

Parashah 51

# Nitzavim

## נצבים

“Standing”

Deuteronomy 29:9 – 30:20

Torah Together



This *Torah* portion is arguably the climax of the book of Deuteronomy. Moses has led the Israelites in the renewal of their covenant with God and has implored them to be obedient to God's commands. You can sense the emotion that Moses feels for the future of the people he has led for the past forty years.

### 1. Renewal of the Covenant - 29:9-29

a) According to this pivotal passage, exactly who was standing, listening to Moses? Why were they standing there? What was God preparing to do?

b) What promise was God fulfilling as he entered into the covenant with the Israelites? Other than God and those Israelites present, who else did the covenant apply to?

c) What specific evil did Moses warn of in verses 16-18? What was in the heart of a person who committed this evil? How did God deal with such a person?

### Scripture Link:

In addition to the Israelites, there were “aliens” living among them. These included Egyptians (see **Exodus 12:38** and **Numbers 11:4**) as well as Midianites, such as Moses' father-in-law and his family (see **Numbers 10:29**). These people were adopted into the nation of Israel. God has always accepted those who choose to be counted as His children.

One distinguishing characteristic of God's covenants is that they are eternal, everlasting, and without end. With that in mind, who do you think “those who are not here today” (verse 17) might be?

**Scripture Link:**

See **Genesis 19** for the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim.

The Bible teaches that God is omniscient, knowing all things, even things that have not yet happened. However, God chooses to **reveal** certain things to his people through His word and by His prophets.

Notice that chapter 30 begins with the words “When all these blessings and curses . . . .” It’s as if Moses already knows that the calamities described in the previous chapters will indeed fall on the Israelites. In spite of this, Moses encourages them that God will NOT forget His covenant with them and that in the end, they will again be blessed by Him.

**Scripture Link:**

Circumcision of the heart is not just a New Testament concept. It is explained in **Deuteronomy 10:16** and here in verse 6, God states that He will perform that circumcision. Paul explains how the Holy Spirit does this in **Romans 2:28-29** and in **Colossians 2:11-12**.

d) If (or when) Israel committed the evil spoken about by Moses, what would be the consequences? To what historical event does Moses compare this? What conclusions will other nations come to? Has this occurred? If so, when?

e) What do you think is meant by verse 29? What are the “secret things” and what are the “things revealed”?

**2. Prosperity after Turning to YHWH - 30:1-10**

a) According to verse 1, what does Moses predict will happen to the Israelites? Did this indeed happen to the Israelites? If so, when?

b) What did Moses say would happen after the event in verse 1? What causes this to happen? Has this happened to the Israelites? If so, when?

c) Read verses 4-6. Has this happened yet? How will the hearts of their descendants be “circumcised”? What will be the effect of this? Do you think this is the same event spoken of in Jeremiah 31:27-37?

### 3. Offer of Life or Death - 30:11-20

a) According to Moses, is it possible to obey YHWH's commandments? Basically, what does it take for us to do this?

b) What are the consequences when we either choose to love God and obey His commands or not?

c) Who did Moses call as witnesses to the renewal of the covenant between God and the Israelites? What does He exhort the Israelites to do?

"This day . . . . I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life . . . ."

Deuteronomy 30:19

### Digging deeper . . . .

1. Carefully read Deuteronomy 30:1-6. With the creation of the modern state of Israel, it would seem that this is happening today. Has all Israel been re-gathered? Now read Ephesians 2:11-22. As believers in *Yeshua*, we become citizens of Israel (Ephesians 2:19). Do we now share in the promises God made to Israel? What implications do you think this might have on your future?

In this climactic passage, you can feel the emotion in God's words (as spoken by Moses) to the Israelites. He begs them to be obedient to God's commands so that they may enjoy His blessings.

**Scripture Link:**  
In Paul's letter to the believers in Ephesus, he states, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,..."  
Ephesians 2:19

**Scripture Link:**

In **John 1:1-18**, the Apostle opens his gospel with a somewhat cryptic statement concerning the Word of God. After studying **Deuteronomy 30:11-20**, do John's words take on additional meaning for you?

2. Re-read Deuteronomy 30:11-14. Now read Romans 10:1-13 where Paul quotes Moses' words. What "word" is Moses referring to? How does Paul interpret this "word"? Are they the same? Does this add to your understanding of God's "word"?

For further study, see

**Haftarah** : Isaiah 61:10–63:9

**Brit Hadashah** : Romans 9:30-10:13; Hebrews 12:14-15