

Deuteronomy

Introduction

Within Judaism the title of this book was “**מִיָּדְבָרֵי הַלֵּוִי**.” These are the first words of the book, meaning, ‘These are the words.’ Other titles commonly given the book in Judaism were “The Words” or “A Copy of the Law.” With the translation into Greek the translators read these words as “**Δευτερονομιον τουτο**” which means “the second (*or, repeated*) law.”

The book is presented as a series of three messages: (the first and third are brief) along with a long presentation of the codified Law of God. The book informs us that these messages were given to the people of Israel as they approached the Promised Land, and also the farewell messages of Moses, since he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Its message is the final admonition of Moses: be faithful to God and obedient to the Law that has been given by God through his spokesman, Moses.

When reading of the book the divisions are very clear.

- I. The Acts of God 1:1 – 4:43.
- II The Law of God 4:44 – 28:68
 - 1. Introduction 4:44- 49
 - 2, The Nature of the Covenant of Faith 5:1 – 11:32
 - 3. The Detailed Covenant 12:1 – 26:10
 - 4. Covenant Renewal in the Promised Land 27:1 – 20
 - 5. Declaration of the Covenant 28:1 - 68
- III The Recapitulation of the Covenant Demand 29:1 – 30:20
- IV The Last Acts of Moses and His Death 31:1 – 32:12

For centuries scholars assumed that the first thirty chapters were a record of the messages of Moses with an editor’s additional information in chapters 31 & 32.

1. Some scholars hold to this position. Chapters 1 – 30 are the work of one writer and chapters 31 & 32 were written after the death of Moses to complete the message.

2. The Graf-Wellhausen theory in the 19th Century involved a variety of authors: [J (Yahweh) E (Elohim) P (Priestly) and D (Deuteronomy) whose writings were combined by editors over a lengthy period of time. This brought about an absence of any agreement about the authorship since some scholars would not agree on which of these authors was the primary one. This concept is still held by many scholars.

3. In more recent years there has been an acceptance by some scholars to the thought that the book of Deuteronomy resembles Middle Eastern Treaties or Covenants.

A brief chart might be helpful.

Law Code	O. T. Covenant	Middle Eastern Treaties
1. Prologue	1. Historical prologue	1. Prologue
2. Laws	2. Stipulations a. basic b. detailed	2. Historical prologue 3. Stipulations a. basic b. detailed
3. Summary: Document clause	3. Document clause	4. Document clause
4. Blessing	4. Blessing	5. God list
5. Curse	5. Curse 6. Recapitulation	6. Curses & Blessings

Thus scholars are divided concerning the dating of the book as well as authorship. The dates of the writing range from the time of the death of Moses and the entry into the Promised Land to the Post-exilic time and the finding of the book in the wall of the temple as it is being reconstructed. Scholars place the date somewhere between the time of the death of Moses to the mid-seventh century B.C.E.

To the casual reader the book of Deuteronomy might seem like an extraordinary discontinuity but a second reading would surely reveal a remarkable summary of the laws given the Hebrew people through the leadership of Moses. Mosaic and traditional laws are woven together in what becomes a widely varied presentation of these which are so intertwined that they have the semblance of unity.

While scholars have problems concerning who wrote the words and when they were written, the writer makes clear who the source of these laws is and that there is, in the understanding of the writer, that there is a sacredness about these codified laws which reach beyond human conversation and thought and have their source from the one who is Divine. Thus the concepts of the Torah become increasingly clarified.

The Hebrew text is well preserved, as is the text of all the books that comprise the Torah. Toward the end of the nineteenth Century a text of an ancient (*or, purported to be an ancient*) manuscript was found in a cave near the Dead Sea which was named after the dealer in antiquities: Moses Wilhelm Shapira. Some scholars felt it was truly ancient, but after study over the years it was declared to be a forgery, carefully prepared and written in ancient Hebrew as found on the Moabite Stone. Shortly after this pronouncement Shapira committed suicide. In more recent years some scholars have again accepted it as a true ancient text. Regrettably the original copy has been lost. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls sufficient evidence of the text of Deuteronomy has become known. The text of the Massoretic Text (MT) is very close to the text of the manuscript evidence found in the manuscripts found at Qumran. There is some evidence that the Qumran text has some additional passages, making it, in, some instances, closer to the text of the Septuagint (LXX). Regrettably there is no complete manuscript of Deuteronomy among

the Dead Sea Scrolls. For a more detailed picture of the comparison of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the MT see: Appendix III in The New International Commentary on the New Testament The Book of Deuteronomy by P. C. Craigie.

Where the numbering of verses differs between the Hebrew Bible and the English Bible the verse numbers of the Hebrew Bible are in brackets: [H. – 21].

Deuteronomy

<CHAPTER 1>

I. The First Address: The Acts of God 1:1 – 4:13

A. Introduction 1:1 – 5

¹ These are the words of Moses which he delivered to all Israel ¹ as the people were gathered in the wilderness on the east side of the Jordan. ² It can be described as being opposite (*or, east*) of the Jordan rift, opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-zahab. ² (That having been an eleven day journey by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea.) ³ ³ (This took place in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month. ⁴ Moses spoke to the people of Israel. His message was based on all that the Lord had given him as his commandments to the people through Moses.) ⁴ This took place just after Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had reigned in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei had been defeated. ⁵ It was here, on the east side of the Jordan, in the land of Moab, that Moses addressed the people, making the law clear to all the people.

B. What God has Done 1:6 – 5:29

1. God's Command and Promise 1:6 – 8

⁶ “The Lord our God told us at Horeb, ‘You have remained at this mountain long enough. ⁷ Break camp and move toward the hill country of the Amorites ⁵ and their neighbors who reside in this and the other regions – the Arabah, the hill country, the Shephelah, the Negeb, and the seacoast – the land of the Canaanites, Lebanon, even as far as the great river Euphrates. ⁸ Pay attention! I am giving you the land that lies before you! You are to have possession of the land which I, the Lord, promised to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by giving this land to them and to their descendants.’”

2. Organization of the Community 1:9 – 18

⁹ “At that time I declared to you: ‘For you to be carried by me alone is too much to bear.’ ⁶ ¹⁰ At that time I said, ‘The Lord God has caused your numbers to increase so greatly that you have become as numerous as the stars of the heavens – a multitude.

¹¹ (May the Lord, the God of your ancestors cause you to increase a thousand times and may he bless you as he promised.) ¹²

How am I enabled to carry this heavy burden of your disputes and differences by myself?

¹³ Select individuals from each one of your tribes who have wisdom, are discerning and

¹ “All Israel” includes the ancestors as well as those who had gathered to hear Moses’ message.

² There is no stated definite location of the site where this was to have taken place. Literally the Hebrew words say, “beyond the Jordan,” which would be the region later called Trans-jordan. These messages attributed to Moses were presented shortly before the people of Israel entered the Promised Land. The book does not present what will happen in the future but rather what God has already done and has provided for the people of Israel.

³ Verses 1 & 2 are unclear. The translation is based on v. 19 and on Numbers 33:16 – 38. Scholars generally feel the places mentioned in verse 1 are all in the region of Moab. The comment in verse 2 deals with travel in the Negeb prior to arriving in the location described in verse 1.

⁴ This is the only hint as to date in the Book of Deuteronomy.

⁵ The Amorites had inhabited the land prior to the return of the Israelites from Egypt. At this point the name Amorites was a general name for the various tribes and clans who resided in the land.

⁶ NEB: “You are a burden too heavy for me to carry unaided.” The sentence might be translated: “I can not take responsibility for you alone.”

have good reputation that they might be your leaders.’¹⁴ Your reply was, ‘This plan which you have proposed is a good one!’¹⁵ I then permitted the heads of each tribe to select experienced⁷ men in this position, setting them as commanders over thousands, others as commanders over hundreds, some as commanders of fifties, and tens. Additional officials were also appointed though out the tribes.¹⁶ At that sane time I charged your judges saying, ‘Give a fair and impartial hearing to the people of your community. Be careful as you make judgments concerning two people. Be certain that there is no difference in the way you treat citizens and resident aliens.’⁸ ¹⁸ In your judgments, when you hear a case, whether it be an important person or one who is thought to be unimportant. Do not deliberately be intimidated by anyone for judgment belongs to God. If any case seems to be too difficult for you, you are to bring it to me, and I will hear the case.’¹⁸ I therefore commanded you, at that time, concerning all things that should be done.”

3. Failure: The Problem of Faith 1:19 – 46

¹⁹ “We set out from Horeb and went through that vast and terrible wilderness that you saw on the way to the hill country, doing just as the Lord had ordered. We continued on that road through land of the Amorites until we arrived at Kadesh-barnea.⁹ ²⁰ I spoke to you saying, ‘You have arrived at the hill country of the Amorites which the Lord our God is giving us. ²¹ Be confident that the Lord our God has provided that land for you as your possession. Do not be afraid or be discouraged.’¹⁰

²² ”Then you all came into my presence and said, ‘Permit us to send men in advance to explore the land for us. Let them examine the cities that we will be approaching.’²³ I approved of the plan for it seemed reasonable and I designated one man from each of the tribes to explore the land and its cities. ²⁴ They then turned, going into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol,¹¹ the central area of which they explored. ²⁵ They collected samples of the produce from the area and brought them to us. Their report said that this was a good land and that the Lord our God was giving us.

²⁶ “You, however, refused to go up and rebelled against the command¹² of the Lord your God. ²⁷ You grumbled among yourselves¹³ and said, ‘It is the Lord’s hatred of us that has brought us out of the land of Egypt and into the land of the Amorites so he can destroy us, ²⁸ but where can we go (*or, where are we headed*)? These men who have explored the land have frightened¹⁴ us by giving us their information. ‘The people are larger and taller than we. The cities are great and fortified, towering to the sky, and moreover, they have seen some of the descendants of the Anakim¹⁵ there.’ ²⁹ Then I said, ‘Do not be fearful or panic! ³⁰ The Lord your God will precede you, for he, himself, will

⁷ Some translators opt to use the word “practical.”

⁸ ANET: p. 213c

⁹ Some scholars insert verse 2 here.

¹⁰ TEV: “do not hesitate or be afraid.”

¹¹ The name “Eshcol” means ‘grapes.’

¹² Literally: “mouth.”

¹³ The Hebrew is unclear. The word that has been translated as “grumbled” is also translated as “muttered, sulked, or murmured.” The Hebrew said this was done “in their tents.”

¹⁴ Literally: “made our hearts melt.”

¹⁵ The “Anakim” were a group of very tall people who were considered to be giants. The report caused so much fear that one could say the people of Israel were on the verge of having a civil war.

fight for you, just as he fought ¹⁶ for you in Egypt in your presence. ¹⁷ ³¹ He also fought for you in the wilderness where you witnessed that the Lord carried you just as one carries a small child, which he did the entire time we were in the wilderness until we reached this point. ³² Despite this you persisted in not trusting the Lord your God. ³³ It is he who goes before you to find a proper place to pitch your tent; to face the night in his presence by the pillar of fire, to show you, through the pillar of cloud by day what the route should be for you. ¹⁸

³⁴ “The Lord, himself, heard your loud complaint, which angered him so greatly that he vowed ³⁵ not to permit any of this evil generation to see the good land which he had determined would be the homeland for your ancestors. ³⁶ ‘The only exception is Caleb ¹⁹ the son of Jephunneh. He will see it, as will his descendants, for I will give him the land on which he walked, since he has been completely faithful to me.’ ³⁷ (The Lord was even angry with me, based on your actions, and said, ‘You will not enter the land.’ ³⁸ Joshua, the son of Nun, is standing before you. It is he who will enter there. Support him for it is he who will secure the possession of the land for Israel. ³⁹ Moreover, your little children who you said would be as booty, along with some children who have reached the age of discretion, will enter. I will give the land to them for it will become their possession. ²⁰ ⁴⁰ As for you: turn and wander in the wilderness, in the direction of the Red (*or, Reed*) Sea.

⁴¹ “Then you answered, ‘We have sinned against the Lord! We will go up and fight, just as the Lord our God had commanded.’ Every man of you strapped on his battle gear, assuming that it would be easy to enter into the hill country. ²¹ ⁴² The Lord said to me, ‘Warn them! Do not go up to fight, for I am not in your midst and therefore you will suffer a defeat from your enemies.’ ⁴³ So I told you this but you would not listen. ²² You rebelled against the command of the Lord, and you went, hotheadedly, into the hill country. ⁴⁴ Then the Amorites who lived in the hill country attacked you and pursued you, just as bees might pursue. They overpowered you along the way from Seir to Hormah. ⁴⁵ You returned and you wept before the Lord, ²³ but the Lord did not listen to your voices or pay attention to your pleas. ⁴⁶ You then returned to Kades-barnea, remaining there for many days. Yes, it was many days that you remained there.”

<CHAPTER 2>

4. Journey Through Trans-Jordan 1:1 – 25

¹ “We then traveled in a different direction, going into the wilderness toward the Red (*or, Reed*) Sea, ²⁴ doing what the Lord had told us; and after a journey that lasted

¹⁶ Literally: “according to all that he did.”

¹⁷ Literally: “before your eyes.”

¹⁸ ANET: p. 236a

¹⁹ Joshua was also permitted to enter the Promised Land. He is mentioned in v. 38.

²⁰ TEV: “your children, who are still too young to know right from wrong, will enter the land – the child you said would be seized by our enemies. I will give this land to them and they will occupy it.”

²¹ Moses reminds the people that they can not recoup opportunities they had lost in the past. JB: “each one buckled on his arms and blithely mustered up into the highlands.”

²² An alternate translation might be: “You rebelled against the Lord’s command and advanced defiantly into the hill country.”

²³ Tears avail little in the face of wanton disobedience.

²⁴ This would be a route that would lead to the Gulf of Aquabah.

many days we skirted the Mount of Seir. ²⁵ 2 Then the Lord said to me: 3 ‘You have been skirting this mountainous country long enough. Turn northward. 4 Give this command to the people: You are about to pass through the territory of your relatives, the descendants of Esau, who reside in the land of Seir. They are fearful of you, so you must be careful. 5 Do not provoke them! ²⁶ It is not my intention to give you any portion of their land – not so much as is covered by one foot step, ²⁷ for I have given the region of Mount Seir to Esau as his possession. 6 You are to purchase everything from then that you might eat or drink. ²⁸ 7 The Lord, your God, has blessed you in all your undertakings and is clearly aware ²⁹ of your great forty year wandering, having been with you providing for your every need.’ 8 As a result we moved on, steering clear of your relatives, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the Arubah, taking the wilderness road from Elath and Ezion-geber.

“We then turned, going in the direction of the wilderness of Moab. 9 The Lord then told me, ‘Do not harass Moab or engage in battle with them, for I will not give you any of their land as your possession. This is because I have given Ar ³⁰ to the descendants of Lot, as their possession. 10 (The Emim, a large and numerous nation, as tall as the Anakim, ³¹ had lived there in the past. 11 Like the Anakim, they are also known as Rephaim (*or, giants*), but the Moabites call them Emim. 13 The Horim ³² also lived in Seir in the past, but Seir was now occupied by the descendants of Esau who had dispossessed them and exterminated them as they settled in the area, just as the people of Israel did in the land which the Lord gave to them.) 13 They then proceeded to cross the Wadi ³³ Zered.”

“So we crossed the Wadi Zered. 14 The time ³⁴ it took to travel for Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the Wadi Zered was thirty-eight years. During this time an entire generation – that is, the men of war had died as the Lord had sworn would take place. ³⁵ 15 The Lord’s hand had certainly been against them, that they would die before the entry to the Land of Promise would occur. ³⁶

16 Just as soon as all those warriors had died from among the people of Israel 17 the Lord told me, 18 ‘Today we are crossing the boundary of Moab at Ar. 19 When you

²⁵ CB: “for a long tme we circled round the highland of Seir.” Literally: “many days: like the days that you remained.”

²⁶ Verses 4 – 8 record the journey around Edom. The LXX adds: “πολεμου.”

²⁷ TEV: “not so much as one square foot.” An alternate translation might be: “not even the smallest portion.” Literally: “as much as a footprint.”

²⁸ It is possible to read the Hebrew, with different vocalization, as: “and whatever you dig.” implying that a well might be dug for water.

²⁹ LXX: “διααγνοθη.”

³⁰ The location of Ar is unknown.

³¹ The Anakim were remnants of a pre-historic tribe that lived in the area, noted for their tall structure. The Anakim were also known as Rephaim, Zamzummim and Zurim. Some scholars feel verses 10 – 13 are a later interpolation. They are thought to be several explanatory notes that have been incorporated in this chapter. Cf. ANET: p. 328d

³² The Horim were apparently a remnant of a tribe that had been called the Horities. Cf.: ANET p. 149d

³³ The Hebrew word, translated as “Wadi” might be translated as the “gorge, or gully of Zered.”

³⁴ Literally: “the days in which we went.”

³⁵ Crossing the Wadi Zered marked an important point in the history of the wilderness wandering. Zered was south-east of the Dead Sea, the southern border of Moab.

³⁶ This marks the unhappy end of those Israelites who had been rebellious. With the decease of the men of Israel who had rebelled against the Lord the people of Israel could move freely to the Land of Promise.

approach the frontier of the Ammonites, do not harass them or engage in battle with them. I will not give you any of their land as your possession since I have given that land to the descendants of Lot as their possession.³⁷ 20 (It is also reckoned as the land of the Rephaim, for the Rephaim had inhabited the land in the past. The Ammorites called them, Zamzumim,³⁸ 21 a strong and populous nation, as tall as the Anakim. The Lord had destroyed them prior to the Ammorites, so they could dispose of them and settle in their place. 22 The Lord also did the same with the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, by destroying the Horites³⁹ who preceded them. They were annihilated by the Ammorites who then settled in their territory, as they do, even today. 23 As for the Avvim, who had lived in settlements in the region of Gaza, the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor,⁴⁰ destroyed them and have settled in their place.) 24 ‘ Rise! Begin your journey and cross the Valley of the Arnon. Be assured: I have handed King Sihon of the Amorites of Heshbon and his entire land to you. Begin taking possession of it by engaging him in battle. 25 Today Israel will begin to cause dread and panic in the nations that are under the heavens for when they hear a report they will tremble and be in anguish because of you.’⁴¹

26 “So I sent messengers from Kadesh⁴² to Sihon the King of Heshbon,⁴³ offering terms of peace, saying, 27 ‘Let us pass through your land. I will only go along the road. I will not turn to the surrounding countryside, whether to the right or to the left.’⁴⁴ 28 You will sell us food in exchange for money that we can eat, and also supply us with water for which we will pay, so that we can drink. I only ask your permission to pass through your land on foot, 29 just as was done in the land of the descendants of Esau who live in Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar. Grant this permission until we cross the Jordan and enter the land which the Lord our God has given us.’³⁰ King Sihon of Heshbon would not permit us to pass through the land for the Lord, your God, hardened his spirit and made him obstinate in order that his kingdom would be handed over to you, as he has done.⁴⁵

31 ”The Lord said to me, ‘Be certain! I have begun to give Sihon and his kingdom to you. Begin taking possession. You are to occupy his land.’³² Then Sihon came out against us along with all his warriors to do battle against us at Jahaz.⁴⁶ 33 We captured all

³⁷ It is to be noted that the Ammonites were to be treated as carefully as the other nations through which they traveled.

³⁸ Some scholars feel verses 20 – 23 are a later interpolation. The name “Zamzumim is a name given that tribe by the Ammorites and became a loan word in Hebrew. Cf.: ANET p. 149d

³⁹ The Horites of Seir (Edom) are thought to be the race of Troglodytes whose art has been discovered, the most outstanding being a statue.

⁴⁰ This was an early name for the Philistines who settled in parts of Palestine, coming from Crete in 1200 B.C.E.

⁴¹ The promise of the Lord is taking effect. There is fear of the Israelites.

⁴² Scholars feel this is not Kadesh-barnea but rather Zaieran, which is sometimes called Kadesh, and was located 10 miles north of the Arnon River.

⁴³ Presumably he was king over all the Amorites, his capitol being Heshbon.

⁴⁴ The message is reported here as a personal message between Moses and Sihon, presumably with good intention.

⁴⁵ King Sihon was perhaps over-confident about his military strength, causing his spirit to be obstinate. Prior to this the transit through the previous lands had been peaceful. Moses attributes the events to God’s power and personal concern for the people of Israel.

⁴⁶ Jahaz is possibly Jalul or Khirbet-et-telin, near Medeba.

his towns at that time, demolishing the towns.⁴⁷ All men, women, and children were put to death. No one survived.³³ All that we kept for ourselves was the livestock as our personal booty and the loot from the captured towns.³⁶ From Aroer, which lies on the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, (including the cities that lie in the valley) as far as Gilead, there was no fortress that was too strong (*or, too high*) for us. The Lord, our God, gave us everything.³⁷ However, you did not encroach on any of the land of the Ammonites for you avoided the entire upper region of the Jabbok Valley along with the towns of the hill country just as had been forbidden by the Lord our God.”

<CHAPTER 3>⁴⁸

¹ “Then we traveled, making our way toward Bashan.⁴⁹ Og, the king of Bashan, immediately mobilized his people and engaged us in battle at Edrei. ² The Lord spoke to me, saying, ‘Have no fear of him for I have already given him and all his people and land to you. You are to deal with him as you have dealt with Sihon, the king of the Amorites who lived in Heshbon.’ ³ The Lord, therefore, had delivered the king of Bashan into our power along with the entire population and as the result of our attack there were no survivors among his people. ⁴ We captured all his cities, not a single city escaped being captured – sixty cities in all. We captured the confederation of Argob, and the entire kingdom of Og in Bashan. ⁵ These cities had all been fortified,⁵⁰ having wide double gates⁵¹ that were barred. In addition there were many unfortified villages. ⁶ We brought about total destruction, just as had been done against Sihon, the king of Heshbon, annihilating all the men, women and children in each location. ⁷ All the livestock and the spoils of the city were kept as our personal booty. ⁸ It was in this manner that we took all of the land of the two Amorite kings which lay on the east side of the Jordan, from the Valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon.⁵² ⁸ (The Sidonians call Mount Hermon Sirion, while the Amorites call it Senir.) ⁹ [All the cities in the tableland, all of Gilead and all of Bashan, as far as Salcah (*or, Salehah*) and Edrei, along with every city of the kingdom of Bashan had been captured. ¹⁰ Only Og, the king of Bashan survived. (He was a remnant of the Rephaim.)⁵³ ¹¹ [He had a huge sarcophagus⁵⁴ which, at the time of this writing, can still be seen at Rabbah⁵⁵ of the Ammonites. Based on the common measurement⁵⁶ it was nine cubits in length and four cubits in width (*or, thirteen feet by six feet*)]⁵⁷

⁴⁷ Literally: “put under the ban” which was a way of saying the town and its buildings would be completely destroyed, including the population of each town.

⁴⁸ Verses 1 – 11 are almost a repetition of Numbers 21:33 – 35.

⁴⁹ Bashan, north-east of Galilee is occupied by Druze people. It was located in the northwest corner of the district of Trans-Jordan.

⁵⁰ Literally: “with high walls.”

⁵¹ Literally: “two leaved gates.”

⁵² This was the highest peak in the Lebanon mountains. It also marked the extreme northern edge of the kingdom of Bashan. Cf.: ANET p. 149d

⁵³ Cf.: ANET p. 280c

⁵⁴ Literally: “a bedstead or resting place.” Scholars feel this is a reference to a massive sarcophagus. Similar sarcophagi have been found in Phoenicia.

⁵⁵ LXX: “was it not in the chief city of the children of Ammon?”

⁵⁶ Literally: “the common cubit.” A cubit was the length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, or, about 18 inches.

⁵⁷ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

6. *The Land is God's Gift 3:12 – 22*

12 “When the appointed time arrived that we should take possession of the land the Reubenites and the Gadites were assigned their territories, beginning at Aroer, between the edge of the valley of Aroer and half of the land of Gilead, along with its cities. 13 [The remainder of the land of Gilead, the entire land of Bashan, the kingdom of Og to the half-tribe of Manasseh. 58 (The entire region of Argob: all the portion that formerly had been called the land of Rephaim. 59 14 Jair the Manassite acquired the entire region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshunites and the Maacathites, and this area which had been named Bashan was now named by Jair, after himself, as Havvoth-jair (*or, the Settlement of Jair*) and it still has that name today.) 15 I granted Gilead to Machir. 16 The Reubenites and the Gadites received the territory of Gilead as far as the Wadi Arnon, with the middle of the valley as the boundary, and extending as far as the Jabbok, the valley being the boundary of the Ammonites, 17 And extending to the Arabah, with the Jordan and its banks, from Chinnereth down to the sea of the Arabah, the Dead (*or, Salt*) Sea including the lower slopes of Pisgah on the east.] 60

18 “At that time I gave you a command, saying, ‘The Lord your God has given you this land as your possession. However, all your armed men are to pass over, along with your relatives from the other tribes, -- the people of Israel. 19 Your wives, your little ones, your livestock, -- (I realize you have much livestock which is to remain behind, staying in the towns which are given to you.) 20 This is how it will be until the Lord provides peace for your brethren and they also occupy the land which the Lord your God will give them beyond the Jordan. Following that every man [*whose assigned property is on the east side of the Jordan*] is to return to the possession I have already granted. 21 I commanded Joshua at that time, saying ‘Your eyes have seen all that the Lord our God has done the two kings. The Lord will deal in the same manner to all the other kingdoms into which you are about to enter. 22 Do not be afraid of them for it is the Lord, your God who fights for you.’”

7. *Moses as the Bearer of the People's Sin 3:23 – 29* 61

23 ”I pleaded 62 with the Lord on your behalf, saying, 24 ‘O Lord God, 63 you have only begun to reveal your might to your servant. What god is there in heaven or on the earth who possesses (*or performs*) such mighty and powerful works as you? 25 Grant me permission to go beyond the Jordan and enter that good hill country, along with Lebanon.’ 26 The Lord, however, was angry with me because of you, 64 and would not pay attention to my prayer. The Lord told me, ‘That is enough! Say no more about this matter! 27 Go up to Pisgah, 65 and look westward and northward, southward and eastward, that you might see [*the land*] with your own eyes, but do not cross the Jordan.. 28 Commission Joshua and encourage and strengthen him for it is he who will go over, with

58 Verses 12- 13 go from south to north. Verses 13 – 16 go from north to south.

59 MFT: “the land of the Titains.” Cf.: ANET p. 149d

60 NEB: “below the watershed of Pisgah,” Some scholars feel verses 13 – 17 are a later interpolation.

61 Some scholars feel Moses died outside the Promised Land as a substitute for the people. If that is the case he suffered vicariously for them. If that is the case, in verse 26 it would need to read “instead of you” rather than “because of you.”

