

119

MINISTRIES

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What is the Gospel? Understanding ALL of the Gospel: Part 3

The Gospel in the Blessings and Curses

We have already seen in the previous parts of this teaching series that Paul's gospel message of righteousness by faith is revealed and explained in Deuteronomy 30. In Deuteronomy 30 we learn that the righteousness of God consists of the commandments of the Covenant, which are regarded by Moses as "not too difficult," nor are they "too remote." Rather, the call for obedience to the commandments of the Covenant are described as "[near you, in your mouth and in your heart.](#)"

Romans 10:6-8, citing Deuteronomy 30:11-14

[But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” \(that is, to bring Christ down\) “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” \(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim\);](#)

Let's take a closer look at the gospel as revealed in Deuteronomy 28-30.

As the second generation since the exodus from Egypt was preparing to enter into the Promised Land, Moses was reiterating the covenant given to all Israel at Sinai.

He was reviewing the covenant that God had offered their fathers, who subsequently forfeited the promises through unbelief and disobedience (Hebrews 4:1-6).

The offering of the covenant relationship could be a blessing or a curse to Israel, depending upon their response to it.

If they chose to obey the covenant and walk in the Lord's ways, all the manner of blessings were promised them.

But if they chose to disobey him and go their own way, the Covenant was to become a curse to them.

The blessing for obedience can be found in Deuteronomy 28:1-13, which begins by saying:

Deuteronomy 28:1-2

“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord [YHWH] your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord [YHWH] your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord [YHWH] your God.

These blessings were conditional.

Only those who continued in obedience to his commandments were to receive these blessings.

But the Lord also promised curses to those who would choose to disobey the commandments and go their own way. This long and often overwhelming set of curses are found in Deuteronomy 28:16-48, which concludes by saying:

Deuteronomy 28:45-48

“All these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you till you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord [YHWH] your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that he commanded you. They shall be a sign and a wonder against you and your offspring forever. Because you did not serve the Lord [YHWH] your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord [YHWH] will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you.

YHWH promises to cause all these horrible things to come upon those who claim to be his, but who refuse to serve him by obeying his commandments.

The end result of these curses is exile, a scattering of Israel among the nations of the world:

Deuteronomy 28:63-66

And as the Lord [YHWH] took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the Lord [YHWH] will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you. And you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

“And the Lord [YHWH] will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. And among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot, but the Lord

[YHWH] will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and a languishing soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you. Night and day you shall be in dread and have no assurance of your life.

In history, we have seen that this is exactly what happened to Israel.

Before we go further, however, it's important that we define some terms. First, what exactly is "Israel"? Most people would probably say the Jewish people. However, contrary to traditional understandings, recent scholarship has uncovered that the terms "Israelite" and "Jew" were *not* synonymous in Jewish literature from the Second Temple era.

As Brant Pitre, Michael Barber, and John Kincaid explain:

As others have shown, *Ioudaios* means "Judean" in many Old Testament and Second Temple Jewish sources, and *Israēlitēs* often refers to an "Israelite"—that is, signaling a wider concern for the Twelve tribes. While the two terms can be used interchangeably, the Old Testament and the wider world of Second Temple literature testify to a widespread and real distinction between the terms.

-Brant Pitre, Michael P. Barber, John A. Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew: Rethinking Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2019)

This distinction has an impact on how we should understand what the New Testament authors meant when they used such terms. So, for example, when Paul says in Romans 11:26 that "all Israel will be saved," he understands Israel to involve a group larger than "the Jews." We will unpack this in much further detail later in this series.

For now, it's important to remember that the biblical Israel is made up of twelve tribes. The ten northern tribes—also called the House of Israel—largely disappeared after the Assyrians took them into captivity around 740 BC. The southern tribes—also known as the House of Judah—were likewise exiled to Babylon around 586 BC. Only these southern tribes returned to the Land. These, according to the Bible and Second Temple Jewish literature, are the Jews.

As the first century Jewish historian Josephus explains, the term *Ioudaios* (Jew or Judean) refers to one who is descended from the House of Judah, which is only part of the larger entity called Israel:

So the **Jews** prepared for the work: that is the name they are called by from the day that they came up from Babylon, **which is taken from the tribe of Judah**, which came first to these places, and thence both they and the country gained that appellation.

-Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews 11.173* (translated by William Whiston)

Thus, the Jewish people are part of Israel, but not all Israel are Jews. This is important to keep in mind.

For a scholarly treatment of this topic, we might recommend these two papers written by Dr. Jason A. Staples, who is a Professor of Religious Studies at NC State University:

- Jason A. Staples, “What Do the Gentiles Have to Do with ‘All Israel’? A Fresh Look at Romans 11:25-27,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 130, no. 2 (2011)
- Jason A. Staples, “Reconstructing Israel: Restoration Eschatology in Early Judaism and Paul’s Gentile Mission” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2016)

We see in biblical history that Israel—all twelve tribes—has experienced the curses that the Lord promised his disobedient people.

But, even in spite of all these curses that fall upon the disobedient, there is good news!

The gospel is proclaimed, even to the disobedient.

