

Deuteronomy

Introduction to the Book of Deuteronomy

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Introduction to the Book of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 1–34

Introduction: Thirty-eight years previous, the children of Israel, gen X, stood at the brink of the Land of Promise and suddenly broke into tears, whining about the giants in the land. For their lack of faith, God destroyed that generation almost in its entirety, leaving less than a handful of believers from them. The next generation, the generation of promise, now stood at the edge of the Land of Promise, with the same concerns. They had to go **into the land and face the same peoples. However, the true fight is the spiritual one. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness;** against the spiritual [forces] of evil in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12). The people of Israel are related by covenant to the true God, the Maker of the Universe. If God be for us, who can stand against us? (Rom. 8:31b). But God demands obedience and exclusive devotion to Him.

The emphasis of the book of Deuteronomy is upon the common man and his entrance into the land. The laws and regulations presented herein deal more with the lay person than with the priests. Most of the regulations concerning the priests have to do with the support and distribution of the Levites and the priests.

Authorship: It is possible that Joshua wrote the first five verses of Deuteronomy and it is very likely that he pieced together the last three or so chapters, interweaving it with explanatory narrative. However the majority of Deuteronomy is messages delivered by Moses to the people of Israel. These messages are said to be spoken by Moses in Deut. 1:5 31:9, 22, 24 and this is attested to throughout Scripture by Old Testament writers (1Kings 2:3 8:53 2Kings 14:6 18:12), by the Apostles (Acts 3:22–23 7:37–38 Rom. 10:19) and by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 19:7–8 Mark 10:3–5 12:19 John 5:46–47). *To assert that He Who is “the Truth” believed Deuteronomy to be the work of Moses and quoted it expressly as such, though it was in fact a forgery introduced into the world seven or eight centuries after the Exodus, is in effect, even though not in intention, to impeach the perfection and sinlessness of His nature, and seems thus to gainsay the first principles of Christianity.*¹ Because

¹ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 269.

the bulk of Deuteronomy is verbal, its literary style, delivery and vocabulary are markedly different from the previous four books. This does not indicate that authorship should be ascribed to anyone other than Moses.

The authorship of Deuteronomy has been disputed by the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, which came out of the German universities a century ago. They claimed that writing did not exist during the time of Moses and that the purpose of the book of Deuteronomy was to glorify the priesthood at Jerusalem and to centralize the worship at Jerusalem. Several scholars have concurred, placing the date of the writing of Deuteronomy somewhere between 680–621 BC by a prophet who hid the book in the temple so that it would be found and adhered to. Then, in 621 BC, Hilkiah found this book, gave it to Josiah, and Josiah used this bogus book in order to bring about the religious reform found in 2Kings 22–23. Now let's be realistic: if there was a prophet who was so intent upon religious reform, he certainly would not have been willing to wait several decades in order for religious reform to occur. Furthermore, why would a person so devious and duplicitous be interested in religious reform? How can these scholars even call this man a prophet? Furthermore, this book is littered with prophecies and a stern warning that if a prophet predicts something and it does not come to pass, then he should be executed as a false prophet. How could someone so duplicitous write such accurate prophecies? Furthermore, archeology has shown that writing predated Moses by easily a millennium. And finally, if the purpose of this book as a forgery was to centralize worship in Jerusalem and to glorify the priesthood, then why is the priesthood only alluded to only a few times and why is Jerusalem not even mentioned at all by name? In fact, Luther wrote: that Deuteronomy was: *...a compendium and summary of the whole law and wisdom of the people of Israel, wherein those things which related to the priests and Levites are omitted, and only such things included as the people generally required to know.* Vestiges of this corrupt theory can be found throughout certain reference books; I find it in the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia* once and awhile, and throughout the otherwise excellent *BDB Lexicon*. One reason to write a bogus book of Scripture would be to convey new and different ideas—ideas opposed to known revelation. A good case in point is the *Book of Mormon*. However, as we examine this book verse by verse, what will become apparent is that *there is not the slightest trace, throughout the whole book, of any intention whatever to give a new or second law.*² Some claim that this book was written by an earnest student of Isaiah, but one of his repeated topics is the *remnant* of Israel, a phrase never found in this book; and one of Isaiah's favorite titles for God is *the Holy One of Israel*, also not found in this book. My point is that the idea this book is a forgery, written almost a millennium after the fact in order to achieve religious reform is illogical from any standpoint. This is simply a Satanic attack upon God's Word. If you deny that Moses wrote this, then you deny that this book is God's Word and that every reference in the Old Testament and New to Moses as the human author indicates that those books are not God-breathed either. The fact of Mosaic authorship is more than just a minor detail.