62 The Hebrew word is a strong one including concepts of: “to entreat, implore, favor, make supplication.”

63 Lord God is used only twice in Deuteronomy. It describes the deep personal tone of Moses; prayer.

64 This could be translated as “for the sake of the people” Cf. footnote 58.

65 LXX: “go up to the quarried rock and look.”

leadership, taking these people and he will grant them possession of the land which you will see. ²⁰ (So we remained in the valley opposite Beth-peor.) ⁶⁶

<CHAPTER 4> ⁶⁷

C. Inferences Drawn from God's Acts 4:1 – 40

1. Israel is to Listen and Obey 4:1 - 14

¹ “Now, O Israel: listen to these laws and rules which I teach I am proclaimed to you, for you to obey (*or, do*) them. If this is done you will live and be enabled to enter the (*promised*) land which the Lord, the God of your ancestors is giving you. ² You are not to add to this word which I command you to obey, nor are you to take away from these commandments of the Lord your God but keep these commandments which I am challenging you to obey. ⁶⁸ ³ Your eyes have seen what the Lord did at Ba'al Peor; ⁶⁹ for the Lord, your God, destroyed every man among you who followed the Ba'al of Peor. ⁴ You, however, held fast in your relationship with the Lord and thus you are all alive today. ⁵ Be attentive! I have imparted laws and rules, teaching you as I have been instructed by the Lord, our God, who commanded me to do so in order that you will be able to abide by these laws and rules as you take possession of this new land. ⁶ You must faithfully observe these laws and rules for these will be our source of wisdom and understanding to all the people of this great nation, when they hear all these laws and rules. Surely this great nation is wise and discerning. ⁷⁰ ⁷ What other great nation is there that has a god ⁷¹ who is so near to it as the Lord our God is to us when ever we call upon him. ⁸ Is there any other great nation that has laws and rules that are as perfect as these which I have set before you?

⁹ “Be sure to pay attention and keep your soul ⁷² diligent, lest you forget what your eyes have seen, and it is far from your minds, ⁷³ and you do not teach them to your children and the succeeding generations. ¹⁰ Recall the day you stood before the Lord, your God at Horeb. When the Lord said to me, ‘Assemble the people before me that they might hear my words so that they might revere me and learn to reverence me all the days of their lives on this earth, and that they also teach this to their children.’ ¹¹ You drew near and stood before the mountain which was blazing up to the heart of heaven, shrouded with dark clouds. ¹² Then the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of his words but you perceived no shape: you only heard the voice. ¹³ He declared his covenant to you which he commanded you to obey, namely, the ten commandments ⁷⁴

⁶⁶ The exact location of Beth-peor is uncertain.

⁶⁷ Chapter 4 has the essence of a mini-sermon on the covenant and the law.

⁶⁸ A similar injunction was given to the rulers of Egypt, not to tamper with the text of a treaty. This is one of several points within Deuteronomy that support the concept that this is an example of a Middle Eastern Treaty text.

⁶⁹ Cf. Numbers 25:3. Israelite men became involved with Moabite women in the idolatrous worship of the Canaanite god Ba'al. This resulted in a plague which scholars feel was a venereal disease.

⁷⁰ TEV: “wise and insightful people.”

⁷¹ The Hebrew has “gods” whereas the LXX, Syriac and Targum have the singular form of the word.

⁷² So: LXX.

⁷³ NIV: “or let them slip from your heart as long as you live.”

⁷⁴ Literally: “words” or “sayings.”

and he wrote them on two stone tablets.⁷⁵ ¹⁴ At that same time the Lord commanded me to impart laws and rules to you which was done so that you might observe them in the land which you were about to enter⁷⁶ and occupy.”

2. *The Peril of Idolatry 4:15 – 31*

¹⁵ “For your own sake you must be careful, guarding yourselves, for from the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb, from the midst of the fire, ¹⁶ that you do not become corrupt and make idols (*or, sculpted images*) for yourselves – male or female: ¹⁷ sculpted images of animals that are on the earth, sculpted images of winged birds that fly in the air, ¹⁸ sculpted images of anything that creeps on the ground, sculpted images of fish that are in the water under the earth. ¹⁹ Beware that you do not look up to heaven and when you see the sun or the moon or the stars, -- all the host of heaven --⁷⁷ that you are led astray and worship and serve them, things which the Lord your God has allotted to all nationalities under heaven. ²⁰ But the Lord has taken you, rescuing you from Egypt, that blazing furnace, to have you become a nation of his own possession, as you are today.

²¹ ”Furthermore, the Lord was angry with me because of you and he vowed that I should not cross the Jordan and that I should not enter into the good land which the Lord has provided for you as your heritage. ²² I am to die in this land. I am not to cross the Jordan; but you will cross and take possession of the good land. ²³ Take care that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make sculpted images in the form of anything which the Lord your God has forbidden you. ²⁴ The Lord God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.⁷⁸

²⁵ “When you give birth to children and there are grandchildren who have become complacent in this land and you act corruptly by making sculpted images in the form of anything, thereby doing evil in the sight of the Lord your God, you provoke him to anger.⁷⁹ ²⁶ If that is the case I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that you will soon utterly perish from the land into which you are going by crossing the Jordan to possess and you will not live long⁸⁰ within this land, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ Then the Lord will disperse you among the nations and you will be a minority in those nations in which the Lord will lead you. ²⁸ There you will serve other⁸¹ gods of wood and stone: the fabrication of men’s hands, -- they neither see nor hear,⁸² eat nor smell. ²⁹ On the other hand, if, from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him, if you seek him with wholehearted commitment of mind and soul.⁸³ ³⁰ When you are in deep distress

⁷⁵ If one accepts that Deuteronomy is an example of a Middle Eastern Treaty, all Ten Commandments would be written on one tablet. In a Middle Eastern Treaty two copies were written: one for each party involved in the treaty.

⁷⁶ Literally: “about to cross.”

⁷⁷ LXX: “heavenly bodies.”

⁷⁸ God is a consuming God to the rebel, but a merciful God to the repentant.

⁷⁹ Religious life does not consist only in remembering the experience of God in the past. It must also function in order to produce the continuing experience of the presence and activity of God. We are not to forget the experience of God but must also teach others about it, and apply what we have learned and experienced in our daily lives. NEB: “do not fall into the degrading practice of making any kind of carved figure.”

⁸⁰ Literally: “prolong your days.”

⁸¹ Omitted in the MT.

⁸² LXX: “shall not see nor hear.”

⁸³ LXX: “in your affection.”

and all these things [*which have been declared in verses 26 – 28 have taken place*] you will, at the end of that era, return to the Lord and be obedient to his voice, ³¹ for I am the Lord your God; a merciful God who will not fail you or destroy you or forget the covenant that has been made with your ancestors which he swore to them.”

3. *The Lord: He is God 4:32 – 40*

³² “Inquire now: Concerning the days that are past, days before you were living – since the time of God’s creation of people who live on the earth and ask, from one end of heaven to the other whether such a great thing as this had ever happened or was heard about. ³³ Did any people ever hear the voice of God (*or, a god*) speak out of the midst of a fire, as you have heard, and survive? ³⁴ Or: has any god attempted to take a nation for himself, from the midst of another nation, by trials, wonders or signs, or by his mighty hand and outstretched arm, or by great terrors as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt, doing all this before your eyes? ³⁵ It has been clearly demonstrated ⁸⁴ that you might assuredly know that the Lord is God! There is no other beside him! ³⁶ He let you hear his voice from heaven that he might thereby discipline you, and on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words in the midst of the fire. ³⁷ Because ⁸⁵ he loved your ancestors and chose their descendants, bringing you out of the land of Egypt within his own presence, ⁸⁶ by his great power, ³⁸ driving out nations ahead of you, nations that were greater and stronger than yourselves, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it still is today. ³⁹ Know therefore today and be sure to remember it. The Lord is God in heaven above and in the earth beneath! There is no other! ⁴⁰ Because of this you are to keep the laws and rules which I command you today, that it may be well with you ⁸⁷ and with your descendants in succeeding generations, so that you may remain in the land which the Lord your God has given you forever.”

D. Cities of Refuge Separated 4:41 – 43 ⁸⁸

⁴¹ Then Moses set apart three cities in the land east ⁸⁹ of the Jordan. ⁴² In the event of a homicide the individual who had unintentionally committed the murder, not having been an enemy to the deceased in the past, ⁹⁰ by fleeing to one of these cities he might save his life. ⁴³ [*The selected cities were:*] Bezar-in-the-Wilderness, ⁹¹ located on the tableland, and designated for the Reubenites. Other cities that were designated were Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites and Golan in Bashan belonging to the Manassites.

⁸⁴ Literally: “you have been shown to know.”

⁸⁵ Literally: “and instead because.”

⁸⁶ Literally: “with his face.”

⁸⁷ Literally: “that your days may be pleasant.”

⁸⁸ The verses 41 – 43 do not seem to be a part of the first address of Moses. Some scholars feel these verses are a later interpolation since the names of the Cities of Refuge are omitted elsewhere.

⁸⁹ Literally: “sunrise.”

⁹⁰ LXX: “before yesterday and the third day.”

⁹¹ The exact location is unknown.

II Second Address: The Law of God 4:44 – 28:68 ⁹²

1. Introduction 4:44 – 49

⁴⁴ This is the law which Moses presented to the children of the Israelites. ⁴⁵ These are the testimonies, laws and rules which Moses spoke to the people after they had come out of Egypt. ⁴⁶ This was spoken beyond the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth-Peor, in the land of Sihon ⁹³ king of the Amorites who had lived in Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated when they came out of Egypt. ⁴⁷ They took possession of the land of Og, the king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, who lived beyond (*or, to the east of*) the Jordan. ⁴⁸ The area they possessed was from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, as far as Mount Sirion ⁹⁴ (also called Hermon) ⁴⁹ together with all the Arabah ⁹⁵ on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, under the slopes of Pisgah.

<CHAPTER 5>

B. The Covenant of Faith 5:1 – 11:32

1. the Ten Commandments 5:1 - 21

¹ Moses convened all the people and said, “O Israel! Hear ⁹⁶ for I am carefully proclaiming these laws and rules to you so that you will be diligent in obeying them. ² The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. ⁹⁷ ³ This was not made just for our ancestors but was also made between the Lord and us, we who are alive. ⁹⁸ ⁴ The Lord spoke to you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵ (At that time I was standing between the Lord and you to clearly declare the word of the Lord to you, for you were fearful because of the fire, and you did not approach the mountain.)

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ⁹⁹

I ⁶”He said, ‘I am the Lord, your God, the one who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the situation in which you were enslaved. ⁷ You are not to have any other god(s) before (*or, beside*) ¹⁰⁰ me.

II ⁸ “You are not to make, for yourself, sculpted images or any other form ¹⁰¹ of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth ⁹ You are not to revere (*or, worship*) them or serve them, for I, the Lord

⁹² The second address of Moses is the core of his message. which is presented following the introduction to that message in 4:44 – 49. Then the general principles are introduced followed by clearly specific segments. The manner in which it is presented follows the form of a Near Eastern Treaty .

⁹³ In the Syriac translation it is “Sirion.: Cf. 3:9.

⁹⁴ Cf. footnote 89

⁹⁵ LXX: “the plain of Arabah.”

⁹⁶ The Hebrew word “shema” signifies not simply hearing but hearing and obeying.

⁹⁷ The Ten Commandments were not simply a covenant with the people who were present but the intent was that they would be personally applied by all of God’s people.

⁹⁸ Craigie translates the verse as: “The Lord did not make the covenant with our fathers; but with us.” This covenant was not simply something done in the past, but is essential for all time.

⁹⁹ The Ten Commandments are (*or, Decalogue is*) the heart of the foundation of the covenant relationship with God. The call to accept and obey the Ten Commandments is based not on the command of God but on the loving action of God to the people in the time prior to the pronouncement of those commandments. This gives the people the instruction to follow and obey.

¹⁰⁰ This could also be translated as “in defiance of me.” “Other gods” is used 64 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. It represents the tenacious deception of pagan gods.

¹⁰¹ LXX: “ουδε παντος ομοιωμα.”

your God, am a zealous ¹⁰² God, punishing the evil deeds of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, ¹⁰ but acting in loving kindness ¹⁰³ toward thousands of generations (*or, to the thousandth generation*) of those who love me and are obedient to my commandments.

III ¹¹ “You are not to use the name of the Lord in a careless manner, ¹⁰⁴ for I. the Lord will not acquit anyone who uses my name wrongfully. ¹⁰⁵

IV ¹² “Observe (*or, remember*) the Sabbath Day to keep it holy as the Lord your God has commanded. ¹⁰⁶ ¹³ You are to work diligently for six days, ¹⁰⁷ ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath Day to the Lord, your God. In it you are not to do any work: not you nor your son, daughter, male or female slave, ox, donkey, cattle or the resident alien who resides with you. ¹⁰⁸ Your male and female slaves are to rest, just as you are to rest. ¹⁵ You will bear in mind that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there by his mighty hand and outstretched arm (*or, by his mighty power*). It is for this reason that the Lord your God commands you to keep the Sabbath Day.

V ¹⁶ “Honor your parents ¹⁰⁹ is commanded you by the Lord your God that you might have longevity in the land given you by the Lord your God.

VI ¹⁷ “You are not to murder (*or, kill*). ¹¹⁰

VII ¹⁸ [H. 17] “You are not to commit adultery. ¹¹¹

VIII ¹⁹ [H. 17] “You are not to steal. ¹¹²

IX ²⁰ [H. 17] “You are not to give dishonest (*or, vain*) testimony against your neighbor. ¹¹³

¹⁰² Zealous seems to be a better translation since “jealous” is an acquired attitude. TAN: “impassioned.” TEV: “I tolerate no rivals.” TCB: “a passionate God.”

¹⁰³ LXX: “go to them that love.”

¹⁰⁴ The Name of God was pronounced only once each year. This was done by the High Priest in the most holy portion of the temple on the Day of Atonement. To use God’s name in vain, is to carelessly question the existence of God.

¹⁰⁵ TAN: “you shall not swear falsely by the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not clear one who swears falsely by His name.” NAB: “make a wrong use of the name of the Lord.” CB: “you must not invoke the name of the Lord your God for evil intent, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who invokes his name for evil intent.” This commandment forbids the idle or empty use of God’s name in an oath.

¹⁰⁶ This commandment differs considerably from the same commandment in Exodus 20:8 – 11.

¹⁰⁷ Literally: “to labor six days, doing your work.”

¹⁰⁸ Literally: “who lives within your gate.” “Within your gate” might mean your private courtyard or the city. There were three levels of Jewish society: 1. National Israelites. 2. Resident aliens or sojourners. 3. Slaves. All are included in this commandment.

¹⁰⁹ Literally: “father and mother.” This commandment moves from the honor of God to the honor of parents and the attitudes and actions of individuals toward society.

¹¹⁰ The Hebrew word “*ratsah*” means murder, usually unpremeditated or accidental. The word in Deuteronomy 19:1 - 13 is a different Hebrew word. God created man in his own image. To take a life by an act of murder is an abrogation of the divine power for it takes away what God has given. The verses 17 – 20 deal with fundamental guarantees for a suitable society.

¹¹¹ There is to be no unfaithfulness in a relationship. In society this is the equivalent of the religious crime of having other gods. Both offenses involve unfaithfulness. Both are reprehensible to God.

¹¹² Some scholars feel kidnapping alone, for the sale of a person for profit is referred to here. Cf.: Genesis 37:22 – 28. When we violate the freedom of a person we have broken this commandment. There is also the important understanding of taking a person’s possessions, namely stealing another’s property. Cf.: Exodus. Cf. ANET p. 169d

X 21 [H. 18] “You are not to lust after your neighbor’s wife, nor covet your neighbor’s house, his field, male or female slaves, ox, donkey or anything that is your neighbor’s.”¹¹⁴

2. *Encounter with God at the Mount 5:22 – 33*

22 [H. 19] The Lord spoke these words to [*your ancestors*] who assembled at the mountain, speaking with a loud voice out of the midst of the fire, clouds and deep gloom, but gave no additional statements. Instead he inscribed his words on two tablets of stone, presenting them to me. 23 [H. 20] When you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was in flames, all the leaders of the tribes along with the elders approached me 24 [H. 21] and said, ‘Look! The Lord has shown us his glory and magnificent strength. We have heard his voice coming out of the fire! Today we have seen that God is enabled to speak with people and these people may survive. 25 [H. 22] That being the case – why should we die? This huge fire will consume us if we hear much more of this great voice of the living God speaking out of the fire, as we already have, and yet have remained alive? 26 [H. 23] Who is there out of all humanity that has heard the voice of the living God speak in the midst¹¹⁵ of fire and has survived? 27 [H. 24] [*Moses*] go yourself, draw near,¹¹⁶ and listen to all that the Lord our God who will declare to you, and then tell us everything that the Lord our God tells you, and we will listen and do it.’

28 [H. 25] “The Lord has heard your message when you spoke to me; and he replied saying, ‘I have heard these people’s message which had been told to you, and they are correct in everything they said. 29 [H. 26] If only they would persist in their reverence of me and keep all my commandments, for then it would go well with them and with their descendants for ever. 30 [H. 27] Report to them saying: ‘Return to your tents.’ 31 [H. 28] You, however, are to remain here with me and I will inform you concerning what you are to teach them that they may obey the teachings of their Lord which I am giving them, that they may do these rules and laws which I have given them as their personal possession. 32 [H. 29] Be careful today for it is I, the Lord your God, who commands you. You are not to deviate¹¹⁷ from these teachings. 33 [H. 30] You will accompany them along the way which is the way of the Lord your God, for it is he who has commanded that you are to live, that it might go well with you and that you will be enabled to live long lives in the land which you are about to possess.’”

¹¹³ A miscarriage of justice would result. The focus of this commandment is in human relationship, emphasizing integrity and honesty within the community of God. CB: “a false charge against your fellow.” REV: “baseless evidence.” Cf.: ANET p. 166b

¹¹⁴ This commandment deals primarily with motivation rather than action. It would be a contravention of the law since desire can lead to action. The commandments 5 - 9 deal with attitudes toward neighbors. The tenth commandment deals with inward feelings. There are slight differences between this version of the commandment and the version found in Exodus 20:17. Just as marriage vows expect consideration, love, trust, faithfulness and devotion to one another to maintain the marriage, so too these commandments expect such feelings also in order to maintain the covenant between human beings and God. Cf. ANET p. 388c

¹¹⁵ Literally: “in our ear.”

¹¹⁶ Literally: “go yourselves.”

¹¹⁷ Literally: “turn aside to the right hand or to the left.”

<CHAPTER 6>

3. Purpose of the Law 6:1 – 3

¹ “Now these are the commandments, ¹¹⁸ the laws and rules which the Lord, your God, commanded me to teach you, that you do them in the land which you are about to enter as your possession. ² You are to revere the Lord your God: you and your son, by keeping all the rules and laws I commanded, which are to be kept through out your entire life, the obedience of which will prolong your life. ³ Listen! O Israel, be careful to fulfill them that it may be well with you and that you may have a great increase in population, as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you would receive in a land that is flowing with milk and honey. ¹¹⁹

4. The Great Commandment 6:4 – 19

⁴ “Listen, Israel! The Lord or God is one Lord. ¹²⁰ ⁵ You are to love the Lord ¹²¹ your God with all your heart, ¹²² with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶ These words which I command you today are to be on your heart; ⁷ and you are to teach them to your children with diligence, ¹²³ for this is to be done when you sit in your house, when you walk along the way, and evening and morning (when you lie down, and when you rise). ⁸ You will bind them on your (*fore*)head and to be as frontlets between your eyes. ¹²⁴ ⁹ You will have them on the doorposts of our house and on your gate. ¹²⁵

¹⁰ When the Lord our God brings you into the land which he vowed to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you great and wealthy cities which you did not build; ¹¹ and houses filled with good things, which you did not accumulate, hewn cisterns which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees which you have not planted, and when you have eaten and are satisfied ¹² then beware lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the situation in which you were enslaved. ¹³ You are to revere the Lord your God, you are to serve him and are to be loyal to his name alone. ¹²⁶ ¹⁴ You are not to become interested in following other gods,

¹¹⁸ The Hebrew word for “commandment” is different from the word used in the previous chapter. A better translation might be “charge.” Moses is speaking about the “charge” God gave to the people at Horeb. The charge Moses gave is intended to entice succeeding generations to continue in faithfulness. It gives special meaning to v. 3.

¹¹⁹ Some scholars feel the last phrase is a later interpolation. It is surely an idealistic picture. Cf. ANET p. 140.

¹²⁰ This is an important declaration. It might be translated in several ways. “The Lord our God, the Lord is One.” The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.” Or “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.”

¹²¹ This expression was the Hebrew way of expressing the relationship between a vassal and a king, as would be expressed in a Near Eastern Treaty; for it flows with gratitude and devotion. It is a positive way to express the negative of the first commandment.

¹²² The Hebrew people signified the heart as the seat of the mind. Cf. Matthew 22:36 – 46; Mark 12:29 – 34; Luke 10:27 – 29.

¹²³ The Lord says through Moses that there is a parental responsibility that children are to be taught about faith and about fellowship with the Almighty.

¹²⁴ This commandment is to be a perpetual memorial of one’s relationship with God. Cf. AMET [v. 131b

¹²⁵ What is presented here as a metaphor became a literal injunction for Judaism. Small leather containers bound on the forehead and left arm contained the Shema (v. 4). These were called Phylacteries. Having them become an item of legalism destroyed the entire spirit of this injunction. The writing on the doorpost is called the Mezuzah. It should be touched each time you come or go, at which time one is to recite the Shema.

¹²⁶ There is an interesting combination of similar Hebrew words: hardly a play on words, but a contrast of meaning with words that are similar in sound.

the gods of the people who live all around you, ¹⁵ for the Lord your God who is in your midst is a zealous God; ¹²⁷ for if other gods are turned to the anger of the Lord, our God will flame up against you, and you will be destroyed from the face of the earth. ¹²⁸

¹⁶ “You are not to test the Lord, your God, the way you tested him at Massah. ¹²⁹
¹⁷ You are to diligently keep these commandments, rules and laws which have been given you by the Lord, and remain obedient to that which he has commanded. ¹⁸ You are to do what is right in the Lord’s ¹³⁰ sight all of life may be well for you, and that you enter and take possession of the good land which the Lord vowed to give to your ancestors, ¹⁹ by ejecting your enemies who are residing in this land. The Lord has spoken!”

5. What Children are to be Taught 6:20 – 25

²⁰ “In the future, ¹³¹ when your child ¹³² asks, ‘What is the meaning of these testimonies, rules and laws ¹³³ which the Lord our God has commanded you?’ ²¹ Your reply will be as follows: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt but the Lord brought us out of Egypt by his powerful hand. ²² The Lord displayed great and wonderful signs, in our presence. These were directed against Egypt, and even against Pharaoh and his household. ²³ He then brought us away from there with the intention to bring us here and give us this land which he vowed to give to our ancestors. ²⁴ We were commanded by the Lord, for our own good, to obey these laws, to revere the Lord our God, in order that we might be enabled to live here, as is now the case. ²⁵ By obeying these commandments diligently before the Lord our God, as he has commanded, we will be obediently doing what is right.’”

<CHAPTER 7>

6. The Conquest of Canaan 7:1 – 26

a. Paganism Must be Destroyed 7:1 – 6

¹ “When the Lord your God brings you into the land into which you are about to enter, taking possession thereof, dislodging many nations that have resided there: Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, ¹³⁴ seven mighty and sizable nations, more numerous and more powerful than you – ² and when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them; then you must exterminate ¹³⁵

¹²⁷ Cf.: footnote 99. This is an anthropomorphic way of explaining God’s determined attitude and active work in opposition of worship of other gods in worship and service.

¹²⁸ To follow other gods seemed remote to the people of Israel at this moment but they listened to Moses since the possibility was real.

¹²⁹ Cf.: Exodus 17:1 – 7. In verses 17 – 19 Moses wants the people to be diligent in their faith so God would not decide to test them.

¹³⁰ Some LXX mss have “the Lord your God.”

¹³¹ Literally: “in time to come.” LXX: “tomorrow.”

¹³² Literally: “son.”

¹³³ The people are to teach the covenant of faith to their descendants. The commandments were not intended as a burden to be borne, but as a gracious provision by a benevolent sovereign as a guide to good living.

¹³⁴ The Girgashites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites are unknown as nations outside the Hebrew Scriptures. The Hivites are possibly a misspelling or a variant of the Horites who existed in the second millennium B.C.E.

¹³⁵ I.e. put them under a ban – wherein total destruction is demanded. The Hebrew word “*hrm*” means that this item, or nation must be given over to destruction. This is to be an ordered genocide. The books of Joshua and Judges have a number of situations when this “*hrm*” is carried out.

them, for you are not to make an alliance ¹³⁶ or treaty with them. No mercy is to be shown! ³ You are not to make any marriage alliances (*or, intermarry*) with them: giving your daughters to their sons, or taking their daughters for your sons. ⁴ They would seduce your sons, keeping them from following me (*or, the Lord*), then they would serve other gods. If that were the case the strong arm of the Lord would be wielded ¹³⁷ against you and you would quickly be destroyed. ⁵ You are not to deal with (*or, trade with*) them. You are to destroy their altars, shatter their stone pillars [*that are dedicated to Ba'al*], chop down their Asherim, ¹³⁸ and burned their carved images with fire.”

b. Israel A Holy People 7:1 – 16

⁶ “You are a nation that is set apart from other nations, dedicated to the Lord, for God has chosen ¹³⁹ you, a nation that is his own possession, set apart from all the nations on the face of the earth. ⁷ This, however, was not because you were a nation that was larger in number than other nations, but the Lord granted his love toward you and you were chosen (for you were the smallest among the nations). ⁸ This was because of the love God had for you and the fact that God had made a covenant and oath to your ancestors, and thus the Lord has brought you out, with his powerful hand, and redeemed ¹⁴⁰ you from the enslavement in Egypt and the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. ⁹ Now then: Remember that the Lord your God is God! A faithful God! One who keeps the covenant made with your ancestors, having steadfast ¹⁴¹ love, toward those who love him, and keep his commandments for a thousand generations.

¹⁰ He will repay those who reject him, by destroying them.

He does not delay but personally repays those who hate him. ¹⁴²

¹¹ ”Because of this you must be careful to obey the commandment ¹⁴³ which I command of you today!”

¹² “If you are attentive to these commandments and keep them, doing the will of the Lord your God, your God will keep you within this covenant and provide his steadfast love, as he has sworn he would. In his dealings with your ancestors; ¹³ he will love and bless you and cause your numbers to increase, and will also bless your children ¹⁴⁴ as well as your crops: the grain, the wine, the oil, and increase the number of your herds when calving and your flocks at lambing time when you live in this land which the lord

¹³⁶ The Hebrew word is “covenant.” The Israelites were the covenant people. This was considered to be a religious bond. No religious bonds were to be established with other tribes for this would be evidence of unfaithfulness toward God on the part of Israel.

¹³⁷ Literally: “kindled” which makes for a mixed metaphor.

¹³⁸ The Asherim were wooden poles honoring the goddess Astarte. These were usually placed next to an altar or shrine. All the religious items that were to be destroyed were religious cult items of the fertility cults.

¹³⁹ Literally: “a special treasure.”

¹⁴⁰ The Hebrew word can mean “redeemed” or “ransomed.” In this sentence “redeemed” seems to fit since there was no “ransom” needed when the people of Israel left Egypt.

¹⁴¹ The Hebrew word “*hesedh*” is a word with legal background, with the obligation to be involved in a covenant relationship. This Hebrew word is used 243 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. God is declared to be the faithful God who keeps his covenant, displaying steadfast love toward those who are in a covenant relationship with him.

¹⁴² Cragie: “but recompensing the one that openly hates him, by destroying him: he does not delay – he destroys the one who openly hates him.”

