

## K. Covenantal Declaration of Obedience (Deut 26:16-19)

Here, we see the general and specific stipulations of the Law concluded with a declaration of obedience to God, verse 16,

Deuteronomy 26:16-17: "16 "This day Yahweh your God commands you to do these statutes and judgments. **You shall, therefore, be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul.** 17 "You have today **declared Yahweh to be your God**, and that you would **walk in His ways and keep His statutes**, His commandments, and His judgments, **and listen to His voice.**"

God was their God, and they pledged their obedience to His commandments, rules, and ways with their heart and soul. Further, just as Israel declared that God was their God, God declares that they are His people, verse 18,

Deuteronomy 26:18: "18 "And Yahweh has today **declared you to be His people, a treasured possession**, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments;"

They were to be His treasured possession, and if they upheld their end of the covenant by obeying His commandments, He promised to set them in a place of fame, honor, and supremacy over the nations.

This vow to obey the Law of the people sets the stage for the third and final sermon from Moses.

## III. Covenantal Blessings and Curses (Deut 26:16-29:1)

### General Overview

After laying out the covenant stipulations at the center of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses then gives instructions for the covenant ceremony to be performed when Israel enters into the Promised Land.

The main point of this section is to **establish the nation's accountability to keep the covenant.**

### 1. Accountability Reinforced (Deut 27:1-26)

#### A. To the Leadership- A Law Stone (27:1-8)

In verse 1, we see Moses instruct the people to keep

See how this section begins with Moses charging the leaders of the people to keep the entire Law,

Deuteronomy 27:1 "1 Then Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, "**Keep the entire commandment** which I am commanding you today."

Notice how he calls the Law the commandment. Even though the Law comprises multiple commandments and stipulations, it is seen as one singular entity. Therefore, the Law must be obeyed in its entirety.

He then gives instructions for this covenant ceremony that is to happen when the people enter the Promised Land, verse 2

Deuteronomy 27:2-3: "2 "So it will be on the day when you cross the Jordan to the land which Yahweh your God gives you, that **you shall set up for yourself large stones and coat them with lime 3 and write on them all the words of this law** when you cross over..."

It is as if this Law, placed on mount Ebal, which represents the curse for disobedience, hangs over the people as a witness against them.

## B. To the People- A Dynamic Proclamation (27:9-26)

After these instructions, Moses introduces the Blessings and Curses to the people. On the day they were to enter the Promised Land, the people were to come to two adjoining mountains, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, and divide the tribes into groups of 6. Once the nation was divided on these two hills, the priests would pronounce the curses for disobedience toward Mount Ebal and the blessings toward Mount Gerizim. Joshua and the nation in [Joshua 8](#) carry out this ceremony. However, in this chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses only describes the pronouncement of cursing.

In verse 15, we get an idea of what this scene looked like,

Deuteronomy 27:15-16: "15 **'Cursed is the man who makes a graven image or a molten image, an abomination to Yahweh, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.'** And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'

Twelve curses are pronounced, and twelve times, the twelve tribes respond by saying, Amen. The first 11 curses act as summaries for the two tables of the Law. Furthermore, these twelve correspond to the reality that the entire nation would be cursed upon disobedience of the Law. In verse 26, we see the final curse that acts as a summary curse,

Deuteronomy 27:26"26 **'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.'** And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'"

## 2. Blessings and Curses (Deut 28:1-29:1)

In this chapter, we see the details of the blessings and curses pronounced in the covenant ceremony.

### A. Blessings (28:1-14)

Moses begins the section of blessing by declaring Israel's covenant blessings if they obey the entirety of the Law, verse 1,

Deuteronomy 28:1-2:"1 "Now it will be, **if you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I am commanding you today**, Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 "And **all these blessings will come upon you and overtake you** if you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God:"

If they obey all the commandments, God will set them above the nations and give them all these blessings. In summary, these blessings expound the promises made to Abraham of Land, Seed, and Blessing. We see this reality in verses 3 and 4,

Deuteronomy 28:3: "3 "Blessed shall you be **in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. 4 "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."

