



Deuteronomy - Chapter Eleven

II Deuteronomy 4:44-11:32 - Moses' Second Speech: General Covenant Stipulations (continues/concludes)

II.i Deuteronomy 10:12-11:32 - Exhortation (continues/concludes)

Summary of Chapter Eleven

Moses commands the people that it is they who are to remember what God has done for them and not leave it to the next generation. He reminds them of just some of the things God has done in Egypt and since, including an example of those who died for their disobedience.

The land they are about to take is much more beautiful and fruitful than Egypt and God will keep it so provided the people obey his commandments. They are warned that giving into the temptation to worship the gods of the other nations will lead God to withdraw his care of the land.

The people are to know the Word of God and produce reminders to wear and see. They are to teach their children the commandments of God and ensure they keep them as well. If they do, the Lord will drive out the mighty nations that currently occupy the land from the southern borders to the Euphrates.

Moses completes the chapter by declaring a blessing on those who keep the commandments and a curse on those who do not. These blessings and curses are to be read aloud to the people from Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal respectively once they have taken the land.

II.i.ii Deuteronomy 11:1-32 - Rewards for Obedience

Refer to the chapter summary above.

¹ You shall love the Lord your God, therefore, and keep his charge, his decrees, his ordinances, and his commandments always.

Deuteronomy 11:1

You shall love the Lord. The command to love is grounded in God's gracious rescue of Israel from Egypt: <<*He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your own eyes have seen. Your ancestors went down to Egypt seventy persons; and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in heaven*>> (Deuteronomy 10:21-22). God commanded Israel to love him. Love is not a matter left entirely up to human impulse or feelings. People choose to love the Lord or not. Additionally, this is a reminder of what the Lord really wants from his people - their love: <<*We love because he first loved us*>> (1 John 4:19). Christians could give him a hundred other things, but none of it really matters unless they give him their love. As Jesus said to the Ephesian church: <<*But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first*>> (Revelation 2:4).

And keep his charge, his decrees, his ordinances, and his commandments always. Love for God never goes against his Word. Some people think their so-called love for Jesus allows them to disregard his commands, but this is not real love at all. As Jesus said: <<*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*>> (John 14:15). Real love for Jesus always translates into obedience.

² Remember today that it was not your children (who have not known or seen the discipline of the Lord your God), but it is you who must acknowledge his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, ³ his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and to all his land; ⁴ what he did to the Egyptian army, to their horses and chariots, how he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued you, so that the Lord has destroyed them to this day; ⁵ what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place; ⁶ and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab son of Reuben, how in the midst of all Israel the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, along with their households, their tents, and every living being in their company; ⁷ for it is your own eyes that have seen every great deed that the Lord did.

Deuteronomy 11:2-7

Remember today that it was not your children (who have not known or seen the discipline of the Lord your God). Moses addressed the generation which saw

much of the works of God among Israel, both in blessing and chastening. He spoke to the generation that *should* know and remember.

But it is you. Moses addresses the adults of Israel on the basis that all had experienced the exodus and wilderness events, even though the adults who left Egypt had died in the wilderness and those being addressed were just children at the time.

Dathan and Abiram, along with Korah who is unnamed here, rebelled against Moses' leadership in the wilderness and died as a result; refer to Numbers 16:1-35.

What he did; how he made. Moses called Israel to remember what God did in their history. Most of history, both official and personal, is simply concerned with what man has done. However, God wants people to look at history and see what he has done. They learn far more, and gain far more benefit, by looking at what God has done, rather than looking at what man has done.

For it is your own eyes that have seen every great deed that the Lord did. Once again, Moses reminds the people that they are not hearing a story second-hand. Some of them were alive in Egypt as children and all were alive in the wilderness to see most the miracles that God did for them. Those who had not witnessed the earlier part of the exodus for themselves would have been told by the many eyewitnesses who had been there and could recount what actually happened.

⁸ Keep, then, this entire commandment that I am commanding you today, so that you may have strength to go in and occupy the land that you are crossing over to occupy, ⁹ and so that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Deuteronomy 11:8-9

Keep, then, this entire commandment. Remembering what God did in history should lead Israel to greater obedience, enabling them to take the Promised Land.

