



Re'eh

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 11:26 – 16:17

Parshat Re'eh begins with a challenge to the Jewish people. "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. A blessing if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your G-d which I command you this day, or a curse if you will not listen to the commandments of the Lord your G-d ..." (Devarim 11:26-28). Moses reminds the people that although they have been instructed as to what G-d demands of them, the choice ultimately would rest in their hands. However, if they truly wanted to possess the land and be assured of the fulfillment of G-d's promises, there was but one correct choice to make.

As the *Parshah* progresses, Moses continues his second speech to the people. He further delineates the laws the people are to observe and instructs them concerning the proper modes of worship in the Land of Israel. Consistent with the larger theme of this fifth book of the *Torah*, Moses warns the people not to establish private altars or sanctuaries to conduct worship and sacrifices, but rather gather in a special place that G-d would choose. There would be one central sanctuary, later known as the *Beit HaMikdash*, the Holy Temple, which would not only be a national center but a unifying force in Jewish life in the Land of Israel. This central shrine would help the tribes rise above their petty rivalries and geographic isolation, so that at appointed times of the year they would join together and worship.

Many members of our congregation will be particularly familiar with the later chapters of *Parshat Re'eh*, as they represent the core of the *Torah* reading for each of the final days of the major festivals of *Pesach*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkot*.



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