Here, we see blessings upon their dwelling places in the Land, the fruit of their womb, and their livestock. This triad is repeated in this chapter and is essential.

In verse 9, we see that these blessings flow out of the blessing of the relationship with YHWH.

Deuteronomy 28:9-10: "9 **"Yahweh will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of Yahweh** your God and walk in His ways."

As they dwell with their God, He pours out blessings to them as they live together in His Land. James Hamilton comments that Moses' message is this: "If you keep this covenant, it will be like you live in the Garden of Eden."

## B. Curses (28:15-29:1)

### i. The Reversal of Blessing (28:15-26)

Which then brings us to the curses for disobedience. The message becomes clear when we compare the two sections and see that there are five verses of curses for every verse of blessing. These curses are broken up into two thematic sections, Reversal and Return.

Beginning in verses 16-18, we see that curse is the reversal of blessing. Verse 16,

Deuteronomy 28:16-18: "16 "Cursed shall you be **in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field.** 17 "Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 18 "Cursed shall be the **offspring of your body and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock."**

Here, we see those initial blessings upon their dwelling places in the Land, the fruit of their womb, and their livestock will be reversed into curses upon those same three things if Israel disobeys the Law.

Similarly, each of the following curses, through verse 26, corresponds directly to the blessings of the previous section.

### ii. The Return to Egypt (28:27-68)

This brings us to our most extended section of curses, verses 27-42, which describe God reversing the very blessing of the Exodus. We see this beginning in verse 27,

Deuteronomy 28:27: "27 "Yahweh will strike you with **the boils of Egypt** and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed."

Israel was saved from Egypt to be God's holy people when He struck the Egyptians with plagues. But here we see that they will be the ones who are struck and smitten by God. They were supposed to be God's special possession, but they would be treated just like Egypt because of their disobedience.

In verse 46, we see this Exodus language mentioned once more,

Deuteronomy 28:46 "46 "And they shall become a **sign and a wonder on you** and your seed forever."

The phrase "Sign and Wonder" was used in [Exodus 7:3](#), [8:23](#), and [10:1](#) to describe God's work of sending His judgment upon Pharaoh and Egypt in the form of the plagues.

God was to bless Israel by expelling the Canaanites. But because of their disobedience, Israel would become like the Canaanites in God's eyes.

Moses presupposes that Israel will not obey, so this curse of return is inevitable, verse 45,

Deuteronomy 28:45: "45 "So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, **because you would not listen to the voice of Yahweh your God to keep His commandments** and His statutes which He commanded you."

Such a terrible return will begin with a siege of the precious promised Land (vs. 51). This siege will be so terrible that they would be forced to do despicable things out of intense hunger,

Deuteronomy 28:53–57: "53 "**Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters** whom Yahweh your God has given you, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you.

They will be driven to cannibalize their children, and the neighbor who was once loving and kind to you would not share the flesh of his child with you or even with his wife (vs. 54-55). The mother who gives birth, who was once so dainty and refined, would be driven to devour the fruit of her womb (vs. 56-57). Such a siege would eventually happen to disobedient Israel (2 Kings 6, Jer 19, Lam 4) down to the very disgusting detail.

Just as the blessings found at the beginning of this chapter were an expounding of the blessings promised to Abraham, the curse of return is a complete reversal, verse 62,

Deuteronomy 28:62–64: "62 "Then you shall remain **few in number, whereas you were as numerous as the stars of Heaven**, because you did not listen to the voice of Yahweh your God. 63 "And it will be that as Yahweh **delighted over you to prosper you and multiply you, so Yahweh 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. 64 "Moreover, **Yahweh 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.**"

If Israel wanted to worship the gods of Egypt and Canaan, God would treat them like the Egyptians and the Canaanites. If they wanted to sacrifice to gods from faraway lands and forsake their God, the God of Abraham, God would give them exactly what they wanted. He would remove their blessing, dwindle their seed, and remove them from the Land.