A land flowing with milk and honey. Again, both the goodness of the land as well as God's faithfulness to the Abrahamic promise provides incentives for Israel to enter and conquer. The sacrifices in obedience were well worth it for Israel. They had the promise of a land which was far superior to Egypt, which did not need to be artificially irrigated, but was watered by rains which God would send upon an obedient nation.

¹⁰ For the land that you are about to enter to occupy is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sow your seed and irrigate by foot like a vegetable garden.

Deuteronomy 11:10

Irrigate by foot is literally ‘watered it with your feet.’ The need for irrigation in Egypt implies lack of rain and much of their irrigation came from the Nile flood plains. The use of feet, possibly to turn water wheels, implies hard work. Egypt had a system of artificial irrigation, using foot-driven pumps to lift water from the Nile to nearby fields. Canaan was so rich it did not need this kind of irrigation.

¹¹ But the land that you are crossing over to occupy is a land of hills and valleys, watered by rain from the sky, ¹² a land that the Lord your God looks after. The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

Deuteronomy 11:11-12

The idyllic picture of the land, as in Deuteronomy 6:10-11 and 8:7-10, recalls the description of the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:5-13, and is an added incentive to conquer it.

The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it suggests care and protection as well as bounty. God declared his special care for the land of Israel, both then and now.

¹³ If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today – loving the Lord your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul – ¹⁴ then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; ¹⁵ and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill.

Deuteronomy 11:13-15

If you will only heed his every commandment. This command lies in the centre of idyllic land descriptions, highlighting the centrality of obedience. God simply promised to provide for Israel if chose to obey him and put him first. As Jesus said: <<*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*>> (Matthew 6:33 NIV).

The promise of the blessing of rain was important, because one of the more attractive of the Canaanite gods was Baal, the god who was said to control the weather and rain. Perhaps the Israelites would be tempted to think, “well, we are in Canaan, and if we want rain, we should worship the Canaanite god of rain.” However, the Lord makes it clear that if they would worship and obey him, he would supply abundant rain and do so at the times that would be of most benefit to the crops.

The early rain and the later rain. Both October/November and March/April rains are needed for good crops. The early rain fell in October and November, and was important to help soften the ground for ploughing and preparing the soil for the seed. The latter rain fell about April, and helped the crops come to final harvest.

This passage along with others such as: <<*Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth*>> (Hosea 6:3), and: <<*O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before*>> (Joel 2:23) were taken to give the name of the 'Latter Rain Movement' which started in 1948. In 1948, a Oneness Pentecostal minister named William Branham held meetings at an orphanage and school founded by a Foursquare Church in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada. Those attending the meeting were so impressed by the supernatural works, healing, prophecy, word of knowledge, and strange phenomenon, that they considered it a beginning of a new work of God on earth. In their newsletter, this is how they described it: "All the great outpourings of the past have had their outstanding truths. Luther's truth was Justification by Faith. Wesley's was Sanctification. The Baptists taught the pre-millennial coming of Christ. The Missionary Alliance taught Divine Healing. The Pentecostal outpouring has restored the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to its rightful place. But the next great outpouring is going to be marked by all these other truths plus such a demonstration of the nine gifts of the Spirit as the world, not even the Apostolic world, has ever witnessed before. This revival will be short and will be the last before the Rapture of the Church." They felt that the Pentecostal denominations of their day were 'dead' and 'dry,' and needed the blessing of the 'Latter Rain,' which would especially be marked by miraculous signs and supernatural works. The Pentecostal denominations, notably the Assemblies of God and the Foursquare Church denounced the Branham and the Latter Rain movement for both their teaching and practices. William Branham continued, drawing large crowds to his prophecy and healing crusades. He and a young evangelist named Oral Roberts led the Latter Rain Movement for several years. Branham's doctrine became more and more aberrant. Branham believed that the Word of God was given in three forms: the Zodiac, the Egyptian pyramids, and the written scriptures. He also taught the 'serpent seed' doctrine, which was based on his interpretation of Genesis 3:13, saying that Eve had sexual relations with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The Latter Rain Movement, as led by William Branham and Oral Roberts eventually faded from prominence. Branham himself died in a road traffic collision with a drunk driver in 1965. He died on Christmas Eve, and his faithful followers believed that he would rise from the dead, so they delayed his burial for several days. But the influence of the Latter Rain movement lived on. The Latter Rain popularised many attitudes and doctrines popular in revival movements today. Many researchers, and many

