

A Torah Study Guide  
for the Young  
& Young at Heart

by  
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& his kids

PARASHAT  
NITZVAIM

פרשת נצבים

Deuteronomy 29:10-  
30:20

Note to the adult teacher: It will be necessary for you to give the scriptural context and background for each of the points listed below.


### Great Discoveries in This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 29:10 Moses Has the Israelites Renew the Covenant Just Prior to His Death
- 29:16 Moses Prophesies That Israel Will Fall into Idolatry
- 30:1 Moses Prophesies That Israel Will Eventually Turn Back to YHVH
- 30:11 The Torah Is Not Beyond Man's Ability to Obey
- 30:15 Choose Torah ... Choose Life

### Exploring This Week's Parashah:

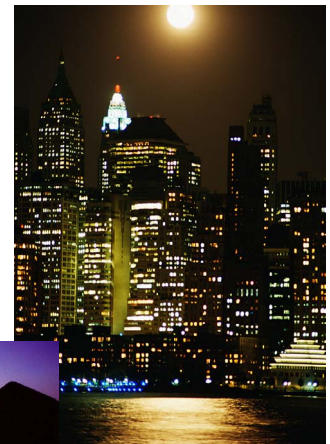
#### 1 Deuteronomy 29-30: YHVH Cares About the Young People

We are now beginning to explore the final portions of the last book of the Torah. These are Moses' final instructions to the Israelites—especially the younger generation of Israelites who are about to enter the Promised Land—before he dies. These last chapters of Deuteronomy contain many blessings, curses, and nuggets of wisdom that can help us to live a righteous and blessed life. They also contain warnings and prophecies about what will happen to YHVH's people if they turn away from him and go the way of the world. These instructions and warnings apply to us today as much as they applied to the Israelites of long ago.

-  (a) In several places in these two chapters, YHVH specifically mentions young people or children. Find those places and make a brief list of what YHVH is saying about them.



#### 2 Deuteronomy 30:16-18: A Stern Warning

The people of YHVH are caught between two worlds: a lower world and an upper world. The lower one wants to pull us downward toward evil and death, while the upper one wants to pull us heavenward





Ancient Egypt and modern Egypt

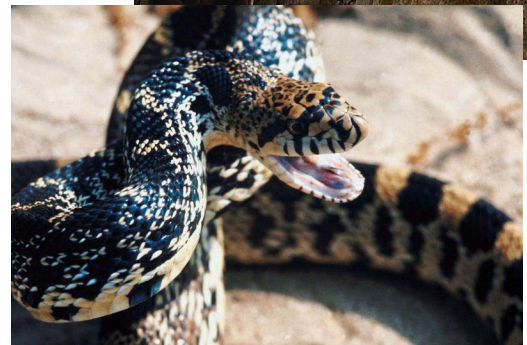
toward Elohim. Egypt is a picture of this lower world.

-  (b) Read Deuteronomy 30:16-18. What is YHVH warning his people against? What is Egypt a picture of spiritually? Egypt was a literal nation that Israel came out of **then**, but what is the spiritual Egypt that YHVH's people are to come out of **now**?
-  (c) What things about Egypt did YHVH warn the Israelites against that could cause them to be drawn back to Egypt? (Look at verses 17 and 18.) What are the idols in spiritual Egypt or the world around us that can tempt us away from YHVH, and draw us back into a life of sin, if we are not careful? What are some of the gods of the nations that YHVH refers to in verse 18? In other words, what are some of the things in the world that people you know do and believe in that are **more** important to them than obedience to and worship of YHVH Elohim? Make a list of ten things that can become idols or gods in our lives that will lead us away from YHVH and lead to a life of sin.

### 3 Deuteronomy 29:20-28: "And Shall Be Scattered..."

In several recent Torah Explorers, we have discussed the curses that come upon YHVH's people when they disobey him. This Torah portion mentions that scary word—CURSES—once again.

-  (d) Why do you think YHVH keeps mentioning curses over and over again through this latter part of Deuteronomy? Remember, these are the last words of Moses to the younger generation of Israelites before he is about to die at age 120, and just before the Israelites are about to enter the Promised Land. Is it possible that YHVH keeps mentioning these things to remind his people not to forsake him because that is what he knows they will probably do? Is he perhaps trying to scare them into obedience to him so that they will not have to suffer these terrible curses if they forsake his ways?
-  (e) What are some things in life of which you are afraid? Is fear a good thing and does it keep you from making a bad mistake that could hurt or even kill you? For example, are you afraid of heights? When you look over the edge of a tall cliff, or a high bridge do you get scared? Why? Is this a good thing? Are you afraid to touch a red-hot stove? Why? Are you afraid to step in front of a speeding car or to touch a rattle snake? Why?




Afraid?

This kind of fear is a healthy or good fear, since it helps keep you alive and from making stupid choices that could hurt or kill you. The same is true with regard to fearing the curses for breaking YHVH's laws.

One of the curses that YHVH's said would come upon his people if they disobeyed him is that they would be scattered to strange lands and foreign places. (See Deuteronomy 29:21,28; 30:3-4.)