## IV. Moses' Final Sermon (Deut 29:2-34:12)

### General Overview

After reading the curses for disobedience and looking at the details of the covenant ceremony described in the previous chapters, this system of the Mosaic Covenant was set up to cause Israel to fail. How can they experience the blessings of the covenant if they don't have the right heart needed to obey the commandments of the covenant? How can their international impact to bless the world be accomplished if they are inevitably cursed? If Israel's failure results in their curse, how can God fulfill the promises made to their forefathers?

The main point of this section is to **resolve this tension** between Israel's sin and unfaithfulness and God's love and covenant faithfulness to the promises He made to Abraham.

## 1. Moses' Calling to Covenant Faithfulness (Deut 29:2-28)

Chapter 29 begins by detailing why Israel is responsible for worshiping God. Verse 2,

Deuteronomy 29:2-3: "2 And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "**You have seen** all that Yahweh did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants and all his land; 3 the great trials which **your eyes have seen**, those great signs and wonders."

They have witnessed His power to judge the Egyptians with great trials and wonders. These were signs to Israel of God's sovereign supremacy as Creator. Seeing God demonstrate His power and hearing Him speak to them at Sinai demanded a proper response: worship Him with all their heart, soul, and strength (Deut 6:5).

However, as we see in verse 4, to do so, Israel must have the right heart,

Deuteronomy 29:4: "4 "Yet to this day **Yahweh has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.**"

In Deuteronomy 10:16, Moses taught Israel that to love God as He desired to be loved, **they had to circumcise their heart**. The problem is that such a thing is impossible for one to do to themselves. Here, we see that God is the only One who can perform this heart surgery, and He did not give them the heart to know and understand. As a result, they had eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, making them unreceptive to God's demands to worship and obey.

In light of this spiritual reality, Moses warns the people to beware of an individual, clan, or tribe among them who would rebel from God, verse 18,

Deuteronomy 29:18-19: "18 lest there be among you a man or woman, or family or tribe, **whose heart turns away** today from Yahweh our God, **to go to serve the gods of those nations; lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood.** 19 "And it will be when he hears the **words of this curse**, that he will **bless himself in his heart**, saying, 'I have peace though I walk **in the stubbornness of my heart** in order to sweep away the watered land with the dry.'"

Such rebellion was like a root of bitterness bearing poisonous fruit, implying that their rebellion and idolatry would affect those around them, spreading poison throughout the nation. The existence of such an individual or group would cause the anger of the Lord and His righteous jealousy to be kindled and the curses of the book to be brought upon him (or them).

Moses then speaks in the **future tense** of what the curses this rebellion **will bring** upon the Promised Land, verse 22,

Deuteronomy 29:22-23: "22 "And the generation to come, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, **shall see the plagues of the land** and the diseases with which Yahweh has afflicted it, and they will say, 23 'All its land is **brimstone and salt, a burning waste**, unsown and nothing sprouting, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of **Sodom and Gomorrah**, Admah and Zeboiim, which Yahweh overthrew in His anger and in His wrath.'"

See that instead of coming into the Land and marveling at Israel's wisdom, the foreigner will see that God has turned it into brimstone, salt, and constant burning. Just as He did with Sodom and

Gomorrah, God will turn the Promised Land, once flowing with milk and honey, into a toxic waste dump because of Israel's rebellious heart.

As the chapter ends with the certainty of Israel's failure, the objection arises - what about the Abrahamic covenant? What about the blessings? What about the nations coming to be blessed by Israel, learning of God's wisdom, and coming to Israel to worship Him where He chooses? Moreover, how are they supposed to obey God's commands or return to Him and seek Him without the right heart, eyes to see, or ears to hear, a thing only God can give them?

Listen to Moses's answer: verse 29,

Deuteronomy 29:29: "29 **"The secret things belong to Yahweh our God, but the things revealed belong to us** and to our sons forever, **that we may do all the words of this law.**"

See that in this answer, there is hope. There are secret things that God will do to resolve these tensions that were not revealed to the Israelites then. God has reasons and purposes, which He had not yet revealed to Israel, for setting things up this way. However, God has revealed His desire for Israel in the Law, and they are responsible for obeying.