¹⁴³ The Hebrew word “commandment” is singular.

¹⁴⁴ Literally: “the fruit of your body.” LXX: “belly.”

your God is giving you, as he had sworn to do in the covenant with your ancestors. ¹³ You will be blessed more than any other nations. There will be no impotent males, nor barren females among you or among your livestock. ¹⁵ The Lord will keep you from all sickness, even the terrible diseases of Egypt, ¹⁴⁵ which you knew would befall you, but he will impose then, instead, on those who hate you. ¹⁶ You will destroy all those nations that the Lord your God will give over to you. You must not pity them nor are you to serve their gods for that would be an entrapment to you.” ¹⁴⁶

c. The Need of Faith 7:17 – 26

¹⁷ “If you think to yourselves, ‘This nation is greater ¹⁴⁷ that we, and cannot be dispossessed,’ ¹⁸ you are not to be fearful of them but you must remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and the entire country of Egypt. ¹⁹ With your own eyes you saw great signs and wonders, the powerful hand and outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt. In that same way the Lord your God will deal with that nation of whom you are fearful. ²⁰ Moreover, the Lord your God will cause disease ¹⁴⁸ to be in their midst, until those who survive will hide themselves from you but will be destroyed. ¹⁴⁹ ²¹ You are not to be fearful of them for the Lord your God is in your midst, a great and powerful God. ²² (The Lord your God will clear away all the nations that you will face. You will not be able to eliminate them quickly for if that would take place the wild animals would become too numerous for you.) ²³ The Lord your God will give them into your hands and cause them to be filled with panic, ¹⁵⁰ until they are annihilated. ²⁴ He will deliver their kings into your hands, and you will eradicate their names from the memory of the people. ¹⁵¹ No one will be able to resist you and you will annihilate each nation. ¹⁵² ²⁵ The carved images of their gods are to be burned and you are not to covet or appropriate silver or gold for yourselves, lest you become ensnared by it, for all these items are abominable to the Lord your God. ²⁶ You are not to bring anything that is abhorrent to the Lord your God into your house or you will be looked upon by the Lord your God as yourself being abhorrent to him for all such things are prohibited.” ¹⁵³

<CHAPTER 8>

7. Lessons from the Past 9:1 – 10:11

a. Discipline of the Wilderness 8:1 – 10

¹ “You are to remember every commandment I deliver to you today. Be careful to observe them so that you might live and increase in population and possess the land which the Lord had vowed to give to your ancestors. ¹⁵⁴ ² You must remember all the

¹⁴⁵ CB: “the malignant diseases of Egypt.” Diseases common to Israel were elephantiasis, various kinds of boils, discharges, bowel problems, all of which were apparently common, based on historic records.

¹⁴⁶ The reward of Israel’s faithfulness will be God’s blessing on them and all their possessions.

¹⁴⁷ LXX: literally: “more.”

¹⁴⁸ This is an attempt to translate. The word literally is “hornets.” Scholars feel that the “hornets” signify some powerful agony which God would use against Israel’s enemies.

¹⁴⁹ NRSV: “until even the survivors and the fugitives are destroyed.”

¹⁵⁰ Literally: “confusion.”

¹⁵¹ Literally: “under heaven.”

¹⁵² The Hebrew invasion was deemed to be a holy war and nothing was to be taken from homes for personal possession. People and possessions were to be destroyed without exception.

¹⁵³ Literally: “accursed things.”

¹⁵⁴ As in the previous chapters the pattern is: Remember, do not forget, wilderness, promised land. Through all their recalcitrance they are to remain faithful.

leadership which the Lord has given you during these forty years in the wilderness, that you might become humble, for he tested you that you might know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ He subjected (*or, afflicted*) you with hardships of hunger and fed you with manna, which you had not known, nor did you question him that he should make you aware that man does not live by bread alone ¹⁵⁵ but lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. ⁴ The clothing you wore did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. ⁵ Therefore realize that just as a person disciplines his son, so the Lord your God has disciplined you. ⁶ Now then: you are to keep the commandments of your God, by being obedient to him, ¹⁵⁶ and showing God reverence. ⁷ The Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with brooks of water, wells, and springs that flow from its valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines, fig and pomegranate trees, olive trees and honey, ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread in ample supply, a land in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones contain iron and from whose hills copper can be mined. ¹⁵⁷ ¹⁰ You will eat and be satisfied, and you will bless the Lord your God for this good land which he has given you.

¹¹ “Beware, lest you forget the Lord your God by failing to keep his commandments, ordinances and laws which I, today, have commanded you to keep. ¹² When you have eaten and are satisfied; when you have built substantial houses, and reside in them, -- ¹⁴ be careful that you not become filled with pride ¹⁵⁸ and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of slavery, ¹⁵ who led you through the arid wasteland of a huge and terrible wilderness that had venomous snakes ¹⁵⁹ and scorpions, through arid areas with no water but he provided you with water out of the flinty rock, ¹⁶ and fed you in that arid wilderness with manna which our ancestors did not understand, that he might make you humble and thereby test you, so you would thus be strengthened. ¹⁷ Be careful that you do not say to yourself, ‘My own power and personal achievement have gotten me this wealth.’ ¹⁸ You must remember the Lord your God for it is he, (*not you*), who has given you power to get wealth that he may confirm within you his covenant which he had vowed to your ancestors: ¹⁹ ‘If you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods, serving and worshiping them, I solemnly assure you today that you will definitely perish. ²⁰ Just as the nations he causes to perish so too you will perish because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God.’”

<CHAPATER 9>

B. Not for Your Righteousness 9:1 – 6

¹ “Hear, O Israel, you are about to pass over the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations that are larger than yourselves, ² People who are tall, the descendants of the Anakim, of whom you already know and have heard, and about. ¹⁶⁰ whom it is

¹⁵⁵ This is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 4:4.

¹⁵⁶ Literally: “walking in his ways.”

¹⁵⁷ Ancient copper mines are to be found in the area of the Dead Sea, toward the Arabah.

¹⁵⁸ Literally: “that your heart be lifted up and you forget.”

¹⁵⁹ The Hebrew word “*seraph*” is not clearly understood.

¹⁶⁰ Moses feels the real victor in a holy war would be the Lord who himself would win the awe and respect of the surrounding nations.

said, ‘Who can overcome the descendants of the Anakim in warfare?’¹⁶¹ ³ You must realize today that the Lord your God is the one who crosses over, leading you, is a devouring fire who will defeat the nations and subdue them so that you will be able to win over them and dispossess them and quickly destroy them as the Lord has promised.¹⁶²

⁴ “Do not tell yourselves after the Lord your God has accomplished all these things before you, ‘It is because of my own righteousness that the Lord has brought me in that I might possess this land’, whereas the true cause is that these nations, being so weak is that the weakness of the nations is based on the Lord’s dispossessing them before you.⁵ This is not based on your personal righteousness (*or, your being fine and upright people*)¹⁶³ that you will be enabled to possess this land but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out ahead of you and that he can confirm the word which the Lord had spoken to your ancestors; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

⁶ “Realize that it is not because of any merit of your own that the Lord God is giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness for you are a stubborn nation.”¹⁶⁴

d. Remember the Golden Calf 9:7 – 24

⁷ “Always remember, you dare not forget, how you provoked the Lord your God to anger in the wilderness for you have been rebellious against the Lord ever since the day you came out of the Land of Egypt until you finally arrived at this place.¹⁶⁵ ⁸ Even at Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, and the Lord was so filled with anger that he was ready to destroy you. ⁹ When I again climbed the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, (the tablets of the covenant which the Lord had made with you,) I remained on the mountain for forty days and forty nights, not eating or drinking.¹⁶⁶ ¹⁰ [The Lord gave me the two tablets of stone which were inscribed by the finger of God, and on them were all the exact words which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on that day when all were assembled.]¹⁶⁷ ¹¹ At the conclusion of the forty days and forty nights the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone, the message of the covenant. ¹² Then the Lord spoke to me, saying: ‘Arise and hurry to go down for the people you brought from Egypt have acted perversely and have committed a monstrous act, losing no time in turning away from the way I had commanded them to take and have made, for themselves, a cast image of an idol.’¹⁶⁸

¹⁶¹ JB: “as you know, you have heard the saying, ‘Who can stand up to the sons of Anak?’

¹⁶² The power is revealed in three ways: 1. He will cross ahead of the people as a devouring fire. 2. He will destroy the people who live there. 3. He will humble them before Israel.

¹⁶³ TAN: “it is not because of your virtues or rectitude that you are able to possess their land.”

¹⁶⁴ Stubbornness can be a valued quality in one’s life but it must be willing to yield. Not to yield is a perversity. In this case stubbornness results in rejection of God’s graciousness and judgment. God’s wrath and jealousy are declared by Moses to be caused by human sin, yet even so, humanity can hope for aid, because God is actively and righteously at work within society.

¹⁶⁵ God does what he does, not because of the righteousness of Israel, but to conform to the promises to the patriarchs.

¹⁶⁶ Such language also appears on the Moabite stone.

¹⁶⁷ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

¹⁶⁸ Aaron’s attempt to symbolize the Lord’s presence among the people was intended to have this be a symbol of the Lord’s presence. He felt it to be well intended no doubt. Moses had been on the mountain communing with God while the people, by sharp contrast, had already turned aside from the path God had commanded.

13 “Moreover, the Lord said to me, ‘I have seen the people and you can be assured that this is a stubborn (*or, headstrong*) nation. 14 Let me do what I will, and I will destroy them and blot out their name from among the nations under heaven. For you I will make a nation that is mightier and greater than they.’¹⁶⁹ 15 So I turned and came down the mountain which was burning with fire, carrying the two tablets of the law in my two hands. 16 I then saw that you had sinned against the Lord your God. You had made a cast image of a bull calf for yourselves, losing no time in turning away from the way which the Lord had commanded you.¹⁷⁰ 17 Holding the two tablets of stone in my two hands I hurled them from my hands and they shattered in full sight of everyone.¹⁷¹ 18 I then lay prostrate before the Lord for forty days and forty nights; not eating any bread or drinking any water because of the sin you had committed in doing what was abhorrent in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. 19 (I was in dread of the Lord’s anger and the wrath which caused him to threaten to destroy you, but the Lord listened to me again at that time.) 20 The Lord was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him, but I interceded on behalf of Aaron at the same time. 21 Then I took the sinful calf, the calf which he had made and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very fine, until it was as fine as dust, and I threw it into the stream that descended from the mountain.¹⁷²

22 “At Taberah, Massah and Kibroth-hattaavah, you roused the anger of the Lord¹⁷³ 23 When the Lord sent you to Kadesh-barnea he said, ‘Go up, taking possession of the land which I have given you, but then you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God; and did not believe him nor did you obey his voice. 24 You have been rebellious toward the Lord as long as he has known you.’”

e. Intercession of Moses 9:25 – 29

25 “For forty days and forty nights I lay prostrate before the Lord because the Lord had said he would destroy you. 26 I prayed to the Lord, saying, O Lord God, do not annihilate these people who are your portion,¹⁷⁴ who, though your greatness you have brought out of Egypt with your powerful hand. 27 Remember your servants: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Do not regard the obstinacy of these people¹⁷⁵ or their wickedness and sin. 28 Those from the land from which they came might say, ‘It was because the Lord was unable to bring them into the land he had promised them when he brought them out of our land so he let them die in the wilderness.’¹⁷⁶ 29 They are a rebellious nation but they are your heritage. You brought them out by the great power of your outstretched arm.”

<CHAPTER 10>

f. The Two Tablets of Stone 10:1 – 11

¹⁶⁹ The verses 7 – 14 are a reminder of the forming of the covenant at Horeb.

¹⁷⁰ LXX adds: “to do.”

¹⁷¹ The shattering of the stone tablets was a symbolic way of saying, ‘the covenant has already been broken.’

¹⁷² Moses’ action was in line with many references in Deuteronomy to destroy all cult objects. There was nothing remaining that might have a sacred association in the minds of the people. The construction of the golden calf might have been: 1. a lapse into idolatry. 2. an attempt to make a physical representation of God, 3. to be an object symbolizing the footstool of God.

¹⁷³ Taberah cf. Numbers 11:1 - 3. Massah cf. Exodus 17:17. Kibroth-hattaavah cf. Numbers 11:31 - 33.

¹⁷⁴ So: LXX.

¹⁷⁵ In Moses’ prayer he understood that the justice of God is related to the mercy of God.

¹⁷⁶ Since the name of God was known by the surrounding nations Moses urged God to be attentive to his prayer for the sake of God’s holy name.

1 “At that time the Lord said to me, ‘Chisel out two stone slabs (*or, tablets*)¹⁷⁷ like the first ones, and come up to me on the mountain, and make an ark of wood.¹⁷⁸ 2 I will write on the tablets all the words that were on the first tablets which you broke, and these are to be placed within the ark.’¹⁷⁹ 3 I therefore made an ark of acacia wood¹⁸⁰ and chiseled out two stones like the first, and climbed the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. 4 God wrote the Ten Commandments on the tablets, (identical to the words the Lord had spoken on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly, and the Lord gave them to me. 5 Then I turned and came down from the mountain and placed the tablets in the ark which I had made, and they are there, just as the Lord had commanded.

6 [The people of Israel journeyed from Beeroth Bene-jaakan (*or, the wells of Bene-Jaakan*) to Moserah.¹⁸¹ It was there that Aaron died and was buried. Eleazar, his son, ministered in his place as the priest. 7 From there they moved to Gud-godah¹⁸² and then went from Gud-godah to Jorbathah, an area with free flowing streams. 8 At that time the Lord designated (*or, set apart*) the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand in the presence of the Lord, to minister to him and to bless in his name, which is still the case at this time. 9 It is due to this that Levi has no designated territory or inheritance as do its brothers for the Lord is their inheritance, as the Lord your God had said when he spoke to him.]¹⁸³

10 “I stayed on the mountain, as I had done the first time, forty days and forty nights. The Lord again listened to me. The Lord was unwilling to destroy you. 11 The Lord spoke to me, saying, ‘Arise, go on your journey as the leader of your people that they may go in and possess the land which I had vowed to their ancestors that they would receive.’”

g. What Does the Lord Require 10:12 – 22

12 “Now Israel,¹⁸⁴ what does the Lord your God require¹⁸⁵ of you but to be in awe of the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and laws of the Lord: which I command you today for your good. 14 Be assured that although the Lord your God, whose heaven, and the heaven of heavens, belong to him, as do the earth and everything that is in it, 15 yet the Lord set his heart to love your ancestors and all those who become your descendants. You are above all nations as it is today. 16 Open your

¹⁷⁷ If we feel that these two stones were large we are in error. They were no doubt small enough to be held easily in one hand. Moses was to climb up the mountain with the stones.

¹⁷⁸ This is a brief summary of the directions found in Exodus 35 – 40,

¹⁷⁹ The Lord had only one covenant with his people. While the covenant remained the same it was filled with fresh meaning over the centuries, thus acquiring a deep significance. The breaking of the tablets symbolized the breaking of the covenant by making the golden calf. A new set of tablets symbolized the new response to the covenant.

¹⁸⁰ LXX: “boards of incorruptible wood.”

¹⁸¹ The location is perhaps north of Kadesh-barnea. In verses 6 – 9 the people of Israel are spoken of in the third person. This is possibly a later interpolation.

¹⁸² TAN has a footnote: Hor-haggidgad. Cf. Numbers 33:32 – 33.

¹⁸³ NEB: “That is why the Levites have no holding of patrimony with their kinsmen. The Lord is their patrimony, as he promised them.”

¹⁸⁴ This makes the call for a personal decision by the people who hear, and or read. A choice is to be made between blessing or Deuteronomy 11:26 – 32.

¹⁸⁵ Literally: “ask from you.” Cf. Micah 6:8.

hearts ¹⁸⁶ and be stubborn no longer, ¹⁷ for the Lord your God is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the great and mighty, awesome God who is not partial ¹⁸⁷ and takes no bribes. ¹⁸⁸ ¹⁸ The Lord enacts justice for the orphan and the widow, loves the resident aliens, providing them with food and clothing. ¹⁹ (Love the resident aliens! Remember, you were resident aliens in the land of Egypt.) ²⁰ You are to revere the Lord your God. You are to serve him and be faithful (*or, loyal*) to him, and by his name you are to swear. ¹⁸⁹ ²¹ You are to praise him! He is your God, who has done great and awesome things on your behalf which you also have witnessed. ²² Your ancestors went down to Egypt: seventy individuals, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the sand on the sea shore.”

<CHAPTER 11>

9. Relation of Obedience to Possession 11:1 – 25

¹ You will therefore love the Lord your God and obey his injunctions ¹⁹⁰ and his commandments from this time on. ² Take into consideration today, ¹⁹¹ (since I am not speaking to your children who have known and seen this,) consider the instruction of the Lord your God: his greatness, mighty power, and outstretched arm ³ his signs and deeds done in Egypt to Pharaoh, ruler of Egypt, and to his country, ⁴ and what he did to the Egyptian army, to their horses and chariots, how he made the water of the Sea of Reeds (*or, Red Sea*) ¹⁹² overflow just as they were pursuing you and how the Lord thereby overwhelmed them once and for all, ⁵ and what he did to you in the wilderness, completely destroying them, ⁶ and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the son of Reuben, ¹⁹³ how the earth opened up and swallowed them, with their entire households, their tents, and every living thing they possessed, ¹⁹⁴ all this taking place in the midst of the entire nation of Israel, ⁷ for your eyes have seen all these great works of the Lord, which he accomplished.

⁸ ”Because of this you are to keep all the covenants which I command you today, that you might be strong and you might take possession of the land, into which you are about to enter and possess; ¹⁹⁵ ⁹ but also that you will be able to live in the land which the Lord vowed to your ancestors, to give them, and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ This land which you are about to enter, taking possession of it, is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it by hand, as one might do with a vegetable garden: ¹¹ but the land which you

¹⁸⁶ Literally: “Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts.” A metamorphic expression! TAN: “the thick skin about your heart.”

¹⁸⁷ Literally: “does not lift up faces.” God is not awed by persons.

¹⁸⁸ Verse 17 is hymn-like. The supreme God is the absolute Lord. God is, in the fullest and most comprehensive sense, the absolute Lord or Sovereign.

¹⁸⁹ Moses is declaring that there is to be a very close and intentional relationship between people and God.

¹⁹⁰ In Hebrew this word is only used here in Deuteronomy.

¹⁹¹ The Hebrew syntax is uncertain. In Hebrew there is a mixture of single and plural pronouns used in speaking to Israel.

¹⁹² In Hebrew: “yam suph,” or “Reed Sea.”

¹⁹³ Cf.: Exodus 16.

¹⁹⁴ JB: “all their retinue.” Literally: “that was at their feet.”

¹⁹⁵ God’s promise was not just resting on one’s being a descendant of the patriarchs, but based on natural desire.

are crossing over ¹⁹⁶ to possess is a land of hills and valleys which are watered by the rains of heaven. ¹² It is a land which the Lord your God carfs for and his eyes are always on it, from the onset of the year to its end.

¹³ [“If you obey my commandments ¹⁹⁷ which I command you to obey, which came from the Lord your God, and if you serve him with all your heart and soul,] ¹⁹⁸ ¹⁴ he will give you rain for your land as it is needed seasonally—the early rains and the latter rains, ¹⁹⁹ that you will be enabled to gather your grain, wine and oil. ¹⁵ He will provide grass ²⁰⁰ in lush pasturelands for your cattle and you will be able to eat and be filled. ¹⁶ Watch yourselves lest you becomes deceived, ²⁰¹ and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them. ¹⁷ Should that take place the anger of the Lord will flare up against you and he will seal off the heavens, resulting in no rain and the Lord will provide no fruit and you will quickly perish on this good land which the Lord your God has given you. ²⁰²

¹⁸ [“You are to remember, with heart and soul, these words of mine, storing them in your memory, binding them as a sign on your arm and on your foreheads as a mark. ²⁰³ ¹⁹ You are to teach them to your children, talking to them when you are sitting in your house, when you are walking along the way, when you lie down, and when you rise. ²⁰ You are to write them on the doorposts (*or, lintels*) of your house and on your gate. ²¹ This must be done urgently so that your days and those of your children may be long in the land which the Lord vowed to give to your ancestors as a gift [*to last*] as long as the heavens are above the earth.] ²⁰⁴ ²² Provided you are careful in doing all this in loving faithfulness to the Lord your God, continuing to do his will, and maintaining a steadfast relationship with him, ²³ the Lord will dive out all those nations you will be facing and you will dispossess them, even though they are greater and more powerful than you. ²⁴ Every place your feet touch will become your territory. It will extend from the wilderness of Lebanon and from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea. ²⁰⁵ ²⁵ No one will be able to withstand your might: the Lord your God will cause nations to be fearful and filled with dread of you, in the land which you will invade, which the Lord already has promised you.”

10, The Choice Before Israel 11:26 – 32

²⁶ “Take note! Today I have set a blessing as well as a curse before you. ²⁷ The blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I am commanding today that you obey. ²⁸ Also: the curse, if you do not obey the commandments given you by the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way that was commanded you to follow,

¹⁹⁶ LXX: “εἰσποῖρεση.”

¹⁹⁷ Hebrew: plural. LXX: singular.

¹⁹⁸ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Israel was to love God because God first loved Israel. We see the graciousness of God who loves insignificant Israel.

¹⁹⁹ These are the fall and spring rains: October –November and March –April.

²⁰⁰ So: LXX, Samaritan Torah and Vulgate. MT: “I.”

²⁰¹ LXX: “your heart becomes broad (*or, puffed up*).”

²⁰² Cf.: ANET p. 257c

²⁰³ Literally: “as frontlets between your eyes.” The call is that hearers become open and submissive to the will of God and end their stubbornness. The repetition of vss. 18 – 20 underlines the importance these words must have and that this message from the Lord must be centered in their life and actions. These are known as phylacteries. NRSV: “emblems.” The Hebrew word’s origin is uncertain. Cf.: ANET p. 131b

²⁰⁴ Literally: “the days of the heavens.” Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

²⁰⁵ Literally: “the western sea.”

when I said, do pursue other gods which you have not known.²⁰⁶ 29 When the Lord your God brings you into this land which you are about to enter, taking possession of it, you will see the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the curse on Mount Ebal. 30 (These are beyond the Jordan, west of the road toward the west,²⁰⁷ in the land of the Canaanites, opposite Gilgal, beside the Oak of Morah.)²⁰⁸

31 “You will cross the Jordan to take possession of this land which the Lord your God has given you, and when you possess it you will live in it.²⁰⁹ 32 You are to be careful to obey all the laws, and commands which are set before you today.”

<CHAPTER 12>

C. The law 12:1 – 26:19²¹⁰

I. Worship of a Holy People 12:1 – 16:17

a. Centralization of Worship 12:1 - 31

1 “These are the laws and commandments (*or, judgments*) which you will be careful to obey in the land which the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has given you as your own, to be obeyed all the days you live on this earth.²¹¹

2 “You will surely demolish all the places where the nations you have dispossessed served their gods, on high mountains, hills and under every luxuriant tree. 3 You are to demolish their altars, shatter their pillars,²¹² burn the Asherim,²¹³ chop up the sculpted images of their gods, and remove every sign of their worship.²¹⁴ 4 You are not to do the same to the Lord, your God. 5 You are only to resort to worship of the Lord your God in places that have been selected from among your cities to place his name and habitation,²¹⁵ and that is where you are to worship. 6 It is there that you are to go to, and there you are to bring your burnt offerings (*or, burnt sacrifices*),²¹⁶ your offerings and tithes and offerings that you have produced,²¹⁷ your votive offerings,²¹⁸ freewill

²⁰⁶ An alternate translation would be: “who have not proven themselves to you.”

²⁰⁷ Literally: “toward the going down of the sun.”

²⁰⁸ So: LXX & Syriac. Cf. Genesis 12:6; 35:4; Joshua 24:26; Judges 7:6. A sanctuary built there in later years.

²⁰⁹ LXX: “live in it all your days.”

²¹⁰ At this point many readers of Deuteronomy cease reading because they have no interest in the laws of a super-small agrarian country. These laws, however, demonstrate how the covenant between God and the nation were carried out. In addition we see how the Ten Commandments are integrated and carried over into the established legal system of the nation and were followed 3000 years ago within Judaism. These laws deal with detailed application of broad principals.

²¹¹ Some scholars change the order of the verses for a better read. 1- 10a, 11- 18, 10b, 20 – 31, verse 19 is omitted and verse 32 is inserted later.

²¹² Hebrew: “maccibohoth.” This signified large upright stones along side altars. Their exact significance is not understood.

²¹³ Astarte was a Canaanite female fertility goddess.

²¹⁴ Literally: “destroy their name out of that place.” The contrast between Canaanite worship and Jewish worship is pointed out in verses 4 – 7.

²¹⁵ LXX: “ἐπικληθῆναι.” Hebrew “*leshikno*” or “to dwell.” God’s dwelling place properly was in heaven. This is a technical term to denote “tent” referring to the deity residing in a sanctuary.

²¹⁶ Offerings are set apart for the Lord. Some were burned, others were lifted up as devoted objects. One tenth of all major crops were to be given to the Lord.

²¹⁷ Literally: “contributions of your hands.”

²¹⁸ LXX: literally: “vows” or “vowed offerings.” These were generally a family offering that, when offered, a portion was returned to the family and friends to share.

offerings, and the offering of the first born of your flocks, ⁸ which are to be eaten before the Lord your God and you will rejoice -- you and your entire house – being joyfully appreciative of all that the Lord your God has provided through his blessing your accomplishments. ²¹⁹ ⁸ You will not act as we are acting today – each of us according to our own desires, ⁹ for you have not yet reached the resting place which becomes your patrimony, given you by the Lord your God. ¹⁰ However: when you cross the Jordan and are living on that patrimony given you by the Lord, given to you as your inheritance, you will live in safety from your surrounding enemies. ¹¹ Then you are to bring everything I commanded you to the place the Lord your God will select as the dwelling place ²²⁰ that the Lord your God has chosen as the dwelling place for his name, and it is there that you are to bring your burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, free will offerings and votive offerings (*or, contributions of your produce*) that you vow to the Lord. ¹² Yours is to be holy joy before the Lord your God: you, [*your spouse*], your sons, daughters, male & female servants, the teaching priest (*or, Levite*) who is within your town, (since he has no allotment or inheritance as do you). ¹³ Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place you see, ¹⁴ but only make these offerings at the place which the Lord will choose for you, as the location within your tribe: there you will offer your burnt offering and there you will do all that I have commanded.

¹⁵ [“However, wherever you wish you are permitted to slaughter anything for food purposes in all your settlements as you desire ²²¹ in all your towns, based on the blessing of the Lord your God. All people, ceremonially clean or unclean, can eat, eating as if it were a gazelle or a buck deer. ²²² ¹⁶ You are, however, not to use the blood as food. You are to let the blood drain on the earth like water.] ¹⁷ In all your settlements you are not to eat the tithe of your grain, wine, or oil, nor the firstlings of your cattle and sheep, votive offerings or any additional offerings which you vow to give of your own free will that you are to present to the Lord, ¹⁸ but these are to be consumed before the Lord your God at the designated place chosen by the Lord your God. There you, [*your spouse*], sons and daughters, male and female servants, and the teaching priest (*or, Levite*) living in your settlement, and together you will rejoice before the Lord your God in all that you undertake. ¹⁹ Be careful that you do not forget the teaching priest (*or, Levite*) during your lifetime. ²²³

²⁰ “When the Lord your God enlarges your territory as he has promised, you may say, ‘I will eat some meat.’ Because you wish to eat meat you may do so whenever you have the desire. ²²⁴ ²¹ If the place where the Lord your God chooses to put his name is too far from you, you may than kill any of your cattle or sheep which the Lord has given you

²¹⁹ Literally: “the putting forth of your hand.” This does not take place in the fullest sense until the time of Solomon.