within these modern groups today, believe that many modern 'revival' movements are really just a continuation of the Latter Rain movement. Movements such as 'Joel's Army,' the Manifest Sons of God, the Dominion Movement, the Kansas City Prophets, the Toronto Blessing, and the Pensacola Revival are connected in some way to the Latter Rain movement. For example, Paul Cain, later to re-emerge as head of the Kansas City Prophets in 1989, travelled with William Branham and called him 'the greatest prophet that ever lived.' The modern Latter Rain movement believes: "The Latter Rain is God's great end-time ministry. This concept as revealed in the Bible, comprises the restitution of the church to its rightful place, the enormous last day revival and the harvest of souls before the great and terrible Day of the Lord. It is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh promised to us in the last days and the restoration of apostolic and prophetic gifts."

Throughout history there have always been groups of people who come up with ideas that hype up the message of the Gospel. Most people would be advised to base their own faith on sound biblical teaching and the experience of their own personal relationship with God. God will make himself known in the hearts of those who earnestly seek him and have no other desire than to serve God in the name of Jesus.

You will eat your fill. During the wilderness years God had provided a constant supply of manna, which was nutritious and kept them well fed. Yet the people yearned for more, they wanted the selection of foods they had known in Egypt: <<*The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at'*>> (Numbers 11:4-6). The promise now is for a great abundance of food and drink for all.

¹⁶ Take care, or you will be seduced into turning away, serving other gods and worshipping them, ¹⁷ for then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain and the land will yield no fruit; then you will perish quickly from the good land that the Lord is giving you.

Deuteronomy 11:16-17

Take care. Abundance always carries warnings (Deuteronomy 6:12 and 8:11-12), often expressed in terms of the heart (Deuteronomy 8:11-17). God had to warn Israel against the deceptions of prosperity. The person who turns from God in prosperity is simply deceived. They believe they are somehow responsible for the blessings received, and become proud and self-reliant. The deception here is

probably wrongly thinking that the Canaanite fertility gods are the source of the rain, crops, and animals.

The anger of the Lord will be kindled. The warnings also lead to the threat of punishment. Here, if the Lord is not acknowledged as the provider of rain (v.14), he will cause the rain to stop: <<*The sky over your head shall be bronze, and the earth under you iron. The Lord will change the rain of your land into powder, and only dust shall come down upon you from the sky until you are destroyed*>> (Deuteronomy 28:23-24).

He will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain. Just such a judgement came upon Israel in the days of Ahab, the wicked king over Israel in the time Elijah was a prophet: <<*Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word'*>> (1 Kings 17:1). The constant need for rain kept Israel dependent on the Lord. It is good for everyone to have things that keep them dependent on God. They should never despise those things and long for the day when they will no longer need to depend on God as much.

¹⁸ You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ²⁰ Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul. God called Israel to not only read the Word of God and to know the Word of God, but to treasure it. In the same way, Christians should love God's Word and miss it when they are separated from the Word of God. They should call it to mind with longing, having laid it up in their heart and soul. They should also consider what the world would be like without it: <<*The time is surely coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord*>> (Amos 8:11).

Teach them to your children. On remembering and imparting these words to the next generation, refer to the comment made on Deuteronomy 6:7-9.

Talking about them. God's Word was to be the topic of their conversation. Christians can fairly measure their love for God's Word by how much they talk about it with others. God does not want them to have a secret love relationship with his Word, he wants his people to share it with others.

As long as the heavens are above the earth. That is, until the end of the age: <<*And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age*>> (Matthew 28:20b).

²² If you will diligently observe this entire commandment that I am commanding you, loving the Lord your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him, ²³ then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and mightier than yourselves. ²⁴ Every place on which you set foot shall be yours; your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the Western Sea. ²⁵ No one will be able to stand against you; the Lord your God will put the fear and dread of you on all the land on which you set foot, as he promised you.

Deuteronomy 11:22-25

Loving the Lord your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him. All the commandments are summarised in these three phrases. Each of these speaks of more than a bare, compelled obedience; they speak of a real relationship of love between God and his people, with obedience flowing naturally from that relationship.

The Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and mightier than yourselves. God promised to fight the battles for an obedient Israel. Many desire God to fight their battles, but have little interest in obeying him, or cultivating the deep relationship of love which obedience grows from.