## 2. Moses' Prophecy of Return (Deut 30:1-10)

So then, up until this point, we have a theological/spiritual trajectory. Israel will receive the Law and enter the Mosaic covenant in the Land; they will fail, sin, and rebel. They will be cursed until they are exiled. Here in this chapter, we see what happens at the end of this trajectory. Moses begins by looking forward into Israel's future where they are in exile, verse 1,

Deuteronomy 30:1-5: "1 "So it will be, **when all of these things have come upon you**, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you cause **these things to return to your heart in all the nations where Yahweh your God has banished you**, 2 and **you return to Yahweh your God and listen to His voice with all your heart and soul** according to all that I am commanding you today, you and your sons, 3 then **Yahweh your God will return you from captivity and return His compassion on you, and He will gather you again from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you**. 4 "If those of you who are banished are at the ends of the sky, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there He will take you back. 5 "And **Yahweh 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.**"

Moses prophesies a moment when all the words of the blessings and curses will return to their hearts and weigh heavily on them after centuries of forgetting God's Law and forgetting God. They will remember, and they will be convicted. At that moment, they will return to the Lord and obey Him. This word return denotes the idea of turning around, reversing course, and repenting. They were far away from worshipping God, but they will turn their back on their idols and turn to Him. This is the nature of repentance. They will listen to His voice with ears to hear and turn from idol worship to worshipping Him.

The question then is how is their repentance made possible? How are they all of a sudden able to have a circumcised heart when before they did not have a circumcised heart or eyes to see and ears to hear? Answer: verse 6,

Deuteronomy 30:6: "6 "Moreover **Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your seed, **to love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.**"

God is the One who will do it. They were utterly unable. They were prone to forget, for they were fallen humans. So God steps in, and He promises to circumcise their hearts. This is incredibly significant. God must intervene. God must give the eyes to see and the ears to hear, and He will!

This return, this restoration will lead to the ultimate fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, vs. 9

Deuteronomy 30:9-10: "9 "Then **Yahweh 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 Yahweh **will return to rejoice over you for good**, just as He rejoiced over your fathers, 10 when you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, **when you return to Yahweh your God with all your heart and soul.**"

When will this happen? When Israel returns to God with all their heart and soul, with the circumcised heart He will give them.

### [Biblical Theology Connection](#)

This promise is the key to the book of Deuteronomy and the foundation for what will later be called the New Covenant.

This is what is promised by the Prophet Jeremiah in [Jeremiah 31](#),

[Jeremiah 31:31-33](#): "31 "Behold, **days are coming**," declares Yahweh, "when I will cut **a new covenant with the house of Israel** and with the house of Judah, **32 not like the covenant which I cut with their fathers** in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, **My covenant which they broke**, but I was a husband to them," declares Yahweh. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will cut with the house of Israel after those days," declares Yahweh: "**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.**"

The New Covenant promises that God will write His Law where? On their hearts! As the Prophet Ezekiel puts it in [Ezekiel 36](#),

[Ezekiel 36:26-27](#): "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 do My judgments."

The New Covenant promises this heart surgery that Moses prophesied about - where God removes the heart of stone - the heart bent on rebelling against God and gives a heart of flesh and sending His Holy Spirit. Then, God's people will walk in His statutes and obey His rules.

Why will He do this? Because God will have mercy on them. It will not be because of their willpower or their righteousness that God will do this. Because of God's great mercy and compassion, they will receive a circumcised heart.



In this, we see the glorious plan of God. The trajectory of the Mosaic covenant brings Israel into curse and exile. Their hardness of heart results in their rejection of God in the Old Testament, leading to the ultimate curse of exile. Then, their hardness of heart leads to their rejection of their Messiah in the New Testament, leading to His execution. However, as Christ taught during the Last Supper, His blood to be poured out on the cross inaugurated that New Covenant, leading to Israel's ultimate redemption and restoration. In this chapter, we see that the Mosaic Covenant points to and moves Israel into the glorious reality of the New Covenant, when, in the end, all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:25-26).