²²⁰ Cf. Foot note 211.

²²¹ Literally: “in every desire of your soul.” Slaughtering animals to be eaten was acceptable but the blood is not to be used since it is the element of life. LXX: “you are to kill in accordance with your desire, and eat the flock according to the will of the Lord your God.”

²²² Meat to be sacrificed needed to come up to special standards. Some scholars feel verses 15 – 16 are a later interpolation. The food eaten after a votive offering that had been given to the Lord was a kind of sacred offering and quite different from eating meat with the entire household at home.

²²³ Literally: “all the days upon your land.”

²²⁴ TCB: “you think to yourself, I’d like to eat some meat (because you have the desire to do so) feel free to do so whenever you want.” Literally: “every desire of your soul” here and in v. 21.

-- as I have commanded you – you can eat within your settlement whenever you see fit (*or, desire*). ²² It is to be eaten just as one might eat a gazelle or a buck deer, by persons who are ceremonially clean or unclean. ²³ The only requirement is to be certain that the blood is the life, and you are to pour it ²²⁵ on the ground like water. ²⁴ You are not to eat the blood, so that all might go well with you and with your descendants, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord. ²⁶ Those sacred donations which are expected of you are: votive offerings which are to be taken ²²⁶ with you when you go to the place which the Lord will select ²⁷ and offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and blood, on the altar of the Lord your God; the blood of your sacrifice will be poured out on the altar of the Lord your God, but you may eat the flesh. ²²⁷

²⁸ "Be careful to obey all these words that I command you today, so that it will go well with you and your descendants forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of your God.

²⁹ "When the Lord your God has cut off the nations that are before you, the ones you will go in to dispossess, and you accomplish that and then reside in that land, ³⁰ be careful that you do not become ensnared to follow ²²⁸ them, after they have been destroyed before you, and also, beware that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods, that I might also do likewise.' ³¹ You must never do this before the Lord your God but remain distant from every abominable thing the Lord hates, for they have done this with every one for their gods. They even would burn their sons and daughters in sacrificial fire to their gods."

b. Idolatry, the Chief of Sins 12:32 – 13:18

² [H. 13:1] ["You must be diligent in doing everything I command. You are not to add or take away anything from these commands."] ²²⁹

<CHAPTER 13> ²³⁰

¹ [H. 13:2] "If a prophet arises in your midst, or a dreamer of dreams ²³¹ who gives you signs and wonders, ² [H. 13:3] and these signs and wonders of which he speaks actually occur, and he says, 'Let us follow alien gods' (which you have not known) and let us serve them; ³ [H. 13:4] You are not to listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you. Know whether you love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your being. ⁴ [H. 13:5] You are to follow the Lord your

²²⁵ LXX: "βρωθησεται."

²²⁶ Literally: "you will pick up and come."

²²⁷ Some burnt offerings were to be burned in their entirety. Others a portion was burned and the remainder went back to the donor, to be eaten by the donor and his family.

²²⁸ Literally: "to go after them." MFT: "beware of letting yourself be beguiled into copying them after they have been destroyed before you, because of resorting to their gods." Under no circumstances are the Israelites to adapt to the religious rites of those who were residing on the land God had vowed to give to the Israelites.

²²⁹ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation as an editor's heading to chapter 13.

²³⁰ The comments in this chapter are not to be looked upon as actions of the perpetrator but as crimes against the welfare of the people of Israel. In spite of the ability a so called prophet might be asked to do miracles, if the prophet is not loyal to the Lord he is leading people to spiritual adultery. The writer of Deuteronomy senses the struggle to keep the people of Israel from debasing elements. Not every dream or vision has a source in divine revelation.

²³¹ TAN: "dream diviners." TEV: "interpreters of dreams." The person referred to is a false prophet who pretends to have received a revelation from God through dreams.

God and him alone, revering him and keeping his commandments, obeying his voice, and steadfastly serving him. ⁵ [H. 13:6] However, that prophet or dreamer of dreams is to be executed because he has tried to foment a rebellion (*or, proclaimed apostasy*) against the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and rescued you from enslavement, to make you have the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to live. Therefore remove such evil from your community. ²³²

⁶ [H. 13:7] “If your immediate family, (your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or daughter, the wife you love, or a friend who is the one with whom you share your life) entices you secretly by saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’, (gods that neither you nor your ancestors ever heard, ⁷ [H. 113:8] any of the gods from the surrounding nations, whether in the vicinity or at some great distance, even from one end of the earth or the other), you must not yield to any such person who is in your midst. Display no pity or compassion, nor seek to protect him. ⁸ [H. 13:9] You are not to look on him with compassion, you are not to spare him, and you are not to provide a cover-up for him. ⁹ [H. 13:10] Hurl the first stone to kill him, putting him to death, and thereafter all the people are to follow. ¹⁰ [H. 13:11] You are to execute him ²³³ for attempting to turn you away from the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹¹ [H. 13:12] Then all the people of Israel will hear and will be fearful, and never again do any such wickedness.

¹² [H. 13:13] “If you hear in one of your settlements where the Lord your God is giving you place of residence, ¹³ [H. 13:14] that some scoundrels ²³⁴ have gone out among the people and have led the inhabitants of a settlement astray, saying, ‘Let us go and worship other gods,’ (whom you have not known), ¹⁴ [H. 13:15] you should then make inquiries, investigate and question thoroughly to determine if the reported rumor is true and certain. If it is discovered that the charge is true that such an abominable thing had taken place in your midst, ¹⁵ [H. 13:16] you must assassinate the inhabitants of that settlement with swords, completely destroying it ²³⁵ -- even killing its livestock. ¹⁶ [H. 13:17] You are to gather all its spoils in the public square and burn all the spoils with fire as a burnt offering to the Lord your God. It will be remain as a heap forever and no one will build on it. ²³⁶ ¹⁷ [H. 13:18] None of the devoted items are to be kept by any person in order that the Lord might turn from the fierceness of his blazing anger and show ²³⁷ mercy and loving compassion on you and multiply you (*or, increase your population*) as he had vowed to your ancestors. ¹⁸ [H. 13:19] If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all his commandments which I command you to obey today: you must do what is right in the sight of the Lord you God!”

²³² Even if there is close or intimate relationship this does not to protect the one who entices others to idolatry.

²³³ Literally: “with stones so that he dies.”

²³⁴ KJV: “children of Belial.” Belial meant “without worth” but more recent scholarship has understood it to mean “base fellows.”

²³⁵ This is an irrevocable order.

²³⁶ This Tell will be a deserted mound made up of what had been the treasures of perverse inhabitants.

²³⁷ Literally: “give.”

<CHAPTER 14>

c. *Beware of Pagan Mourning Rites 14:1 – 2*

1 “You are the sons of the Lord your God: you are not to lacerate yourselves or make a mark on your forehead ²³⁸ for the dead. 2 You are people who are holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be people who are his own special treasure ²³⁹ from among all the people who live on the face of the earth.”

d. *Clean and Unclean Food 14:3 – 21*

3 “You are not to eat food that is detestable. ²⁴⁰ 4 These are the animals you are permitted to eat: ox, sheep, goats, 5 deer, gazelle, roebuck, wild goat, ibex, antelope, and mountain sheep. ²⁴¹ Every animal whose hoof is formed in two parts (*or, has a split hoof*) and is a ruminant (*or, chews its cud*) is eatable. 7 However, of those who are ruminant but do not have a split hoof, ²⁴² you are not to eat the camel, hare, and rock badger, because they do not have a split hoof and therefore, as food they are unclean. 8 Additionally: swine, ²⁴³ because, while they have a split hoof, ²⁴⁴ they are not ruminants and thus are unclean to you. Their flesh is not to be eaten, and the carcass is not to be touched. ²⁴⁵

9 “Of all that swims in the water you may eat the following: whatever has fins and scales are eatable. 10 Whatever does not have fins and scales are not to be eaten for these are unclean.

11 “You are permitted to eat every clean bird. ²⁴⁶ 12 The following are the ones you may not eat: eagle, vulture, osprey, 13 buzzard, every kind of kite, 14 every kind of raven, 15 ostrich, nighthawk, sea gull, every kind of hawk, 16 small owl, great owl, water hen, 17 desert owl (*or possibly, pelican*), carrion vulture, cormorant, 18 stork, every kind of heron, hoopee, and bat. 19 All winged insects are unclean and therefore are not to be eaten. 20 You may, however, eat every clean winged creature.

21 “You are not to eat any carcass that has died of a natural death: it is permissible to give it to resident aliens for them to eat, or you might sell it to a foreigner. You, after all, are people who are holy to the Lord your God. ²⁴⁷

“You are not to boil a kid in its mother’s milk.” ²⁴⁸

e. *Tithes 14:22 - 29*

²³⁸ Literally: “make a baldness between your eyes.” The exact meaning is not clear. NEB: “shave your forehead.” The word translated as “forehead” in this translation, in the LXX literally is “between your eyes.” Some pagan cultures, then and even now, shave their heads as a sign of grief.

²³⁹ “Special treasure” is a literal translation of the Hebrew word. In these two verses the emphasis in Hebrew is: v. 1: The sons of the Lord. v. 2: People holy to the Lord God. This is to prepare the people for what is being said. As the Lord’s people they should realize that the pagan mourning rites are forbidden. This would also cut off any relationship with other gods.

²⁴⁰ It is not always possible to understand the grounds on which the decision was made concerning clean and unclean. In the ultimate understanding it was not food that distinguished Israel as holy but the total attitude of willing allegiance to God in love and obedience. Cf.: Matthew 7:15.

²⁴¹ The LXX has some different animals – literally: “pygarg, buffalo, camelopard.”

²⁴² LXX: “distinct claws.”

²⁴³ In Egypt swine were considered unclean for mythological reasons.

²⁴⁴ LXX: “claws of their hoofs.”

²⁴⁵ This list of animals is representative, not comprehensive.

²⁴⁶ The identity of the birds is not always certain in verses 12 – 18.

²⁴⁷ In this verse you see two main groups who lived within the Israelite community: 1. Resident aliens 2. Foreigners.

²⁴⁸ In Canaan and Mesopotamia it was common practice to prepare a sacrifice by cooking it in milk.

22 “You are to set aside a tithe of all the yield of your seed that is harvested from your field annually.²⁴⁹ 23 This is to be done before the Lord your God, in a place chosen by your God, to teach you always to have God foremost in your life. Thus you will eat the tithe of your grain, your wine and your oil, as well as the first born of your cattle and sheep in the place chosen by your God as a dwelling for his name, that you may always be in awe of the Lord your God. 24 If the distance is too great for you to go to this chosen place and you are unable to transport your tithe to where the Lord your God blesses you, 25 you are to turn your tithe into money and keep it safely,²⁵⁰ until you go to that chosen place where the name of the Lord your God dwells, 26 and there spend the money for whatever you might desire: oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink, and you will then eat these items before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household. 27 You are not to forsake the teaching priest (*or, Levite*) who lives in your settlement, for he has no patrimony as do you.²⁵¹

28 “At the conclusion of every three years you are to bring the entire tithe [*of the third year*] of your produce, storing it within your towns.²⁵² 29 The teaching priest (*or, Levite*), because he has no allotment or patrimony as you do, as well as the resident aliens, orphans, and widows of your towns are thereby enabled to eat their fill so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work you undertake.”

<CHAPTER 15>²⁵³

f. Year of Release 15:1 – 11

1 “At the end of each seven year period you will grant the remission of debts. 2 The remission of debts is to take place as follows: Every creditor will release the debt in the amount of what has been lent to the debtor. The amount owed is not to be exacted from his neighbor who is like a brother, [*who owes money but is unable to repay*], because the Lord’s release has been proclaimed. 3 You may exact repayment from a foreigner;²⁵⁴ but you must remit your claim on whatever has been lent, but not repaid, for any other member of the community. 4 There are not to be any poor people among you, for the Lord will bless you in the land which has been given you as your patrimony, 5 but only if you will be obedient to the Lord your God by diligently observing this entire commandment that I command you today. 6 As he has promised, the Lord your God will bless you, and you will lend to many nations, but you are not to borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.

²⁴⁹ In chapter 26:1 – 15 tithes and first fruits are mentioned together. Possibly we do not have sufficient information to satisfactorily differentiate between these rituals. Scholars strive to reconcile the differences found in Numbers 18 and Deuteronomy 14:22 – 29.

²⁵⁰ Literally: “tie up your money and take it with you.”

²⁵¹ Some scholars feel v. 27 belongs with v. 26. Other scholars feel it belongs with vss. 27 – 28. The LXX omits “You are not to forsake.”

²⁵² This tithe is to be used for charitable funds for the needy, the Levite and resident aliens along with widows and orphans.

²⁵³ The concept of “to every man his due according to his importance” is in sharp contrast to the concepts of the other nations in the Middle East at that time. The two concepts: 1. vs 1 – 11 and 2. vs. 12 – 18 were unheard of in the other societies of the time. Portions of these verses are difficult to understand in Hebrew but surely were clearly understood at that time.

²⁵⁴ The Hebrew word translated as “foreigner” is not implying “a resident alien.” The is a foreigner with no lasting ties with the community of which the lender is a part. MFT: “you may press a foreigner for payment but you must remit any claim upon your fellow countryman.”

7 “If there is anyone in your midst who is in need, a member of your community, in any of your towns within the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your neighbor in need, 8 but you are to open your hand to your neighbor, providing sufficiently for his needs, what ever it might be. 9 Be careful, lest you think harsh thoughts and say to yourself, ‘The seventh year, the year of remission, is drawing near,’ and you look at your needy brother providing him nothing, for he cries out to the Lord against you, and you will be looked upon by the Lord as being guilty. 10 You are to lend liberally and not begrudge doing so, for because of this action the Lord your God will bless you in all your labor and in each and every one of your ventures. 11 There will always be poor in the land. Therefore I command you to be generous ²⁵⁵ toward your brother. – to the needy, the poor who reside in this land.”

g. Limitation of Debt Slavery (or, Manumission) 15:12 – 18

12 “If your fellow Hebrew: male or female ²⁵⁶ is sold to you, he or she will serve you for six years, and in the seventh year you will manumit them (*or, let them go free*). 13 When you let them go from you, as free persons, you are not to send them away empty-handed. 14 You are to furnish your former slave liberally (*or, lovingly*) from your flock, your threshed grain, and your wine press, just as the Lord your God has blessed you, so you are also to do for them. 15 You must remember that at one time you were enslaved in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. As a result I command you today to free anyone who has been enslaved. ²⁵⁷ 16 On the other hand: if your slave says to you: ‘I do not want to be freed from you,’ became he loves you and your household and since he is well off with you, 17 you are to take an awl and thrust it through his earlobe into the door frame, and your slave will then continue as your slave forever.

“This same action is to be used by you, whether a male or female slave. ²⁵⁸

18 “Do not feel that this manumission of slaves is a hardship to you, when you let them go free from serving you. They have given you six years of service which has cost you only half the wages of hired employees: and the Lord your God will bless you in all that you do.”

h. Offerings from Flocks and Herds 15:19 – 23

19 “All the male firstborn of your herd and flock are to be consecrated by you to the Lord your God: these firstborn male animals from your herds and flocks are not to be used as work animals. ²⁵⁹ 20 These are to be eaten by you and your household in the presence of the Lord your God, annually, at the place where the Lord will select. 21 However, if the animal is blemished, as for example, lameness, blindness or whatever that might be, you are not to sacrifice it to the Lord your God. 22 It is to be eaten by your household, whether they are ceremonially clean or unclean, in your own town, just as you

²⁵⁵ Literally: “open our hand wider.”

²⁵⁶ So: LXX. The Hebrew text only refers to males, though it would be assumed that females were implied. Cf.: v. 17.

²⁵⁷ Manumission would only be an act of love if the released slave was freed with ample provision for survival. Some scholars feel v. 18 should be inserted between verses 14 & 15.

²⁵⁸ With this act, which in Leviticus has religious overtones, makes the individual a perpetual slave. The same concept is found in Ugaritic literature. The concept has no derogatory implications. Cf. { ANET p. 171b

²⁵⁹ Since the animal is to be consecrated (*or, made holy*) it should not be utilized in accordance with normal functions. It would be wrong to claim the wool for personal use, since the lamb would be deemed to be God’s lamb.

would do with a gazelle or deer. ²³ You are, however, not to eat the blood. It is to be poured out on the ground as one might pour out water.”

<CHAPTER 16>

j. *Passover 16:1 – 8*

¹ “Observe the month of ²⁶⁰ Abib ²⁶¹ and keep the Passover of the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God rescued you at night, from Egypt. ² You are to slaughter the Passover sacrifice for the annual Passover ²⁶² sacrifice to the Lord your God: a sheep from your flock ²⁶³ which is to be offered up at the place the Lord your God will have chosen to dwell. ³ You are not to prepare leavened bread ²⁶⁴ for seven days, during which time you are to eat unleavened bread – the bread of suffering, (for you came out of Egypt, fleeing hurriedly). [*This unleavened bread*] will remind you of those days in your history ²⁶⁵ when you came out of Egypt [*the place of suffering*]. ⁴ No loaves are to be seen in the territory for seven days, nor are you to have any of the sacrifice you slaughtered on the first day, remaining until morning. ⁵ You are not to offer the Passover in any of the towns ²⁶⁶ which have been given you by the Lord your God, ⁶ but the Passover is to be celebrated at the place the Lord your God will choose as the place where his name will dwell. It is there that you are to offer the Passover sacrifice in the evening, just at sunset, for this was the time that you departed from Egypt. ⁷ You are to boil it, ²⁶⁷ and eat it at the place where the Lord your God will choose. In the morning return to your tents. ⁸ For six days you are to continue to eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there is to be a solemn assembly for the Lord your God, ²⁶⁸ when you are not to do any labor.” ²⁶⁹

k. *Harvest Festival 16:9 – 12*

⁹ “You are to count seven weeks: beginning to count on the day when the sickle first cuts the standing grain. ²⁷⁰ ¹⁰ At that time you are to celebrate ²⁷¹ the Feast of Weeks for the Lord your God, contributing a free will offering, based proportionately on the blessing you have received from the Lord your God. Rejoice before the Lord your God: you, your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, the teaching priests (*or,*

²⁶⁰ Literally: “the new moon of.”

²⁶¹ LXX: “the month of new grain.”

²⁶² Hebrew: “Pasah”

²⁶³ LXX: “sheep or oxen.” Since, east of the Jordan the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh raised cattle and not sheep there was a broadening of the law in the light of these three tribes.

²⁶⁴ This word is omitted in the LXX. The unleavened bread was considered to be bread without life in it. It was the bread of the bands of nomads. Possibly the unleavened bread was considered to be more pure and more suitable for the festal occasion.

²⁶⁵ Literally: “life.”

²⁶⁶ Literally: “gates.”

²⁶⁷ LXX: “roast it.” “και οπτησεις.”

²⁶⁸ NEB: “a closing ceremony in honor of your God.” LXX: “holiday.” Cf.: Leviticus 22:36; Numbers 29:35; II Chronicles 7:9.

²⁶⁹ LXX adds: “except what must be done for (or by) a soul.” To take part in Passover with the additional travel in later time, to Jerusalem, the travel was somewhat similar to a Mohammedan Haj (the annual pilgrimage to Mecca).

²⁷⁰ The LXX uses the name “Pentecost” meaning 50 days. The name is based on Leviticus 23:14 – 16. This harvest feast marked the beginning of the barley harvest it ranged from late April to early June depending on the ripening of the fields.

²⁷¹ Literally: “perform” here and in v. 13.

Levites) who reside in your towns, as well as strangers, orphans and widows who are in your midst, at the place where the Lord your God will select as a dwelling place for his name. ¹² Remember that you were enslaved in Egypt, and be diligent in observing these regulations.”

l. Feast of Tabernacles 16:13 – 15 ²⁷²

¹³ “You will keep the Feast of Tabernacles (*or, Booths*) for seven days when you gather the harvest from your threshing floor and your wine press. ¹⁴ You are to rejoice in your feast: you, your sons, daughters, male and female slaves, the teaching priest (*or, Levite*), resident aliens the orphans and widows who are within your towns. ¹⁵ For seven days you will keep the feast of the Lord your God at the place which the Lord will choose’ because the Lord your God will bless you in all our undertakings and all the work of our hands so that you will certainly celebrate joyfully.”

m. Summary of Annual Feasts 16:16 – 17

¹⁶ “Three times a year males are to appear before the Lord tjeiar God at the place which he will select: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They will not appear before the Lord empty handed (*or, no one is to appear before the Lord empty handed*). ¹⁷ Every man will give in accordance with his ability, based on the blessings of the Lord your God which he has given you.” ²⁷³

2. Duties of Officials 16:18 – 18:22

a. Judges 16:18 – 20

¹⁸ “You will appoint judges and officers throughout your tribes (*or, in every settlement*) ²⁷⁴ which the Lord your God has given you, based on tribes, and they will judge the people in righteous judgment. ²⁷⁵ ¹⁹ Judges are to administer impartial justice and not show favoritism, and not accept bribes for the bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. ²⁰ Judges: you are to follow justice, and only justice, that you may live and occupy the land the Lord your God has given you.” ²⁷⁶

b. Further Laws Pertaining to Worship 16:21 – 17:7

²¹ “You are not to plant any tree to be a sacred pole (*or, Ashera*) beside the altar of the Lord your God which will be established. ²⁷⁷ ²² You are not to set up any pillar which the Lord your God hates.”

<CHAPTER 17>

¹ “You will not sacrifice any ox or sheep to the Lord your God that has any defect, ²⁷⁸ whatever it might be, for that is abominable to the Lord your God.

²⁷² Originally this festival was doubtless an agricultural event. In Hebrew it is called “Succoth.” It took place in September / October. Cf.: Leviticus 23:30, 39. It took place on the 13th to the 22nd of the seventh month, Tishri.

²⁷³ Literally: “in accordance to the gift of his hand.”

²⁷⁴ Judges were leading elders of the local council of elders in each community. Officers were the judges’ assistants. They possibly were the equivalent of police officers.

²⁷⁵ NEB: “you shall not pervert the course of justice or show favor.”

²⁷⁶ Cf.: ANET p. 35c

²⁷⁷ LXX: “you are not to plant a grove for yourselves. You are not to plant, for yourself, any tree near the altar of your God.”

²⁷⁸ Literally: “evil thing.”

2 “If there is a man or woman, in any of the towns the Lord your God has given you, who violates the covenant, doing evil in the sight of the Lord your God, in transgressing his covenant, 3 by going to serve other gods and prostrating himself before them – whether it be the sun, the moon, or the host of heaven,²⁷⁹ 4 and if it is reported that this is taking place you are to inquire diligently, and if it is true and definite that such an abominable thing has been done in Israel, 5 you are to bring that man or woman who has committed this crime out to the gate [*of the city, the place where judgment is given*], and you are to stone that man or woman to death.²⁸⁰ 6 This, however, is to be done only with the evidence of two witnesses²⁸¹ that this has taken place, and death is deserved. A person will not be put to death based on the word²⁸² of one witness. 7 The hands of those first accusers are to be the first to hurl stones, followed by all the people.²⁸³ In this manner you will purge the evil from our midst.”

C. The Supreme Court (or, The Central Tribunal) 17:8 – 13

8 “If any judicial need arises, which because of its difficulty, is too baffling to decide on the local level, as for example, between one kind of bloodshed and another, (*or, between first and second degree murder*),²⁸⁴ or the legal right in a difficult or questionable situation,²⁸⁵ -- any such dispute in your town – you are to immediately go up to the place that the Lord your God will choose, 9 where you are to consult the teaching priests (*or, Levitical priests*) and the judge who is in office at that time. They will pronounce the decision in the case.²⁸⁶ 10 You are then to carry out exactly what the judges have announced from the place that the Lord will choose. 11 You, then, must diligently carry out the interpretation of the law as they announced to you and the verdict which they have given. You are not to alter it either to the right or to the left. 12 Any person who disobeys by not obeying the priest²⁸⁷ who is appointed to minister to the Lord²⁸⁸ your God, or the judge will die. Such evil in Israel is to be purged! 13 All the people in Israel will hear and be afraid and will not act presumptuously again.”

d. The King 17:14 – 20

14 “When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it, and live in it, you will say, ‘I want a king to rule over me, like all the nations that surround me.’ 15 You may indeed set up a king to rule over you, who will be of the Lord your God’s own choosing. He must be a man of your own race who is to be placed

²⁷⁹ I.e. the stars. In the 8th century B.C.E. this was the fad religiously. Some scholars use the words “the host of heaven”: is a reason for believing in a late date for the book of Deuteronomy. The concept was basic in many religions that worshiped heavenly bodies. It was already a common belief long before the time of Deuteronomy, in the religion of the Sumerians.

²⁸⁰ Guilt must be proven by diligent research of the evidence of two or three witnesses. Since it is a capital offense the witnesses must initiate the death sentence by casting the first stone.

²⁸¹ LXX: “two or more witnesses.”

²⁸² Literally: “mouth.”

²⁸³ The procedure was such that the accusers, throwing the first stones should carefully try to inflict a fatal, or near fatal blow with their stones. It was not a random pelting or rocks at the accused.

²⁸⁴ Literally: “between blood and blood,” to distinguish against manslaughter. LXX: “blood between blood.” TEV: “that cases that distinguish between murder and manslaughter.”

²⁸⁵ Literally: “judgment to judgment.” LXX: “stroke to stroke.”

²⁸⁶ Literally: “the matter of the sentence.” The cases mentioned in verses 8 – 13 are: 1. Homicide. 2. Rights in law. 3. Different kinds of assault or personal injury.

²⁸⁷ LXX: “haughtiness so as not to listen to the priest who stands to minister in the name of the Lord.”

²⁸⁸ LXX: “the name of the Lord.”

over you as your king, not someone from a foreign country who does not share your ancestry. ¹⁶ However he must not acquire a large number of horses for himself, or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire more horses, since the Lord has told you, ‘You are never to return to Egypt.’ ²⁸⁹ ¹⁷ Additionally, he is not to acquire a large number of wives for himself, or else his heart will be turned away, ²⁹⁰ nor should he acquire great quantities of silver and gold for himself.

¹⁸ ”When he is seated on the throne in his kingdom, he is to have a written copy of this law, written for him by the teaching priests (*or, Levites*). ²⁹¹ ¹⁹ It will remain with him and he will read it all the days of his life, so that he might learn to revere the Lord his God. Be diligent in observing all the words of this law and doing its statutes. ²⁰ If he does that he will not exalt himself ²⁹² above the citizens of the land, nor will he turn aside from the commandments, turning neither to the right or to the left, so he and his descendants might have a lengthy reign over his kingdom.” ²⁹³

<CHAPTER 18>

e. The Priests 18:1 – 8

¹ “The Levitical priests, ²⁹⁴ which include the entire the tribe of Levi, will have no patrimony (*or, land that is to be their inheritance*). This includes those who are temple priests as well as teaching priests but they will be designated land for their use. They are permitted to eat the portions that were given as sacrifices to the Lord, ² since they do not have a patrimony as do all the other tribes, for the Lord is their inheritance.