There are three basic reasons which we will examine: Deuteronomy as a whole is completely consistent with the times of Moses as to geography, local color, nations. (2) Deuteronomy continually asserts the authorship of Moses, which is confirmed throughout the Scripture. (3) The material herein contained are appropriate for a nation on the brink of entering into the Land of Promise; and not with a nation in the desert, a nation occupying the land, or a nation divided in the land. It is a military book of law, a *code of conquest* designed to take a people into a land to conquer it.³ Let's take this in more detailed points as to why it is most logical for Moses to be the author:⁴

1. The book of Deuteronomy continually claims to be the words of Moses (Deut. 1:1 4:44 29:1). Continually, the use of the 1st person singular is tied to Moses and continually, we are told that Moses spoke these words to Israel (Deut. 1:16, 18 3:21 4:5, 14 5:31 29:5). No other book in Scripture so clearly identifies its author as does this book. To assert otherwise is to completely negate the divine inspiration of God's Word. That is, God's Word cannot contain a flaw (other than material which has been added or changed in Scripture); if this were not the words of Moses, then it would be clear that this cannot be God's Word.
2. There is a distinct paternal vein running throughout the book of Moses, which belies Mosaic authorship. Moses has led these young people, many of them since birth and the balance since their teens and younger. Their parents have died out. There are no elders to consult, they have no parents or grandparents to go to. Therefore, we see continued heartfelt warnings of Moses as one would prepare one's own child upon separation.

² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 845.

³ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.; Hendrickson Publishers, ©1956, Vol. II, pp. 836–837.

⁴ The bulk of these points were taken from *When Critics Ask*; Geisler and Howe, ©1992, Victor Books, pp. 113–114.

3. Joshua, the successor to Moses, also testifies that this is the writing of Moses, in Joshua 1:7 and throughout the last couple of chapters of Deuteronomy, assuming that Joshua pieced those chapters together (Deut. 31:30 32:44 33:1).
4. Other writers of Old Testament Scripture also attributed the authorship of Deuteronomy to Moses (Judges 3:4 2Kings 14:6 Ezra 3:2 Neh. 1:7 Psalm 103:7 Dan. 9:11 Mal. 4:4). To deny that these are the words of Moses is to deny that the rest of the Old Testament is God's Word. Furthermore, we have many references to Deuteronomy or to the laws found therein in books which were written after the actual date of Deuteronomy, but prior to the date that Deuteronomy was supposedly forged (Joshua 6:17–18 7:25 8:27, 29–30, 32, 34–35 10:40 11:12, 15 Judges 1:17 17:13) Hosea 4:4 5:10 8:13 9:3 Amos 2:6–8). See either the exegesis of these passages or the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, pp. 116–117 for the exact ties to Deuteronomy. Now how exactly to you make references to a book which has not been yet written or how do you follow the laws and precepts of a book which has not yet been written?
5. As has been mentioned, the most quoted book in the New Testament is Deuteronomy, with such phrases as *Moses truly said* (Acts 3:22), *Moses said* (Rom. 10:19), and *it stands written in the Law of Moses* (1Cor. 9:9). To deny the authorship of Moses is to deny the divine nature of New Testament Scripture.
6. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe, also quoted from the book of Deuteronomy more often than any other Old Testament book and attributed authorship to Moses when He said *Moses permitted* (Matt. 19:8), *Moses said* (Mark 7:10) and *Moses wrote* (Luke 20:28). To deny that Moses wrote Deuteronomy is tantamount to denying that Jesus Christ is God, our Savior. Most of you have been sheltered and don't realize that this sort of teaching exists—that Deuteronomy was not written by Moses. In fact, there are many seminaries which teach this blasphemy. The reason we are spending time with it is that the inspiration of God's Word, the divine nature of Jesus Christ and our salvation all hang upon the authorship of Moses of this book. Remove Moses as the author and this calls into question the most basic issue of our Christian life—our salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Now perhaps you see why this is an important issue.
7. We would naturally expect this book to be filled with issues and experiences personally important to Moses. He refers to Egypt as [a house of slaves](#) (Deut. 5:6b); the burden of being the leader and judge of this people (Deut. 1:9–18); the viciousness of the attack of Amalek is recalled (Deut. 25:17); the murmurings of the people against him (Deut. 9:22–24); the construction material of the ark of the covenant (Deut. 10:3); and, of course, there is the mention of those close to him: Joshua (Deut. 3:21, 28 31:3, 7, 14, 23), Aaron (Deut. 9:20 10:6) and Miriam (Deut. 24:9). As has been mentioned the bulk of the first four chapters are historical and throughout the rest of the book, there are personal references and remembrances. No later prophet comes anywhere close to mentioning this much about Moses in his own work; and no later prophet reflects upon this history with the close, personal involvement that we see in Deuteronomy.
8. An example which should be dealt with separately is in Exodus, Moses prays on behalf of the people of Israel when they sinned with the golden calf—however, nothing is said of Aaron. However, in Deut. 9:20, Moses mentions that he prayed on behalf of Aaron as well. This is the sort of additional information we would expect from Moses, but not from a writer from a millennium later. *Could all these personal Mosaic features have been introduced by some reformer, priest, prophet, or Levite, in order to invest his collection of laws with a Mosaic dress? Is it probable that such an author would have succeeded in establishing a correspondence so natural, so close in manifold and minute particulars, and so profound? Or is it more reasonable to thin that this result proceeds from a true historical connection between the book of the law and the man whose name it has always borne? On every hand if Deuteronomy is acknowledged to be a great book which exerted great influence, should it not also have a great author? Who can fill that place so worthily as the old and tried leader who brought the Israelites out of Egypt, shared their experiences and laid the foundations of their faith?*⁵
9. Other than one remark that Moses was the meekest man on the earth, nowhere throughout the entire Pentateuch do we find a single verse praising Moses until Deut. 34:10 in his eulogy.
10. Another remarkable proof of Mosaic authorship is the sudden intrusion of history when dealing with the Law, e.g., the hiring of Balaam to curse Israel (Deut. 23:4) and the evil attack of the Amamlekites (Deut. 25:17). We would expect to find these things mentioned in the historical section; however, they are so fresh on the mind of Moses that they come out in the area dealing with Law.

