

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
11-2-22

Deuteronomy 29

The Covenant In The Land Of Moab – Verse 1

These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

29:1 At Mount Sinai, 40 years earlier, God and Israel had made a covenant (Exodus 19–20). Although there were many parts to the covenant (read the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers), its purpose can be summed up in two sentences: God promised to bless the Israelites by making them the nation through whom the rest of the world could know God. In return, the Israelites promised to love and obey God in order to receive physical and spiritual blessings. Here Moses reviewed this covenant. God was still keeping his part of the bargain (and he always would), but the Israelites were already neglecting their part. Moses restated the covenant to warn the people that if they did not keep their part of the agreement, they would experience severe discipline.

Israel Saw Wonders, But They Did Not See Them – Verses 2-4

² And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; ³ The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: ⁴ Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

29:2 You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes: Israel saw great wonders from the hand of God since coming from Egypt. They saw the plagues, they saw the death of the firstborn, they saw the Red Sea parted, they saw the Egyptian armies destroyed, they saw victories won by prayer, they ate the manna, they drank the miraculously provided water, and they saw miracle after miracle.

29:4 Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive: The miracles in and of themselves could not accomplish anything in the heart of Israel. If God did not send His Spirit to change their hearts, then the greatest wonder imaginable would not make a difference.

Some people today think the greatest help to evangelism would be to see more miraculous events. After all, who could not believe in the face of such displays of spiritual power? But seeing great wonders accomplishes nothing apart from a supernatural work of God in someone's heart.

God's great works for Israel in the wilderness – Verses 5-9

⁵ And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. ⁶ Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God. ⁷ And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them: ⁸ And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto

the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh. ⁹ Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

29:5 Just as the people of Israel did not notice God's care for them along their journey, we sometimes do not notice all of the ways that God takes care of us—that all of our daily needs have been supplied and we have been well fed and well clothed. Worse yet, we mistakenly take the credit ourselves for being good providers instead of recognizing God's hand in the process.

29:9 What is the best way to prosper in life? For the Israelites, their first step was to keep their part of the covenant. They were to love God with all of their heart, soul, and strength (6:4-5). We, too, are to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33); then true success in life will follow as a blessing from the hand of God.

The parties to the covenant – Verses 10-15

¹⁰Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, ¹¹Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: ¹²That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: ¹³That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. ¹⁴Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; ¹⁵But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day:

29:10 All of you stand today before the LORD your God: This means that the covenant was made with the entire nation. This included the leaders, the men, the women, the children, and even the servants.

29:13 That He may establish you today as a people for Himself: All of Israel was included in God's desire to enter into covenant, to be the people for Himself. He wasn't just looking for a few prominent and talented people, or for just one spiritual tribe like the Levites. God wanted the whole nation to be this people for Himself.

29:15 As well as with him who is not here with us today: But the covenant extended beyond those who stood before the LORD and Moses on that day. It also included him who is not with us here today. The descendants of this nation assembled before the LORD and Moses were also included in the covenant.

The Promise Of Judgment Against The Covenant-Breaker – Verses 16-20

¹⁶(For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which ye passed by; ¹⁷And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them:) ¹⁸Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; ¹⁹And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: ²⁰The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of

the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.

29:16-17 You saw their abominations and their idols which were among them: Israel had seen the abominations and... idols of their pagan neighbors. God promised that anyone who turns away from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations, should never presume on a sense of peace in his heart.

29:18 Moses cautioned that the day the Hebrews chose to turn from God, a root would be planted that would produce bitter poison (see also Hebrews 12:15). When we decide to do what we know is wrong, we plant an evil seed that begins to grow out of control, eventually yielding a crop of sorrow and pain. But we can prevent those seeds of sin from taking root. If you have done something wrong, confess it to God and others immediately. If the seed never finds fertile soil, its bitter fruit will never ripen.

29:19 He blesses himself in his heart, saying "I have peace": Perhaps one who has turned from the LORD and to idols hears the curses against the covenant-breaker, yet thinks he has escaped any penalty. So, he blesses himself in his heart, saying "I have peace." He may have an immediate sense of peace at the moment, but it is the peace of the blind, the peace of the ignorant, who cannot see the peril of coming judgment.

29:20 The LORD would not spare him: This truth is plain "There is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked." (Isaiah 48:22) The score may be settled on either side of eternity, but it will be settled. No one can forsake the LORD and escape the consequences.

The Purpose For Judgment Against The Covenant-Breaker – Verses 21-28

21 And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law: 22 So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; 23 And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: 24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? 25 Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: 26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them: 27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: 28 And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.

29:21 And the LORD would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity: There is an obvious reason to punish the covenant-breaker for his own sake. But God has a purpose beyond the reason of individual covenant.

29:22 So that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land: God's purpose in bringing judgment against a covenant-breaking Israel was also for the sake of the coming generation of your children... and the foreigner. When they see the

devastation that comes from breaking God's covenant, when they see what happens to the land which the LORD overthrew in His anger and wrath, they will be warned to obedience.

29:22 We can also learn from the calamity that comes on the lives of others when they break God's covenant. We can learn that the price of disobedience is not worth it. We can learn that the commands of God are good, and protective in our lives.

29:23 All nations would say: God's purpose in bringing judgment against a covenant-breaking Israel was also for the sake of all nations. When they see what happens to a nation who forsakes the LORD, they will be warned to obedience.

God's revelation to Israel – Verse 29

²⁹ The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

29:29 There are some secrets God has chosen not to reveal to us, possibly for the following reasons: (1) Our finite minds cannot fully understand the infinite aspects of God's nature and the universe (Ecclesiastes 3:11); (2) some things are unnecessary for us to know until we are more mature; (3) God is infinite and all-knowing, and we do not have the capacity to know everything he does. This verse shows that although God has not told us everything there is to know about obeying him, he has told us enough. Thus, disobedience comes from an act of the will, not a lack of knowledge. Through God's Word we know enough about him to be saved by faith and to serve him. We must not use the limitation of our knowledge as an excuse to reject his claim on our life.