

See: The Choice Between Blessing and Curse

Text: Deuteronomy 11:26–16:17

Introduction

Shabbath shalom, everyone.

- This week's parasha is Re'eh, which means "See!" from the very first verse:
- Deut. 11:26–28

"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known." (NASB95)

- Notice how it begins: Re'eh—see! The word is in the singular. Elohim is speaking to the whole nation, but the command is personal. Each one of us is being told: "See this choice for yourself."
- The main theme of our parasha is clear: Israel must choose obedience to Elohim's covenant, which brings blessing. Disobedience brings curse.
- But Re'eh doesn't stop there. It explains what covenant obedience looks like: worshiping Elohim in His way, rejecting idolatry, living holy lives, caring for the poor, and

celebrating Elohim's appointed times. And, as always, we will also see how Messiah is revealed in this parasha.

1. The Blessing and the Curse (Deut. 11:26–32)

- Elohim lays before Israel two paths: blessing and curse. This echoes the covenant at Mount Sinai, but here the emphasis is on life in the Land. Their daily choices will determine whether they flourish or wither.
- We need to understand: blessing is not just material prosperity. The greatest blessing is life with Elohim—His presence, His favor, His closeness. The greatest curse is being cut off from Him.
- Application for us: Every morning when wake up we stand at this same fork in the road. We can choose obedience, which leads to life, joy, and Elohim's presence. Or we can choose disobedience, which leads to emptiness and curse.

2. Centralization of Worship (Deut. 12)

- Elohim commands Israel not to worship Him just anywhere, but only in the place He chooses. Eventually this would be Jerusalem. Why? To prevent Israel from imitating the nations and falling into idolatry.

Deut. 12:1-5

“These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. “You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. “You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place. “You shall not act like this toward the Lord your God. “But you shall seek the Lord at the place which the Lord your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come.” (NASB95)

- Application for us: We no longer have the Temple, but the principle remains. We do not worship Elohim according to our imagination or convenience. We worship Him according to His word.
- Yeshua spoke of this in John 4: “The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” In spirit—meaning from the heart. In truth—meaning in line with Elohim’s revealed word, not our own inventions.

3. Guarding Against Idolatry (Deut. 13)

- This chapter gives a hard teaching: even if a prophet performs signs, or even if a close family member urges you to follow other Elohim, you must not listen. Covenant loyalty comes before family, before miracles, before any other voice.

Deut. 13:1-5

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. “You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. “But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.” (NASB95)

- We must weigh every teaching, every tradition, and even every miracle against Elohim’s Torah and the words of Messiah. If it leads away from Elohim’s commandments, it is not from Him.

4. Holy Living and Social Justice (Deut. 14–15)

- Chapter 14 reminds Israel of the dietary laws. Why? Because Israel is a holy people, set apart. Holiness touches even what we eat.
- We don’t have to know WHY The Almighty gave us these dietary instructions, just accept that he did and obey them as a result.
- Then chapter 15 emphasizes generosity and compassion:
- Debts are to be released every seventh year.

- Hebrew servants are to be freed in the Sabbatical year.
- The poor must be cared for generously, with open hands.
- Here we see that covenant obedience is not only about ritual—it is also about justice, mercy, and compassion.
- Our holiness is not only in what we avoid, but also in how we treat others. Obedience means generosity, kindness, and care for the vulnerable.
- How we treat others, especially the poor, widows, orphans, sick, even animals and our environment reveals MUCH about who we really are.

5. Joyful Festivals (Deut. 16)

- Finally, the parasha reviews the three pilgrimage festivals: Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

All Israel is called to come together to celebrate before Elohim in joy.

- These feasts are not just traditions. They are rehearsals of Elohim’s redemptive plan.

They remind us that holiness is not only about seriousness and separation, but also about joy in Elohim’s presence.

Deut. 16:5- 6, 11, 15-16

You are not allowed to sacrifice the Passover in any of your towns which the Lord your God is giving you; but at the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name, you shall sacrifice the Passover in the evening at sunset, at the time that you came out of Egypt.” (NASB95)

Verse 11

and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name.”
(NASB95)

Verses 15, 16

Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful. “Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed.” (NASB95)

6. Seeing Messiah in Re’eh

- Yeishua chose the blessings rather than the curses.
- Centralized worship → Messiah worshipped with his fellow Jews, where they worshipped, and when they worshipped.
- Warning against false prophets → Messiah is the true Prophet like Moses, the one we must listen to (Deut. 18:15). He warned us against wolves in sheep’s clothing.

Dt. 13:6-18

“If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. “But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put

him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. "So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you. "If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to live in, anyone saying that some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' (whom you have not known), then you shall investigate and search out and inquire thoroughly. If it is true and the matter established that this abomination has been done among you, you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword. "Then you shall gather all its booty into the middle of its open square and burn the city and all its booty with fire as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt. "Nothing from that which is put under the ban shall cling to your hand, in order that the Lord may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers, if you will listen to the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all His commandments which I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God." (NASB95)

- IF Yeishua changed one thing about the Torah, to cause people to forsake it and turn to other mighty ones, he was a false prophet and deserving of death.
- Social justice → Yeshua proclaimed good news to the poor, release to the captives, freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4:18). He lived out the compassion of Deuteronomy 15.
- Festivals → The life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Yeishua is pictured in the Moedim.
- In Messiah, we see the blessing promised to Israel. Where Israel often failed, he was faithful. And through him, the blessing of covenant life is offered to all who follow him.

7. Closing Application

Parashat Re'eh challenges us: What will you see? Will you see blessing through obedience, or curse through disobedience?

We are called to:

Worship Elohim His way, not our way.

Guard ourselves from idolatry and false teaching.

Live as a holy people, distinct yet generous.

Celebrate Elohim with joy, and look forward to Messiah's kingdom.

Deut. 30:19 sums it up: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live."

In Yeshua the Messiah, we see the true blessing of life. Let us choose him, walk in Torah, and live as a covenant people.

Shabbat Sshalom & HaSof