

Renewing the Covenant

Opener: What's something in your past that's proven God's faithfulness?

Scripture: These are the terms of the covenant the Lord commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb [Sinai]. ² Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them:

Your eyes have seen all that the Lord did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to all his land. ³ With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those signs and great wonders. ⁴ But to this day the Lord has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear. ⁵ Yet the Lord says, "During the forty years that I led you through the wilderness, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet. ⁶ You ate no bread and drank no wine or other fermented drink. I did this so you might know that I am the Lord your God."

⁷ When you reached this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out to fight against us, but we defeated them. ⁸ We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

⁹ Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do. ¹⁰ All of you are standing today in the presence of the Lord your God—your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, ¹¹ together with your children and your wives, and the foreigners living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water. ¹² You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God, a covenant the Lord is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, ¹³ to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ¹⁴ I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you ¹⁵ who are standing here with us today in the presence of the Lord our God but also with those who are not here today.

¹⁶ You know how we lived in Egypt and how we passed through countries on the way. ¹⁷ You saw their detestable images and idols of wood, stone, silver, and gold. ¹⁸ Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you whose heart turns away from the Lord our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison.

¹⁹ When such a person hears the words of this oath and they invoke a blessing on themselves, thinking, "I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way," they will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry. ²⁰ The Lord will never be willing to forgive them; his wrath and zeal will burn against them. All the curses written in this book will fall on them, and the Lord will blot out their names from under heaven. ²¹ The Lord will single them out from all the tribes of Israel for disaster, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law.

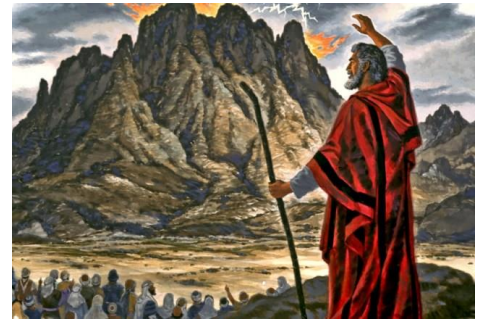
²² Your children who follow you in later generations and foreigners who come from distant lands will see the calamities that have fallen on the land and the diseases with which the Lord has afflicted it. ²³ The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur—nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboyim, which the Lord overthrew in fierce anger. ²⁴ All the nations will ask: "Why has the Lord done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?"

²⁵ And the answer will be: "It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt. ²⁶ They went

off and worshiped other gods and bowed down to them, gods they did not know, gods he had not given them. ²⁷Therefore the Lord's anger burned against this land, so that he brought on it all the curses written in this book. ²⁸In furious anger and in great wrath the Lord uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now." ²⁹The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. Deuteronomy 29

Discussion Questions

1. Deuteronomy 29 is Moses' final address to the second generation of Israelites who had left Egypt. He challenges them to be totally devoted to the Lord within a renewed covenant relationship, promising blessings for loyalty and threatening curses for rebellion. At first he walks them down memory lane. What does he remind them of? Why would he bring all that up? Deuteronomy 29:1-8
2. Why is it significant that he included foreigners in this covenant? Why would he specifically include future generations? How can we make certain today that future generations learn about our faith and relationship with God? Who did this for you? Deuteronomy 29:11, 14-15
3. There is an acute warning in Deuteronomy 29:18-19 about being drawn away from God by idolatry or letting our heart become bitter. How does idolatry and bitterness affect us? What most often tempts you to become bitter or to put something else on a pedestal?
4. Deuteronomy 29:19-21 points out that some "invoke a blessing on themselves" by rationalizing that they'll be safe even though they persist in going their own way. Why do we want to believe that we can be safe even when we sin? What consequences can happen when we do that?
5. What's the difference between believing that we obey God in order to love Him as opposed to obeying Him because we love Him? How would you define loving God?
6. In what ways do we see society and families today experience consequences due to collective decisions? Deuteronomy 29:22-28
7. What does "the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever" mean? What secret things belong to the Lord? What revealed things belong to us? Deuteronomy 29:29



Wrap Up: God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. We'll never know all that He knows, but here in Deuteronomy 29 He lets His people know something that changes everything:

- He is and always will be their God;
- They are and always will be His people; and
- Nothing in all the world is better than this love relationship.

So even though their hearts are hard and they can't seem to live up to the covenant, He will do what they cannot, proving again that the impossible is possible with God.