⁵ *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 115.

11. There are geographical and historical information which suggests the writer was a person who observed these things firsthand. Manley wrote: *The account of the journeyings in chapters i-iii is altogether realistic and quite unlike an introduction prefixed to a collection of old laws; it bears every sign of originality. The views described and the features of the omissions are also significant: there is not hint of Jerusalem, nor of Ramah, dear to Samuel's heart, not even of Shiloh, where the Tabernacle came to rest. Everything points to its historical character and early date.*⁶ The detailed geographical observations would be superfluous in a document designed to set religious precedence.
12. Throughout Deuteronomy, there are fervent commands to destroy the Canaanites (Deut. 7:16, 22) and to completely blot out Amalek (Deut. 25:17–19),⁷ commands which would have been archaic if written in the time of Josiah.
13. There are also historical significance to the early portion of Deuteronomy which would have been meaningless had they been written hundreds of years later. Moses mentions the areas where the kings of Bashan dwelt in Deut. 1:4; kings who disappeared from history. Moses comments about the Emmin, a people who also disappeared after his time (Deut. 2:10–11; see Gen. 14:5). Moses gives a brief history of the Horites in Deut. 2:12, a point of interest to his listeners, but entirely irrelevant to an audience a millennium later. And Moses mentions the Zamzummin, a Canaanite race, which was known to his audience, but unknown to history (Deut. 2:20–21). How many writers of forgery would have thought to have included this minutiae?
14. In Deuteronomy, we have an area called the hill country of the Amorites (Deut. 1:7, 19, 20, 44) which, soon thereafter becomes the hill country of Judah (Joshua 11:16, 21). A later author may not have thought to make these changes back.
15. Had Deuteronomy been written as a forgery sometime prior to the reign of Josiah, then we would expect to see something about the divided kingdom or Assyrian oppression. However, the names of *Judah* and *Ephraim* only occur once each in the blessing of Moses (Deut. 33) and the Assyrians are not mentioned (however, Assyria is mentioned twice in the book of Genesis). The threat of exile should involve Assyria or Babylonia, and not Egypt (Deut. 28:68). It is almost impossible for someone to forge a document which supposedly existed a millennium previous without in some way betraying his present period of time.
16. Had some prophet written Deuteronomy as a forgery a millennium later, he would have been required to study intensely the previous three books of Moses to retrieve all of the details found in Deuteronomy. That being done, that prophet could have easily cited the pertinent passages from the previous books to centralize the worship in Jerusalem (the men had already been instructed to gather three times a year in a place which God would appoint) (Ex. 23:17 34:23 this is by implication of Lev. 16); to extol the support and authority of the sons of Aaron and the Levites (Num. 3:9–10 4:1–49 8:18–26 81:–18); and to call for the destruction of idolatry (Ex. 34:14–17 Lev. 19:1–8 Num. 25:1–18 31:1–16). What is clear is that in Deuteronomy, there were more references to a place of centralized worship (Deut. 12:5, 11–13) than in the previous books. Since they were about to enter into the land immediately after the completion of the book of Deuteronomy and since the laws previously given applied to both their worship in the desert and in the land, it would only stand to reason that centralized worship would be implied in Exodus, Numbers and Leviticus (recall, they built one tabernacle only) and emphasized in Deuteronomy. The problem with these silly non-Mosaic authorship theories is that their originators never studied the previous books of the Bible very carefully. If Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are carefully studied, then the precept that Deuteronomy was necessary to centralize worship, to strengthen the priesthood and to stamp out idolatry becomes a flawed foundation on which to build a flawed theory of authorship.
17. At the time of the writing of Deuteronomy, the authority to uphold the Law was placed in the hands of priests (Deut. 17:9), judges (Deut. 16:18) and the elders of Israel (Deut. 21:21). Had this been written during the time of the divided kingdom, the emphasis of enforcement of the Law would have been upon the king of Israel; however, the concept of kingship is discussed once and that in a way to limit and guide one who would later become king (Deut. 17:14–20).
18. During the time of Moses, there were covenants which followed a certain form called suzerainty-vassal treaties (which we have covered before). There was a particular form for these covenants to be written in and

⁶ G.T. Manley, *The Book of the Law*; London: The Tyndale Press, 1957, p. 64.

