first chosen us, we would never have the inclination to choose Him. Thank God for His sovereignty!

And lastly,

7. The Day of Choice Is Passing Away

Don't think that you have forever to make up your mind whether you're going to be a follower of Jesus Christ or not. Make your eternal salvation secure today.

Choose Jesus because...

You can know immediate joy. Why wait to have joy when you can have it right now? I'd be a Christian if there were no heaven or hell for the joy that I have today in Christ.

You may die tonight. These may be the last words you ever read about salvation in Jesus Christ. After you die, there are no second chances to get saved. Choose life.

Jesus Christ is coming back. Matthew 24:24 says, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." If you don't think He's coming, then that is a fulfillment of this verse because He's coming when you least expect Him.

Each time you decide against Him, you harden your heart. Hebrews 3:7-8 says, "Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts." A person becomes proficient at anything he does for a long time. You can become a professional Christ-denier.

Dear Friend, the day of choice is today. Your decisions will determine your destiny.

Deuteronomy 30:20 by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

KJV - That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

YLT to love Jehovah thy God, to hearken to His voice, and to cleave to Him (for **He is thy life**, and the length of thy days), to dwell on the ground which Jehovah hath sworn to thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them.'

- **loving** Dt 30:6,16; 10:12; 11:22
- **holding fast** Dt 4:4; 10:20; Joshua 23:8; Acts 11:23; Romans 12:9
- **life** Ps 27:1; 30:5; 36:9; 66:9; John 11:25,26; 14:6; 17:3; Acts 17:25,28; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3,4; Revelation 21:6; 22:1,17
- **may** Dt 4:40; 5:16; 11:9; 12:10

- [Deuteronomy 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CHOOSING LIFE IS CHOOSING TO LOVE AND OBEY AND HOLD FAST TO GOD

By loving ([ahab/ahab](#); Lxx = [agapao](#) in the present tense = as one's lifestyle or habitual practice - only possible by [the Spirit's enablement](#)) the LORD your God, by obeying ([shama](#)) His voice, and by holding fast to Him- All three of these attitudes/actions are evidence of a changed (circumcised) heart. In Deut 6:5 it was stressed that this kind of "love" contains not only the elements of liking and affection, but also devotion and loyalty. And again note that if one says he loves God, he will be generally (not perfectly) disposed to obey God.

Holding fast to Him - Clinging to the LORD as if your life depended on it (Him) because it does! NLT "committing yourself firmly to Him." The NET has "be loyal to Him." **Holding fast** give us a great word picture.

Holding fast (cleave) ([1692](#)) ([dabaq](#)) means to stick to, adhere to, cling to, join with, stay with, stay in close proximity to and which yields the noun form for "glue". Dabaq describes something that sticks or clings to something else (Ezek 29:4 and Ezekiel's tongue to roof of his mouth Ezek. 3:26). It is interesting that one of the most concentrated uses of "dabaq" in the OT is found in this short story of Ruth (Ru 1:14, 2:8, 2:21, 23- see [notes Ru 1:14; 2:8; 21; 23](#)) -- Ruth 2:8 "stay here with my maids"; Ruth 2:21 "You should stay close to my servants"; Ruth 2:23 "So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz";

Dabaq also conveys the ideas of **loyalty** and **devotion** as in the first use of **dabaq** where "a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Ge 2:24) which also emphasizes the basic meaning of being intimately joined to another and of being identified with one another, even as Ruth was now committing to be "identified" no longer with the Moabites but primarily with Naomi, her people and her God. This idea of leaving former affections and loyalties and shifting them to Jehovah is found numerous times in Deuteronomy, as for example in (Dt 10:20) where Moses instructs Israel that they are to "fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and cling (**dabaq**) to Him, and you shall swear by His name". In this verse we also see that reverential awe (**fear**) of God is in part manifest by one **cleaving** closely to Him. This truth gives us some insight into Ruth's cleaving to Naomi and ultimately to Naomi's God. (cf Dt 11:22-23, 13:4 Josh 23:8 contrast Josh 23:12 Dt 13:17)

Dabaq is a key word in Deuteronomy for Israel is repeatedly called to cling to God - Deut. 30:20 and the three earlier uses...

Deuteronomy 10:20+ "You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and **cling** ([kollao](#) from **kolla** = glue means literally to glue, cement, join or fasten together and thus to unite) to Him, and you shall swear by His name.

Deuteronomy 11:22+ "For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and **hold fast** to Him,

Deuteronomy 13:4+ "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and **cling** to Him.

There are also three negative uses of dabaq in Deuteronomy - Deut. 13:17+; Deut. 28:21+; Deut. 28:6+

For - [term of explanation](#) What is Moses explaining?

This is your life and the length of your days- "this is how you will have a long and prosperous existence as a nation."

NIV Study Bible - "Life" in this context refers to all that makes life rich, full and productive—as God created it to be (cf. Lev 18:5; Jn 10:10).

This is your life - Literally "He (Yahweh) is your life"! True life is only to be found in the Lord, in an intimate relationship of union and communion with Him. This recalls Paul's words in two of his epistles that **Christ is our life**...

Colossians 3:3+ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 [note](#) When **Christ**, [who is] **our life**, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Galatians 2:20+ "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

John writes

1 John 5:11-12+ And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

In Deuteronomy 32:46-47+ **life** is found in the **Word of God**, for Moses declared to Israel...

Take to your **heart** (NOT JUST HEAD KNOWLEDGE!) all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it (THE WORD) is your **life**. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."

Comment: Compare the NT descriptions of God's Word as the Word of Life (Philippians 2:16+, 1 John 1:1+; see also Jn 1:1+, Rev 19:13+)

Cornerstone Biblical Commentary on "**He is your life**" – The Lord not only grants life as something outside Himself, but **He is life in Himself**. Knowledge of Yahweh brings **life**, and those who are truly **alive** testify thereby to the presence of Yahweh in their lives. **There could hardly be a clearer statement of the Gospel message: "The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone"** (John 1:4+). Choosing to adopt and obey the terms of the covenant would procure blessings far beyond the moment of decision. It would offer hope for descendants yet unborn (Dt 30:19b) and the perpetuation of national existence in the land God had promised to the patriarchal ancestors (Dt 30:20).

That you may live in the land - That they may continue to live in the promised land.

The land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them- This is a reference not to the Mosaic or Old Covenant but the Abrahamic Covenant. See [Abrahamic versus Mosaic](#)

At the very outset God had spoken of the Land of Israel

'**See**, I have placed the land before you (the Hebrew verb means "to present," "to offer," "to deliver") ; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them.' (Dt 1:8+)

Take One Step

Love the Lord your God, . . . obey His voice, and . . . cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days. —Deuteronomy 30:20

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

At a shopping mall in Coventry, England, researchers posted colorful signs along the steps of a staircase that said: "Taking the stairs protects your heart." Over a 6-week period, the number of people who chose to walk up the stairs instead of riding the adjacent escalator more than doubled. The researchers say that every step counts, and that long-term behavior will change only if the signs are seen regularly.

The Bible is filled with "signs" urging us to obey the Lord and follow Him wholeheartedly. Just before the Lord's people entered the Promised Land, He said to them: "I have set before you today life and good, death and evil . . . 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" (Deut. 30:15,19-20).

So often we hope our lives will change through a giant leap of faith, a profound decision, or a significant act of service. In reality, the only way we change is one step at a time, and every step counts.

Today, let's heed the signs and take a step of heartfelt obedience toward the Lord. By: David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

It matters not the path on earth My feet are made to trod;
It only matters how I live: Obedient to God.
—Clark

One small step of obedience is a giant step to blessing.