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Renewal of the Covenant

29: 1-9

Renewal of the covenant DIG: What do the words, “In addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb” mean? What did Moshe remind the people of? What does each story demonstrate? Was Isra’el able to do what YHVH required of them? Why? Why not? What is the gift of God? When was it given? When will it ultimately be fulfilled for the nation?

REFLECT: What memories help keep you faithful to God? Today, when a crisis of transition comes upon us, we also need to be reminded of God’s faithfulness and of our responsibility to obey Him. Do you have a short memory of the blessings that God has given to you?

The covenant in Deuteronomy wasn’t different from the covenant given in Exodus; rather, it was an explanation and application of that covenant to a new generation ready to enter the Land.

The day before Moses died.



The renewal of the covenant between **ADONAI** and **His people** is an integral part of **Deuteronomy**, for it sets out the terms of the relationship between **YHVH** and **Isra’el**. This covenant was the constitution of the theocracy. **God** was **King** and had claimed **His people** for **Himself** out of Egypt; **the people**, who owed everything to **God**, were required to submit to **Him** in a covenant that was based on love. The approaching death of **Moses** provided the initial basis for this renewal.

The opening is very similar to **1:1**, “**These are the words . . . of the covenant**

the LORD commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in Mo’ab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb” (which is the name used for **Mount Sinai** in **Deuteronomy**) **(29:1)**. Like bookends, this shows us that we are entering the conclusion of the book. Both **Chapter 1** and **Chapter 29** remind **the Israelites** of **their** victory over two **kings**. **When you reached this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out to fight against us, but we defeated them. We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh (29:7-8)**. Why these two **kings** and why this reminder? As we saw in **Chapter 1** both of those **kings** were **Amorites (31:4)**. This brings us back to **God’s** promise to **Abraham** in **Genesis 15:16**, where **God** gave **Abraham** the dimensions of **the Promised Land**. At that time, **the sin of the Amorites had not reached its fullness**. However, **ADONAI** had promised that **in the fourth generation the Israelites** would **return to the Promised Land**. Therefore, from the time of **Abraham** to the time of **Moses** in **Deuteronomy 29**, **the sin of the Amorites had reached its fullness**, and **the children of Abraham** were about to enter **the Promised Land**.

He is at work for our benefit at all times. Had **they** forgotten all that **He** had done for them? **ADONAI** would remind **them** of two miracles. First, **during the forty years that I led you through the wilderness, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet**. Secondly, **you ate no bread and drank no wine or other fermented drink. I did this so that you might know that I am the Lord your God (29:5-6)**. It is interesting that **Yeshua** brought out the same two points in **His** sermon on the mount (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Da - The Sermon on the Mount**). First: **Therefore, do not worry, saying, “What will we eat? Or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear” (Matthew 6:31)?** Secondly: **It is written, “Man shall not eat by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).**⁶²⁶

What does **Moshe** mean when **he** writes that **his** speeches to **Isra’el** on the plains of **Mo’ab** are **in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb**, or **Mount Sinai (29:1)**? The covenant declared in **Deuteronomy** wasn’t different from **the covenant** given at **Mount Sinai** (see the commentary on **Exodus Ek - The Ratification of the Sinai Covenant**). Rather, it was an explanation and application of that **covenant** to the new generation and their new situation in **the Land** of Promise. If what **Moses** taught in **Deuteronomy** had been a separate covenant, **he** would have offered blood sacrifices to seal **the covenant** as **he** did at

Sinai (Exodus 24:3-8; Hebrews 9:18-22). Many of the people who accepted **the covenant** at **Sinai** had perished in the wilderness, but the ratification of that **covenant** was made with **the entire nation** (see the commentary on **Exodus De - You Will be For Me a Kingdom of Priests**). Therefore, this current generation of **Israelites** was still held accountable to **the LORD** to **obey** that **covenant** (see **Bi - The Stipulations of the Covenant**).⁶²⁷