⁷ Amalek was not completely blotted out until the time of Hezekiah (1Chron. 4:41–43), whose reign was over 47 years prior to the beginning of Josiah's reign. This is possibly why some place a date on Deuteronomy of several decades preceding Josiah. But, then again, if Deuteronomy was a forgery written decades prior to the reign of Josiah, then the urgency entailed in the destruction of idolatry becomes moot.

it has been shown by several authors that the book of Deuteronomy follows that form, e.g., G.E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*; Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955 and Meredith Kilne, *Treat of the Great King*, Eerdmans, 1963.

19. Among those who accept Deuteronomy as Scripture—Christians, Jews and Muslims—all have historically accepted this book from its inception as the writing of Moses.
 20. Moses had spent forty years out in the wilderness with the Israelites while God destroyed generation X and one thing that he would logically like to leave with this next generation is the fact that they will go into the land and they will conquer it. Thirty-five times in the book of Deuteronomy, we find Moses using the phrase “go in and possess”; thirty-four times he says “the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you.” It is logical that Moses would continually use these phrases; it is less logical for a writer of several centuries later to do so.
- Specific Objections to the authorship of Moses, apart from the JEPD theory:⁸
21. Some references appear to come from a period of time subsequent to the time of Moses. Deut. 2:10–12 for instance has information which may not have been known by Moses. However, most scholars see these verses as being parenthetical, added after Israel entered into the land (and very likely by Joshua who would know this information). These short, parenthetical additions are given as explanatory clauses or to update the names of certain cities or groups of peoples.
 22. The book of Deuteronomy differs in style, content and vocabulary from the previous three books of the Pentateuch. Most of the quotations in the previous few books were direct quotations from God. God would have a different vocabulary and style than Moses. Furthermore, some of the writing in the previous books was written narrative, therefore naturally differing in style from the oratory message. As a teacher, I have read many student reports and only one written report comes to mind as a report which sounded as though it were spoken. I recall even making a comment to that effect on the student’s paper, noting that it was a very pleasant, readable style. The subject matter of the previous books was very different. Moses dealt with the building of the tabernacle, the numbering of the tribes, the positioning of the troops, the dietary laws, the leprotic laws, etc. etc. Different subject matter requires a different vocabulary. I have personally written hundreds of mathematical worksheets and the vocabulary found in those worksheets are different than the vocabulary found in this book. What would be unreasonable would be to expect that the style found in the previous three books and this book would be similar. This would be like the fact that the Book of Mormon, although written in the 1800's, was written in an *old English* style, much like the KJV of the Bible. Now that is silly. A book written in America over two centuries after the KJV, which was produced in England, should not be in the same style.
 23. Critics charge that the discovery of this book by Josiah was a fraudulent occurrence and that he used this forgery (written by himself or by trusted men of no character) to (a) destroy idolatrous worship, (b) to give greater power and authority to the priesthood and (c) to centralize the worship of Y^ehowah in Jerusalem. (a) First off, objections to idolatry occur throughout the previous four books and the book of Joshua. Josiah (or some priest from his era) do not need to use some forgery in order to support the destruction of idolatrous worship. (b) The priesthood is given very little mention in the book of Deuteronomy; their powers and authority are nowhere specifically increased. (c) Finally, as has been pointed out, the name *Jerusalem*, does not occur in the book of Deuteronomy. In a book so filled with prophecy, it would be natural in the hands of a forger to name Jerusalem by name as a prophecy.
 24. It is said that certain laws found in Deuteronomy differ from those in the previous three books. The easy, general explanation is that some of what is found in the previous three books deal with a nation on the move in the desert and wilderness. A simple example of this is the troop movement and organization surrounding the ark. This is specific to those circumstances at that time. A major change which was about to take place was that Israel would soon settle into her own land and there were be some minor differences due to that.
 25. The phrase *beyond the Jordan* is used to describe the land east of the Jordan, which is where Moses and company were encamped. This would appear to be a phrase used by those living on the western side of the Jordan. However, this was a specific term which means *the other-side land* and was applied to the portion east of the Jordan, despite the location of the writer or speaker. Today, we still call the land *Trans-Jordan*, whether we live in the United States, in Israel or in Trans-Jordan.

⁸ Many of these objections came from the *Scofield Reference Bible, Study Edition*; New York•Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 153 and from Josh McDowell’s *A Ready Defense*; Here’s Life Publishers, 1992, p. 152.

26. Occasionally, we find the phrase *until this day*. This can refer to (a) the period of time of Moses, looking back over the past forty years; (b) the perspective of Joshua, who amended the book of Deuteronomy in perhaps a half dozen places. In no case are we ever looking backwards several hundred years.
27. Deuteronomy contains an account of the death of Moses. When we get to the final chapters of Moses, we will find that most of them were pieced together and edited by Joshua, adding in the blessing and the song of Moses. Therefore, to find an account of the death of Moses is perfectly natural and more indicative of an eyewitness account rather than a writer from a time period several hundred years later.

