

Our Goal: Christ Jesus (Deuteronomy 30)

The first five books of the Bible are referred to as the Pentateuch (which means 5 books or scrolls-Greek: "penta"- "teuchos"¹). The Pentateuch is also referred to as the "Torah" which is translated as "law," "instruction," or "teaching."² The first book of the Bible is Genesis and is the recording of the beginning of God's creation, through the time of the patriarchs, starting with Abraham, who is called the "father of our faith" (**Galatians 3:7**), then Isaac, then Jacob, who God renamed Israel, and then was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. The second book of the Bible, called Exodus, is the narration of God's calling to Moses to lead the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt to the time of when the tabernacle was completed of which was a total of two years. The next book is Leviticus and it is the spelling out of the role of the Levites, God's priests through the lineage of Aaron, as well as the other Levites with their duties associated with the tabernacle and the sacrifices, and then also the responsibility of the Israelites with regards to the tabernacle and the sacrifices. "The vocabulary of sacrifice pervades the book: the words "priest," "sacrifice," "blood," and "offering" occur very frequently; and "qodesh," rendered "holiness" or "holy," appears more than 150 times, of which has the repeated command: "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy".³ The Apostle Peter quoted that saying, "but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I AM holy." (**1 Peter 1:15**) All of which points to Christ Jesus, "who became for us Wisdom from God—and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption." (**1 Cor. 1:30**)

The next book, Numbers, starts with the numbering of the people of the twelve tribes of Israel, and then gives us a narration of the time of the Israelites being told by God to leave Mt. Sinai, where God had given the law to Moses, and to head toward the Promised Land. The narration continues all the way up until the Israelites were going to cross the Jordan River, for a total of 40 years. Yet after they left Mt. Sinai and made it to the southern border of the land of Canaan, it had been only a couple of years after they had left Egypt. Unfortunately, what could have taken all of just eleven days, the time it should have taken them to go from Mt. Sinai to the southern border of Canaan land (**Deuteronomy 1:2**), plus another 40 days when Moses sent 12 spies, one from each tribe, to check out the land that God was giving them, yet it ended up being a total of 40 years that God had them wander around the wilderness, in order for that adult generation to die off because of their disobedience. The book of Hebrews, in speaking of those Israelites who were disobedient by not trusting God in His promise, we read "For if Joshua [who was the one to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land] had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day [the prophets

1 <https://www.gotquestions.org/Pentateuch.html>.

2 <https://biblehub.com/topical/t/torah.htm>.

3 Scofield Study Bible, 2002, NKJV, pg. 149.

who spoke of the coming One, the Christ, the Messiah]. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent [spoudazo: endeavor, labor, make every effort] to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience [of the Israelites]. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast our confession.** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (**Hebrews 4:8-16**) That should say to us that every day is intended to be our Sabbath in seeking to enter His rest. Our perspective is ALWAYS Christ Jesus. No matter what form of rest, it is ALWAYS in Him, from our time in this lifetime on this earth, to the following life eternal in Christ. Proof of that is in Jesus' own Words, "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.** Take My yoke upon you and **learn from Me,** for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find **rest for your souls.** For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (**Matthew 11:27-30**) We are believing on and putting our trust in Christ Jesus for our spiritual rest for today and every day through eternity. We do not cease from our labors in the present as God has a calling and mission for each of us in sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus. In the words of the Apostle Paul, we must not forget, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are **His workmanship,** created **in Christ Jesus** for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk **in them.**" (**Ephesians 2:8-10**)

Now, Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the law, was written as not only a summary of God's dealings with His people, the Israelites, from the time He delivered them from their captivity in Egypt, to the time just prior to entering the "Promised Land", aka "Canaan Land", but it was also a reaffirming of God's covenant with Israel [hence, Deuteronomy or Second Law). The book of Deuteronomy starts off telling us about the twelve spies sent into Canaan, then later of their conquering of the Amorite kings Sihon and Og. Then we get once again to the law of God, which included the Ten Commandments: **1.** No other gods before Me **2.** No graven images **3.** Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain **4.** Observe the Sabbath to keep it holy **5.**

Honor your father and your mother **6**. Do not murder **7**. Do not commit adultery **8**. Do not steal **9**. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor **10**. Do not covet other people's stuff. This message isn't about the law and the ten commandments but it is about our focus, our perspective, what we are looking ahead to, and then what is in our hearts. Once again, the book of Hebrews spells it out for us.

