

# Renewal of the Covenant

*March 17, 2024*

## Lesson Summary

### **Main Passages**

Deuteronomy 30:1-20

### **Session Outline**

1. Restoration (Deuteronomy 30:1-6)
2. Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:7-14)
3. Decision (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

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### **Theological Theme**

Each person must choose whom he or she will serve and obey. There is one true God, and we must worship Him only.

### **Call to Action**

Life is full of choices. God calls us to obedience, but we often choose sin. What is one area of your life where God is calling you to trust Him more and give more of your heart to Him?



## Leader Guide

# Renewal of the Covenant

### Introduction

There is a form of questions on exams called if-then questions. The gist of these types of problems is the student reads a list of circumstances that are true then must decide what the outcome will be based on the facts. These questions are often challenging, with multiple complex factors to consider while solving for the answer.

Though these problems involve many pieces, the answers are not subjective. These problems have clear right and wrong answers because they are based on facts. The world we live in is often resistant to the idea of objective truth because people want to decide for themselves what is true. But absolute truth does exist, and it is found in Scripture. When you read and understand the Word of God, you can know the “if-then” of your decisions and make the godly choices.

- ❓ Are you good at answering if-then test questions? Why or why not?
- ❓ Why do you think the world resists truth from the Word of God?
- ❓ What are some if-then principles you know from the Bible?

### Session Summary

Moses knew the Israelites would break their covenant with the Lord, and he made it clear what would be necessary for restoration to occur. God knows in advance what we will need, and He makes provision for both our good and bad choices.

In explaining the decision to the Israelites and the consequences that would follow, Moses hoped the people would evaluate the possibilities and make wise and godly choices. Knowing the consequences in advance can motivate us to make good decisions, but that doesn't always happen. So, Moses also explained the importance of turning back to the Lord and loving Him with our whole hearts after making the wrong choices. Today we have the same options as Israel, and we also face consequences based on our choices.

## 1. Restoration (Deuteronomy 30:1-6)

As the Israelites prepared to enter the promised land, Moses essentially told them, "You're going to mess up. You will stumble and disobey God. It's not a matter of if, but when." This wasn't a vote of no confidence in their character; it was an accurate understanding of human nature. Moses knew there would still be hope even when God's people messed up completely, because God is a God of compassion and redemption. He gives second chances. So Moses urged the people, when they did find themselves far from God due to their own straying, to make the right choices.

Moses communicated to the Israelites that were consequences to their choices and actions. He made clear what God had to say, but he knew they were going to break their covenant with God. Under the inspiration of the Lord, Moses explained the blessings and curses that would result from their obedience or disobedience. It was important that the people knew in advance that God would restore them when they returned to Him after disobeying.

The Lord knows and prepares what we need before we ever need it. God knew Israel would be scattered and wanted them to remember the promises of the blessings and curses that would accompany their choices. Having all the information allows you to make better, more informed choices and hopefully keeps you living in righteousness instead of disobedience. At every stage in life, it is important to reflect on the blessings you have received from the Lord as well as the negative consequences of disobedience.



How does reflecting on the outcome of past obedience or disobedience impact your decision making for the present and future?

### Proactive Grace

Moses anticipated not only Israel's rebellion and God's judgment but also God's grace toward the repentant. God would visit His people in their day of calamity and exile and would cause them once more to reflect on their covenant privileges. God then would exercise His grace and restore them to full covenant partnership with its blessings.

Moses stressed that when Israel returned to the Lord after breaking the covenant, He would bless them. The restoration would take place in the land of Israel, thus Moses referenced “the land your ancestors possessed” (v. 5). Though the people had disobeyed in the past, God remained faithful. He would do the same with the present generation and for His people throughout time.

- ❓ How could reflecting on God’s past faithfulness encourage those Moses spoke to toward faithfulness to God? How does reflecting on God’s past faithfulness encourage you?

Moses described the restoration that would occur by God’s promise to circumcise the people’s hearts. This is an important concept to understand. To love God the way we should, we must be willing to have our hearts circumcised. When the excess is removed from our hearts, we can love God with undivided hearts in the way He desires and deserves.

- ❓ Application: What needs to be cut away from your heart or life so that it is undivided for the Lord? What steps will you take toward this?