For most of you, it is sufficient to say that Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy because this is God's Word and that is what God's Word says. So the past couple of pages may have seemed as though I was beating a dead horse. However, since this theory persists and continually finds its way into Christian literature and Christian seminaries, it is important that it be dealt with carefully. Whereas, the bulk of the quotations found in the previous three books are direct quotes from God which Moses conveyed to the people, Moses spoke to the people in this book in his own words, as moved by the Holy Spirit. Now, don't get me wrong—he didn't just start speaking and all of these things came out. We have a written document which recorded what he said, and since voice to print had not been perfected on their computers as of yet, this would indicate the Moses first wrote these dissertations out and then presented them. If you didn't catch that, let me explain: with their writing materials and their speed of writing, even without vowels, it would have been quite difficult to keep up with Moses and take word-by-word dictation. Since we have this information recorded for us in written form, that would logically indicate that Moses wrote it down first and then read from his notes.

As I had mentioned from the outset, it is likely that Joshua pieced together the last few chapters and possibly wrote the first five verses of this book. A reasonable but distant second choice is Eleazar. I would choose Joshua as my first choice for several reasons: 28. It would be natural for the writer of the book of Joshua to be the one to finish the last few verses of the book of Deuteronomy, since they follow one another historically. This person was likely Joshua. We find the phrase, *Moses, the servant of Y^ehowah* in Deut. 34:5. Whereas, we do not find this title previously in the Pentateuch, we find it a dozen times in the book of Joshua. This would suggest that the writer of Deut. 34 and the book of Joshua are the same person. Whereas it is possible that any person could write Scripture through the power of the Holy Spirit, eyewitness or not, it is just more likely that the events described were events which one witnessed or was a confidant of one who saw these events. The verses Ex. 24:13 and 33:11 indicate a very close relationship between Moses and Joshua. Because we hear the name of Joshua much more often in the book of Deuteronomy than we hear of Eleazar (nine times versus once; and Joshua is mentioned six times in the concluding four chapters), this would indicate that Joshua was more closely associated with Moses.

The Date and Time of Writing: Deuteronomy was written and taught during the last few days (and perhaps weeks) of the life of Moses. Although it appears to me that these messages were likely given during the last week of the life of Moses, one author was of the opinion that Deuteronomy covered a span of forty days (citing Deut. 1:3 to affirm his thinking) and another felt that the time frame herein was approximately a month. Whereas, I do not find forty days represented here, there is also nothing, other than the length of these messages, which would indicate a week either. This would have been written and taught somewhere between 1450–1405 BC. Several authors quote 1406 or 1405 BC as the year in which this book was written. Actually the time period for Deuteronomy is quite easy to determine. The book begins with: *And it came to pass in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that Jehovah had command him to them* (Deut. 1:3). This means that 39 years and 10 months after the exodus, we begin the book of Deuteronomy. In this book we have very little by way of narrative—nothing that would indicate any period of time passing. We have the death of Moses and then the people mourn for Moses thirty days (Deut. 34:8). After 5–10 days pass in the book of Joshua, we have the verse: Now the people came up from the Jordan on the 10th of the first month and camped at Gilgal on the eastern edge of Jericho. This means that the time period for the

book of Deuteronomy is less than a month. That gives us another month for the mourning at the death of Moses and a few days for the first few chapters of Joshua.

One very interesting theory was set forth by D. Miall Edwards in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 837 and that was that the message of Deut. 5–26 had been covered before by Moses prior to their first attempt at entering the land from the south thirty-eight years previous. It would make sense that Moses had put together a message to inspire them and to bring them into the land and that he possibly taught it while the spies were in the land. The reason Edwards would assert this is the many named places in Deut. 1:1–2 does not confine us to only across the River Jordan from Jericho but mentions that they are eleven days away from Kadesh Barnea by way of Mount Seir, which is where gen X was stopped in its tracks. Edwards writes: *If these statements have any relevancy whatever to the contents of the book which they introduce, they point to a wide area, from Horeb to Moab, as the historico-geographical background of the book. In other words, Deuteronomy, in part at least, seems to have been spoken first on the way between Horeb and Kadesh-barnea, and later again when Israel were encamped on the planes of Moab.*⁹ The upshot is that these, in part, are twice-baked sermons, which had no effect upon gen X, but did upon the Generation of Promise. This does not mean that Moses just hauled out the sermon from thirty-eight years previous and read it again. He obviously re-worked it somewhat, adding, for instance, the names of the cities of refuge (Deut. 4:41–43 19:1–13), which would not have been named prior to the invasion and conquering of the land to the east.

Tone and Style: The tone of this book is primary hortatory. Whereas, for instance, the categories of laws and regulations which Moses taught can be roughly grouped, they do not all fall perfectly into these categories, as Moses did not approach his addresses to the people as strictly a more organized structuring of the Laws of God, but as one who was exhorting the people to obey the True and Living God. As ZPEB says: *[Moses] is not a historian or a jurist as much as he is a religious teacher*¹⁰.

