

# DEUTERONOMY

## Chapter 30

### *Repentance and Forgiveness*

**“And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, 2 and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. 5 And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. 6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. 7 And the LORD your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you. 8 And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today. 9 The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, 10 when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.**

**30:1** Moses admonishes the Israelites to reflect on the blessing and the curse by faith in God and so interpret what has taken place. Cf 1:32–33. (TLSB)

*call them to mind.* Not a shallow mental reflection. (TLSB)

**30:2** *return to the LORD your God.* Phrase underscores both Israel’s repeated unfaithfulness and the unfathomable depth of the Lord’s grace and compassion. Cf 4:30 for the function of the Law in confronting rebellious Israel with the recognition of their apostasy. Without the Gospel—without God’s grace—Israel was incapable of returning. (TLSB)

**30:2, 6, 10** *with all your heart ... soul.* Recalls the commandment in 6:5 (repeated in 30:6, 10). In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7), Jesus explains that just as sin begins in the heart and manifests itself in the bodily members, so does righteousness wrought by God’s grace. Each bears fruit, whether bad or good (Mt 7:16–20). (TLSB)

**30:3** *restore your fortunes.* History of God’s people Israel illustrates His plan of salvation. In His holiness, God punishes Israel’s disobedience not as an end in itself but to teach that salvation comes only from the one true God—the God who made His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In permitting His chosen people to fall away and realize the consequences of their disobedience, God demonstrates both His absolute intolerance of sin and His mysterious love for humankind. The Holy Spirit, through the Law, drove the hard-hearted children of Israel into contrition; they confessed their sin and recognized that they could not save themselves. He then made their hearts tender by bringing the message of salvation through the promised Messiah. (TLSB)

**30:4** *uttermost parts of heaven*. Hyperbole underscores dispersion of Israelites through future invasion and captivity. Years later, Nehemiah reminded God of His covenant and the promise He made to gather His scattered people (Ne 1:4–9). (TLSB)

**30:5** God’s covenant with Abraham and his offspring included the promise of land (Gn 17:8). (TLSB)

**30:6** *circumcise your heart*. Reinforces the theme that faith begins in the heart with the gracious work of the Holy Spirit through the Word, and manifests itself in obedience to the one true God. Jeremiah described the new covenant that God would make with His people: God Himself, with no assistance from humans, would write His Law (*torah*) on their hearts (Jer 31:31–34). Likewise, Ezekiel prophesied how God would restore His people, with no assistance from humankind (Ezk 11:19–20; cf Ezk 36:25–29; Rm 2:28–29). (TLSB)

**30:7** *curses on your foes*. Fulfilling Ge 12:3. (CSB)

When God’s chosen people trust in God alone, He protects them from their enemies. Cf Ps 54:6–7. (TLSB)

**30:8** Living in daily contrition and repentance, obedience to God proceeds from faith and constitutes the fruit of faith. Cf Heb 11:6. (TLSB)

**30:10** *Book of the Law*. Probably refers to something more than the Decalogue, possibly the statutes described in chs 12–26, since 4:13 makes specific reference to the Ten Commandments.

**30:1–10** Moses, approaching the end of his life, reviews God’s covenant relationship with the Israelites. God gives His Law to His people, not as a legalistic code, but to establish their holiness. However, the people fail miserably to walk in holiness of life and repeatedly commit apostasy. Moses taught them, and teaches us, that a relationship with God means a circumcision of the heart, i.e., faith rooted in the heart and soul. Such faith lives in obedience to the one true God, who gathers and blesses His people. • Holy Spirit, circumcise our hearts through the Word so we cling to Christ in faith and walk in obedience to the Father. Amen. (TLSB)

#### *The Choice of Life and Death*

**11** “For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. **12** It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ **13** Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ **14** But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. **15** “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. **16** If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God[a] that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules,[b] then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. **17** But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, **18** I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. **19** I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, **20** loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

**30:11** *this commandment*. Cf v 8; 6:5–6; see p 971. A commandment derives its force from its source, in this case, God Almighty. This commandment summed up all of the commandments Moses taught the people: to love the Lord your God with all your heart. (TLSB)

*not too hard*. It is not beyond one's grasp to understand. Those with circumcised hearts—i.e., those who believe—will understand. (TLSB)