### 3. Moses' Call to Choose Life (30:11-20)

After Moses revealed the complete package of the Mosaic Covenant - that of failure and exile and then restoration and redemption - he concludes by calling on Israel to choose life. He begins by declaring to them that this Law is understandable and accessible to them, verse 11,

Deuteronomy 30:11-14: "11 "For this commandment which I am commanding you today is **not too difficult for you, nor is it far from you.**"

They knew the Law. They did not have to go to Sinai to receive it from heaven again. They had the understanding. They will have life and blessings in the Land in return for their obedient love. But if they do not obey, they will perish.

The paths are clear. Israel is accountable and responsible for their actions. Therefore, Moses finishes with the command to choose the path of life, verse 19,

Deuteronomy 30:19: "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 seed,"

However, even if Israel had the understanding of the Law, they will not do it, for they will not desire to. Hamilton comments, "In spite of all the history of what Yahweh has done for them (Deuteronomy 1-3), in spite of all of Moses' rhetorical brilliance in seeking to motivate them to keep the law (Deuteronomy 4-11), in spite of the straightforward revelation of what it is they are to do (Deuteronomy 12-28), Israel will break the covenant."

### 4. Preparation of the People (Deut 31:1-23)

Moses begins these closing remarks by reminding the Israelites that he will not be leading them over the Jordan, verse 2,

Deuteronomy 31:2-3: "2 And he said to them, "I am 120 years old today; **I am no longer able to come and go**, and Yahweh has said to me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan.' 3 "**It is Yahweh your God who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them.** Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as Yahweh has spoken."

He points to the Lord their God, who will go before them. Moses was not the one who was responsible for delivering Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness. He was not the one who gained victory over the Moabites. God did these things, and Moses sought to remind the people that God would destroy the nations before them, with Joshua being their human representative.

Moses then turns his attention to Joshua,



Deuteronomy 31:7: "7 Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, **"Be strong and courageous,** for you shall go with this people into the land which Yahweh has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance."

He commands him to be strong and courageous as he leads the Israelites in conquering the Land the Lord promised.

The basis of his strength and courage is seen in verse 8,

Deuteronomy 31:8: "8 "And **Yahweh is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."**

Joshua had no reason to fear man, for the Lord had promised never to leave or forsake him.

After Moses's address to the people, God came down from the Pillar of Cloud and met with Moses and Joshua. He first speaks to Moses in verse 19,

Deuteronomy 31:16–21: "19 "So now, write this song for yourselves and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it in their mouths, **so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel.** 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 fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them and spurn Me and break My covenant.** 21 "Then it will be, when many evils and troubles have found them, **that this song will answer them as a witness** (for it shall not be forgotten from the mouths of their seed); for I know their intent which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore."

Here, God commissions Moses to write a song to teach to the people. This song was to stand as a witness against them and all future generations when they broke the covenant with God by turning to other gods, serving them, and despising God.

After instructing Moses, God then turns to Joshua and commissions him personally, verse 23,

Deuteronomy 31:23: "23 Then He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun and said, **"Be strong and courageous,** for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and **I will be with you."**

Joshua was to take the mantle as the theocratic leader of God's people, and just as God had been with Moses, God promised to be with Joshua as he brought the people into the Promised Land.

## 5. The Song of Moses (31:24-32:52)

### A. Covenant Lawsuit: Call of the Witness (31:24-32:3)

As we saw in the chapters of [Deut 27-30](#), Moses detailed the curses that would come upon Israel when they failed to obey, culminating in God's restoration when He caused them to return to Him by circumcising their hearts. In this chapter, Moses teaches Israel a song that will remind them, or stand witness against them, of the reason for God's rejection and the hope for their future restoration. This was to be a song learned and sung from generation to generation. We see that this did happen, as Isaiah cites this song on numerous occasions about 700 years later.