Now Israel's being scattered (taken captive) to foreign countries occurred when hundreds of years after the time of Moses the Israelites forsook YHVH and turned to pagan idols. At that time, YHVH allowed Israel's enemies to capture the land of Israel and to take many of the Israelites into slavery into foreign countries like Babylon and Assyria. The result of this was that whole communities and families were broken, destroyed and scattered.

-  (f) Let's talk about broken families. Do broken families exist in our society? How are families broken today? What is a family? A family is a mom and dad who are married and stay together until they die and who have children. Do you know any children whose parents are divorced, who do not live with both parents, or who seldom if ever see their father (or mother) because of broken families? How many men and women live together in sin without being married and start having children, even though they are not married? Is this good for the children or does it cause hurt and pain because the parents are not in or stay in a lawful marriage relationship?

Broken families are a curse that is caused by sin. They are not a blessing. It hurts and can even destroy children's lives. Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman that protects the couple as well as their children. Marriage is good and it is important, but it is not easy and must only be entered into with much prayer and consideration. When it is time for you to marry, choose wisely and carefully and then be a loving husband or wife. Choose to give your children a home of blessing.


#### 4 Deuteronomy 30:2: Returning to YHVH

YHVH is merciful!!! He doesn't like to see his children suffer. Like the loving parent that he is, he just wants his children to obey him so that they can be blessed and so that he can have a loving relationship with them. That's all!

-  (g) Read Psalm 103, the entire chapter. What does it say about the mercy of YHVH and his love for his children? Read the chapter slowly and think about the words. Let them sink into your heart.

In Deuteronomy 30:2, YHVH prophesies through Moses that when his people have been scattered and punished for their sin of disobedience to his commandments, they will eventually return to him.

Returning to YHVH involves repentance. To repent means to stop doing the evil that you are doing, to feel real sorry for what you did that was wrong (sin), and then to confess your sin to others and to YHVH and then to start doing that which is right. This is biblical repentance. All of us have sinned, and all of us need to get right with YHVH and to repent of our sins. This is called "returning to YHVH."

-  (h) Read verse 2 again. What does YHVH prophesy that his people will do when they return to him? WHY does YHVH stress over and over and over again the need to keep his commandments, and to obey his voice with all our heart? Why is this so important that he is constantly reminding us of it?





There are several thoughts we need to consider at this point:

- First, YHVH is a loving Father who just wants his children to obey him so that they can be blessed.
- Second, YHVH is a God of love. He is love. Everything he does is an expression of his love. As such, YHVH has to have someone to love. There is no such thing as love if there is not someone to love. YHVH made humans after his likeness so that he would have something to love, but how can he love someone who is fighting against him, disobeying him, and going in a direction that is away from and contrary to him?
- Third, how do humans show YHVH that they love him? They show it by their actions. They do what he says to do. (Read John 14:15 and Mark 12:29-31.) In the same way, how do we show our parents, or family members and our friends that we love them? We do it through our actions. We don't spit on someone, curse them and punch them in the face and then say "I love you." This is absurd and ridiculous. We show our love by being kind to them, helping them, and doing what they want us to do.
- Forth, there are only two ways to go in life: the way that leads to a good life, blessings and eternal life, and the way that leads to a sorrowful life, curses and eternal death. YHVH so badly wants to spend eternity with his human children that he is constantly and, it seems at times, almost pleading with them to obey him so that they can avoid curses and walk in blessings and in a relationship with him that will lead to life and love forever and ever.

These are the reasons that YHVH wants his people to return to him and serve and obey him. Nothing more or less.

## 5 Deuteronomy 30:11-14: It Is Not Too Hard to Keep the Torah!


Some people think it's too hard or even impossible to obey YHVH. Is this true?

 (i) Look at Deuteronomy 30:11-14. What is the main point of these verses?

Now consider this: Would YHVH tell his children to do something (such as obey the Torah) if it were impossible for them to do, and then curse them for not being able to do it? Would a just and loving Elohim demand this of his people? Of course not. He knows that we can do it, and he expects us to do our best to obey him, and then keep improving as we go along. You see, it's about your heart attitude. Is your heart turned toward YHVH or not? Is YHVH the most important thing in your life or is it to please others or to please yourself?

## 6 Deuteronomy 30:15-20: So Choose Life and Blessing!

In the last few verse of this Parashah, Moses summarizes everything we have been stating here. He talks about the blessing and the curse, he talks about the choices we have to make, he talks about life and death, and then he ends by talking about that "love thing" again.

 (j) Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20. Imagine that you are walking down a trail and you come to a fork in the trail with two signs. One points one direction and is called "death" while the other points the other way and is called "life." On a piece of paper, make a diagram based on what you read in these verses that show all the things you will come to if you go down the trail marked "death" and another diagram for the trail marked "life" showing all the things that will happen to you if you go down that trail. Based on what we have read in chapter 30:2, on the diagram marked "death," show how one gets off the path marked "death" and back onto the path marked "life."

