

## Parashat Re'eh

Michael     *Micha'el ben Shalom v'Shmu'el*

AJ            *Adam Shmu'el ben Frumah Zabava v'Pete (Barukh)*

August 17, 2017

### Summary

**Michael:** The Torah portion of *Re'eh* begins in the 11th chapter of *Sefer Devarim* (Book of Deuteronomy). We will read verses 26-28.

**AJ:** Moshe reminds the Israelites of the choice that is set before them. They may choose a path of blessing by doing *mitzvot* or they may choose not to follow God's directions which God tells them will lead to curse.

**Michael:** Moshe tells them that when they enter the promised land, half the tribes will stand on top of Mount Gerizim and loudly recite blessings and the other tribes will say "amen." Then the other tribes--while standing on Mount Ayval--will recite the curses and the tribes on top of Gerizim will recite "amen!"

**AJ:** Moshe also warns the Israelites about praying to idols and false prophets and calls for them to worship God in just one place. He reviews laws for the eating of animals, for supporting the poor, for the Sabbatical year, for the festivals, and for the freeing of slaves.

## Questions

1) AJ: In the verses we just read God said, “See--I give to you today blessing and curse. The blessing--if you listen closely to the commandments of your God which I command to you today. And the curse--if you do not listen closely to the commandments of your God which I command you this day, to go after other Gods who you do not know.” The first verse is interesting to me. “See--I give you today blessing and curse.” Why does God say that God is giving us blessing AND curse? If God is giving us blessing, how can God give us a curse at the same time? <<Michael picks 3>>

AJ: I imagine that what is happening is that God is giving us a choice. We have to choose which one we want--the blessing of doing *mitzvot* or the curse of not listening to God and not doing *mitzvot*.

2) Michael: What do you think a blessing really is? What do you think it might mean that someone who pays attention to doing the *mitzvot* is blessed? <<Michael picks 2, AJ picks 1>>

AJ: The word “blessing” could be interpreted in many different ways, but the main thing is that it includes some grain of good. A blessing is a gift of being good to people. If someone falls on the playground, you could be a blessing to them by helping them up. Someone can *also* be a blessing to the community through the example of their good behavior.

Michael: I think a blessing is a way to thank somebody for something good they have given you--like kindness or help.

3) Michael: What do you think makes blessings powerful? How can a blessing help someone? <<AJ picks 3>>

Michael: A good blessing is one where you use words carefully to bless someone for something good they've done to help. When you share this kind of blessing with someone it helps them feel appreciated. It helps the person who receives the blessing to know what they did that was helpful so that they can maybe even find a way to do it again.