This song was written as a covenant lawsuit, which begins with an accusation that is then supported with evidence. Moses calls together the elders of the people as witnesses, saying, verse 28,

**Deuteronomy 31:28-29:** "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. 29 "For I know that after my death **you will act corruptly and turn away from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the last days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of Yahweh, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands."**

Again, see the inevitable nature of their disobedience and corruption. This song will serve as a witness against them and future generations because they will rebel.

#### B. Covenant Lawsuit: Accusation (32:4-6)

The song begins in verses 4-6, with Moses describing the two parties in this covenant relationship. First, Moses establishes who God is in verse 4,

**Deuteronomy 32:4:** "4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; **A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He."**

God is the Rock. He is immovable in His perfection and His righteousness. All that He does is just and righteous. Unlike humanity, there is no iniquity or sin in Him. He is reliable and without flaws. Moreover, He is a God of faithfulness to His covenant promises.

Unlike YHWH, Israel rejected God's righteousness, verse 5,

**Deuteronomy 32:5-6:** "5 "They have **acted corruptly toward Him**, They are **not His children** because of their defect; But are a **perverse and crooked generation**. 6 "Do you thus repay Yahweh, O people who are wickedly foolish and without wisdom? **Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you."**

#### C. Covenant Lawsuit: Evidence (32:7-18)

The song then moves to verses 7-14 to provide proof of his accusation that Israel had dealt corruptly with their God. He begins by describing God's love for His people for the past 400 years, verse 10,

**Deuteronomy 32:10-12:** "10 **"He found him** in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness; **He encircled him; He cared for him; He guarded him** as the apple of His eye. 11 "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them; He carried them on His pinions. 12 **"Yahweh alone guided him, And there was no foreign god with him."**

God had brought their forefather, Jacob, out of nothing, out of the waste of the wilderness. God cared for and kept Israel in the desert. They were the apple of his eye, and He provided for them like an eagle protecting and providing for its young.

Instead of enjoying the beautiful provisions, love, and care of their Father, Israel abandoned him. He begins by calling them Jeshurun, a term of affection meaning "upright." They were loved. They were cared for. They were supposed to be upright, but instead, verse 17,

Deuteronomy 32:17–18: "17 "They **sacrificed to demons** who were not God, **To gods whom they have not known**, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread. 18 "You **neglected the Rock who begot you**, And forgot the God who brought you forth."

Despite God's love and faithfulness to bring them from Egypt to the brink of the promised Land, they had turned to sacrificing to demons and worshipping foreign idols. Israel had not experienced anything from these gods to compel them to worship them. In doing so, they chose to forget the God who had saved them with His mighty hand.

#### D. Covenant Lawsuit: Verdict and Sentence of the Judge (32:19-35)

In response to Israel's awful rejection of God, God will reject them. His face shone upon them in love for generations, and they chose to forget Him so He would hide His face from them, verse 20,

Deuteronomy 32:20–21: "20 "Then He said, 'I will hide My face from them; I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons **in whom is no faithfulness**. 21 'They have **made Me jealous with what is not God**; They **have provoked Me to anger with their idols**. So I will make them **jealous with those who are not a people**; I will provoke them to anger with a wickedly foolish nation,"

They made Him jealous by loving foreign gods. So, He will make them jealous by loving the foreign people instead of them. They decided to worship non-gods so He would make them jealous by loving non-people. God will turn the tables on Israel.

God shows that if His judgment had been unrestrained, Israel would have been wiped from human history by the gentile nations that God was sending to conquer them, verse 26,

Deuteronomy 32:26–27: "26 'I would have said, "I will cut them to pieces; **I will cause the memory of them to cease from men**," 27 **Had I not feared the provocation by the enemy**, Lest their adversaries misjudge, **Lest they say, "Our hand is triumphant, And Yahweh has not done all this."**

His judgment against Israel was to demonstrate His just wrath against sin and His jealous desire for their exclusive worship of Him. But to annihilate Israel would have violated the unconditional promises He made to Abraham and caused His plan for Redemption to fail. Furthermore, the conquering nations would not correctly understand God's judgment. They would have seen their work as a mighty triumph of their hand.

