

"COMMITMENT"

By Mike Burnham

Years ago a traveler taking a train across dry and dusty Palestine remarked, "and the bible calls this a land of milk and honey!"

A man overheard, tapped him on the shoulder, and showed him Deuteronomy 29:22-24

God had spelled out the principle of love which underlay the law and had detailed the specific stipulations of the contract he made with each generation of Israelites. Now the new generation ratified that covenant [Deut. 27]. But God also spelled out the tragedies which would surely come if Israel went back on her commitment [15-68]. The treaty was then summarized [chaps. 29-30], and this great Old Testament book concludes with the personal words, and the story of the death of Moses.

The message?

It is one of commitment. Commitment determines destiny. Deut. 32:46,47

Earlier, when Israel stood poised at Paran and sent spies to examine Canaan, the people reached a time of decision. God spoke and told them, "go." and they refused.

On this decision the destiny of that entire generation hinged. Because of their lack of trust in God, their decision was to disobey.

That single act of disobedience forced that generation away from the promised land out into the wilderness to die.

Now this new generation had a decision to make, a commitment in their hearts to follow the Lord.

There is a similar decision reflected in the gospels for Christians [Luke 9:23-24].

Jesus was spelling out the ultimate impact of that decision on the human personality. If we choose to follow Jesus in daily commitment, we will 'save' our lives. We will become the self we potentially are through the presence of God within us.

Or we can make the wrong decision. We can live for ourselves rather than in commitment to Christ. An inevitable result of that decision will be that we lose ourselves. The person we might have been because of intimate relationship with God-our "very self" will be forfeited.

Commitment determines the destiny ahead in this world for each one of us. The bridge between our two selves -

The self we are, and the self we want to be is daily commitment to Jesus.

As we surrender our lives and our wills to Jesus, and are obedient to him, our gain is the new self that each of us wants so badly to be.

The definition of commitment is given in Deut. 28:1,2 daily obedience. Not just hear but do! James 1:22

What is the outcome of commitment, for the nation and for the individual? Deut. 28:9-10

What was the future against which Israel was warned? Deut. 28:59-66.

The destiny written as a warning so long ago has become history. The word was true. The danger inherent in rejection of commitment is very real.

But the invitation to commitment is an open one! Deut. 30:1-3

It is never too late for the believer to return to God as long as he lives. Verses 19-20

Luke 9:57-62 Many in Jesus' day volunteered or were called to

discipleship. But many fell short of commitment.

There was the "eager disciple [v-57] who volunteered to follow Jesus anywhere- till Jesus warned that discipleship might be uncomfortable.

There was the reluctant disciple [v-59] who, when commanded to follow wanted to wait until his father had died and been buried! Jesus rejected the excuse, and told him to "go". There is no evidence that this reluctant disciple obeyed.

There was also the someday disciple [v-61], who wanted only a little time. Just to say good-bye to the home folks. Then, someday soon, he would follow. This too was unsatisfactory.

What Jesus seeks is the now disciple [v-62]. He wants the person who will put his or her hand to the plow and, without looking back, move straight out to do God's will.

This is what Jesus asks of us. To fix our eyes ahead, on him, and not to look back. We are to take the plow, now, and commit ourselves to his task.