## 2. Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:7-14)

Moses declared that God would deal with the enemies of His people. No matter our circumstances, we can trust that God is in charge. He also promised to bless His people when they chose to obey. We see this promise repeated throughout Scripture. Obedience invites blessing, and those who want to experience the generous blessings of God live in obedience to Him and His Word.

- ❓ How have you experienced blessings from obeying God?


Consider the different blessings Moses listed that would follow the obedience of the people. From blessing the work of their hands to strengthening their flocks, the Lord was committed to good for His people. The key for us is to trust Him, love Him, and obey Him. Obeying God’s voice and following His commandments is the goal.

Moses went on to say the Lord would rejoice in the people’s restoration. It brings pleasure and joy to the Father when His children love Him and live for Him. This is just as true for believers today as it was for the Israelites in Moses’s time. God is pleased when His people love Him and turn to Him.

- ❓ How does it impact you to remember that God rejoices over your delight in Him? How does this encourage you to delight in Him further?


Moses said the covenant between God and Israel was not too hard for them to understand or do. God's grace is seen in His clear communication to His people. He was not keeping His will for them secret. He laid it out plainly. This is not to imply that it was possible to keep the Mosaic covenant perfectly or possible for any person to earn their salvation by works. God never expected people to be made righteous by keeping the law perfectly. The sacrifices the people offered to God for their sins pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God who was to come.

Although they could not earn righteousness by keeping the law, they were still expected to strive to keep the covenant. Moses reminded the people that the message of God's will had been brought near. To please God and live for Him, it is important we know His Word. When we keep His Word in our hearts, minds, and mouths, we can live in a way that lines up with who God is and reflects His love and nature to the world around us.

 Application: How do you need to be more intentional about keeping God's Word in your heart and mouth? What does this look like in daily life?

### 3. Decision (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

Moses concluded his message from God to the people with a strong appeal to choose well. He had explained the options between life and good or death and evil. Which they would experience was up to them. Just as we all have the choice of what kind of lives we will live or what consequences we will experience, the Israelites had to decide too. God was going to glorify Himself through Israel one way or the other. How it would happen was their choice.

 How do you recognize God's grace in making His will clear? Where else did He do this in the Bible?

Moses begged the people on behalf of God to make the right decision and choose life. Moses reflected the heart of God for the nation of Israel. It was their choice how they would respond to God, but the Lord wanted them to choose life and glorify Him through their love and obedience.

Believers today have been given the same choice to glorify God or chase after the world. We can choose to gratify our sinful nature and give in to the desires of the flesh, but this leads to the destruction and negative consequences described by Moses. Or we can choose life and good that comes from obeying the Lord and doing His will.



Why does God care about which path you choose to take?  
How does this further reveal His love for His people?

God's clear revelation of His will to the people emphasized His love for them. He is a good Father who all people to follow Him and live in the way that is best. By heeding God's words and ways, we choose the path of life that He has promised. God is not trying to trick us in any way. He makes His will clear so that we can find life when we obey Him.

But this is not our only option. If the people chose to turn away from the Lord, they would reap the consequences of that decision. The people had to decide if they would turn from any other gods and love the Lord wholeheartedly or not. In that day, worship of false gods was prevalent and destructive. Though it may look different today, worship of false gods is still prevalent and destructive. We have all been given the choice whether we will love the one true God or chase the false gods of power, money, success, or comfort, among others. You have been given the choice: choose life.



Application: Where do you need to turn away from false gods in your life? What will this look like practically?

## Conclusion

Moses knew the people of Israel would break their covenant with the Lord and need restoration. He described in detail what needed to happen so Israel could be restored to right fellowship with God and live in the land He had for them. Moses wanted the people to understand they could expect certain consequences for disobedience just as they could expect blessings when they made the choice to obey.

It is important to recognize our responsibility for our actions. The choice is before each person to choose whether to follow the Lord or to chase after the things of the world. Just as Moses described the difference between life and death and good and evil, we have the same choice today. Each of us must decide which direction we want our lives to take and then follow through.

- ❓ What do the choices you've been making lately reveal about who or what you serve? How will you seek to move toward obedience to God?
- ❓ How can we as a group support one another in pursuing life found in Jesus?
- ❓ How can you seek a gospel conversation with another person by sharing the truths of what we've learned today?