³ ”These priests deserve to have a portion of the sacrifices, whether they are an ox or a sheep. The portions for the priests are to include the shoulder, jowls and the stomach. ²⁹⁵ ⁴

The first fruits of your grain, wine and oil as well as the first of the sheared fleece of young sheep are to be given to him. ²⁹⁶ ⁵ The Lord your God has chosen Levi ²⁹⁷ from among all the tribes, to stand and minister to the name of the Lord, along with all his descendants and this is to continue eternally.

²⁸⁹ Literally: “that way again.”

²⁹⁰ LXX: “change.”

²⁹¹ REB: “at the dictation of the Levitical priests.”

²⁹² Literally: “his heart will not be lifted up.”

²⁹³ Originally Israel was to be a functioning theocracy which functioned through a common allegiance to God.

²⁹⁴ All priests who served in the temple were Levites. However not all Levites were priests who served in the temple. Those Levites who did not serve in the temple are called “teaching priests” in this translation. It was their duty to teach the people in the towns or villages in which they lived. Temple priests served in the temple in divisions or sections. Each temple priest was assigned a section or division and would serve perhaps one or two weeks in the year along with other members of the priesthood who were assigned to their division or section. Cf. Luke 1. Any “teaching priest” could apply to be a temple priest and if there was an opening he might be chosen. All priests had the obligation of showing leadership and guidance in the spiritual life of the people whether in the tabernacle/temple or in their community. They were the ones who taught and guided the people of Israel in their faith and understanding.

²⁹⁵ A footnote in the CEV says: “Certain portions of the stomach were considered a delicacy.”

²⁹⁶ The Hebrew is not clear. Some scholars feel the entire first sharing of the fruit is to be given to the Levites, others feel that the new grain, wine and oil should be given in a smaller, symbolic amount, signifying that a larger amount of the harvest (as shared) is to be completed. NEB: “first fleeces at the shearing of your flock.”

²⁹⁷ Hebrew: “him.”

6 “If a Levite leaves any of your towns, what ever the location of his residence in Israel, seeking out ²⁹⁸ the place that has been chosen by the Lord, (and he may go wherever he chooses), ⁷ he is then permitted to minister in the name of the Lord his God, just as do his fellow Levites, standing and ministering before the Lord. ⁸ He is to have an equal portion ²⁹⁹ even though he has received income from the sale of family possessions.” ³⁰⁰

f. The Prophet 18:9 – 22

9 “When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you must not learn to imitate ³⁰¹ the abominable practices of those nations. ³⁰² ¹⁰ No one is to be found within Israel who makes his son or daughter pass through fire, ³⁰³ or practices divination, ³⁰⁴ or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or who casts spells, or consults ghosts or spirits, or who seeks oracles from the dead. ³⁰⁵ ¹² Anyone who does these things ³⁰⁶ is an abomination to the Lord; and because of these reprehensible practices the Lord is driving them out before you. ³⁰⁷ ¹³ You will have integrity ³⁰⁸ before the Lord your God. ¹⁴ You need to be careful as you dispossess these nations that you give heed to the soothsayers and diviners ³⁰⁹ since the Lord your God does not permit you to do as they have been doing. ³¹⁰

¹⁵ “The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you: a prophet ³¹¹ like me, from your midst, from your own people. You are to be attentive to the words of such a prophet! ¹⁶ In this way you will get just what you desired at Horeb for on that day you

²⁹⁸ Hebrew literally: “with all the desire of his soul.”

²⁹⁹ Literally: “portion like portion.”

³⁰⁰ The Hebrew is obscure. TAN: “without regard to personal gifts as patrimony.” REB: “besides what he may inherit from his father’s family.” LXX: “beside the sale of his hereditary property.” NRSV: “equal portion...even though they have income from the sale of family possessions.”

³⁰¹ Hebrew: “do according to.”

³⁰² The polytheistic nations that surrounded Israel used all kinds of superstitious practices designed to lead the will of their gods This was condemned in Israel. To practice such sorceries and superstitions etc. was tantamount to acknowledging a power that was greater than that of the Lord. To do that was looked upon as rebellion.

³⁰³ The exact nature of “walking through fire” is unknown. It is usually connected with II Kings 23:10 and Jeremiah 32:35. LXX: “who purges his son with fire.” NAB: “immolates his son or daughter in fire.” NIV: “Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium, or spiritist, who consults the dead.”

³⁰⁴ LXX: “who divines.”

³⁰⁵ Moses seems to use every descriptive word in Hebrew that he can to assault these practices .

³⁰⁶ “These things” consists of three classes: 1. children tried by fire. 2. magic. 3. consulting the world of the spirits.

³⁰⁷ TCB: “There must not be anyone among you who passes his son or daughter through fire; who practices divination, is a sign reader, fortune-teller, sorcerer, or spell caster; who converses with ghosts or spirits or communicates with the dead. All who do these things are detestable to the Lord! It is on account of these detestable practices that the Lord your God is driving these nations out before you.”

³⁰⁸ Literally: “complete.” REB: “You must be undivided in the service of the Lord your God.”

³⁰⁹ The classical prophets had already received their messages from God, thus making them different from the soothsayers and diviners. Their message came directly from God. They did not need to go through any sort of ritual to receive their messages. The prophecies came directly.

³¹⁰ Moses message is significant in that there is a provision for continuing prophecy following his death. Therefore there could be prophecy by people of Israel across the centuries, finding their greatest culmination in Jesus Christ. NRSV: “the Lord does not permit you to do so.”

³¹¹ Or: “prophets.”

requested from the Lord your God, on the day we were solemnly assembled, saying, ‘If I ever hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again witness this great fire, I will perish.’¹⁷ The Lord then spoke to me, saying, ‘They have spoken correctly,³¹² ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their tribes; and I will place my words into his mouth and he will speak to them the words that I reveal to him.³¹³ ¹⁹ Whoever will not be attentive to my words spoken by the prophets in my name, I, myself, will hold accountable. ²⁰ Any prophet who presumes to speak a word that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods: that very prophet will die! ²¹ If you say in your heart, ‘How are we able to determine whether this is a word that comes from the mouth of God?’ ²² When the word of prophet is spoken in the name of the Lord, but does not come into fruition – it is not a word spoken by the Lord. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. Do not be frightened by it.’”³¹⁴

<CHAPTER 19>

3/ Criminal Law 19:1 – 21³¹⁵

a. Homicide 19:1 – 13

¹ “When the Lord our God exterminates the nations whose land the Lord your God is about to give you and you dispossess those who live in their cities and their towns, ² you are to set apart three centrally located cities in the land which the Lord your God gives you as your possession. ³ You are to calculate the distance³¹⁶ and divide the land area into three parts, which the Lord your God is about to give you as a possession, so that manslayers can flee to the nearest of these cities³¹⁷

⁴ “This is the provision for the manslayer: by fleeing to one of these designated cities the manslayer might save his life. If anyone causes his neighbor’s death unintentionally (*or, without forethought*),³¹⁸ not having hated his neighbor previously,³¹⁹ ⁵ as for instance, when a man goes into the forest to cut wood with his neighbor, and one of them swings the axe to cut down a tree and the axe head slips from the wooden handle³²⁰ and strikes the other person who then dies,³²¹ he may flee to one of these cities and save his life, ⁶ lest the avenger of blood, in his anger³²² pursues the manslayer and overtakes him because the way to the city of refuge is long, and wounds him mortally,³²³

³¹² Literally: “they have done well what they have spoken.”

³¹³ This is in sharp contrast to prophets of the surrounding countries who were moved to prophecy by dreams. The prophets of Israel would have their words given them by God.

³¹⁴ The true prophet always urged loyalty to the covenant and gave a realistic prophecy, Adherence to God was always proclaimed.

³¹⁵ Cf.: Exodus 4:41 – 43. The organization of the presentation of the laws in chapters 19 – 26 seems to be less orderly in its presentation. Topics seem to be discussed in outline rather than in a more complete form.

³¹⁶ The Hebrew is uncertain. It might possibly be translated as “prepare roads to them.”

³¹⁷ Literally: “and it will be for every manslayer to flee there.” The Hebrew is uncertain. Blood revenge was common in the nomadic society of the time. In Israel its covenant also was an ancient one.

³¹⁸ Literally: “without knowledge.”

³¹⁹ LXX: “before yesterday and the third day.” Hebrew literally: “he was not hating him previously.”

³²⁰ LXX: “if the hand of the one cutting wood with the axe is violently struck and the head flies up...”

³²¹ LXX: “strikes his life.” NEB: “when cutting a tree, he relaxes his grip on the axe the head glances off the tree, and hits the other man and kills him.”

³²² Literally: “while his heart is hot.”

³²³ Literally: “smite him in the soul.”

though the man did not deserve to die, for he had not hated his neighbor previously, 7 (therefore, I command you to add three other cities to the previous three).³²⁴

8 “If the Lord your God enlarges your territorial border, as he had vowed to do, to your ancestors, 9 assuming of course that you are careful to keep all the commandments³²⁵ by continually living your lives in the way which the Lord your God wants you to live – then you will add three cities 10 so that innocent blood of an innocent person might not be shed in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance (*or, patrimony*), thereby causing you to have blood-guilt upon you.”

11 “However: if any man hates (*or, has a feud with*) his neighbor and waits in ambush to attack him, and does so, and wounds him mortally, killing him, in cold blood, and the man escapes to one of these cities, 13 the elders of the city at which the alleged crime was committed will act as prosecutors³²⁶ and send for the culprit and return him to his city for prosecution, handing him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die. 13 You are not to pity him, but you are to prosecute, purging the guilt of the blood of one who was innocent in Israel so that it is avenged and all may go well with you.”

b. Theft of Property 19:14

14 “You are not to move your neighbor’s boundary marker that had been set up in previous generations marking the boundary of your property which had been given you by the Lord your God as your patrimony (*or, inheritance*).”

c. False Witness 19:15 – 21

15 “A single witness is not sufficient to convict a person, no matter what the crime might be, or any wrong in connection with any offence that may have been committed. The charge will be sustained only if there are two or three witnesses. 16 If a malicious (*or, violent*) witness³²⁷ comes forward to accuse someone of wrongdoing, 17 both parties are to appear before the Lord, the priests, and the judges who are in office at that time. 18 The judges are to determine, through examination, if he is a false witness and has made false accusations against the defendant. If the witness is found to be false, having testified falsely against the defendant, 19 you are then to do to the false witness just as the false witness had in mind to do to the defendant. In that manner you will be enabled to purge the evil from your midst. 20 Those who hear will become fearful and such a crime will never again be committed among you. 21 You are not to show pity! Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”³²⁸

³²⁴ Three cities of refuge were established on the west side of the Jordan and three on the east side of the Jordan when Israel came to be organized.

³²⁵ Literally: “all the commandment.”

³²⁶ Recent scholarship seems to hint that an elder in this instance might be considered to be a “court witness” rather than a prosecutor.

³²⁷ Literally: “a witness of violence” “Spiteful” might be a suitable translation. Cf.: ANET: p. 166b.

³²⁸ Cf.: ANET p. 175b. The penalty for perjury, ‘lex talionis’ was the law of retribution. This law is similar to a law found in the Hammurabi Code.

<CHAPTER 20>

4. *The Conduct of Holy War 20:1 – 29*

a. *Proclamation before the Battle 20:1 – 9*

¹ “When you engage in warfare against your enemies, as you approach battle, you may face horses and chariots ³²⁹ and a larger army than yours. You are not to be fearful for the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt is with you. ³³⁰ ² When you draw near to engage in battle the priest will come forward to speak to the troops. ³³¹ ³ He will tell the troops: ‘Hear O Israel, the battle is about to begin. As you face your enemies; do not be timid, fearful, alarmed or tremble because of them, ³³² ⁴ for the Lord your God – he that is great – accompanies you as you fight against your enemy, thus giving you victory.’ ⁵ Then the officers will speak to the army, saying, ‘What man is there among you who has just built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go back and have his house dedicated so that, should he die in battle, someone else would dedicate it. ³³³ ⁶ What man is there who has planted a vineyard and has not tasted its fruit? ³³⁴ ⁷ And what man is engaged to be married, but has not yet married his beloved? ³³⁵ Let him go back home to his bride, lest he be killed in battle and someone else will take her [*as his bride*].’ ⁸ Following this the officers will speak further, saying, ‘Is anyone afraid or disheartened? ³³⁶ Let him go back to his home, lest he cause the heart of his comrades to melt as his has. ⁹ When the officers have finished speaking to the soldiers, the unit commanders are to be appointed to take charge.”

b. *Besieging a City 20:10 – 18*

¹⁰ “When the army approaches a city to attack, offer the city a truce [*or, call out to the city to surrender*]. ³³⁷ ¹¹ If it replies that it will surrender ³³⁸ and it opens [*its gates*] to you, those who inhabit the city will become your forced laborers and will serve you. ¹² However, if it does not surrender to you, ³³⁹ but is ready to do battle against you, you are to besiege it. ³⁴⁰ ¹³ When the Lord your God gives it into your hand you are to kill all males with the sword. ¹⁴ The women and children, the cattle, and everything within the

³²⁹ Horses and chariots were not a part of early Israelite warfare. They are not mentioned until the time of Solomon.

³³⁰ Israelite strength was not to be determined by the size of the army, or superiority of their weapons, but by their God. This was based not solely on their faith but on their experience.

³³¹ Literally: “people.”

³³² TAN: “do not be afraid of your enemies, or lose courage, or panic.”

³³³ Exemption from military service was granted for moral and compassionate reasons. The object of the officers was not to have the largest possible army but the best possible army, completely committed to God.

³³⁴ This is a ‘*hillel*,’ a ritual term. The first crop of grapes is to be dedicated to the Lord. The second crop is able to be used by the one who planted the vineyard for common use. Thus it would be four years until the vineyard was sufficiently established to have a harvest. This fourth year the crop would be dedicated to the Lord and in the fifth year the vintner would have the crop for himself.

³³⁵ The important aspects of normal life in the land took precedence over the requirements of the army. The amount paid, ‘the price of the bride’ was tantamount to taking her as his wife. This was all that was standing in the way of the marriage. Cf.: ANET p. 143d.

³³⁶ This marks a different category of exemptions. There is fear that the morale of the army would be in danger if the fearful remnant remained in the ranks. No one was to be bullied into battle.

³³⁷ Literally: “call out to the city.”

³³⁸ Literally; “answer peace.”

³³⁹ Literally: “makes no peace with you.”

³⁴⁰ This instruction was only for cities that were distant.

city are all to be spoils to be taken for yourselves, and you will be able to take pleasure in these spoils which the Lord our God has given you. ¹⁵ The same will take place in all cities that are distant from you, but are not nations within the immediate area. ³⁴¹ ¹⁶ If the cities of those people in the areas which the Lord your God has given you as your promised land you are to annihilate them. ³⁴² ¹⁷ You are to annihilate the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, for this is the command the Lord your God has given. ³⁴³ ¹⁸ This is to be done so they may not teach you to adopt the abhorrent practices which they have carried out in the shrines of their gods, and thereby cause you so sin against the Lord your God.”

c. Concerning Trees 20:19 – 20

¹⁹ “When you besiege a city for a lengthy period of time, making war against it in order to capture it, you are not to destroy the trees by cutting them down with an axe. After all, you may eat their fruits and thus are not to cut them down. Those trees out in a field are not attacking you, are they? ³⁴⁴ ²⁰ The trees you know that do not produce food may be cut down to be used in building siege-works against the town that makes war against you until it is defeated.”

<CHAPTER 21>

5. Miscellaneous Laws 21:1 – 25:19

a. Explanation of Unsolved Murder 21:1 – 9

¹ “If in the land which the Lord your God has given you as your possession, the body of someone who had been murdered ³⁴⁵ is found, lying in the open country, ³⁴⁶ and the murderer is unknown, ³⁴⁷ ² the elders and judges are to gather and they are to measure the distance to the nearby cities. ³⁴⁸ ³ The elders are then to establish which city lies nearest to the victim. That city is to be responsible to take a heifer which has never been used for work. ³⁴⁹ ⁴ The elders of that city will bring the heifer down to a valley that had never been plowed or planted, ³⁵⁰ and there break the heifer’s neck. ³⁵¹ ⁵ Then the priests, the descendants of Levi, are to come forward, (for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to him) and they are to pronounce a blessing the name of the Lord, and it is in this manner that all such disputes and assaults are to be settled. ⁸ All the elders of the

³⁴¹ The people who surrendered were offered a vassal treaty. If they opened their gate this would be a symbol of surrender.

³⁴² Literally: “kill all that breathes.”

³⁴³ These nations are to be annihilated for there is a sort of ‘holy taboo’ which causes them to be dedicated to the Lord as sacrifices to the Lord and utterly consumed so they might not be used by the people of Israel. Cf. Leviticus 27:26. In the LXX and the Samaritan Torah the Girgashites are added.

³⁴⁴ War is to be conducted against other men, not trees. The verse is a rhetorical question.

³⁴⁵ Literally: “pierced.”

³⁴⁶ I.e.: open country, not a cultivated field.

³⁴⁷ Some scholars feel these verses should follow Deuteronomy 19:21. The religious implication is that there is guilt and immediate action should be taken by the community.

³⁴⁸ Cf.: ANET p. 167b. The Hammurabi code required that the nearest city had the responsibility to make restitution in cases of robbery, compensating with a mina of silver given to the family of the person who had been murdered. The Hittite code also required measuring the distance and making compensation.

³⁴⁹ LXX: “not borne a yoke.”

³⁵⁰ LXX: “a rough valley.”

³⁵¹ It is not clear whether his is to be a symbolic expiation or a symbolic execution. This was not considered as a sacrifice, as one might have at temple worship. NEB: “cut the heifer’s throat.” LXX: “cut the sinews of the neck.”

nearest city area then to wash their hands over the broken-necked heifer lying in the valley. ⁷ The priests are then to declare: ‘Our hands have not shed the blood, nor did we witness this event. ⁸ O Lord, forgive my people Israel ³⁵² whom you have ransomed, and do not let the guilt of innocent blood rest on your people Israel. ³⁵³ but grant absolution.’ ⁹ Purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst for you must do what is right in the sight of the law.” ³⁵⁴

b. Treatment of a Captive Woman 21:10 – 14

¹⁰ “When you go out to wage war against your enemies and the Lord your God grants you victory and you take captives, ¹¹ let us assume that you see a woman among the captives who is exceedingly beautiful and you desire ³⁵⁵ to marry her, ¹² and you bring her to your house. She is to cut off all her hair and trim her nails. ³⁵⁶ ¹³ She is to remove her captives garb and remain in your house for an entire month and bewail her parents. After that you are allowed to go in to her, and be her husband and she will be your wife. ³⁵⁷ ¹⁴ If you are not satisfied with her you are to let her go free ³⁵⁸ but not sell her as a slave. You must not treat her as a slave, ³⁵⁹ since you have dishonored her.’

c. Inheritance Rules 21:15 – 17

¹⁵ “If a man has two wives, ³⁶⁰ the one loved, the other disliked, ³⁶¹ and they have borne him children, both the loved and the disliked, and if the first-born son is born to the one who is disliked, ¹⁶ on the day in which the man assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved wife as the first-born in place of the son of the disliked wife who in actuality was born first. ³⁶² ¹⁷ but he will

³⁵² REB: “Accept the expiation.” The Hebrew word is “forgive.” This word is derived from a root word meaning “to cover.” It also means to “wipe off” in Arabic. It is a symbolic canceling of sin.

³⁵³ LXX: “may not be in your people.”

³⁵⁴ This was a means of clearing Israel of the responsibility of an unsolved murder. To do it was deemed right in the sight of the Lord. The verse raises the question of corporate guilt. Scholars feel this law was based on some very ancient source which declared that the entire community bears a responsibility.

³⁵⁵ LXX: “think about her.”

³⁵⁶ Cf. 34:8. Numbers 20:29. At worst her father had been killed in battle. If her mother survived, she would belong to another master.

³⁵⁷ Some portions of verse 13 are found in a parallel text in the Royal Archives of Mari, dating in the 18th century B.C.E. The reason for shaving her head, trimming her nails and removing her foreign clothing is unknown. Possibly it is a symbolic putting off the taint of heathenism and transferring to a new life as an Israelite.

³⁵⁸ The Hebrew piel word form would have the technical sense of “divorce.”

³⁵⁹ The Hebrew hithpiel word form would have the technical sense of “you may not treat her as merchandise. LXX: “πραθησεια.” The law protected the woman from ‘misuse’. She had some rights which seem to be designed as some sort of compensation for the loss incurred by the marriage and subsequent divorce. REB: “you must not sell her or treat her harshly since you have had your will with her.” TEV: “Since your forced her to have intercourse with you, you cannot treat her as a slave, and sell her.” NAB

since she was married to you under compulsion.”

³⁶⁰ In the Hebrew Scriptures polygamy is depicted as an occasion for family trouble. This law is designed to protect the first born.

³⁶¹ MFT: “and the other whom he slighted.” The relationship may not be love/hate as we know it. Cf.: Genesis 29:30-31.

³⁶² This is the law of primogeniture. In this example the law of primogeniture, if not carried out, would be against God’s will. NIV: “he must not give the right of the first born to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual first born.” The oldest son was to receive a ‘double portion.’ For example there are

acknowledge the first-born, ³⁶³ the son of the disliked wife, by granting him a double portion ³⁶⁴ of all that he possesses, for he is the first to have been born, as the result of his vigor, therefore receiving the right of the first-born as his.” ³⁶⁵

d. The Woman's Son 21:18 – 21

¹⁸ “If a man has a son who is refractory, who will not obey the voice of his father or mother, ³⁶⁶ and they punish him but he will not pay attention to them, ¹⁹ his father and mother are then to take hold of him and drag him to the elders of the city, at the gate of the town in which he lives, ²⁰ and they are to speak to the elders of the city, saying, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.’ ³⁶⁷ ²¹ Then all the men of the city are to stone him to death. In that way you will purge (*or, eradicate*) the evil in your midst and all Israel will take not and be afraid.”

e. The Body of a Criminal 22:22 – 23

²² “If a man has committed a crime that is punishable by death, and he is put to death, [*you then are permitted to*] impale him on a stake. ³⁶⁸ ²³ His body is not to remain impaled on the stake over night, but you are, on the same day, to bury the one who has been cursed by God. ³⁶⁹ You are not to pollute the land which the Lord your God has given you as an inheritance.”

<CHAPTER 22> ³⁷⁰

f. Laws Concerned with the Welfare of Others 22:1 – 12

¹ “If you should not see your brother's ox or sheep going astray and are not willing to assist him, ³⁷¹ it is your responsibility to take them back to your brother. ³⁷² ² If he is not a close neighbor, or you do not know him, you are to bring them home, and the lost animal(s) will remain with you until the owner is looking for them, at which time you are to return them to him. ³ Likewise: this is also to be done for your brother's donkey, garment, or anything else your brother has lost and you have found. You are not to neglect his loss. ⁴ You are not to witness your brother's donkey floundering along the way and fail to help, having no concern. You are surely to be ready to assist in getting them up again.

four sons. Property is divided into five parts and the oldest son receives two parts and each additional son receives one part.

³⁶³ LXX: “the beginning is the chief.”

³⁶⁴ I.e.: two thirds, assuming there are no additional sons.

³⁶⁵ Cf.: ANET p. 185d.

³⁶⁶ This appears to be a cruel and desperate solution concerning one who breaks the commandment: “Honor thy father and thy mother.”

³⁶⁷ The charge against the son is presented formally. The elders then find the son guilty and judgment is given. The parents, having made the formal charge, are not to participate in further accusation. There are no examples in the Hebrew Scriptures of this being carried out.

³⁶⁸ The death sentence usually was carried out by stoning. Those who brought the accusation were the first who were to throw stones. They were to attempt to throw the stones at the head of the accused. After the accusers had thrown their stones the others were to join in, throwing stones. Hanging was not a method used within Judaism. The reference to the tree is a wooden post on which the body would be impaled. Cf. Joshua 8:29. TAN: uses the words: “impale him on a stake.”

³⁶⁹ Cf.: Galatians 3:13.

³⁷⁰ Verses 9 – 12 are laws for a variety of occasions.

³⁷¹ Literally: “hide yourself” here and in v. 3.

³⁷² “Finders – keepers” does not apply. The Hebrew law deals with shouldering responsibility. Cf. Exodus 23:4, 5, where one finds a parallel law which deals with enemies.

5 “A woman is not to wear anything that pertains to a man (*or, a male garment*), nor is a man to wear anything that pertains to a woman (*or, a female garment*).³⁷³ Whoever does this³⁷⁴ is abhorrent to the Lord your God.

6 “If you happen to come upon a bird’s nest, in a tree or on the ground with fledglings or eggs, and the mother brooding over her fledglings or her nest you are not to take the mother from her young. 7 You are to let the mother go, but you are permitted to take her young for yourself; that it may live long.

8 “When you build a new house, you are to make a parapet for your roof,³⁷⁵ that you may not feel guilty or bring blame upon yourself and your house, should anyone fall from your roof.³⁷⁶

9 “You are not to sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed for if this is done the yield of the entire area will be forfeited,³⁷⁷ both the crop that was sown and the yield of the vineyard as well.³⁷⁸ 10 You are not to plow with an ox and a donkey.³⁷⁹ 11 You are not to have mixed fibers³⁸⁰ in your clothing, that has been woven of wool and linen.

12 “You are to make tassels³⁸¹ for the corners of your outer garments.”

g. Sexual Purity 22:13 – 30

13 “If a man takes a wife and has had sexual relations with her and then takes an aversion to her,³⁸² 14 and makes false accusations against her, and brings up shameful charges which are trumped up, slandering and defaming her³⁸³ by saying, ‘I took this woman and when I had sexual relationship with her I did not find the evidence of her virginity,’ 15 the parents of the young woman are then to take the tokens (*or, evidence*) of her virginity, presenting them to the elders of the city, at the gate,³⁸⁴ 16 The father of the young woman will say to the elders? ‘I gave my daughter to this man to be his wife and he had an aversion toward her (*or, hated her*). 17 Take note: he has made derogatory comments against her, saying, ‘I did not find evidence of her virginity in your daughter’³⁸⁵

³⁷³ Verses 5 – 12 deal with matters that are deemed to be unnatural. This is in sharp contrast with the Canaanite religion where ‘the unnatural’ seemed to be the norm. These six laws forbidding the unnatural in regard to relationships. These laws deal with a wider view of what is deemed to be ‘unnatural.’ Cf.; Galatians 3:25 to find Paul’s interpretation of the teaching of Jesus.

³⁷⁴ This phrase is omitted in the LXX.

³⁷⁵ Roofs were flat and were used for storage, a work space, or sleeping when the interior of the house is too hot. Visitors might be entertained on the roof.

³⁷⁶ This same law is found in the Code of Hammurabi (1700 B.C.E.), citing legal and moral responsibility.