**30:12–14** *It*. The commandment in 6:5–6. No one will have to search for it; the Lord God, the source of the commandment, will Himself place it in the heart and mouth of His people. Cf Am 8:11–12. (TLSB)

**30:12, 14** *It is not up in heaven ... the word is very near you*. † Moses declares that understanding, believing and accepting the covenant were not beyond them. Paul applies this passage to the availability of the “word of faith” (Ro 10:6–10). (CSB)

**30:15-18** – Life is full of choices; few carry eternal consequences. But this choice – do we follow our covenant God, or do we go away to follow other gods? – was as important as life itself. Trusting the Lord and living His way isn't just the only way to stay alive; it's the only way life can be rich, full, and productive – the way He created it to be. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). God cannot give us happiness and peace apart from Himself, because apart from Him there is no real happiness and peace. To reject God's mercy and to seek greater joy and satisfaction somewhere else is the surest way to personal and national ruin. (PBC)

Note from John 10:10 – LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL – This is the best kind of life: life lived in security and freedom, life with a purpose and goal, life with a capital “L.” – Life is an important word in John (used 36 times; but only 14 times in the Synoptics). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 12, Part 2)

Justin Martyr says, “God spoke thus to the man first created.” God's ways with humankind this always remain the same. Daniel would describe how Israel brought down on themselves the curse of death and evil by departing from God's Law – the whole Word of God (Daniel 9:11). (TLSB)

**30:16** *ways...commandments...rules* – Each suggests a different emphasis. (TLSB)

**30:19** *I call heaven and earth as witnesses*. The typical ancient covenant outside the OT contained a list of gods who served as “witnesses” to its provisions. The covenant in Deuteronomy was “witnessed” by heaven and earth. (CSB)

God informed Israel that His whole creation was summoned to testify that He had told His people in advance what the results of their choice would be: it was a matter of life and death. (TLSB)

*choose life* – Moses could be the Lord's covenant mediator with Israel. He could urge them to do the right thing, but he couldn't choose for them. They had to choose for themselves. (PBC)

On the basis that God had chosen them and established a covenant relationship with them based upon grace. Chemnitz: “These statements must not be understood as applying only to the concerns of this life, for in Luke 10:25ff., when the scribe says, ‘What shall I do to gain eternal life?’ Christ replies, ‘What is written in the Law ... this do and you shall live’ ” (*LTh* 2:620). (TLSB)

The most important question you and I will ever have to answer is, “What do you think of Jesus Christ?” Every other question – Where should I live? Whom should I marry? What school should I attend? What career should I pursue? – pales by comparison. There are only two alternatives: “Whoever believes in the

Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him” (John 3:36). (PBC)

**30:20** *holding fast*. The Spirit of God, who breathed life-giving breath into Adam, breathes life-giving breath into His people through His Word. Cf Ezk 36:22–28. Irenaeus of Lyons: “Preparing man for this life, the Lord Himself did speak in His own person to all alike the words of the Decalogue [Ten Commandments]; and therefore, in like manner, do they remain permanently with us” (ANF 1:482). (TLSB)

*HE is your life*. When they chose the Lord, they chose life (v. 19). In 32:46–47 “all the words of this law” are said to be their life. The law, the Lord and life are bound together. “Life” in this context refers to all that makes life rich, full and productive—as God created it to be. (CSB)

We Christians also have life and death, everlasting salvation and eternal damnation, laid before us in the Word of God. He that believes the Gospel and trusts in the mercy of God in simple faith will have eternal life. He will also give evidence of his faith in his obedience to the Word and command of God. But lie who does riot believe the Gospel, preferring to live a life of sin and shame, will be lost forever. (Kretzmann)

**30:11–20** The Lord’s declaration to His people to choose life is inseparable from His covenant of grace that He established with them. Israel’s history clearly demonstrates that they spurned the life God had reserved for them through His grace, pursuing death instead. Consequently, by rejecting God’s grace, they rejected the length of days God promised to those who love the Lord, walk in His ways, and keep His commands. • Heavenly Father, we pray for forgiveness, for all too often we pursue the way of death and evil rather than life and good. Forgive us for the sake of Christ, who perfectly obeyed Your commands and died for our sins. May Your Holy Spirit work mightily within our hearts. Amen. (TLSB)