The Hebrew for *make a covenant* is literally *cut a covenant*, in which the treaty or covenant was ratified in a ceremony where animals were slain (see the commentary on **Genesis Eg - I am the LORD, Who Brought You Out of Ur of the Chaldeans to Give You This Land**). It seems very likely that some kind of covenant ceremony is implied in the events recorded here by **Moses** (see **Fn - All of You Are Standing**). As the **Israelites** were about to start a new chapter in the life of **the nation**, **they** were about to face many enemies, fight many wars, and undergo many trials. Here, **Moshe** gives **them** some sound advice. And **he** speaks to all of us as well when we face difficult situations. We need to remember what **God** has done for us.⁶²⁸

Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them:

Moshe never seemed to tire of reminding **the people** of the grace and mercy of **God** given to the descendants of **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. **Your eyes have seen all that the Lord did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to all his land. With your own eyes you saw those great trials**, so remember all **those signs and great wonders (29:2-3)**. This historical summary served as a motivation for action. **Those signs and great wonders** refer to **Isra'el's** pilgrimage from the time of **their** departure from **Egypt** to **their** present encampment at **Mo'ab**. The repetition of the Hebrew verb *raah*, meaning *to see*, and the reference to the **eyes** emphasized that **God's people** had personally witnessed what **YHVH** had done on **their** behalf. Those to whom **ADONAI** calls into **covenant** relationship, those from whom **the LORD** demands **covenant** obedience, are those whom **He** has already acted to save. **God's** love has previously been demonstrated . . . ours is anticipated.

If **God's** historically proven grace can, in a sense be taken for granted, the human response certainly cannot. **Verse 4** injects a surprisingly paradoxical note, yet one that is consistent with **Moshe's** stark realism elsewhere. **He** knows that **the eyes** that had witnessed **the Exodus** had not become **eyes** of faith (**1:30-32**). **The ears** that heard the thunder of **Mount Sinai** did not become **ears** of obedience, in spite

of good intentions (**5:26ff**). **The hearts** that learned the message from these events, namely, that **YHVH** alone was **God**, were still capable of turning away and worshipping other gods.

It is this persistent fickleness of human nature, even among **the people of God**, that creates the apparent contradiction between **29:2**, “**Your eyes have seen . . . your own eyes you saw,**” and **29:4**, “**ADONAI has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear.**” People can **see** the very works of **God**, hear the very voice of **God**, and yet still neither **trust** nor obey **Him**. This awful fact trailed the footsteps of **Yeshua Himself**, broke **His** heart, and caused **Him** to declare: **You will keep on hearing but will never understand; you will keep looking, but will never see. For the heart of this people has become dull, their ears can barely hear, and they have shut their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts. Then they would turn back, and I would heal them (Matthew 13:14-15).** Paul also reflected on this verse in **his** interpretation of the rejection of **Messiah** by some of **his** contemporary **Jews**, “**God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes not to see and ears not to hear until this very day” (Romans 11:8)**, and in a broader context (**Romans Chapters 9-11**) heavily influenced by these verses in **Deuteronomy**.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, How wonderful that **You** call **Your children** those who chose to believe in you as **Lord** and **Savior (John 1:12)**. **You** are not calling into a mere friendship; but into a covenant relationship that agrees to put you first as the one we love most and seek to please in all we do. **You** take us as **Your child** and put **Your** robe of righteousness on us so we can enter your holy heaven. **God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21)**. It cost **You** so much to come from heaven (**John 6:41**) and bear the shame, great pain and agony of **Your** death on the cross. The pains and trials that I go through here on earth will soon be forgotten when I spend eternity with **You** in **Your** holy heaven. **I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18)**. I love and worship **You!** In **Yeshua’s** holy name and **His** power of resurrection. Amen*

Returning to our text, we must face the question of what is meant by the words: **ADONAI has not given you (29:4)** . . . On the surface, it may appear to suggest that **Isra’el’s** failure to **understand, trust, and obey** was somehow **God’s** fault! Such a suggestion, however, is at odds with the whole thrust of the book of