As we see in Deuteronomy 30:1-10, when God’s people return to him with their whole heart and obey his commandments, he will:

- Restore their fortunes and have mercy on them (30:3)
- Gather them from everywhere they had been scattered (30:3-5)
- Circumcise their hearts, enabling them to love him and serve him fully (30:6)
- Curse their enemies (30:7)
- Make them prosperous (30:9)

Here, then, is the Gospel as it is delivered in the Torah:

“If you repent and return to the Lord with your whole being and desire to keep his commandments, God will bless you, give you a new heart, and forgive all your sins.”

Thus, as Israel is brought back into covenant they are to obey ALL of the commandments that were originally given to them.

It is at this point in the narrative where Moses describes this as "*not too hard for you*" and not "*far off*."

Deuteronomy 30:11-16

“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. 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?’ 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?’ But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord [YHWH] your God that I command you today, by loving the

Lord [YHWH] your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord [YHWH] your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

And this is the Gospel as Paul described it in Romans 10!

We receive life, blessing, peace, and forgiveness, when we repent and make the decision to start walking in obedience to God's commandments.

And through the Messiah, this was offered to the northern tribes of Israel, which were scattered among the nations.

Even Yeshua declared this himself:

Matthew 15:24 (NKJV)

But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

This is a part of the gospel of Christ—a restoration of Israel, which includes the northern tribes!

To be clear, Yeshua's statement in Matthew 15:24 does not preclude the later mission to the Gentiles. The gospel includes "blessing all nations" through the seed of Abraham. So Yeshua's focus on Israel here does not negate the Gospel going out to the Gentiles. To make a comparison, the suffering servant of Israel suffers on behalf of the lost sheep of Israel (Isaiah 40:11), but the servant's mission was ultimately to reconcile all nations to God (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6-7). Isaiah 49:6-7 speaks of the servant's mission to gather the lost tribes being "too light a thing" and that there is a greater mission he would fulfill, which is to be a light to the nations and to bring God's salvation to the end of the earth. So, Israel is a piece of that puzzle, but not the whole picture, and we'll unpack it further in the next part of this series.

Now that we understand that Christ taught about the House of Israel being restored to the covenant of YHWH, in obedience to all of God's commandments, perhaps we should now examine this aspect of the gospel in more detail.

The Re-gathering of the House of Israel

The Prophets have much to say about the end times re-gathering of the lost tribes of the house of Israel.

The prophesy of Deuteronomy 28-30 plainly delineates the exiling of Israel due to their disobedience to covenant.

And this is where we find them, literally on the earth, today.

The Lord explains through Ezekiel why he scattered the House of Israel:

Ezekiel 20:19-25

I am the Lord [YHWH] your God; walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules, and keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord [YHWH] your God.’ But the children rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths.

“Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. Moreover, I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries, because they had not obeyed my rules, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols. Moreover, I gave them statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life,

In verse 20, YHWH restates his requirements as stipulated in the covenant: "walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules."

He then brings his case against Israel: they "children rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules"

For this reason, he vowed to "scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries" And the rest is history.

The two-stick prophesy of Ezekiel 37 tells of the time in our near future when the Lord will bring back the exiled but now repentant House of Israel back to the Land to reunite them with a repenting house of Judah. Messiah Yeshua will rule over the restored Kingdom.

Ezekiel 37:15-28

The word of the Lord [YHWH] came to me: “Son of man, take a stick and write on it, ‘For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him’; then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.’ And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. And when your people say to you, ‘Will you not tell us what you mean by these?’ say to them, Thus says the Lord [YHWH] God: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him. And I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand. When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, then say to them, Thus says the Lord [YHWH] God: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save

them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord [YHWH] who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”

A quick note... "stick" in Hebrew-*ets*- also means "tree" or "branch" or "wood," which should be kept in mind as we proceed from the message found in Romans 10 and enter into the related message found in Romans 11.

Scripture teaches that Israel is an "olive tree" in the context of its branches being broken off:

Jeremiah 11:16

The Lord [YHWH] once called you ‘a green olive tree, beautiful with good fruit.’ But with the roar of a great tempest he will set fire to it, and its branches will be consumed.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah have not been united since the days of King Solomon.

The Lord sent the Northern Kingdom into exile by the Assyrians and scattered them among the nations of the world.

Prophecy states that the Lord will bring back the House of Israel from among the nations where they have gone and gather them back to their land.

At that time, the repented and re-gathered sons of Israel will obey the commandments of the Lord by walking in the right-rulings and keeping the Torah.

These people will then be obeying the covenant, which the Lord offered the people of all generations, just as the prophesy of Deuteronomy 30 tells us.

Through Jeremiah, YHWH explains the conditions by which he will forgive his rebellious people and re-gather them from all around the world where he has scattered them:

Jeremiah 29:11-14

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord [YHWH], plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord [YHWH], and I will restore your

fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the Lord [YHWH], and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

When his rebellious people repent of their wayward ways and agree to obey the commandments of the covenant, YHWH will then forgive them and re-gather them back to their homeland.