Every place on which you set foot shall be yours. God repeated this promise to Joshua, just when Israel was about to cross over the Jordan River into Canaan. Refer to Deuteronomy 2:5 and 28:65, and Joshua 1:3.

Your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the Western Sea. The description of the land boundaries promised to Israel is also given in Genesis 15:18 and Joshua 1:3-4.

No one will be able to stand against you. When Israel walked in love with the Lord and was obedient to him, they were unbeatable. No man could defeat them: <<*Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world*>> (1 John 4:4).

The fear and dread of you. The Lord would make the other nations fear Israel and therefore they would be weaker in battle. This is summed up beautifully by Rahab in Jericho: *<<Before they went to sleep, she came up to them on the roof and said to the men: 'I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. As soon as we heard it, our hearts failed, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below>>* (Joshua 2:8-11). Refer also to Deuteronomy 2:25, although the expression is not identical in Hebrew. The promise assumes Israel's faithfulness.

²⁶ See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today; ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn from the way that I am commanding you today, to follow other gods that you have not known.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28

I am setting before you today. This expression, repeated in v.32, brackets these verses and gives them urgency for making the right decision. Although the conquest is the immediate concern, general obedience is the ultimate goal. The two options are summarised as a blessing and a curse; refer also to Deuteronomy Chapters 27-28. It was up to Israel. If they wanted to be blessed, then they should walk in obedience, as they would do in the days of David and Solomon; but if they disobeyed, they would be cursed, as they were in most of the days of the Judges and later kings. A choice was required. There was no neutral ground. God would not just 'leave them alone.' It would either be a blessing or a curse.

The three great elements to the Old Covenant were the law, the sacrifice, and the choice. Israel had a choice: to obey and be blessed, or to disobey and be cursed. It was a cause and effect relationship with God. It is important to recognise that those in Jesus Christ do not have an Old Covenant relationship with God. Christians expect to be blessed, not because of their obedience, but because of their position in Jesus. The curse they deserved was laid upon him: *<<For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.' Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for 'The one who is righteous will live by faith.' But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, 'Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for*

us – for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’ – in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith>> (Galatians 3:10-14). Although there may be an inherent curse of consequences in their disobedience or even in the correcting hand of God, under the New Covenant, he does not punish his people or curse them, because all the punishment that they deserved, past, present, and future, was poured out upon Jesus: <<There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death>> (Romans 8:1-2).

Other gods that you have not known. There has been no personal relationship with the Canaanite Baals, unlike with the Lord, who has entered a covenant relationship with Israel. How could there be - they did not exist? Inherent in Israel’s disobedience was idolatry. Whenever people walk in disobedience, they exalt themselves against God, and declaring that their rules, their standards, their desires, are all more important than his. This is idolatry in its most base, and common, form.

²⁹ When the Lord your God has brought you into the land that you are entering to occupy, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.

Deuteronomy 11:29

You shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.

The recitation of the blessings on Mount Gerizim and the curses on Mount Ebal will be detailed in later chapters. Yet it is plain that God wanted the Word to get to the entire nation, because the entire nation was part of this covenant with him.

The name Gerizim is supposed to be associated with fruitful harvests, and the name Ebal is supposed to be associated with barrenness. Refer to Deuteronomy 27:1-14 for details on this ceremony and the two mountains.

The map shows the location of the two hills either side of the town of Shechem.





A modern day view of the two hills from which the blessings and curses would be read; refer to Joshua 8:33.

³⁰ As you know, they are beyond the Jordan, some distance to the west, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oak of Moreh.

Deuteronomy 11:30

The Arabah. The Arabah is also known as <<*the plain opposite Suph*>> in Deuteronomy 1:1, and is the low Jordan Valley and area surrounding the Dead Sea. Israel passed through the region on their way to Moab.

Gilgal was the first place the Israelites camped when they crossed over into the Promised Land: <<*The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho*>> (Joshua 4:19).

The oak of Moreh is where the promise of land was first made to Abraham: <<*Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land*>> (Genesis 12:6). The ceremony will implicitly acknowledge fulfilment of that promise.

³¹ When you cross the Jordan to go in to occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and when you occupy it and live in it, ³² you must diligently observe all the statutes and ordinances that I am setting before you today.

Deuteronomy 11:31-32

These verses conclude the general exhortations from Deuteronomy Chapters 5-11.