³⁷⁷ Literally: “will become holy.” JB: “become consecrated.” Some scholars feel this is based on Egyptian practice. The mixing of crops was banned, thus this is also confiscated.

³⁷⁸ The reason for verses 9 – 12 is unclear.

³⁷⁹ This might be a reference to ‘clean’ and ‘unclean.’

³⁸⁰ The word is not Hebrew. It is an Egyptian ‘loan word.’

³⁸¹ Literally: “twisted threads.” Cf. Numbers 15:37 ff. for a reason for tassels.

³⁸² Literally: “hates.”

³⁸³ Literally: “causing an evil name to go out against her.” Other translations might be: “giving her an evil reputation” or “framing wanton charges against her.” These are also possible translations in v. 17.

³⁸⁴ The gate in the cities of that time was the place where justice was determined, being the ancient equivalent of a present day court room. Court, therefore was held in the open where everyone could hear.

³⁸⁵ This might mean that the hymen had already been broken or he found she was not menstruating and thus felt this was evidence that she was already pregnant.

Yet these are the evidence of my daughter's virginity.' ³⁸⁶ They are then to display the garment (*or, bed covering*) before the elders of the city. ¹⁸ The elders of that city are then to take the man and have him flogged. ¹⁹ In addition he is to be fined one hundred pieces (*or, shekels*) of silver, ³⁸⁷ (which is to be given to the father). Furthermore: during her entire lifetime he will not be permitted to divorce her because he had caused her, as a virgin of Israel, to have an evil reputation ³⁸⁸ She will remain as his wife and he dare not reject ³⁸⁹ her during her lifetime. ²⁰ But if the accusation is true and there is no evidence of the virginity of the young woman to be found, ²¹ the young woman is to be brought to the door of her father's house, and the men of the city are to stone her to death, because she committed a flagrant crime ³⁹⁰ by prostituting herself in her father's house. You are to purge this evil from your midst.

²² "If a man is discovered having had sexual relations with another man's wife, both of them are to die: the man who was having sex with the woman and also the woman. In this way you will purge this evil from Israel. ³⁹¹

²³ "If there is a woman who is engaged (*or, betrothed*) to be married and a man meets her in the city and has sexual relations with her (*or, rapes her*), ³⁹² ²⁴ you are to bring them both to the gate of the city and you are to stone them to death, the young woman because she did not scream for help even though she was in the city, and the man because he seduced another man's wife. Therefore they are both to be stoned to death to purge this evil from your midst.

²⁵ "However, if this occurs in the open country – a man and a young woman who is engaged (*or, betrothed*) and he rapes her, then only the man who raped her is to die. ²⁶ You are not to do anything to the young woman for she has committed no offense that is punishable by death for this case is like that of someone who attacks and murders a neighbor. ³⁹³ ²⁷ In this case he raped her in the country where there was no one to hear her screams for help. There was no one who could have rescued her.

²⁸ "If a man meets a virgin who is not engaged to be married (*or, betrothed*) and seizes her and rapes her, and they are discovered, ²⁹ the man who raped her must give her father fifty shekels (*or pieces*) of silver ³⁹⁴ and she will be his wife because he has violated her. He will not be permitted to divorce her during his lifetime.

²⁹ [H. 23:1] "A man is not to have sexual intercourse with ³⁹⁵ his father's wife (*or, his step-mother*) nor is he to uncover her for she is his father's wife " ³⁹⁶

³⁸⁶ The evidence might be a bed covering or an article of the woman's clothing with a bloody spot because the hymen had been torn.

³⁸⁷ Scholars feel the amount is about 2 ½ pounds of silver.

³⁸⁸ Literally: "caused an evil name to go against a virgin of Israel."

³⁸⁹ Literally: "send her away."

³⁹⁰ Her not having her virginity was tantamount to making her family home a house of ill-repute. The Hebrew word that is used is also the root word for "fool."

³⁹¹ Cf.: footnote 376. Cf.: ANET p. 171.

³⁹² Such an act would be tantamount to adultery since the woman was betrothed and didn't scream for help. To be betrothed was virtually being married. All that had not yet taken place might be the payment of the dowry, but in all understanding they were virtually at the point of the consummation of the marriage. Cf.: ANET pp. 171b, 185b, 181b.

³⁹³ There would have been no one to hear her screams.

³⁹⁴ This was the normal bridal price, thought by scholars to be about 1 ¾ pounds of silver.

³⁹⁵ Some scholars interpret this as "to marry."

<CHAPTER 23>

h, Those Excluded from the Congregation 23:1 – 8

¹ [H.2.] "A man whose testicles are crushed (*or, who has been emasculated*), ³⁹⁷ or, whose penis has been cut off, is not permitted to enter into the assembly ³⁹⁸ of the Lord.

² [H. 3.] "No one of illegitimate birth ³⁹⁹ is to enter into the assembly of the Lord; to the tenth generation: (neither he nor his descendants is to enter the assembly of the Lord).

³ [H. 4.] "No Ammonite or Moabite is permitted to enter the assembly of the Lord, (even to the tenth generation). No one belonging to these nations is to be permitted to enter the assembly of the Lord, ⁴ [H. 5.] because they did not meet you with bread and wine when you were coming out of the land of Egypt and because they had employed Balaam the son of Beor who was from Pethor in Mesopotamia ⁴⁰⁰ to curse you. ⁵ [H.6.] (Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, for the Lord your God gave you this land, blessing it for you because the Lord your God loved you.) ⁶ [H. 7.] You did not desire to establish peace with them, nor did you desire their property at any time. ⁴⁰¹

⁷ [H.8.] "You are not to abhor the Ebonites, ⁴⁰² for they are your relatives (*or, brothers*), nor are you to abhor the Egyptians since you were at one time residents in that land. ⁸ [H. 9.] Those children that are of the third generation who are born to them are permitted to enter into the assembly of the Lord.

j. Cleanliness of the Army Camp 23:9 – 14

⁹ [H. 10.] "When you go to engage in warfare with your enemies and are living in camps you are to keep yourselves from every evil thing. ⁴⁰³

¹⁰ [H. 11.] "If there is any man in your midst who is not clean because of a nocturnal emission he is to go outside the camp: he must not enter the camp. ⁴⁰⁴ ¹¹ [H. 12.] At eventide he is to bathe himself in water, and when the sun goes down, he may return to the camp.

³⁹⁶ This would be considered to be an incestuous marriage. This was practiced by the Hittites. Upon the death of the father his wife(s) became the wife(s) of the oldest son. The Hebrews considered this as violating the father's property. The uncovering: cf. Ruth 3:9, Ezekiel 10:8. Covering with the skirt of one's garment meant to take some one as his wife. Violations of this were not uncommon in polygamous societies. Cf. Genesis 35:22; Ezekiel 22:10. The Hamurabbi Code said both the man and woman are to be bound and thrown into the river to drown. If the husband of the woman wanted to spare his wife that would be acceptable.

³⁹⁷ LXX: "mutilated in his private parts." NEV: "no one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting."

³⁹⁸ The Hebrew word is the one used for "the assembled congregation." In the New Testament it came to signify "the church." Those who had been emasculated had shown their devotion to the gods of the fertility cults: Astarte or Ba'al. The crushing of testicles signified the giving, by a man, of his testicles to the fertility goddess, demonstrating such love for the goddess that he would no longer use them for himself. Similarly, the cutting off of the penis was a sacrifice to the goddess, who could then use, and enjoy his sacrifice. The greater message is: "do not mix religions: no synergism of religions."

³⁹⁹ At this time in history the Hebrew word "*mamzer*" did not seem to have an exact definition. It might mean an illicit union, an incestuous union, or a mixed marriage, as for example -- an Israelite and a Nabataean. These might also be children of cult prostitutes. If so they were conceived and borne into an abhorrent society directly related to the cult of a foreign religion. LXX: "no one born of a prostitute."

⁴⁰⁰ Literally: "Aram-Nahurim," located in northwestern Mesopotamia.

⁴⁰¹ NAB: "never promote their peace and prosperity so long as you both shall live."

⁴⁰² The Ebonites were the descendant of Esau.

⁴⁰³ The holiness of God surely was the motive for cleanliness in the camps. NEB: "you shall guard yourself against any sin." MFT: "anything that is offensive."

12 [H. 13] “You are to provide a place outside the camp,⁴⁰⁵ to be used as a latrine. 13 [H. 14.] You are to have a tool⁴⁰⁶ with your weaponry,⁴⁰⁷ and when you go to sit down outside, you will dig a hole with it, and then turn back and cover up your excrement. 14 [H. 15.] This is to be done because the Lord walks in the midst of the camp, to save you and to hand your enemies over to you. Thus he will not see anything indecent⁴⁰⁸ in your midst and turn away from you.”

k. Various Laws 23:15 – 25:19

15 [H. 16.] “You are not to return slaves to their masters who have escaped,⁴⁰⁹ and come to you. 16 [H. 17.] They are to reside in your presence, in any place they choose - in any of your towns, wherever they please. You are not to oppress them.⁴¹⁰

17 [H. 18.] “No daughters, or sons of Israel are to become cult prostitutes.⁴¹¹ 18: [H. 19.] You are not to⁴¹² bring the fee of a female or male cult prostitute’s wages into the house of the Lord your God in payment for any vow, for both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God.

19 [H. 20.] “You are not to demand interest from another Israelite: interest on money, provisions, or anything that is lent. 20 [H. 21.] Concerning loans to a foreigner you are permitted to demand interest but not to a fellow Israelite. Not demanding interest of a fellow Israelite assures you that God will bless you in all your undertakings⁴¹³ in the land that you are about to enter and possess.⁴¹⁴

21 [H. 22.] “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you are not to delay the fulfillment of your vow, for the Lord your God will surely expect you to fulfill your vow and you would be guilty if you would not fulfill it. 22 [H. 23.] (If you refrain from making a vow you will not incur guilt.) 23 [H. 24.] You must be careful concerning what passes your lips, for you must diligently perform what you vow, doing so as readily as you were when you spoke your vow.

24 [H. 25.] “If you enter your neighbor’s vineyard you are permitted to eat your fill of grapes, as many as you desire, but you are not to put any of the grapes into a container.

25 [H. 26.] “If you enter your neighbor’s standing (*or, ripe*) grain you may pluck the heads of grain with your hand but you are not permitted to put a sickle to your neighbor’s standing (*or, ripe*) grain.”

⁴⁰⁴ Scholars differ concerning the meaning. Some think in terms of nocturnal, involuntary emission of semen. Others feel it means: urinating during the night (*i.e. bedwetting*) or men who are too lazy to go to urinate outside the camp.

⁴⁰⁵ Literally: “for you to go out to.” This is a euphemism for a “latrine.”

⁴⁰⁶ Literally: “a peg.” The Hebrew word “*gated*” seems to mean a special tool or trowel.

⁴⁰⁷ LXX: “a trowel hanging from your belt.”

⁴⁰⁸ Literally: “nakedness of anything.”

⁴⁰⁹ Literally: “delivered himself.”

⁴¹⁰ In the Hammurabi Code a runaway slave is to be put to death. The Hebrew law instructed that slaves were not to be exploited.

⁴¹¹ The Hebrew word for prostitute that is used here is derived from the Hebrew root word “holy”. This signifies not an ordinary prostitute but a sacred prostitute, a common practice in the worship of fertility deities. Cf.: ANET p. 427b,

⁴¹² Hebrew: “dog.” This was the euphemistic expression for a male cult prostitute. MFG: “catamite.”

⁴¹³ Literally: “putting forth your hand.”

⁴¹⁴ During the Middle Ages when Jews were not allowed to own land these two verses were interpreted that Jews were permitted to enter into the banking business.

<CHAPTER 24>

1 “When a man takes a wife and consummates the marriage, and she is not pleasing to him because he finds something objectionable about her,⁴¹⁵ and he writes a certificate of divorce,⁴¹⁶ presenting it to her,⁴¹⁷ and sends her from his house, 2 and she goes to another man’s house, 3 and that second husband also dislikes her and places a certificate of divorce into her hands, and sends her out of his house, (or the second husband dies); 4 her first husband who had sent her away cannot take her back again to be his wife, after she had been defiled;⁴¹⁸ for that is an abomination before the Lord and you are not to bring guilt upon the land which the Lord your God gave you as a possession.

5 “When a man is newly married he is to be exempt from military service, and any other responsibility for other duties, for he is to be free⁴¹⁹ to be at home for one year, to rejoice with his wife (*or, to give happiness to the woman he married*).

6 “No man is to take a millstone,⁴²⁰ or an upper millstone, as collateral,⁴²¹ for he would be taking a life with the millstone as collateral.

7 “If a man is found to have kidnapped someone from among the people of Israel (*or, one of his brothers*),⁴²² taking someone as his slave, or selling him, that thief is to die. In that way you will purge the evil from your midst.

8 “Guard against an outbreak of leprosy (*or, skin afflictions*), and do all that is taught by the priests and obey their orders, being careful to do them. 9 Keep in mind what the Lord did to Miriam along the way as the people left Egypt.⁴²³

10 “When you make a loan to your neighbor, regardless of the kind of loan, you are not to go to his house to get his security.⁴²⁴ 11 You are to stand outside, and the person to whom you made the loan will bring the item to be used as security to you. 12 If he is poor you are not to sleep on the garment he has given you as security. 13 When the

⁴¹⁵ Literally: “nakedness of a thing.” This might possibly be immodest exposure or unusual conduct. It does not mean adultery since that carried the death penalty. TAN: “objectionable.” REB: “but she does not win his favor because he finds something offensive in her.”

⁴¹⁶ Divorce and the reasons for divorce are not clearly defined though several facts are clear. 1. Only for a good cause. 2. The cause is to be brought before an official. 3. A legal document is to be presented. 4. This document is to be placed in the wife’s hand. Divorce was not to be a rash act but must be carried out very carefully. The greatest deterrent to a divorce was financial. The husband had to return the dowry and any other financial transactions made in connection with the marriage. This obscure passage prompted great debates between Rabbis in the history of Judaism. Cf.: Matthew 10:1 – 12; 5:31 – 32; Luke 16:18.

⁴¹⁷ Literally: “giving it into her hand.”

⁴¹⁸ A footnote in TAN says: “I.e. disqualified for him.”

⁴¹⁹ LXX: “guiltless.” Cf.: ANET p. 143d

⁴²⁰ LXX: “upper and lower millstone.” Possibly “hand mill” might be a good translation.

⁴²¹ The ancient mill would have two parts: Upper and lower millstones, one of which moved on the other. Each household needed to have such millstones for the grinding of grain into flour. Bread was a major source of food and with the millstone taken as collateral it was impossible to have the major item of the diet prepared to be eaten. Items that were absolutely needed within a household could not be taken as collateral for a loan.

⁴²² LXX: “a soul, enslaving him.” Cf.: p. 166d

⁴²³ Cf. Leviticus 13:1 – 11; Numbers 12:10 – 15. Leprosy was not a technical term as we might use it in defining an ailment. Any skin diseases, for example, eczema, would fall into the definition of leprosy in Biblical times. Generally those who were described as leprous were thought to be malignant and infectious.

⁴²⁴ The creditor was not permitted to get anything he wanted as security. This assures the privacy of the recipient of the loan and the choice of what article would be used as collateral.

sun goes down you are to return the pledge to him, so he can sleep with his garment to cover him,⁴²⁵ Doing this will be as righteousness before the Lord your God.

¹⁴ “You are not to withhold wages from laborers who are destitute, whether they are an Israelite or a resident alien who lives on land in one of your towns.⁴²⁶ ¹⁵ You will pay them before sun down on the day they work for you, for they are poor and their livelihood depends on that pay. If that is not done they might cry out to the Lord against you and you would be considered to be guilty.

¹⁶ “The parents⁴²⁷ are not to be executed for their children’s crimes, nor are the children to be executed for their parent’s crimes. Each person is only responsible for their personal crimes.

¹⁷ “You are not to deprive justice on behalf of the resident aliens, the orphans, or widows. You are not to take the garment⁴²⁸ of a widow as a pledge. ¹⁸ Bear in mind that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. Because of this I am making this command.

¹⁹ “When you are reaping the harvest in your fields, and you have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you are not to go back and get it. It is to be left for the resident alien, the orphan, and the widow, so the Lord your God may bless you in all that you do. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what remains on the branches. Those olives are to remain for the resident aliens, orphans and widows.

²¹ “When you harvest grapes in your vineyard, do not glean what is left. This is for the resident aliens, orphans and widows. ²² You must remember that you were once slaves in the land of Egypt; therefore I am making this command.”

<CHAPTER 25>

¹ “If there is a dispute between two persons⁴²⁹ and they enter into litigation, their case is decided by the judge, acquitting the innocent one and condemning the one who is guilty, ² Then, if the one who is guilty is deserving of being flogged,⁴³⁰ the judge is to order him to lie down and he is to be beaten in the presence of the judge with the number of lashes that are proportionate to his offense.⁴³¹ ³ Forty lashes are permitted to be administered, no more.⁴³² If more lashes are given, the neighbors will feel humiliated.⁴³³

⁴²⁵ The garment was a blanket like piece of clothing which would be used as a coat in the day time and a blanket at night.

⁴²⁶ Cf.: p. 34c

⁴²⁷ Literally: “fathers.”

⁴²⁸ Cf.: footnote 425.

⁴²⁹ Literally: “men.” While the Romans often beat a person to determine if he was guilty, in Judaism guilt would only be determined by a legal decision and guilt was assigned. The beating within Judaism was limited in the number of stripes that could be administered. This was not the case for the Romans.

⁴³⁰ Literally: “a son of beating.” Flogging was done with a rod. Cf.: Exodus 21:20.

⁴³¹ TAN: “as his guilt warrants.”

⁴³² Forty lashes appear in the Assyrian code. In later Judaism 39 lashes were administered to make sure that, should the count be wrong, the guilty person would not receive more that was permitted. The code of Hammurabi specified 60 lashes. Cf.: ANET p. 175. The criminal was not to be grossly maltreated. To receive 40 lashes in ancient times was a fairly light punishment.

⁴³³ This concept of human dignity in Israel was a noble one.

4 “You are not to muzzle an ox that is treading grain.”⁴³⁴

5 “If brothers reside together and one of them dies, having no son, the wife of the deceased should not go outside [*the family*] to a strange man – her brother-in-law should take her as his wife, having intercourse with her and perform the duties of a husband.”⁴³⁵ 6 The firstborn son she bears will assume the name of the brother who is dead (*or, her first husband*) so his name is not blotted out within Israel.⁴³⁶ 7 If the man is not willing to take his brother’s wife as his own, she is to go to the elders, saying, ‘My husband’s brother refuses⁴³⁷ to perpetuate his brother’s name⁴³⁸ in Israel. He will not perform his duty as my husband’s brother to me.’ 8 The elders of the city then will summon him and speak to him. If he persists in declining to marry her and says, ‘I do not wish to take her,’ 9 his brother’s wife is then to go up to him in the presence of the elders, and, taking off his sandal from his foot, and will spit in his face, and will declare,⁴³⁹ ‘This is what should be done to a man who does not build up his brother’s house. 10 The name of this house⁴⁴⁰ will be called: The house of the removed sandal. This will be its name through all of Israel.’⁴⁴¹

11 “When two men are fighting and the wife of the one who is being beaten up intervenes to rescue him from his antagonist and reaches out and seizes the man’s genitals,⁴⁴² 12 you are to cut off her hand. You are not to pity her.

13 “You are not to have two kinds of weights:⁴⁴³ large and small, in your pouch. 14 You must have completely honest weights. In your house you are not to have two kinds of measures, large and small. 15 You are only to have full, honest weight: and only full, honest measures, if you seek longevity in the land which the Lord your God is giving you. 16 Everyone who does such things, who acts dishonestly are abhorrent to the Lord your God.”⁴⁴⁴

⁴³⁴ This procedure was threshing grain. Cf.: I Corinthians 9:9. Paul uses this line as an *a fortiori* argument. If you deal with an ox in that way you should surely provide sustenance to the one who proclaims the Gospel.

⁴³⁵ This is called the Levirate Marriage Law. Cf.: the marriage of Ruth in the Book of Ruth. During Jesus’ ministry the Sadducees used this law in an attempt to prove that there was no resurrection. Matthew 22:24ff.

⁴³⁶ Presumably if the woman already had a daughter the law would still be in effect for her. She and her brother-in-law must live together as a close extended family to have the true tribal relationship and preserve her first husband’s name and inheritance.

⁴³⁷ LXX: “has not been willing.”

⁴³⁸ Literally: “to raise up a name.” The word “name” is used in the sense of posterity.

⁴³⁹ Literally; “answer to say.”

⁴⁴⁰ Literally: “its name.”

⁴⁴¹ The woman has humiliated her brother-in-law. This was a public show of the feelings of the man as well as that of the woman and the community. To remove the sandal signified that he had abandoned his responsibility and therefore was deserving of the humiliation. The man might have a sense of personal loss: if he had married the woman and had a son. The son would receive property as if from his father, The man might fear that his own son would, thereby inherit less. Cf.: ANET p. 182.

⁴⁴² The sources of societal growth were to be protected. The only penalty was mutilation. This would surely be an extreme case. The end does not justify the means. Presumably her action was well intended but was the punishment intended to protect the modesty of women, or to prevent permanent injury: This seems to call the *lex talionis* into question.

⁴⁴³ Literally: “stones.”

⁴⁴⁴ The intent of this law was to establish high moral standards. It was an attempt to establish commercial standards. Cf: Amos 8:5. Cf.: ANET p. 423. Only one legal size was to be used in transactions.

17 “Remember what Amalek did to you as you traveled along on your way from Egypt. 18 He was undeterred as he attacked you when you were faint and weary, and destroyed all the stragglers who were lagging behind. He did not revere God. 19 Therefore, when the Lord your God has given you rest from all the enemies who surround this land which the Lord your God has given you as your patrimony you will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. But: you are not to forget Egypt.”

<CHAPTER 26> ⁴⁴⁵

6. *Two Liturgical Confessions 26:1 – 15*

a. *Ceremony at the Presentation of First Fruits 26:1 - 11*

1 “When you come into the land which the Lord your God has given you as a heritage, and have taken possession of it, living in it, 2 you are to take some of the fruit of the ground which you harvest from your land, which will have been given you, by the Lord your God, placing it in a basket and you are to go to the place which the Lord your God will choose to be his home, where he will reside. 3 [You are to go to the priest ⁴⁴⁶ who is in office at that time and say to him: ‘Today I declare to the Lord ⁴⁴⁷ my ⁴⁴⁸ God, that I have come into the land which the Lord my God vowed to my ancestors that it would be given to the people of Israel.’ ⁴⁴⁹ 4 The priest then will take the basket from your hand and place it before the altar of the Lord your God.] ⁴⁵⁰

5 “You are then to respond to the Lord your God, saying, ⁴⁵¹ ‘My ancestors were nomadic Arameans who went down to Egypt and resided there as aliens. They were few in number but became a great, powerful nation having a large population. 6 The Egyptians treated us brutally and humiliated us, imposing cruel slavery upon us. 7 We then called out to the Lord, the God of our ancestors and the Lord heard our pleas, seeing our plight, our toil, and our oppression, 8 and the Lord brought us out of Egypt by his powerful hand, and outstretched arm, and did astonishing deeds, signs and miracles. 9 He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10 Be assured: today I am bringing the first of the fruits of the ground which you, O Lord have given me.’ ⁴⁵² You are then to set down the basket before the Lord your God, bowing down before the Lord your God. ⁴⁵³ 11 Following this you, along with the Levites, and resident aliens who reside among you, will rejoice before the Lord your God for all the bounty that has been given to you and your household.”

⁴⁴⁵ These two rituals were constantly in danger of being influenced by the practices of the Canaanites since they were originally agricultural rituals.

⁴⁴⁶ This would be the chief priest of the central sanctuary.

⁴⁴⁷ Some scholars feel, based on a study by Von Nadi, that these are words spoken by a cultic group within Israel.

⁴⁴⁸ So: LXX. Hebrew: “your.”

⁴⁴⁹ The reason for the basket of fruit is not clear. Possibly it was to be given to the priest who gives instructions and then it is given back to the donor who then presents the basket while he is speaking.

⁴⁵⁰ Some scholars feel verses 3 & 4 are a later interpolation to reconcile the difficulties with verse 10.

⁴⁵¹ Some scholars feel from this point to the end of verse 10 is poetry. Cf.: CEV.

⁴⁵² The LXX adds: “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

⁴⁵³ There is a slight difference between the instructions in v. 4 and v. 10. In v. 4 the basket is given to the priest. In v. 10 the donor has the basket and presents it to the Lord. Presumably the basket was given to the priest in v. 4 and then returned to the donor for the actual ceremony in vss. 5 – 10. Cf.: footnote 449.

b. Confession for Use with the Three Year Tithe 26:12 – 18

¹² “When you have paid the tithe ⁴⁵⁴ of your produce in the third year, (which is the year of the tithe), giving it to the Levites, the resident aliens, orphans and widows, that they will be able to have food within your towns, and be well fed, ¹³ you are to make a declaration before the Lord, saying: ‘I have removed the sacred portion from my hand, and have given it to the Levites, the resident aliens, orphans and widows, in accordance to the command you have given. I have never transgressed any of your commandments, nor have I forgotten any of them. ¹⁴ I have not eaten of the tithe when I was in mourning, ⁴⁵⁵ nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, ⁴⁵⁶ and no part of it was left as food for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the Lord our God and have done everything in accordance to the commandments you have given me. ⁴⁵⁷ ¹⁵ Look down from your holy, heavenly habitation, and bless your people, Israel, and the ground which you have given us, as you vowed to our ancestors – a land flowing with milk and honey.”

7. Concluding Exhortations 26:16 – 17

¹⁶ “Today the Lord your God commands you to obey these rules and laws. Therefore you are to be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷ You have obtained the Lord’s agreement ⁴⁵⁸ that he is your God, and that you will be obedient to his ways, and keep his rules, laws, and ordinances, and will obey his voice. ⁴⁵⁹ ¹⁸ Today the Lord has declared that you are the nation which he possesses, as he had promised you, and that you must keep his commandments. ⁴⁶⁰ ¹⁹ Further, the Lord has declared that he will grant you a place that is high above all the nations that he has made: in praise, fame, and honor, and that you will be a nation that is holy to the Lord your God, as he has declared.”

<CHAPTER 27> ⁴⁶¹

D. Ceremony to be Instituted at Shechem 27:1 – 20

1, Public Exhibition of the Law 27:1 – 10

¹ Now Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, “Keep all the commandments that I have given you today! ² On the day you cross the Jordan, entering the land which the Lord your God gives you, ⁴⁶² you are to set up large stones, plastering them with plaster (*or, whitening them with lime*), ³ and you are to inscribe all the words of the law on them. When you pass through the Jordan, as you enter into the land which the Lord your God has given you: a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord your God of your ancestors had promised you; ⁴⁶³ ⁴ when you will have crossed the Jordan you will set up some stones, concerning which I command you today – on Mount

⁴⁵⁴ Cf.: Deuteronomy 14:23 – 29.

⁴⁵⁵ JB: “I have not eaten any bread of mourning.”

⁴⁵⁶ This portion of v. 14 is very uncertain.