*The speeches exhibit an unity of style and character which is strikingly consistent with such circumstances. They are pervaded by the same vein of thought, the same tone and tenor of feeling, the same peculiarities of conception and expression. They exhibit matter which is neither documentary nor traditional, but conveyed in the speaker's own words. Their aim is strictly hortatory; their style earnest, heart-stirring, impressive, in passages sublime, but throughout rhetorical; they keep constantly in view the circumstances then present and the crisis to which the fortunes of Israel had at last been brought. Moses had before him not the men to whom by God's command he delivered the law at Sinai, but the generation following which had grown up in the wilderness.*¹¹ *The literary style of Deuteronomy is very marked and individual; in his command of a chaste, yet warm and persuasive eloquence, the author of Deuteronomy stand unique among the writers of the Old Testament*¹².

*Deuteronomy is a hortatory description, explanation, and enforcement of the most essential contents of the covenant revelation and covenant laws, with emphatic prominence given to the spiritual principle of the law and its fulfillment, and with a further development of the ecclesiastical, judicial, political, and civil organization, which was intended as a permanent foundation for the life and well-being of the people in the land of Canaan*¹³.

There are certain phrases which we find again and again in this book, which would be consistent with the speaker being Moses. We have certain Moses-isms, e.g., *as at this day, that is may be well with you, caused to inherit, the land where you are going in to possess it, with all your heart and with all your soul*; these are phrases which are almost unique to the book of Deuteronomy. Furthermore, we have a continued emphasis upon listening, learning and obeying. Moses continually tells his students *to hear, to listen, to obey*.

⁹ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; Hendrickson Publishers, ©1956, Vol. II, p. 837.

¹⁰ *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 110.

¹¹ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, p. 267.

¹² *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.; Hendrickson Publishers, ©1956, Vol. II, p. 836, quoting Driver.

¹³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 845.

Title: The name *Deuteronomy* comes from the Greek word which means *Second Law* or *repetition of the law*. Interestingly enough, this name is based upon a Greek mistranslation of Deut. 17:18. The Septuagint reads: **And when he is established in his government, the he will write for himself this second law into a book by the hands of the priests the Levites.** *Second Law* is the word *deuteronomion* (δευτερονόμιον) [pronounced *dew-ter-ah-NO-mee-on*]. However, what Moses is saying is that the king must write for himself a *copy* of the law. The other four names of the first four books of the Torah are based upon the Hebrew; this is based upon the Greek. The Hebrew title of this book is *Debarim*, which means *words*.

Chronology: The few events described in this book take place during the last week of the life of Moses.

Deuteronomy and the Suzerainty-vassal treaties:¹⁴ Treaties of the first and second millenniums BC tend to follow a specific format, quite similar to the writing of Deuteronomy. We have 29. a preamble (Deut. 1:1–5); an historical prologue (Deut. 1:6–3:29); Stipulations of the treaty (Deut. 4–26); Deposition of text (Deut. 31:9, 24–26) and the public reading thereof (Deut. 31:10–12); Witnesses to the treaty (Deut. 31:16–30 32:1–47); and the curses and blessings (Deut. 28). In the ancient world, these covenants generally were in the order of witnesses, curse and then blessings; Deuteronomy is curses, blessings, curses and then witnesses.

The preamble of a suzerain-vassal treaty names the speaker, the one claiming lordship over his vassals. In v. 1, Moses is identified, but he is God's earthly minister and representative (v. 3). Next we would find a historical section, an historic preamble, if you will, that examines the previous relationship of the lord and vassal. Benefits of this relationship to the vassal are often cited (Deut. 2:7 3:3 4:39). The, the most important portion of the covenant were the laws and expectations, which were set forth in the laws, judgments and regulations which we find in Deut. 5:1–26:19. Then we would have the cursings and blessings, which we find listed in Deut. 27–30. Such a treaty would have to be witnessed by representatives of both sides, which is what we have in Deut. 32–33. Every time the Israelites sang the song of Moses, they were a witness to this treaty. There must also be a place where the treaty would be deposited for reference, and that was handled in Deut. 31:9, 24–26, when Moses gave this document to the priests to place next to the ark of the covenant. A treaty which has been written, ratified, and witnessed was considered to be inviolable thereafter. Hence, we have a cursing for anyone who either added to or took from the words of this book (Deut. 4:2). Finally, the document was to be notarized, which was analogous to the recording of the death of Moses at the very end.

The covenant form found in Deuteronomy is much more similar to those covenants found in the second millennium BC than to those used during the period of the Assyria's dominance, several hundred years later. In fact, the covenant form from the second century BC was likely unknown to the people under the united monarchy of Israel. Kitchen writes: *First, the basic structure of Deuteronomy and much of the content that gives specific character to that structure must constitute a recognizable literary entity; second, this is a literacy entity not of the eighth or*

¹⁴ The bulk of this material comes from *A Ready Defense* by Josh McDowell, Here's Life Publishers, 1992, pp. 151–152 and he draws upon the works of K.A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament*; Chicago Inter-Varsity Press, 1966, p. 4; and George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East*; Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955, p. 30.

seventh century B.C. but rather from ca 1200 B.C. at latest. My personal opinion is that this is not necessarily what Moses had in mind when he wrote these messages to the people. This was a logical approach for him, to state the background for his messages, to list the historical relationship between God and Israel, and then to list the laws to which they were to be obedient to. I personally believe that the similarity in the overall structure of Deuteronomy to the suzerain-vassal treaties was a function of God the Holy Spirit.