But because of their devotion to false gods and their refusal to recognize that God was to be the One who would give them victory over Israel, God declares, verse 35,

Deuteronomy 32:35: "35 **Vengeance is Mine**, and retribution, **In due time their foot will stumble**; For the day of their disaster is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them."

He will quickly turn to exercise His vengeance on them with calamity and doom. In due time, He will turn from cursing Israel and place His wrath on their wicked oppressors. He will exact vengeance for the evil done against His people.

## E. Israel's Restoration and YHWH's Vindication (32:36-52)

When God finishes His just cursing of Israel and turns their curse upon their enemies, He will turn to right all His people's wrongs, verse 36,

Deuteronomy 32:36: "36 "For **Yahweh will render justice to His people**, And **will have compassion on His slaves**, When He sees that their strength is gone, And there is none remaining, bond or free."

See how God will relent from His punishment and instead have compassion on Israel. They are His people, and He will comfort them.

God has all authority to do this very thing, for He alone is the One true God, verse 39,

Deuteronomy 32:39: "39 'See now **that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life.** I have wounded, and it is I who heal, and no one can deliver from My hand."

He alone has the power to judge and control the nations and events of human history. He alone holds absolute sovereignty over life and death. He has the power to curse and the power to bless.

This restoration will happen when God circumcises their heart, and they remember all the curses and blessings of the Law when they remember the words of this song and know that God is their God and there is no god besides Him.

On that day, the nations and Israel are invited to rejoice, for He will cause His people to live, exercise justice upon their enemies, and make atonement for their sins, verse 43,

Deuteronomy 32:43: "43 "**O nations, cause His people to shout for joy;** For He will avenge the blood of His slaves, And He will render vengeance on His adversaries, And **He will atone for His land and His people.**"

See here how the song of Moses foretells and summarizes the entire future of Israel. It tells of how they will fail and fall into the curse. It anticipates how God will turn His face from them to love others. It displays how God will restrain His wrath upon Israel and how, in the end, they will return to worship Him alone when He vindicates and restores them. On that day, the nations and His people will shout for joy.

### Biblical Theology Connection

This song is significant for setting up God's plan for the redemption of the Gentiles. See how this passage links with what is prophesied by Hosea in Hosea 2,

Hosea 2:23: "23 "And I will sow her for Myself in the Land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, And **I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they will say, 'You are my God!'"**

Paul quotes this verse from Hosea in Romans 9 as Paul details how God has sovereignly worked through Israel's rejection of Him to extend His eternal salvation to us Gentiles.

Paul then quotes from the song of Moses in Romans 10,

Romans 10:18–20: “18 But I say, have they never heard? On the contrary, they have; “THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.” 19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says, “**I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU.**” 20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, “**I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME,** I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME.”

Here, Paul details Israel's inexcusable ignorance of God's plan for the Gentiles who are now grafted into the people of God.

But it is in chapter 11 that Paul follows the logic of Deuteronomy and shows how God will ultimately remove their ignorance and use the gentile church to bring Israel back to Himself,

Romans 11:11–12: “11 I say then, did they stumble so as to fall? May it never be! **But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles,** to make them jealous. 12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, **how much more will their fullness be!**”

If God has used Israel's rejection of Him, which culminated in their great transgression of rejecting her Messiah, to bless the Gentile world, how much more will He bless the world when Israel turns to Him in faith?

## 6. Blessing of Moses ([Deut 33:1-29](#))

In Genesis 49, Jacob gathered his twelve sons before his death to give them prophetic blessings about their future and the future of the generations after them. Here, we see Moses doing the same thing before he dies. He gathers the twelve tribes to bless them with a prophetic blessing of their future in the Land.

Compared to Genesis 49, we can see that Moses' blessings to the 12 tribes expand on or correlate with Jacob's blessings to his 12 sons. Jacob declared that the scepter would not depart from Judah. Moses declared that Judah would have victory in battle with the hands of the Lord to help him (vs. 7). Jacob declared that Levi was to be scattered. Still, we see that Moses prays for God's blessing of their work as teachers and priestly mediators between the people and God throughout the Land (vs. 8).

