

April 27, 2019

## Local Conference

***The biggest little word.*** The 40 years of wandering in the wilderness were about to come to an end. Moses, because of his own disobedience, was prohibited from crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land. Before transferring the leadership to Joshua, however, he wanted to admonish this new generation of Israelites regarding the two possible futures that awaited them. As you read his words in Deuteronomy 28, you will be struck by the fact that everything hinged on the biggest little word in the English language, “if.”

“If” you obey, great blessings will follow, and the world will flock to your doorstep, because they will sit up and take notice, and wonder how they can receive the same benefits. “If,” however, you rebel and become disobedient, the other nations will scorn and abuse you.

Despite this important sermon, not only spoken but written down for posterity, the Israelites spent hundreds of years of spiritual ups and downs. Over and over they succumbed to the cultural pressures around them, and soon became just like the other nations in so many ways. Following their exile in Babylon, some returned under Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild the nation and entered a period of great zeal for the Law, which by the time of Christ resulted in legalism. We’re not much different from them.

Today, Christ calls us to faithful obedience based on the Gospel. The choice is ours, “if.”