

Deuteronomy 30:15-20ⁱⁱ

Moses said to all Israel the words which the Lord commanded him, “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

ⁱⁱ About the First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

The book of Deuteronomy is presented as Moses’ farewell address to the Israelite people gathered at the border of the promised land. It reinterprets Mosaic instruction (the Jewish Torah or Law) to deal with the situations of later history.

This reading comes from Moses’ third address (chaps. 29-30) and challenges the people to decide between two ways of living. The format reflects ancient treaties that concluded with a call to the gods to act as witnesses to the treaty. Here the whole created universe is called to witness the covenant (31:28). The people are urged to “choose life,” not merely a prolongation of days but the fullness received in love, obedience and faithfulness to God.