Moses ends this chapter meditating on the favor of Israel's amazing God, verse 26

Deuteronomy 33:26–29: “26 “There is none like the God of Jeshurun, **Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty.** 27 “The eternal God is a dwelling place, And underneath are the everlasting arms; And He drove out the enemy from before you, And said, ‘Destroy!’ 28 “So Israel dwells in security, The fountain of Jacob secluded, In a land of grain and new wine; His heavens also drop down dew. 29 “**Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by Yahweh, Who is the shield of your help And the sword of your majesty!** So your enemies will cower before you, And you will tread upon their high places.”

There is none like God. God rides on the heavens to help His people and bring them to a land of safety, prosperity, and heavenly provision. They are a people saved by the Lord from Egypt. He is a God who is their Shield, Help, and Sword.

## 7. Death of Moses (34:1-12)

This brings us to our final chapter, the death of Moses. Upon ascending the mountain, the Lord shows Moses the entire Promised Land, verse 1,

Deuteronomy 34:1-3: "1 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. **And Yahweh showed him all the Land,** Gilead as far as Dan, 2 and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the Land of Judah as far as the western sea, 3 and the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar."

Notice that Moses is not merely seeing the Land of Canaan. He is seeing the future tribes of Israel in the Land. No human eye could have seen all of this Land from Mount Pisgah, so what Moses saw is what God showed him: a vision of the future inheritance of Israel.

No one has seen the land that they possess, but here, Moses has seen the exact inheritance of each tribe. God speaks to Moses in verse 4,

Deuteronomy 34:4: "4 Then Yahweh said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your seed'; I have let you see it with your eyes, **but you shall not go over there.**"

God is making Moses a witness to the inevitable accomplishment of God's promise to Abraham. He is showing Him something none of the Israelites have seen yet. He is making Moses a sign. Even though Moses would be gone, God would still be with them, leading them into the Land they would inherit.

But then the text shifts from Moses' clear vision to the cloudy details of his death and burial,

Deuteronomy 34:5-6: "5 So Moses **the servant of Yahweh** died there in the land of Moab, according to the command of Yahweh. 6 **And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab,** opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day."

The emphasis of this change in mood is mystery. Mystery surrounds Israel's future and their leader in the promised Land.

The text intentionally sets up a new leader to bring Moses' vision of the future into a present reality. Verse 9,

Deuteronomy 34:9: "9 Now Joshua the son of Nun **was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him;** and the sons of Israel **listened to him** and did as Yahweh had commanded Moses."

Joshua was to be that new leader as he reasoned with a wisdom spirit. Joshua was blessed by Moses and obeyed by the people.

Remember that in Deuteronomy 18:18, Moses foretold how God would raise a prophet like Moses. But Joshua was not the ultimate fulfillment of this Prophet. Verse 10,

Deuteronomy 34:10: "10 And **there has not yet arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom Yahweh knew face to face,**"

As we will see in Joshua, under his leadership, Israel only conquered a portion of what Moses saw. He was not a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. Moses ends this book by implying that Israel was to look for a prophet like him.

### Christ Connection

This Prophet would be the Deliverer of God's people. He would come to perform signs and wonders that none like Him had done before. He would demonstrate mighty power and great deeds and declare a new law from on top of a mountain. He would mediate a New Covenant between God and His chosen people, and He would know God face to face, for He would be the Son of God. The New Moses is none other than Jesus Christ Himself, and He will be the one who will ultimately fulfill all of God's promises to Israel. Israel was supposed to watch for Him and listen to His voice. Sadly, almost all of Israel rejected Him when He came. But there will be a day coming when Israel "**will look on Him who they have pierced** (Zech 12:10)" and "On that day there shall be a **fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.** (Zech 13:1)" With divinely circumcised hearts, ears that hear and eyes that are opened, they will see their Savior and be cleansed from their sins with His blood. And on that day, Jesus, the ultimate Prophet like Moses, will sing a song of His own, "17 **The Lord your God is in your midst**, a mighty one who will save; **he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.**" (Zephaniah 3:17)