Deuteronomy which rebukes **the Israelites** for **their** own personal failure, and challenges **them** instead to respond properly to **YHVH**. Nor can this verse mean that somehow **Isra'el** was incapable of **faith** and **obedience**. Such a thought is rejected in this very speech (**30:11-14**). The urgent appeal to **choose life** (see [Fq - Choose Life](#)) would be merely a sham if **Ha'Shem** had somehow determined in advance that **Isra'el** could not respond to **His mitzvot**. It seems, therefore, that this phrase reflects a feature of the Hebrew language and thought in which events and processes that today would be expressed as consequences of human choice are attributed to **YHVH's** active will. The sovereignty of **God** includes even those who oppose **Him**.

But the words also express a deeper truth, namely, that **hearts understand, eyes see, and ears hear** only through the gift of **ADONAI. Knowledge of God, faith in God (Ephesians 2:8)**, and obedience to **God** are themselves gifts of grace, at the same time they are matters of human choice and response. In some sense, however hard it is for us to understand in our finite minds, the persistence and wholly responsible failure of **Isra'el** to make the right response to **YHVH** and to live accordingly, was indeed because the gift had not yet been fully given to **the nation of Isra'el** as a whole.⁶²⁹

Thus, the words of **Moshe** at the edge of **the Promised Land** can also be seen as being fulfilled in **the far eschatological future**. **Jeremiah** would point to a day when **ADONAI** would indeed “give” **the people hearts to know and obey**, in the context of not merely a renewed covenant, but a B'rit Chadashah altogether (see the commentary on [Jeremiah Eo - I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el](#)). **Hosea 6:1-3** tells us that in the last three days of the Great Tribulation (see the commentary on [Revelation Cg - The Great Tribulation](#)) **all Isra'el will be saved (Romans 11:26)**. At that time, **God** will declare: **I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people. No longer will each teach his neighbor or each his brother, saying: Know ADONAI, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jeremiah 31:32b-33)**.

Therefore, so keep the words of this Covenant and do them, so that you may prosper in everything you do (29:9). On the day before **his** death, **Moses** assembled **all Isra'el** to initiate **them** into **the covenant** with **YHVH**. **The whole nation** was standing before **Moshe** who had previously **summoned them** to assemble (**29:1**).

Haftarah Ki Tavo: Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) 60:1-22 (to see link click [Af](#) - Parashah)

Isaiah's vision of **Isra'el's far eschatological future** springs from a hope to console anyone who loves **God** and desires **His** fame and glory to abound throughout the earth! Compare **Isaiah 60:11** and **19-20** with **Revelation 21:23-26** and find the similarities between what **Isaiah** saw and what **John** saw. **ADONAI** is doing an amazing thing through **the righteous of the TaNaKh** in preparation for **all Isra'el** being **saved (Romans 11:26)**. **YHVH** is doing an amazing thing through **His** body, the Church, as more and more churches are supporting Messianic congregations. Prayerfully seek **God** about how **He** wants you to invest yourself in making disciples of **Yeshua Messiah** among **Isra'el** and the nations.

B'rit Chadashah suggested readings for Parashah Ki Tavo: Mattityahu (Matthew) 13:1-23; Acts 28:17-31; Romans 11:1-15; Luke 21:1-4

In the Torah portion, **Moshe** is standing in **Mo'ab** and instructing **the nation** proclaiming, **Ki Tavo (When you come into) the Land, you must give ADONAI your firstfruits and your tithes (26:1-2)**. In the B'rit Chadashah portion, **Yeshua** is standing in the Temple courts observing the giving of the tithes and instructing the apostles that giving when it hurts has more value than giving out of the overflow of abundance (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Je - The Widow's Offering](#)). How can this be true? To the world, value is determined materially, more money equals more value. But in **God's** economy, however, value is determined spiritually, more faith equals more value. Where was **the widow's faith**? In what, or whom was **she** trusting? Is money your idol? Are you **trusting** in your own ability to bring in material resources to provide for you and your family, or is **the LORD** receiving all the glory as **the Great Provider**? How can you step out in **faith** to **obey YHVH** and thus **store up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20)**?