Points of Interest: There are times when Moses is so moved by the Holy Spirit in his message that he speaks in place of God, a daring effect which few, if any, pastors should use.

Because Moses is speaking to the people in a series of speeches, he places himself in the 1st person, which he never does in the previous three books.

This book as likely the book discovered by King Josiah which precipitated his religious reforms (2Kings 22–23).

Authority and Inspiration: According to the notes of the Scofield Reference Bible, there are 80 references in the New Testament to the book of Deuteronomy; the NIV Study Bible says that there are almost 100 allusions to Deuteronomy in the New Testament; and Zodhiates claims that there are 200 references to this book in the New Testament. In answering the temptations of Satan, our Lord quoted from this book exclusively and in general, He quoted this book more than any other from the Old Testament.

The concept of inspiration is taken further specifically by this book of Deuteronomy: the laws which Moses gives and the statements which he makes are no longer directly from the mouth of God, as we found in Exodus through Numbers. However, they are given the same weight when it comes to authority by Moses and by later writers of Scripture, as we have seen, even though God spoke the laws in the previous books and now Moses is speaking.

One very interesting point is that in previous books of God's Word, Moses primarily quoted God when speaking to the people. Whatever God told him, Moses repeated this almost word-for-word. However, with this book, there are only a handful of verses which quote Y^ehowah directly. Moses, with this book, speaks God's Word directly, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Now, this was not some sort of trance-like state and automatic speaking; Moses had studied God's Word directly from God, so he had the background. Furthermore, in order for all of this information to be recorded, this means it had to be written down. It is much more likely that Moses wrote his discourses first and then spoke them. However, this in no way minimizes the fact that these are the very Words of God spoken through Moses, without distorting the personality, vocabulary or speaking style of Moses and yet without compromising the very Words of God. In Deuteronomy, we find the very essence of the concept of the inspiration of Scripture.

Geography: Moses and the children of Israel have just come up the east side of the Dead Sea, defeating several armies and taking over much of the land east of the Jordan. They are about to go into the Land of Promise and Moses will not be going in with them. Moses prepares several sermons, if you will, and presents these to the children of Israel across the Jordan River from Jericho. They are in a land which used to belong to Moab, but had been taken from them by the Amonites, which land Moses took from the Amonites. There are no movements to speak of, just several gatherings of the children of Israel to hear Moses speak.

General Content:

Parallels: There are several parallels found when viewing this book as a whole. The people to whom the Law was first given, although they received it with enthusiasm, they rejected God's Law and were taken out under the sin unto death. Israel, as a nation, received God's Law with enthusiasm, yet also fell away, and had to be removed from the land several times and the responsibility given to "the next generation"—the church. Finally, in terms of

space, three books were devoted to the exodus of Israel and their forty year wanderings in the desert (actually, the time frame which was covered was really two years of that time). The entire book of Deuteronomy is devoted to approximately one week of history of Israel. This parallels our Lord's life, wherein most of what was written concerning His stay on this earth was the last week. One of the great parallels between the death of Moses and the death of our Lord was the fact that both of them died according to the commandment of God when their work was finished. Moses was still physically strong and his eye was not dim, yet he died as his work on earth was finished. Jesus Christ would have been at His physical peak in His early 30's but he breathed His last as His work was finished.

Important Quotations: "Hear, O Israel! Y^ehowah is our God, Y^ehowah is One! And you will love Y^ehowah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your ability [lit., might]" (Deut. 6:4–5). These two verses are quoted just about every Sabbath in every synagogue. The word for *one* can mean *alone, unity*. When a man leaves his mother and father and cleaves to his wife, they become *one* flesh.

There are two specific commands barring us from adding to god's Word or taking from it. Most people are familiar with this mandate at the end of the book of Revelation, but not many know about the one in Deuteronomy: "And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, in order that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which Y^ehowah, the God of your fathers is giving you. You will not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor will you take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of Y^ehowah your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:1–2).

In this book we have the Ten Commandments repeated in Deut. 5. This does not mean that Moses ran out of things to say; this is a new generation to whom he is speaking. It is possible that many of them had not even heard Moses before (only a small percentage of the two million could have ever actually heard Moses teach).

For the covenant theologians, there are continual reminders that Y^ehowah would not forget Israel. "For Y^ehowah your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them." (Deut. 4:31). Although covenant theologians teach that the church is really a *spiritual* Israel and that all these promises have been transferred over to the church, there will always be the Jewish race and there will always be the Land of Promise and God will fulfill His promises to His people, the sons of Israel, and that is not us, the church.

