

Netzavim Deuteronomy - Devarim (29.9-31.30)

“Today you are standing, all of you, before God, your God,” Moses said during his final speech to the Israelites who are about to cross the Jordan river into God's promised land.

“All of you are standing here so the God may raise you up today as a people and that you may go as one people into the Covenant of God. You entered into God's oath and God can fulfill God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But it is not you alone with whom this covenant and oath is made. It is also with those who will come after you.

Do not forget how we lived in Egypt as slaves and saw the Egyptians worshipping their idols. If any of you turn your heart away from our God to serve these foreign gods, there could be among you a root that will someday ripen as a fruit of poison and the people will be serving them instead of God who brought us as a people out of the land of Egypt. Then God's anger will rise against you and there will be such sickness and plagues that future nations will ask, "why has God done this to this land?" And then the answer. "Because the people broke their Covenant with the God who brought them out of slavery in Egypt. They served other gods so God scattered the people. Now, know this, there are secret things that belong only to God. What belongs to you are the words of this Teaching. This Torah is ours and our children's forever.”

“And there shall come a time,” Moses said, “that you shall experience these blessings and curses that I have presented. Then you will understand and repent. In whatever nation God has scattered you, you and your children will return to your God with all your heart and soul. You will return to God's Teachings and follow God's commandments. Then God will be merciful and have compassion upon you and gather you together. Then God will bring you back to your ancestors land and God will be good to you, removing barriers in your hearts, so you will truly love your God with all your heart and soul. Thus you will survive.

God will place curses upon your enemies instead of you, because you will have returned to God's Teachings. You will be good in your doings, listening to God and following what is written in this mandate. These teachings are not beyond your understanding, nor is it in heaven. Follow them with all your heart and soul and mind. I have called heaven and earth today as witnesses against you. I have set life and death before you, blessing and curse. Choose life, so that you and your descendents may live to love your God. Cling firmly to God for that is your life and the length of your days to dwell upon the soil that God, your God, swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Questions: 1) How do you choose life? 2) What are some questions you would like to ask God? 3) Why are the teachings 'not beyond our understanding, nor in heaven?' **Illustration Ideas:** someone being blessed by God...someone being cursed by God...God scattering the people..the people returning to God and God's Teachings....Heaven and earth as witnesses..