⁴⁵⁷ Some scholars feel the 3 negative aspects of the confession may have come from Canaanite practice.

⁴⁵⁸ The Hebrew is somewhat uncertain.

⁴⁵⁹ This verse might be translated as “You have affirmed today that the Lord is your God, that you will walk in his ways, that you will observe his laws and his commandments and ordinances and obey them.”

⁴⁶⁰ NRSV: “Today the Lord has obtained your agreement, to be his treasured people, as he promised you and to keep his commandments.”

⁴⁶¹ Chapter 27 seems to interrupt the context, yet further study seems to say it is a continuation of the thoughts in chapter 26, though using a different format.

⁴⁶² The Hebrew construction of vss 2 – 4 is uncertain.

⁴⁶³ Literally: “spoke to you.” Some scholars feel v. 3 is a gloss.

Ebal,⁴⁶⁴ and you are to cover them with plaster (*or, whiten them with lime*).⁵ [You are to build an altar to the Lord your God there. This altar is to be built of stones that are not dressed by any iron tools to shape the stones.⁴⁶⁵ ⁶ (You are to build an altar to the Lord your God of unhewn ⁴⁶⁶ stone), and are to offer burnt offerings to the Lord your God on it. ⁷ You are to offer sacrifices of peace offerings⁴⁶⁷ and you will eat them as you rejoice before the Lord your God.]⁴⁶⁸ ⁸ You are to write a clear record, on the stones, writing all the words of this law.”⁴⁶⁹

⁹ Moses and the levitical priests⁴⁷⁰ said to all Israel: “Silence! Hear, O Israel: Today you have become the people of the Lord your God. ¹⁰ You are therefore to obey the Lord your God, observing his commandments and laws which I have presented to you.”⁴⁷¹

1. Liturgical Ceremony 27:11 – 26

¹¹ On that same day Moses charged the people, saying: ¹² “When you will have passed over the Jordan, these will stand on Mount Gerazim for the blessing of the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. ¹³ The following will stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.⁴⁷² ¹⁴ Then, in a loud voice the Levites will declare to all the Israelites:⁴⁷³

¹⁵ “Cursed is anyone who makes an idol or casts a metal image, or anything else that is abhorrent to the Lord, an item made by hand by a craftsman, and sets it up in secret. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁷⁴

¹⁶ “Cursed is anyone who insults his parents. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁷⁵

¹⁷ “Cursed is anyone who removes his neighbors landmark. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁷⁶

¹⁸ “Cursed is anyone who misdirects a blind man on the road. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁷⁷

¹⁹ “Cursed is anyone who subverts justice done to the resident alien, orphan and widow. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁶⁴ An important trade route went between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerazim. The location is about 40 miles north of Jerusalem. Mount Gerazim was the location of the worship center for the Samaritans.

⁴⁶⁵ The use of iron tools implied dependence and help from other nations since the Iron Age had not yet arrived for the Israelites. It would be considered shameful to use objects from non-Hebrew sources to build an altar to God.

⁴⁶⁶ Literally: “whole.”

⁴⁶⁷ TAN: “offerings of well-being.”

⁴⁶⁸ Whole burnt offerings were to be totally consumed by fire. Peace offerings were largely consumed by the worshippers. Some scholars feel the verses in brackets are a later integration taken from a different source.

⁴⁶⁹ Literally: “engraving clearly and well.” The method used was Egyptian – writing on a plastered wall instead of engraving into stone.

⁴⁷⁰ Not all Levites were ‘temple’ priests. All priests, however, were Levites.

⁴⁷¹ Verses 9 & 10 clearly show the important relationship between covenant and obedience.

⁴⁷² The sons of Jacob from Leah and Rachel would be on Mount Gerazim, while the sons of his secondary wives (*or, concubines*) together with Reuben and Zebulun were to be on Mount Ebal. How this was to be organized is not revealed.

⁴⁷³ Cf.: Joshua 8:30 – 35.

⁴⁷⁴ TEB: “We agree.” MFT: “So be it.”

⁴⁷⁵ Cf.: Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18 – 21.

⁴⁷⁶ Cf. Deuteronomy 19:14.

⁴⁷⁷ Cf.: Leviticus 19:14. The construction of verses 17 & 18 is uncertain.

20 “Cursed is anyone who has sexual relations with his father’s wife (*or, step mother*)⁴⁷⁹ for he has violated his father’s rights.⁴⁸⁰ All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁸¹

21 ”Cursed is anyone who has sex with any kind of animal. All the people are to say “Amen.”⁴⁸²

22 “Cursed is anyone who has sexual relations with his sister; or with his father’s or mother’s daughter. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁸³

23 “Cursed is anyone who has sexual relations with his mother=in-law. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁸⁴

24 “Cursed is anyone who secretly kills his neighbor. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁸⁵

25 “Cursed is anyone who takes a bribe to kill an innocent person [*that the murder might be acquitted*]. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’⁴⁸⁶

26 “Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of these teachings and observes them. All the people are to say, ‘Amen.’”⁴⁸⁷

<CHAPTER 28>⁴⁸⁸

E. Declaration of Blessings and Curses 28:1 – 68

1. The Blessings 28:1 – 11

1 “If you fully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being very careful to obey all his commandments, which I have presented⁴⁸⁹ as God’s commands today, the Lord God will set you high above all other nations of the earth. 2 All these blessings will be attained by you and become a part of your being if you obey the voice of the Lord your God:

3 “You will be blessed in the city and also blessed in the field.⁴⁹⁰

4 “You will be blessed with children, harvests, livestock: this blessing also extends to both your cattle and our flocks.

5 “You will be blessed in your basket and your kneading bowl.

6 “You will be blessed when you enter and when you leave (*or, in every activity*).

7 “The Lord will cause your enemies who are aggressive to be defeated before you; they will come to attack but will be routed before you, fleeing in seven different directions. 8 The Lord will declare a blessing on your granary,⁴⁹¹ and on all your

⁴⁷⁸ Cf. Deuteronomy 14:17; 24:17. MFT: “tampers with the rights.”

⁴⁷⁹ Literally: “his father’s skirt.” This is a euphemism for the invasion of the privacy of sexual relations which are solely between the father and step-mother, not the step-mother and the father’s son.

⁴⁸⁰ Literally: “he has uncovered her who is his fathers.”

⁴⁸¹ Cf.: Deuteronomy 22:30; Leviticus 18:8; 20:11. ANET: pp. 172, 173b.

⁴⁸² Cf.: Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:23. ANET: p. 190.

⁴⁸³ Cf.: Leviticus 18:9; 20:17. Cf.: ANET: p. 173b. CB: “with his full sister or with his half sister.”

⁴⁸⁴ Cf.: Leviticus 20:14.

⁴⁸⁵ Cf.: Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 24:17; Numbers 35:30 – 31.

⁴⁸⁶ Cf.: Exodus 23:7. LXX: “to smite the life of innocent blood.” NEB: “Him who has no feud.”

⁴⁸⁷ Cf.: Galatians 3:10. With the procedure outlined in this chapter there was no excuse by which one could elude punishment by saying, ‘I did not know.’

⁴⁸⁸ This chapter continues the previous chapter but adds to the curses that will befall the people of Israel. Moses hopes to impress on Israel’s attention the totally the totally important message of doing what is pleasing to God.

⁴⁸⁹ TAN: “I enjoin you.” It is to be noticed that the blessings and curses have to do with the security and mutual cleanliness in the land God is giving.

⁴⁹⁰ Verses 3 – 6 are not quite poetry. Rhythmic prose might be a better description.

⁴⁹¹ The Hebrew word “*asam*” describes a place where gain is stored.

undertakings. He will bless the land that the Lord your God is giving you. 9 The Lord will consecrate you to himself, as he promised you on oath, if you keep these commandments, for he is your God and you are to live in the way your God desires. 10 All the nations of the earth will recognize you as the chosen of the Lord and will revere you. 11 The Lord will make you exceedingly prosperous ⁴⁹² in the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground. The Lord God vowed this to your ancestors that you would receive this. 12 The Lord will open the storehouse of his bounty, the heavens, granting you the seasonal rains for your land and bless all your undertaking. You may lend to many nations, but you are not to borrow. ⁴⁹³ 13 The Lord will make you the head, not the tail, for you will always be on top, never at the bottom (*or, You will always be in the position of leadership*), assuming that you will always obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I am presenting to you as commands today, by faithfully obeying them. 15 Do not deviate to either the right or left concerning these words which I have commanded today.”

2. The Curses 28:15 – 68 ⁴⁹⁴

15 “But: If you do not obey ⁴⁹⁵ the Lord your God, and are not careful to obey all his commandments, and ordinances which I command you today, then all these curses will befall and overtake you.

16 “A curse will occur in both the city and the field.

17 “A curse will occur in your basket as well as in your kneading bowl.

18 “A curse will occur on the children who are born, your harvests, the offspring of your livestock, and your flock.

19 “A curse will occur on all your movements – when you enter or leave your home. ⁴⁹⁶

20 “The Lord will send curses: calamity, panic, and frustration in all that you will undertake ⁴⁹⁷ – until you are destroyed because you will have forsaken me. 21 The Lord will cause pestilence to cling to you until he has consumed you from the land which you are now entering to take possession. ⁴⁹⁸ 22 The Lord will afflict you with consumption, fever, inflammation, and sword, ⁴⁹⁹ along with blight and mildew, all of which will pursue you until you perish. 23 The sky above you will give the appearance of bronze and the earth under you will be like iron. 24 The Lord will cause the rain to be like powder and the dust of heaven will fall upon you until you are destroyed.

25 “The Lord will cause you to be routed by your enemies: you will go out one way against them and then flee seven ways. You will be repugnant ⁵⁰⁰ to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 Your corpses will be carrion for all the birds of the air and there will be no

⁴⁹² Literally: “The Lord will grant you enough prosperity.” TAN: “astonishingly prosperous.”

⁴⁹³ Verse 12 is similar to an Ugaritic text which speaks of the might of Ba'al.

⁴⁹⁴ The unbalance of blessings and curses has caused some scholars to establish theories about the unbalance. Among these theories is the possibility of accretion over the course of time.

⁴⁹⁵ Literally: “listen to the voice.”

⁴⁹⁶ These curses cover every area of an individual's life. All who do not obey will feel the wrath and power of the will of God. Some scholars feel these last verses of this chapter are later interpretations of the curse.

⁴⁹⁷ Literally: “put forth.” The anger of the Lord for disobedience will provide physical and psychological problems for those who disobey.

⁴⁹⁸ Disaster after disaster will take place. These disasters are declared to be of epidemic proportion.

⁴⁹⁹ An alternate vocalization can read “drought.”

⁵⁰⁰ Literally: “an object of horror.” In vss. 25 – 37 the arrangement of words is called chiasmatic. Words are repeated but in several different ways.

one to frighten them away. ²⁷ The Lord will afflict you with eczema, scabies, ulcers, scurvy and itch, as you experienced in Egypt, and there will be no one to heal you. ⁵⁰¹ ²⁸ The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness and mental confusion. ²⁹ You will grope about, even at noon day, as does a blind man in his darkness, and you will not be able to find your way. You will be taunted, abused and robbed, with no one to assist. ⁵⁰² ³⁰ You will be betrothed to a wife but some other man will ravish her. You will build a house and you will not reside in it: you; you will plant a vineyard, and you will not enjoy its fruit. ⁵⁰³ ³¹ Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will not eat it. Your donkey will be stolen in plain sight and will not be returned to you. Your sheep will be given to your enemies and there will be no one to help you. ³² Your sons and daughters will be handed over to someone else within your sight, and you will strain your eyes searching for them, but you will be powerless to prevent it. ³³ A nation which you have not known will eat the fruit raised on your ground and the result of your labors and you will continually be exploited, abused and crushed, ³⁴ to the point that you will become mad by what your eyes will see. ³⁵ The Lord will strike you on the knees, and on the legs with grievous blows that will never heal, and also cause malignant boils to form, from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head.

³⁶ “The Lord will bring you and your king whom you have selected to rule over you to a nation neither you nor your ancestors have heard of or seen, and there you will serve other gods, made of wood and stone. ³⁷ You will become objects of horror, a proverb and a byword among all the nations where the Lord will lead you,

³⁸ “You will scatter great amounts of seed on your fields but you will gather little during your harvest, for the locust will come will have devoured it. ⁵⁰⁴ ³⁹ You will plant vineyards and prune them but you will not drink the wine or eat the grapes because the grape worm will eat them. ⁵⁰⁵ ⁴⁰ You will have olive trees throughout your region but you will not anoint yourselves with oil, for your olives will not develop but will drop off. ⁴¹ [You will have sons and daughters, but they will not remain yours, for they will be taken into captivity.] ⁵⁰⁶ ⁴² A swarm of cicadas will take over all your trees and the fruit of your ground. ⁴³ The resident aliens who are a part of your population will rise higher and higher above you, while you will sink lower and lower. ⁴⁴ They will loan you funds but you will be unable to repay: they will be the head and you will be the tail.

⁴⁵ “All these curses will come upon you, pursuing you and overtaking you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the Lord your God, by observing the commandments and decrees that he commanded you. ⁴⁶ They will be upon you as an ominous example for all times.

⁵⁰¹ This verse speaks of disease of the body. The following verse speaks of disease of the mind. Scholars have problems with the translation of the Hebrew words for all the ailments since the Hebrew words are not technical medical, but general words for the problems. The above is an attempt to present the general concept of the Hebrew words.

⁵⁰² The blind man, having brought to this sad state by disobedience of the law of God, is now at the mercy of those who live outside the law. The horror of blindness could be a blessing. They could not see their children being taken away into slavery.

⁵⁰³ In verses 30 – 33 the crimes are continued – literally – “all the days.”

⁵⁰⁴ Verses 38 - 44 provide new curses dealing with the economy: agriculture and economy.

⁵⁰⁵ Locusts and grape worms will decree disaster. Disease in the olive trees will also afflict these disobedient people.

⁵⁰⁶ Some scholars fell this is a later interpolation.

47 “Because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully and gladly, for the abundance of everything, 48 therefore you will serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you. Your serving will be in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and extreme destitution. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until you are destroyed. 49 The Lord will bring a distant nation, from the end of the earth, to swoop down on you like an eagle, a nation whose language you are unable to understand. 50 This will be a ruthless nation showing no respect for those who are old, or favor for those who are young. 51 It will consume the young ⁵⁰⁷ of your livestock and of your ground until you are destroyed, leaving you neither grain, wine, nor oil, nor the increase of your cattle and flocks, until it has made you perish. ⁵⁰⁸ 52 They will besiege all your towns ⁵⁰⁹ until your loftiest, most fortified walls, in which you trust, have come down throughout your land: it will besiege you in all your frontier towns throughout the land that the Lord your God has given you. 53 You will be reduced to the point that you will eat your own babies: ⁵¹⁰ the flesh of your sons and daughters whom the Lord our God has given you, in the sieges and in the destruction by your enemies which will destroy you. 54 The most gentle, and refined man among you will begrudge the food eaten by his brother, his wife, whom he loves, and the last of his remaining children, ⁵¹¹ 55 so that he will not give any of them of the flesh of his children whom he is eating, because there is nothing else that remains for him. In a time of these desperate straits the enemy’s siege will destroy you and all your towns. 56 The woman who is most tender and delicate: so gentle and delicate that she will not venture to place her foot on the ground, will begrudge food to her husband whom she loves , her own son, and daughter, 57 and hide from them the afterbirth that she expelled from her womb, ⁵¹² and the newborn, since she will eat them in secret, for lack of anything else, for in such desperate straits the enemy’s siege will destroy her and all that remains for her.

58 If you are not careful to observe all the words that are written in this book, being in awe of this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God, 59 then the Lord will overwhelm you and your descendants with strange and lasting plagues and malignant and chronic diseases. 60 and he will bring back again all the diseases you endured in Egypt which you have dreaded. They will inflict you. 61 Every other malady and affliction, even though it is not written in this book of the Law, will be inflicted on you by the Lord until you are destroyed. 62 In spite of the fact that you were once a nation with a large population, as large in number as the stars in heaven, you will have few survivors, because you did not obey the Lord your God. 63 Just as the Lord took delight in making you prosperous and sizable in numbers, so too the Lord will take delight in destroying and exterminating you from this land which you are about to enter. 64 The Lord will scatter you among all the nations from one end of the earth to the other, and you will serve other gods, made of wood and stone, gods of which neither you nor your ancestors ever had known. 65 Your life will not be easy among these nations and there will be no rest for the soles of your feet. The Lord will give you an agitated heart, eyes

⁵⁰⁷ Literally: “the fruit of your livestock.”

⁵⁰⁸ The foreign nation will consume the produce: meat, crops, and wine. The locusts and other creatures will devour what remains of the harvest.

⁵⁰⁹ Literally: “gates.”

⁵¹⁰ Literally: “the fruit of your own womb.”

⁵¹¹ Verses 54 – 57 make cannibalism seem even more terrible because it is mentioned almost casually.

⁵¹² Literally: “between her feet.”

that search, and a despondent spirit. ⁶⁶ Your life will be suspended in front of you, and you will be filled with dread by night and have no confidence in yourselves. ⁶⁷ In the morning you will say, 'I wish it was evening,' and in the evening you will say, 'I wish it was morning,' because of the dread that your heart will feel, and the sights your eyes will behold. ⁶⁸ The Lord will bring you back in galleys ⁵¹³ to Egypt, a journey which I had declared you should not make again: and there you will try to sell yourselves to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will want to buy you."

<CHAPTER 29>

iii Third Address: The Covenant with God 29:1 – 30:20 ⁵¹⁴

A. Israel Exhorted to accept the Covenant 29:1 - 15

¹ [H. 28:69.] These are the words of the covenant ⁵¹⁵ which the Lord commands to establish this covenant between the people of Israel [*and their God*] in the land of Moab in addition to the covenant that had been made in Horeb. ² [H. 1.] Moses summoned all the people of Israel, saying, "You have seen all that the Lord has done – before your eyes – in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his leaders ⁵¹⁶ and to the entire land: ³ [H. 2.] the great trials ⁵¹⁷ which you witnessed with your own eyes, the signs, and the outstanding wonders, ⁵¹⁸ ⁴ [H. 3.] but to this day the Lord has not given you the mind ⁵¹⁹ to understand, eyes to see, and ears to hear. ⁵ [H. 4.] [I have led you for forty years ⁵²⁰ in the wilderness. The clothes you wore did not wear out, nor did the sandals you were wearing wear away. ⁶ [H. 5.] You have not eaten bread and have not drunk wine or strong drink, that you might know that I am the Lord your God.] ⁷ [H. 6.] ⁵²¹ When you came to the place of Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, came out to attack you. We defeated them ⁸ [H. 7.] and took their land, giving it as a patrimony to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. ⁹ [H. 8.] Therefore be careful to listen to the words of this covenant faithfully, that you may succeed (*or, deal wisely*) in all that you do.

¹⁰ [H. 9.] "All of you have taken your stand ⁵²² before the Lord your God, the tribal leaders, ⁵²³ the elders, and all your officers – all men of Israel ¹¹ [H. 10.] -- your little ones, your wives, and the resident aliens who are in your camp, (even those who cut ⁵²⁴ your

⁵¹³ Presumably these are the slave ships of the Phoenicians. REB: "The Lord will bring you back sorrowing to Egypt by the very road of which I have said, 'You shall not see that road again.'"

⁵¹⁴ In the Hebrew text the first verse of this chapter is the concluding verse of the previous chapter. The question is: Does this verse present a summary of the previous chapter or is it an introduction to chapter 29.

⁵¹⁵ In Hebrew the expression which might be translated as "to make a covenant" is always "to cut a covenant." In ancient times when a covenant was accepted an animal was always killed as a part of the ritual, hence "to cut a covenant."

⁵¹⁶ Literally: "servants." REV: "courtiers."

⁵¹⁷ Some scholars translate this as "wondrous feats."

⁵¹⁸ Some scholars translate this as "prodigious signs and marvels."

⁵¹⁹ Literally: "heart." In ancient times the Hebrew people thought of the heart as the seat of understanding.

⁵²⁰ Is it Moses who led the people – or, was it God? The sentence in brackets designates that apparently it was Moses who interjected a personal comment.

⁵²¹ The message of God through Moses resumes.

⁵²² The Hebrew is reflexive.

⁵²³ So: LXX. Hebrew: "your heads of your tribes."

⁵²⁴ The Hebrew root word is related to Arabic, where it would mean "to gather." Those in a servile position are also included and need to obey the word of Moses as well. The relationship of the people who covenant with God is that of suzerainty. God is sovereign. The people receive God's goodness and grace and are obligated to respond.

wood and those who draw your water), ⁵²⁵ 12 [H. 11.] That you may enter ⁵²⁶ into this sworn covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God makes with you today, 13 [H. 12.] that each one might establish ones self today as one of God’s people, and thus God will be one’s [*personal*] God, as has been promised, for he spoke previously to your ancestors: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; 14 [H. 13.] Nor is it with you only that I make this sworn covenant; ⁵²⁷ 15 [H. 14.] but also with those who are not here with us today (*or, the future generations*)..

B. Punishment for Disobedience 289:16 – 29

¹⁶ [H. 15.] [“You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which we passed. ⁵²⁸ 17 [H. 16.] You have seen detestable things (*or, fetishes*): idols of stone, silver, and gold, which were among them.] ⁵²⁹ 18 [H. 17.] It is possible that there are some among you, male, female or tribes, whose interest ⁵³⁰ is already turning from the way of God to serve the gods of these nations. It is possible that such a root is already sprouting poison within your midst. ⁵³¹ 19 [H. 18.] All those who, hear the words of this oath say, ‘I will be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart,’ ⁵³² thus bringing disaster on moist and dry alike. ⁵³³ 20 [H. 19.] The Lord will be unwilling to pardon, for the anger and resentment of the Lord will flare up against them, ⁵³⁴ and the curse written in this book will rest upon them, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. 21 [H. 20.] The Lord will single them out from all the tribes of Israel for the evil, in accordance with the curses against the covenant, which are written in the book of the Law. 22 [H. 21.] The next generation of children who will succeed you, as well as the aliens among you who come from different countries, will see the devastation of that land and the affliction with which the Lord has afflicted it. 23 [H. 22.] The entire land has its soil burned and ruined with sulfur and salt (*or, burning salt*). [Nothing is planted, nothing sprouts, the land is unable to support vegetation, for it is like the reign of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, ⁵³⁵ which the Lord destroyed in his fierce wrath. 24 [H. 23.] All the nations will wonder, ‘Why has the Lord done this to this land? What caused this outpouring of anger?’ 25 [H. 24.] They will deduce, ‘It must have befn because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord the God of their ancestors, which had been made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. 26 [H. 35.] They followed other gods, worshiping them, gods of which they had no knowledge, gods who their Lord had not allotted to them, 27 [H. 26.] so the anger of he Lord flared up against that land bringing

⁵²⁵ Cf.: ANET p. 144b.

⁵²⁶ Literally: “that you may pass over into the covenant of God.” A quite literal translation would be: “for your crossing over into the covenant of the Lord your God.” Each generation must review the covenant for themselves and make it their own.

⁵²⁷ TAN: “I make this covenant with its sanctions not with you alone.”

⁵²⁸ Cf.: ANET p. 299b.

⁵²⁹ Some scholars feel vss. 16 – 17 are a later interpolation.

⁵³⁰ Literally: “heart.”

⁵³¹ LXX: “lest there be in you a root springing up with gall and bitterness.”

⁵³² LXX: “but good will happen tome for I will walk in the error of my heart. May holy things happen to me.”

⁵³³ The Hebrew is unclear. A possible translation might be: “all plants will be watered or thirsty.”

⁵³⁴ Literally: “blaze smoke.” LXX: “flame out.”

⁵³⁵ Cf.: Genesis 19:24 – 44. Cf.: ANET p. 300. A similar description is found in the Annals of Ashurbanipal.

with it the malediction written in this book. ²⁸ [H. 27.] The Lord uprooted them from their land in his wrath and cast them into another land where they are to this day.

²⁹ [H. 28.] [“The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things that are revealed belong to us, and to our descendants forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”] ⁵³⁶

<CHAPTER 30>

C. Repentance and Forgiveness 30:1 – 10

¹ “When all these things come upon you, the blessings and the curses, which I have set before you, ⁵³⁷ and you meditate on them ⁵³⁸ among the nations where the Lord your God has driven (*or, banished*) you, ² and you return to the Lord your God, ⁵³⁹ you and your children, and you obey ⁵⁴⁰ his voice (*or, heed his command*) in all that I commanded you today, with all your heart and soul, ⁵⁴¹ ³ then the Lord your God will restore your fortune ⁵⁴² and have compassion on you, and he will gather you ⁵⁴³ again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. ⁴ If you are outcast in the most distant parts of the earth, ⁵⁴⁴ the Lord your God will gather you together, ⁵ and the Lord your God will bring you back to this land, possessed by your ancestors, that you may possess it and you will become more numerous than they ever were.

⁶ “In addition, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart, ⁵⁴⁵ as well as the hearts of your descendants, that you will love ⁵⁴⁶ the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live. ⁷ The Lord your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you. ⁵⁴⁷ ⁸ Then you will again obey the voice ⁵⁴⁸ of the Lord your God, and keep all the commandments which I have given you today. ⁹ The Lord your God will make you exceedingly prosperous ⁵⁴⁹ in all the work you undertake, in the fruit of your body, ⁵⁵⁰ in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. The Lord will take delight in having you prosper, just as he took delight in having your ancestors prosper, ⁵⁵¹ ¹⁰ provided you obey the voice of the Lord your God and keep his commands.”

⁵³⁶ Some scholars feel this verse is a later interpolation.

⁵³⁷ Cf.: 28:15 – 68.

⁵³⁸ Hebrew literally: “cause them to return to your heart.” LXX literally: “receive them into your heart.”

⁵³⁹ The Hebrew word “*shubh*” refers not simply to turning around by a change of attitudes resulting in repentance, but it involves a total turning around—much like the Greek word “*metanoia*.”

⁵⁴⁰ Literally: “listen to his voice.”

⁵⁴¹ Despite the curses of chapter 29, there is hope for a new covenant and wonderful restoration.

⁵⁴² Some translators use: “your captivity.”

⁵⁴³ LXX: “heal your iniquities.”

⁵⁴⁴ Literally: “sky.”

⁵⁴⁵ This figure of speech is: to dissolve an inner resistance so the people of God can love the Lord unconditionally. God has the power to accomplish, and the willingness to accept change.

⁵⁴⁶ Literally: “for your life’s sake.”

⁵⁴⁷ The change comes when Israel is preferred to the agent who accomplished her ruin.

⁵⁴⁸ Literally: “listen to the voice.”

⁵⁴⁹ Literally: “make you have excess for good.”

⁵⁵⁰ LXX: “the offering of your belly.”

⁵⁵¹ The outcome of obedience is blessing.