"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls."
(**Hebrews 12:1-3**)

The story of God and the Israelites are given to us for primarily two reasons. **1**. To know who GOD IS, His character, what pleases and displeases Him **2**. The example of the Israelites (the good and the bad). For example, when God told Moses to send into Canaan 12 spies, The good: two of the twelve gave a favorable report when they returned, Caleb and Joshua. By no coincidence, they are the only ones of the twelve that got to enter the Promised Land again! They were the only ones of the twelve who had the right perspective. They all, all twelve, saw the good of the Promised Land. They all had witnessed the glory and power of God in leading them out of Egypt, etc. They all saw the giants (nephilim) in the land and their walled cities. After Joshua and Caleb had given their good report, the others weakened the faith of the people saying that it was not possible to take that land. Caleb and Joshua then said, "If **the Lord delights in us**, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not **rebel against the Lord**, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the **Lord is with us**. Do not fear them." (**Numbers 14:8-9**) "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (**Romans 8:31**) Now tying together the whole of the law of God and that story of Caleb and Joshua and the other ten spies for Israel, we can refer to what Jesus responded with as being the Greatest or First commandment of God. "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (**Mark 12:29-31**) "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (**Matthew 22:40**) Our goal then ultimately is intended to be IN Christ Jesus. All of the promises of His rest, eternal life, being joint-heirs with Jesus, reigning with Him, all are IN HIM! Once you get to loving God for Who

HE IS, and loving Christ Jesus for Who HE IS, you just want to be where HE IS, all else is just icing on the cake so to speak!

Deuteronomy 30 is one of those chapters in the Bible that if you just had that chapter and nothing else, you can know the heart of God and His desire for His people. Prior to chapter 30 in **Deuteronomy 27-28**, God gives them His reward of blessings or curses and there were two mountains next to each other to remind them. Mt. Gerizim (blessings) and Mt. Ebal (curses). Mt. Gerizim is said to be more fertile and Ebal was bald and rocky. It was on Mt. Ebal, that Moses had commanded that an altar be erected, and the law be written on it. The Israelites then were told to choose between life vs. death, blessings vs. curses, and then really God's way vs. their own. A life of blessings most would say, "yes, that's what I want!" Yet, when it gets to God's way vs. one's own way, that is where the people drop off. The Israelites demonstrated that time and again, and God has witnessed the same since, even with us. Yet Jesus said, "**whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple** [**"is not worthy of Me"** (**Matt.10:38**)]. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. [to become a friend of the world] So likewise, **whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.**" (**Luke 14:27-33**)

You see really, we are to be putting our trust in Him to build that. "Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain." (**Psalms 127:1**) Similarly, Jesus also said, "**For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.**" (**Matt 16:25**) Why? Because that life is IN HIM. As Jesus said, "**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**" (**John 14:6**) Counting the cost means then considering God's Way vs. our way. In **1 Corinthians 3:11**, the Apostle Paul said, "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is **Jesus Christ.**" The Apostle Paul also said, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the **foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (**Ephesians 2:19-21**) Then, Jesus joined those

metaphors together in agreement by saying, in **Luke 6:47-49**, “Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and **DOES THEM**, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the **foundation on the Rock** [Petra]. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was **founded on the Rock**. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation [God’s Word], against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.” While metaphors have their place, one’s understanding can get lost in the mixing of metaphors or illustrations. But with the case of the digging deep and laying our foundation on the Rock, it is God who is leading us TO dig deep and lay our foundation, which is actually the Word that Jesus gave His apostles and prophets. And that foundation is on THE ROCK!

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[Deuteronomy 30:1-10 (The Blessing of Returning to God)] “Now it shall come to pass, 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 drives you, and you **return to the Lord your God and obey His voice** [that reminded me of Jesus’ parable of the Prodigal Son], according to all that I command you today, you and your children, **with all your heart and with all your soul**, that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. [Our promised land in Christ is on the other side of this lifetime!] He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And 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, that you may live**. Also the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. And you will again **obey the voice of the Lord** and do all His commandments which I command you today. The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

[Our fruit is spiritual, the fruit of the Spirit: “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But **if you are led by the Spirit**, you are not

under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:16-26)]

[Deuteronomy 30:11-20 (The Choice of Life or Death)] "For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Nor 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?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; 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; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

[Each of us, are given the free-will to choose between death and life, blessings and curses, God's Way or our own way. The Apostle Paul quoted the just-mentioned passage in Deuteronomy 30 saying, "For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 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 preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your

heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (**Romans 10:5-10**) What that means then is that we are not being saved from our sins just so we can run amok in heaven. We are entering into a covenant relationship with God in Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul explains, "do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you [if you have believed on and received Christ], whom you have from God, and **you are not your own**? For you were bought at a price; therefore **glorify God** in your body and in your spirit, **which are God's**." (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**) That is then how we can say, 'Jesus cannot be JUST your Savior. He MUST ALSO be your LORD!' That is surrenderedness to the Lord as we are always looking unto Jesus, as He is our Way, Truth, and Life! He is the Author AND Finisher of our faith! In closing, "Therefore, to you who believe, **He is precious**; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being **disobedient to the word**, to which they also were appointed. But you are a **chosen generation**, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, **His own special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you **out of darkness into His marvelous light**; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." (**1 Peter 2:7-12**) May our goal be Christ Jesus, each and every day, as He is our holiness and our rest!