Moses stated that one day the nation would go astray from the Lord.

But the Good News is that in the distant future, when they repent and turn back again to the Lord, then he would be faithful to keep his promise to them:

Deuteronomy 4:25-31

“When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord [YHWH] your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And the Lord [YHWH] will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord [YHWH] will drive you. And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But from there you will seek the Lord [YHWH] your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord [YHWH] your God and obey his voice. For the Lord [YHWH] your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

And the Prophets confirm this scattering of Israel and their eventual re-gathering back into the Land.

Ezekiel 11:16-20

Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord [YHWH] God: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while[a] in the countries where they have gone.’ Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord [YHWH] God: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.’ And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

We must note that the purpose of the new covenant, as outlined by the prophets, is to bring the House of Israel back into covenant, to restore them into covenant with YHWH. That is certainly good news. What is also good news is that Paul also details how Gentiles, who have no historical

linkage to the House of Israel nor the House of Judah, are also coming into covenant, and will continue to do so. We will expound more on that detail later in this series.

The prophets note that the New Covenant involves the same eternal law written down by Moses at Sinai. There is no mention of a new law, only a new covenant.

Why is a new covenant required?

Because the House of Israel broke the previous covenant.

Yet, this covenant is different, not in the sense that there is a new law, but that the House of Israel will have a heart to keep the law of God. This covenant is not like the covenant that was made with the House of Israel before:

Jeremiah 31:31-32

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord [YHWH], when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord [YHWH].

So, how is this covenant different?

Because of a new law?

No...that is not what is said...

Here is what will be different:

- The law will be written on our hearts, meaning we will want to do the law of God.
- We will no longer have to teach each other the Word of God.
- He will forgive our iniquity, and will remember our sin no more.

Jeremiah 31:33-34

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”**

The difference is that we will want to do the law of God, because of His Spirit:

Ezekiel 36:26-27

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

While the law being written on our hearts and knowing the Torah perfectly was always what YHWH wanted for us, these things are now promised to us.

It does not matter if you are of the House of Israel, the House of Judah, or a Gentile coming into the faith. We all enter into the same covenant with YHWH the same way, one law for all.

We will not walk in new rules, new statutes, or a new law...but the same instructions that Ezekiel and Jeremiah followed and wrote about as part of the New Covenant. They are the same instructions we find written down at Sinai.

The very fact that we still need to teach each other the Word of God means that the New Covenant, though it has been started, has not fully taken effect yet:

Jeremiah 31:34

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, **‘Know the Lord [YHWH],’ for they shall all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord [YHWH]. **For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”**

This is still to come, and something to look forward to in the fulfillment of the New Covenant.

The Torah is not fully written on our hearts yet. It’s BEING written on our hearts through the work of the Spirit. Sanctification is a process—we will be fully sanctified at the consummation of the kingdom. This occurs at the resurrection.

According to the prophets, this appears to occur at Yeshua’s coming at the end of days, when we are gathered out of the nations and resurrected incorruptible. For more on this we would suggest our [Life After Death](#) series.

Jeremiah 31:34b

...For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This is a HUGE piece of the puzzle. The New Covenant is based on being forgiven. The work of Messiah inaugurates the fulfillment of the New Covenant by making atonement, resulting in forgiveness. This is basically the entire message of Romans 8, which begins with “There is now therefore no condemnation for those in Messiah Yeshua.” And then Paul goes on to explain how the Holy Spirit enables us to obey the Torah.

Paul believed the New Covenant era was inaugurated through the work of Messiah. It will come to completion at the consummation of the kingdom. So the prophecies are fulfilled in Messiah, but only in part until the Second Coming. Technically, the means of our salvation through Yeshua is now fulfilled, but we are not yet saved and that is still to come. The means to salvation

has already occurred through Yeshua, and Yeshua will finally complete the New Covenant promises at his second coming.

Hebrews 9:28

so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

This is what theologians call “already but not yet.” So again, the New Covenant has been started, but has not fully taken effect yet.

In another proclamation of the Good News, the re-gathering of the scattered House of Israel is announced:

Jeremiah 31:10-12

“Hear the word of the Lord [YHWH], O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’
For the Lord [YHWH] has ransomed Jacob
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall be like a watered garden,
and they shall languish no more.

And again,

Jeremiah 32:37-39

Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.

And yet again,

Jeremiah 23:3

Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply.

The Good News of the New Testament is that Christ has accomplished the work of redemption so that those who repent and desire to follow God’s commandments will be brought back to the Promised Land which is the inheritance of the people of God.

We should now see that the House of Judah and the House of Israel will be reunited in covenant with YHWH based on Deuteronomy 30. One might then ask, how do the Gentiles who have no historical linkage to the House of Judah and the House of Israel fit into all of this? That question leads us into Romans 11.

The next part in this teaching will begin examining Paul's teaching on the mystery of the gospel, which contains some interesting aspects of the gospel you might not have considered before.

For your benefit, when you continue on to part 4 of this teaching, make sure the foundation of parts 1 and 2 are still fresh in your mind.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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