D. The Meaning of the Word 30:11 - 14.

¹¹ “This commandment which I am commanding you today is surely not unattainable for you, nor is it too baffling. ⁵⁵² ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say: ‘Who will go up to heaven for us, to get it, that we might be able to hear it and observe it?’ ⁵⁵³ ¹³ No, it is not beyond the sea, that you should say: ‘Who will cross over to the other side of the sea for us that we can hear it and observe it?’ ⁵⁵⁴ ¹⁴ Be assured, the word is very near you: it is in your mouth and in your heart so you can observe it (*or, spoken and understood*).” ⁵⁵⁵

E. The Choice is Between Life and Death 30:15 - 20.

¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today, [*to be acted upon*]: life and property, death and adversity (*or, misfortune*).⁵⁵⁶ ¹⁶ If you obey the commandment of the Lord your God ⁵⁵⁷ that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God and walking in his ways, and obey his commandments, laws and rules, then you will live and increase in population, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are about to enter, taking possession of it. ¹⁷ However, if your heart turns away, and you will not listen, but are led astray, worshipping other gods, and serving them, ¹⁸ I then declare to you that you will perish, not living long on this land which you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life, so that you and your descendants may live, ⁵⁵⁸ ²⁰ loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and attaining old age, so that you may live in the land which the Lord vowed he would give to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” ⁵⁵⁹

<CHAPTER 31>

IV. Appendix 31:1 – 34:12

A. Parting Words of Moses 31:1 – 8

¹ So Moses continued ⁵⁶⁰ to speak these words to all the people of Israel. ² He said, “I am one hundred and twenty years old today ⁵⁶¹ and I am no longer able to go out and come in. The Lord has said to me, ‘You will not go over (*or, cross*) the Jordan.’ ³ The Lord your God, himself, will go before you; he will exterminate the nations before you so that you will dispossess them. Joshua will go over as the leader, as the Lord has spoken. ⁴ The Lord will do to them as he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and do to their land as he did when he destroyed them. ⁵ The Lord will give them ⁵⁶² over to you, and you will do to them according to all the commandments which I have commanded

⁵⁵² Cf.: Romans 10:6 – 8.

⁵⁵³ This expression is also found in the Tel-el-Amarna letters. Egypt 14C. B.C.E.

⁵⁵⁴ Cf.: ANET p. 92 The Tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh.

⁵⁵⁵ Literally: “In your mouth and in your heart.” It is readily spoken and easily remembered.

⁵⁵⁶ Cf.: ANET p. 371.

⁵⁵⁷ LXX: “If you obey the commandments.”

⁵⁵⁸ Cf.: ANET p. 93a.

⁵⁵⁹ The ultimate decision of the people is one of free choice on their part. The choice is clear: good over evil; life over death, blessing or curse.

⁵⁶⁰ LXX: “went to speak.” The Hebrew word is unclear as to meaning. Perhaps the formal address had ended and Moses continued, making some additional closing remarks.

⁵⁶¹ In Egypt the life span of a wise man was considered to be one hundred ten.

⁵⁶² I.e. the nations.

you. ⁶ Be strong, have courage, ⁵⁶³ do not be fearful or in dread of them for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.”

⁷ Moses then summoned Joshua, and said to him in the presence of all the people, “Be strong and resolute! You must go with this nation, leading them into the land which the Lord has vowed to their ancestors that this land would be given to them and you will be the one who will ⁵⁶⁴ put them in possession of this land ⁵⁶⁵ which the Lord had vowed to their ancestors that this would become their possession. ⁸ It is the Lord who goes before you, he will be with you and not fail you or forsake you. Do not be disheartened by anything.”

B. Seventh Year Covenant Ceremony 31:9 – 13

⁹ Moses wrote this law, giving it to the priests, the descendants of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to the elders of Israel. ¹⁰ Moses commanded them: “At the end of seven years ⁵⁶⁶ at the scheduled year of release, ⁵⁶⁷ at the festival of the booths (*or, Succoth*), ⁵⁶⁸ ¹¹ when all Israel comes before at the Lord your God at the place at which he will select, you will read the law ⁵⁶⁹ before everyone, in their hearing. ¹² Assemble the people, men and women, along with the resident aliens, who live in your towns, that they may hear and lean to revere the Lord your God and be careful to do all that is required within this law, ¹³ that their children who have known and learned about it may hear and learn to revere the Lord your God as long as you live in the land that you are crossing over the Jordan to possess.” ⁵⁷⁰

C. The Divine Charge to Moses and Joshua 31:14 – 23

¹⁴ The Lord said to Moses, “Be assured that the time of your death is drawing near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting (*or, the tabernacle*) that I may come to you.” Moses and Joshua went out, presenting themselves in the tent of meeting. ⁵⁷¹ ¹⁵ The Lord appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud and the pillar of cloud stood before the door of the tent. ⁵⁷²

¹⁶ The Lord said to Moses: “Take note: You will soon be resting with your ancestors. Then these people will begin turning to foreign gods, ⁵⁷³ who are in their midst: the gods of the land into which they are going, thereby breaking the covenant which I had made with them, ¹⁷ My anger will be hot against them at that time, and I will forsake them, hiding my face from them, for they will become easy prey for their

⁵⁶³ Strength and courage was to come from God and were used to bring about change and leadership. The Israelites had not had much strength and courage. They had rejected the leadership of Moses who urged them to move into the southern area of Palestine and instead wandered about in the Negeb for 40 years. Moses is giving another reminder that they will not fail if they are faithful in their obedience to God.

⁵⁶⁴ The Hebrew word form is hiphil: “you will bring:.”

⁵⁶⁵ The greater the privilege the greater the responsibility.

⁵⁶⁶ Cf.: 15:1 – 7.

⁵⁶⁷ NEB: “the year of relaxation.”

⁵⁶⁸ This feast took place in September - October: the 15 – 22 days of Tishri. This was one of three major feasts for which all males of Israel were required to travel to the place of worship. Cf. Exodus 23:14 – 19. The three feasts were Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.

⁵⁶⁹ At this pilgrimage festival the entire law was to be read. In that way every generation learned of the law that had been given by Moses. The very first of these pilgrimages met at Shechem.

⁵⁷⁰ Verses 1 – 13 have all the marks of a suzerainty treaty.

⁵⁷¹ Some scholars feel vss. 14 - 23 are a later interpolation.

⁵⁷² Some scholars feel v. 23 should be inserted here to make a better read.

⁵⁷³ NRSV: :orisutyte tgensekves to the foreign gods.”

enemies, and trouble will come upon them, so that they will say on that day, ‘It must be because God has forsaken (*or, is not among*) us that these troubles have happened to us.’¹⁸ I will surely hide my face from them from that time on, due to all the sins which they have done, because they have turned to other gods.¹⁹ Now therefore, write down this song⁵⁷⁴ and teach it to the people of Israel, put it on their lips, that their song might be a witness for me against the people of Israel,²⁰ for when I have brought them into this land flowing with milk and honey which I had promised to their ancestors, and they will have eaten their fill, and have grown fat, they will turn to other gods, serving them and thus despises me breaking my covenant.²¹ When a host of disasters and misfortunes overtakes them the son will comfort them as a witness (for I realize that even now it lives, unforgotten, on the lips⁵⁷⁵ of their descendants,’) ²² Moses wrote this song on that very day, and taught it to the people of Israel.

²³ Then the Lord commanded Joshua the son of Nun with this charge, saying, “Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the children of Israel into the land which I have promised to do. I vowed I would give them this land. I will be with you.”⁵⁷⁶

D. The Law to be Placed in the Ark 31:24 – 29

²⁴ When Moses had finished writing the words of the law into a scroll (*or, book*),²⁵ Moses commanded the priests (*or, the Levites*) who carried the ark, saying: ²⁶ “Take the book of the Law, placing it within the Ark of the Covenant of God, that it may remain there among you. ²⁷ I realize how rebellious and stubborn⁵⁷⁷ you people are against the Lord and how much more you will be thus, following my death.⁵⁷⁸ ²⁸ Assemble all the elders of the tribes⁵⁷⁹ in my presence, along with the officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing that they can call heaven and earth as witnesses against the people, ²⁹ for I know that after my death you will act corruptly, for you will turn aside from the way that I have commanded you. In the future you will experience trouble, because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord and will provoke his anger through your actions.”

E, The Song of Moses 31:30 – 32:47

³⁰ [H. 32:1.] Then Moses wrote the words of this song until it was completed, and presented it so that the entire assembly of the people heard it.⁵⁸⁰

<CHAPTER 32>

1 [H. 2.] “Listen, O heavens, and I will speak.
 Let the earth hear these words I utter.
2 [H. 3.] May my teaching⁵⁸¹ drop like the rain,

⁵⁷⁴ NEB: “Therefore write down this rule of life [*or, song*].”

⁵⁷⁵ Literally: “mouths of its seed.”

⁵⁷⁶ One of the deepest feelings of loneliness is that of being conscious of leadership.

⁵⁷⁷ TAN: “defiant and stiff-necked you are even now.”

⁵⁷⁸ The law was to be placed in the ark along with the Ten Commandments. Cf. Exodus 25:16; I Kings 8:9.

⁵⁷⁹ LXX: “heads of the tribes, the elders, judges, and officers that I may speak to their ears all that these words are to witness to them.”

⁵⁸⁰ The date of when the writing of this song of Moses has been disputed. Relatively recent scholarship notes some archaic words that were used in the 11 C. B.C.E. which would place those words in the time of Samuel. Many scholars feel it is an interpolation. There is no agreement among scholars as to the date of the writing. Some feel it is from the hand of Moses, others feel it is a later interpolation. This song was intended to be part of the covenantal renewal ceremony, for in singing it to the people of Israel, they would certainly be involved within the circle of the participants in the covenant and its implications.

⁵⁸¹ KJV: “doctrine.” TAN: “discourse.”

- my speech condenses like the dew,
as the gentle rain on the new growth.
- 3 [H. 4.] I will proclaim the name of the Lord,
and ascribe greatness to our God!
- 4 [H. 5.] “The Rock: ⁵⁸² His deeds are perfect:
all his ways are just. ⁵⁸³
A God of faithfulness who never fails.
He is just and upright.
- 5 [H. 6.] Yet his degenerate children
have dealt falsely with him:
a perverse and crooked generation
(*or, they are no longer his children*). ⁵⁸⁴
- 6 [H. 7.] Is this the way we repay the Lord?
You foolish and unwise people!
Is he not the father who created us:
the one who made you and established you? ⁵⁸⁵
- 7 [H. 8.] ”Remember the times in the past,
consider the years of many generations. ⁵⁸⁶
Ask your father, and he will inform you,
or, your elders, and they will tell you.
- 8 [H. 9.] When the Most High ⁵⁸⁷ allotted territory to the nations,
and established the nationalities,
he assigned boundaries for the people
in relationship with the number of the sons of God. ⁵⁸⁸
- 9 [H. 10.] The Lord’s own portion among the nations is Israel,
Jacob being his allotted heritage.
- 10 [H. 11.] ”He sustained him ⁵⁸⁹ in the desert region,
and in the howling wasteland of the wilderness.
He shielded him, and cared for him,
guarding him, as the apple of his eye.
- 11 [H. 11.] Like the eagle that incites its fledglings
by hovering, with its wings, over the brood,
bearing them aloft on its pinions, ⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸² Most scholars feel this is a reference to the Almighty One.

⁵⁸³ LXX: “and his ways are judgments.”

⁵⁸⁴ Hebrew uncertain.

⁵⁸⁵ The people have forgotten their *raison d’etre*. History is not just interest in that which is old, but a knowledge of the past and the connection that God will continue providing for the guiding of his people.

⁵⁸⁶ LXX: “ages of ages.”

⁵⁸⁷ Hebrew: “*elyon*.” This word is used only here in Deuteronomy.

⁵⁸⁸ So: LXX. MT: “sons of Israel.” CEV: “gave land to every nation. He assigned a guardian angel to each of them, yet the Lord takes care of Israel.” Dead Sea Scroll 4QDeut: “the number of their gods.”

⁵⁸⁹ So: LXX. Hebrew: “he found.”

- 12 [h. 13.] The Lord alone guided him,
there was no foreign god with him.⁵⁹¹
- 13 [H. 14.] “He caused him to reside on the high places of the earth,
and he feasted on the produce of the land,
nourishing him with honey from the crag,
and oil from the flinty rock.
- 14 [H. 15:] Curds⁵⁹² from the herd and milk from the flock,
with the best of lambs and rams,
bulls and goats from Bashan,
along with the finest wheat,
and from the juice of the grape you drink wine.
- 15 pH. 16.] ”But Jeshurum (*or, Jacob*) became fat and unruly,⁵⁹³
You became fat, bloated and sleek,
forsaking God who made him,
and spurned the Rock of his salvation.
- 16 [H/ 17.] They provoked me to anger with strange gods,
with abhorrent meaningless practices he was made angry.⁵⁹⁴
- 17 [H. 18.] They sacrificed to demons which are no gods,
deities that had been unknown,
new gods who had arrived recently,
who were unknown (*or, not adored by*) to their ancestors.
- 18 [H. 19.] You neglected the Rock that begot you,
and forgot the God who gave you life.
- 19 [H. 20.] “The Lord saw this and spurned you,
because of the provocation of your sons and daughters,
20 [H. 21.] and he declared, ‘I will hide my countenance,
I will see what their end will be,
for they are a perverse generation:
untrustworthy children, having no loyalty.
- 21 [H. 22.] They provoked me to jealousy with what is no god,
exasperating me with their idols,’
So I will stir them to jealousy,
with those who are no people,⁵⁹⁵
provoking them with a foolish nation.
- 22 [H. 23.] A fire is ignited by my anger,
and it burned to the depths of Sheol:⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁰ The thought seems to be that the eagle taught its young to fly by throwing it out of the nest and then swooping down and allowing the eaglet to alight on its back and return it to its nest.

⁵⁹¹ The LXX adds: “and Jacob ate and was full. “

⁵⁹² LXX: “butter.”

⁵⁹³ The Dead Sea Scrolls, Samaritan Torah and LXX add : “Jacob ate his fill.”

⁵⁹⁴ Strange, abhorrent and meaningless allude to foreign gods – a vast contrast to the understanding and worship of God.

⁵⁹⁵ Note the play on words: “No gods” and “no people.”

devouring the earth and its increase,
and igniting the foundations of the nations.

- 23 [H. 24.] “I will heap evils on them,
sending my arrows against them:
24 [H. 25.] the growing hunger through famine,
the burning heat of fever,
the ravages of disease,
and I will send the teeth of beasts against them,
and the venom of things crawling in the dust.
25 [H. 26.] In the open the sword will bring bereavement,
and in the enclosed places there will be terror,
destroying both young and old – male and female –
nursing children and those of venerable age.
26 [H. 27.] I thought of scattering them,⁵⁹⁷
blotting them from human memory,
27 [H. 28.] but I feared provocation by the foes,
for their adversaries would not understand,
saying, ‘We are the triumphant ones!’
It was surely not the Lord who accomplished this.’
- 28 [H. 29.] “They are a nation that lacks in discernment.
29 [H. 30.] If they had any discernment they would have understood;
they just do not realize what the outcome will be.
30 [H. 31.] How could one have routed a thousand,
and two put a multitude into flight,
unless the Rock (*or, Lord*) had sold them:
the Lord having given them up?
31 [H. 32.] Their rock (*or, god*) is certainly not like our God,
Our enemies are fools.⁵⁹⁸
- 32 [H. 33.] ”Their vine comes from Sodom,
and from the terraces of Gomorrah,
their grapes are poisonous,
their clusters are bitter!
33 [H. 34.] Their vine possesses the poison of serpents,
and the venom of the asp.
- 34 [H. 35.] “Is not this laid in store for me?
firmly included in my storehouse?
35 [H. 36.] Vengeance belongs to me as well as recompense,
for the time will come when their foot will slip.
Because the day of their calamity is near,

⁵⁹⁶ Sheol means the abode of the dead.

⁵⁹⁷ The Hebrew is unclear.

⁵⁹⁸ The Hebrew is unclear.

For their doom will come swiftly! ⁵⁹⁹

- 36 [H. 37.] “The Lord will vindicate his people
and have compassion on them,
when he sees that their power is gone
and neither bond nor free remain.
- 37 [H. 38.] Then he will say, ‘Where are your gods?
The rock in which you took refuge?
- 38 [H. 39.] Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
and who drank the wine of their libations?
Let them rise up and help you,
let them be your protection!
- 39 [H. 40.] “Be certain of this: it is I. I am he,
and there is no god beside me,
I kill and I am able to make alive.
I wound and I heal,
There is no one that can escape from my hand.
- 40 [H. 41.] I raise my hand to heaven,
and I vow: ‘As I live forever:
- 41 [H. 42.] When I have the edge of my flashing sword,
and my hand takes hold on judgment,
I will return vengeance on my adversaries,
and I will wreak vengeance on my foes.’
- 42 [H. 43.] “I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
and my sword will devour flesh---
with the blood of the slain and the captives,
from the long-haired enemy. ⁶⁰⁰
- 43 [H. 44.] Give praise, O heavens, ⁶⁰¹ his people
worship him, all you gods!
For he will avenge the blood of his children,
and will return vengeance on his adversaries,
he will repay those who hate him,
and make atonement for his people”

44 [H. 45.] Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Joshua the son of Nun. ⁶⁰² 45 [H. 46.] When Moses had completed the recitation of all of these words ⁶⁰³ to the entire nation of Israel, 46 [H. 47.] he told them,

⁵⁹⁹ Before the people could expect to experience the compassion of God again they had to have a desire for self-assurance and become totally separated from the pagan gods.

⁶⁰⁰ Death, disease and defeat are declared in this passage as equal parts of God’s dealing with his people and those who are not an evidence of God’s losing his power.

⁶⁰¹ So: Dead Sea Scroll & LXX. Hebrew: “nations.”

⁶⁰² So: Dead Sea Scroll, Samaritan Torah, & Vulgate. Hebrew “Hoshea.” The translators of the TEV imply that Moses and Joshua recited the song together.

⁶⁰³ 1QDeut. & LXX add: “angels came to him and worshiped.” Cf. Hebrews 1:6

“Take to heart all the words that I have given you in witness against you today! Accept them as a command to your children, so that they may diligently obey all the words of this law. ⁴⁷ [H. 48.] This is most important to you! ⁶⁰⁴ This deals with your very life. You will live long in the land which you are about to enter and possess when you cross over the Jordan.”

F. Moses Commanded to Prepare for Death 32:48 – 52

⁴⁸ [H. 49.] The Lord said to Moses on that very day, ⁴⁹ [H. 50.] “Ascend the mountain of the Abarim range, to Mount Nebo, ⁶⁰⁵ which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and view the land of Canaan which I am giving to the people of Israel as their possession. ⁵⁰ [H. 51.] It is here that you will die, ⁵¹ [H. 52.] because you broke faith with me at the waters of Meribath-kadesh in the land of Zizi, in the wilderness, and failed to revere my holiness among the Israelites. ⁵² [H. 53.] You will see the land from a distance but will not enter into this land which I am giving to the Israelites.

<CHAPTER 33>

G. The Blessing of Moses 33:1 - 29

¹ This is the blessing with which Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel prior to his death. ⁶⁰⁶ ² He said:

“The Lord came from Sinai,
and dawned upon us from Seir; ⁶⁰⁷
where he shone forth from Mount Paran.
With him were myriads of holy ones; ⁶⁰⁸
a host of his own at his right.

³ He indeed loved his people (*or, O favorite among peoples*),
all his holy ones who were consecrated to him,
as they followed in your steps,
receiving direction from you.

⁴ When Moses declared a law to us,
as a possession for the assembly of Jacob, ⁶⁰⁹
⁵ the Lord became king in Jeshurun (*or, the land of Jacob*),
when the leaders of the people gathered –
the united tribes of Israel.”

⁶ May Reuben live, and not die out,
in spite of being few in number.”

⁶⁰⁴ Literally: “not a trifling matter.”

⁶⁰⁵ Mount Nebo is one of the peaks of the Abarim range, located NE of the Dead Sea.

⁶⁰⁶ The poem does not really fit the context. It was perhaps included because it was a well known poem that was felt should be included in the Book of Deuteronomy. Some scholars feel it was written as late as the 10th century, others feel it was written and well known at the time of the entrance into the land of promise.

⁶⁰⁷ So: LXX, Syriac, Vulgate & Targum. Hebrew: “them.”

⁶⁰⁸ The Hebrew text is not clear. This translation is based on the LXX, Syriac and Vulgate. The Hebrew text is: “he came from Ribebboth-kodesh.”

⁶⁰⁹ Verses 4 – 5 seem incomplete, making them difficult to reconstruct and translate. Some scholars feel verse 21b should be an interpolation at this point.

7 This he said concerning Judah,
 “O Lord, hear the voice of Judah.
 Return him to his people,
 making his hand strong for him,
 that it can be a help against his adversaries.”

8 Of Levi he said,
 “Grant Levi your Thummim
 and your Urim ⁶¹⁰ – to be given to your loyal one,
 the one you tested at Massah,
 with whom you contested at the waters of Merom. ⁶¹¹

9 who said to his parents,
 ‘I do not regard them,’
 thus ignoring his relatives,
 and denying his own children.
 They, however observed your word,
 and kept your covenant.

10 They will teach Jacob your ordinances,
 and Israel your law,
 they will place increase before you, ⁶¹²
 and whole burnt offerings on your altar.

11 Bless his substance, O Lord,
 and accept the work of his hands;
 crush the loins of his adversaries:
 those who hate him, -- that they may not
 rise up against him.”

12 Of Benjamin he said,:
 “The beloved of the Lord rests safely,
 he is surrounded, all day long,
 by the Almighty One. ⁶¹³
 as he rests between his shoulders.”

13 Of Joseph he said,
 “His home is blessed by the Lord,
 with the choicest gifts of heaven above,
 and from the depths of the earth,
 the choice fruits of the sun,
 and the rich yields of the months –

14 with the finest produce of the ancient mountains,
 15 and the abundance of the everlasting hills,

⁶¹⁰ This was the breastplate worn the high priest. It was used in consulting God concerning decisions that were difficult and needed the direct help of the Almighty.

⁶¹¹ Cf.” Exodus 17:1 – 7’ Numbers 20:2 - 13.

⁶¹² Literally: “they will place increase in your nostrils.”

⁶¹³ Literally: “above him.”

16 with the choice gifts of the earth in its fullness,
and the favor of the one who resides on Sinai,
Let them come to the head of Joseph,
the brow of the prince of all his brothers
17 The firstborn male (*or, bull*) – majesty is his.
His horns are the horns of a wild ox.⁶¹⁴
With these he gores the nations among his brothers,
driving them to the ends of the earth.”

[These are the myriads of Ephraim,
and the thousands of Manasseh.]⁶¹⁵

18 Of Zebulun he said,
“Rejoice Zebulun, in your going out,
and Issachar, in your tents,
19 They call nations to your mountain,
where they offer correct sacrifices,
for they suck the affluence of the seas,
and the hidden treasure of the sand.”⁶¹⁶

20 To Gad he said:
“Blessed be he who enlarges Gad!
Gad crouches like a line,
tearing at an arm and scalp.
21 He chooses⁶¹⁷ the best for himself,
for a commander’s allotment is reserved for him.
He came to the head of the people,
and he carried out the justice of the Lord.”

22 Of Dan he said,
“Dan is a lion’s cub,
for he leaped forth from Bashan.”⁶¹⁸

23 Of Naphtali he said,
“O Naphtali, satisfied with favor,

⁶¹⁴ LXX: “unicorn.”

⁶¹⁵ Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation.

⁶¹⁶ The text of the LXX differs. “To Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out and Issachar in his tents. They will utterly destroy the nations. You will call men there, and there offer the sacrifices of righteousness, for the wealth of the sea will suckle you, and so will the markets of those that reside by the sea shore.”

⁶¹⁷ The Hebrew is uncertain.

⁶¹⁸ Dan had been assigned tribal land but due to the pressure of the Philistines the tribe moved to the far north of the county. Cf. Judges 18. Some scholars feel this is a later interpolation. Some scholars feel the word translated as “Bashan” here should be translated as “viper.” Assuming this is a later interpolation the word “viper” would better explain Dan’s fleeing from the power of the Philistines. Bashan was not located in the vicinity of Dan, since it is another name for Moab.

and full of the blessings of the Lord,
possess the west and the south.”

24 And of Asher he said,
“Most blessed of the sons of Asher,
may you be the favorite of his brothers,
and may you dip your foot in oil.
25 Your bars ⁶¹⁹ are iron and bronze,
and as your days, so may your strength be.”

26 “There is no one like God, O Jeshurun (*or, the land of Jacob*),
who rides majestically through the heavens
to help you through the skies.

27 He subdues the ancient gods,
shatters ancient powers (*or, gods*),
driving out the enemy before you,
and has declared: ‘Destroy!’

28 As a result Israel will dwell safely
without trouble in Jacob’s abode, ⁶²⁰
in a land of grain and wine,
where the heavens drop down dew.

29 Happy are you, O Israel. Who is like you?
You are a nation saved by the Lord,
the shield of your help,
and the sword of your triumph!
Your enemies will come crawling to you,
and you will tread on them.”

<CHAPTER 34>

H. The Death of Moses 34:1 – 12

¹ Moses went up from the plains ⁶²¹ of Moab to Mount Nebo ⁶²² to the headland of Pisgah ⁶²³ which is opposite Jericho. The Lord showed Moses the entire land, from Gilead to Dan, ² all of Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, the land of Judah, as far as the Mediterranean, ³ the Negeb, ⁶²⁴ and the plain – that is the valley of the Jericho, (the city of palm trees), as far as Zoar. ⁶²⁵ ⁴ The Lord told Moses, “This is the land which I vowed would belong to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have let you see it with your own eyes but you are not permitted to go there.” ⁵ So Moses, the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab in accordance

⁶¹⁹ LXX: “sandals.”

⁶²⁰ The Hebrew is questionable. Literally: “the fountain of Jacob alone.”

⁶²¹ TAN: “steppes.” This eastern plain of the Jordan Rift lies north east of the Dead Sea. The area is located in the present day country of Jordan.

⁶²² Mount Nebo (Jebal Neba) is 2600 feet in altitude. The view is enhanced since the valley beyond it is at or below sea level.

⁶²³ Ras es-Siaghah.

⁶²⁴ The Negeb is the area south of Beer-sheba to Kadesh-barnea.

⁶²⁵ Zoar would be the approximate southern end of Dan.

with the word of the Lord. ⁶²⁶ 6 [*The Lord*] ⁶²⁷ buried him in the valley of the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor, ⁶²⁸ but no person knows the exact place of his burial to this day. ⁶²⁹ 7 Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died: his eyesight had not failed and his vigor had not diminished. 8 The people of Israel bewailed (*or, wept for*) Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended. ⁶³⁰

⁹ Joshua, the son of Nun, was filled with the spirit of wisdom, (for Moses had laid his hands on him), and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses.

¹⁰ Since then there has never been a prophet to arise in Israel who could be compared with Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. ¹¹ There has been no one comparable to him with all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent to him to do to Pharaoh, and to all his servants and all those who resided in the land of Egypt, ¹² along with all the mighty deeds and terrifying powers which Moses brought into the sight of the people of Israel. ⁶³¹

⁶²⁶ Cf.: ANET p. 143b.

⁶²⁷ Literally: "he."

⁶²⁸ Thus Moses was buried in the same valley in which he gave his final speech.

⁶²⁹ This was intentional, having an air of mystery in the Hebrew wording.

⁶³⁰ The bewailing (*or, mourning*) for Aaron, Moses' brother also lasted 30 days. Cf.: Numbers 20.

⁶³¹ Moses was not only a prophet but he was God's spokesman.