## Prayer of Response

*Thank the Lord for loving and welcoming you when you turn to Him. Ask for wisdom and courage to see where you need to make the choice for life and blessings and refuse to chase after false gods.*

## Memory Verse

*"Love the Lord your God, obey him, and remain faithful to him. For he is your life, and he will prolong your days as you live in the land the Lord swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." - Deuteronomy 30:20*

## Additional Resources

- *Deuteronomy* by Ajith Fernando
- *Be Equipped* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Deuteronomy* by Eugene Merrill

## Disciples Multiplying Disciples





# Historical Context of Deuteronomy

## Purpose

Though the initial covenant between the Lord and Israel was made at Sinai, the generation that received it had largely died out in the thirty-eight years since that event. Now the younger generation needed to affirm their commitment to the covenant (4:1–8). Moreover, the transition from a largely nomadic existence in the desert to a sedentary lifestyle in Canaan required a covenant revision and expansion suitable to these new conditions. The purpose of Deuteronomy is to provide guidelines for the new covenant community to enable them to live obediently before God and to carry out his intentions for them.

## Author

The book itself asserts that Moses is the principle source and author for the material (1:1), as do subsequent OT texts (Jos 1:7–8; 1Kg 2:3; Ezr 3:2) and NT texts (Mt 19:7; Ac 3:22; Rm 10:19). This attribution remained virtually unchallenged until the advent of modern rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Structural similarities between Deuteronomy and Near Eastern treaty texts from the second millennium BC support the unity and antiquity of the book. That Moses is the primary author of Deuteronomy is the most reasonable view for the person who accepts the testimony of Scripture.

## Setting

The exodus probably occurred in 1446 BC, whereupon Israel set out for Canaan, the inheritance God had promised his people. Because of their rebellious spirit, the Israelites were forced to wander in the desert for forty years (2:7) until at last they arrived in Moab, just opposite Jericho (32:49). It was there that Moses put pen to parchment to compose this farewell treatise (31:9, 24).

## Special Features

The title of this book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy, comes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) and means “second law” or “repetition of the law.” The phrase is actually a mistranslation of 17:18, which reads “a copy of this instruction.” It is still a fitting title since much of the book contains repetitions of the laws found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

## Extended Commentary

### Deuteronomy 30:1-20

30:1–3 The grammatical structure of this passage suggests that Israel’s repentance and return to the Lord would be at his initiative, an act of his grace wherein God’s promises and Israel’s need to be obedient to the conditions of the covenant would be reconciled—one of the hidden mysteries of the mind of God (29:29).

30:4–5 God said he would bring a nation “from the ends of the earth” against his people (28:49). Now he will gather them from the farthest horizon. Verse 4 is quoted in Neh 1:9. See Is 41:9; 43:6; Mk 13:27.

30:6–8 The image of circumcising the heart derives from the occasion of Abraham’s having been physically circumcised, along with his household, as a sign of his covenant relationship with the Lord (Gn 17:9–14). Jeremiah also spoke of this mark of covenant reality in terms of spiritual circumcision (Jr 4:4; cp. Jr 31:33; Ezk 36:26), and Paul compared it to the new life and relationship to God to be found in Christ (Rm 2:28–29; Col 2:11).

30:9–10 Israel’s return to the Lord would bring about a reversal of the curses they had suffered, and they would enjoy the blessings of covenant obedience rather than suffer the consequences of disobedience (28:4). The term for delight is the same as the one translated “be glad” in 28:63.

30:11–14 Lest Israel should protest that the demands of the covenant were too difficult to obey, Moses reminded them that the power to do so resided within them (v. 14). This refers to the revelation of the Lord’s mind and purposes to the Israelites at Sinai and now in the plains of Moab. Moses had instructed them about these matters (6:1), and they were to impress them upon their own hearts and souls as well as those of their children (11:18–19). 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 (Rm 10:6–10).

30:15–20 The topic of these verses is life, which is contrasted with death. The verses echo 11:26–32.

30:19 In a setting similar to a courtroom, the Lord summoned witnesses to his offer to Israel of life and death. Since these witnesses must be enduring and objective, he called not on humans or even angels, but on heaven and earth (cp. 4:26; 31:28; 32:1; Is 1:2; Mc 1:2). He appealed for Israel to choose a life of blessed obedience so they and their descendants might live.<sup>1</sup>

## References

1. Eugene H. Merrill, “Deuteronomy,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 307.