One of my personal favorite quotations from Deuteronomy is: "Do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out from before you, 'Because of my righteousness Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before you. It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that Y^ehowah your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that Y^ehowah your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people!" (Deut. 9:4–6). God blessed Israel in grace, based upon His own character, just as He does us in the Church Age.

Israel was commanded by Moses in the power of the Holy Spirit not to do what was right in their own eyes (Deut. 12:8). God had given them a clear delineation of what was right and what was wrong. Human viewpoint of morality and correctness of action was immaterial. When Israel began to do what was right in her own eyes caused her to enter into one of the darkest period of her history, the time of the judges, when every man did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6 21:25).

Israel was warned in the book of Deuteronomy not to follow after other gods even if a false prophet or dreamer arose with great signs and wonders. "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you will not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for Y^ehowah your God is testing you to find out if you love Y^ehowah your God with all your

heart and with all your soul. You will follow Y^ehowah your God and you will fear Him; and you will keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. And that prophet or dreamer of dreams will be executed, because he has counseled rebellion against Y^ehowah your God.” (Deut. 13:1–5a).

One of my favorite passages deals with the rebellious teenager: “If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, then his father and mother will seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his home town. And they will say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of his city will stone him to death; so you will remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear and fear.” (Deut. 21:18–21). There is no *time-out* or removing his privileges of using the family car for the week; the rebellious teen is executed.

Deuteronomy is filled with prophecies concerning the discipline of Israel: “Now the generation to come, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, when they see the plagues of the land and the diseases with which Y^ehowah has afflicted it, will say, ‘All its land is brimstone and salt, a burning waste, unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which Y^ehowah overthrew in His anger and in His wrath.’ And all the nations will say, ‘Why has Y^ehowah done thus to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?’ Then men will say, ‘Because they forsook the covenant of Y^ehowah, the God of their fathers which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. And they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they have not known and whom He had not given to them. Therefore, the anger of Y^ehowah burned against that land, to bring upon it every curse which is written in this book; and Y^ehowah uprooted them from their land in anger and in fury and in great wrath, and cast them in to another land, as this day.’” (Deut. 29:22–28). Looks at the land of Israel today; doesn’t it appear to be sown with salt? Don’t you see the brimstone flying from the sky into the land? Israel is under discipline.

Outline: Most *Christian* sources separate the book of Deuteronomy into four addresses of Moses whereas the Hebrew theologians separate this book into eight separate addresses. The latter is the proper way to see the headings of this book, and these eight separate addresses are interspersed with introductory material, a couple of historical events and the last two times God and Moses met face to face prior to Moses being taken into eternity.

- I. Introduction to the book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 1:1–5)
- II. The first discourse of Moses (Deut. 1:6–4:40)
 - A. Their historical background (1:6–3:29)
 1. Moses reviews their history from the Exodus to Kadesh-Barnea, where the people were too afraid to enter into the land (1:6–45)
 2. The 38 silent years (v. 46)
 3. From Kadesh to where they stand opposite Jericho (1:47–3:29)
 - B. The importance of God’s Word, God’s commandments and the obedience and fidelity of the Israelites (4:1–40)
- III. Moses sets apart the three cities to the east of the Jordan for those who have committed unintentional manslaughter (Deut. 4:41–49)
- IV. The second discourse of Moses given to all Israel (Deut. 5:1–26:19)
 - A. Moses repeats the Ten commandments and Moses reminds them of the historical circumstances of the receipt of those commandments (5:1–33)
 1. Introduction (5:1–5)
 2. Ten Commandments (5:6–21)
 3. Immediate history following the giving of the Ten Commandments (5:22–33)
 - B. Moses enjoins obedience to God’s Word (6:1–25)
 - C. God’s particular relationship with Israel (7:1–9:29)
 1. Moses warns them about their contact with the indigenous population of the Land of Promise and about their gods (7:1–5)
 2. Chosen Israel (7:6–11)
 3. Special blessings to Israel (7:12–19)
 4. Israel’s enemies in the land (7:20–26)

5. God's special blessings to Israel (8:1–9)
6. Particular warnings from God (8:10–20)
7. Israel's rebelliousness and their provocation of God (9:1–29)
- D. Miscellaneous history and exhortation (10:1–11:32)
 1. Ten Commandments re-written (10:1–4)
 2. The Levites (10:5–9)
 3. Exhortation to obey God and to show love as God has shown them love (10:10–22)
 4. God's continued activity in their lives (11:1–17)
 5. The importance of learning His Word (11:18–22)
 6. Blessings and cursings (11:23–32)
- E. What God expects of His people upon their entry into the land (12:1–26:15)
 1. What is acceptable in worship and what is not (12:1–17:1)
 - a. Miscellaneous expectations upon entering the land (12:1–32)
 - (1) False religion vs. that which is true (12:1–10)
 - (2) Offerings (12:11–27)
 - (3) Disgusting heathen practices (12:28–32)
 - b. Idolaters, false prophets and treatment of idolaters (13:1–18)
 - c. Clean and unclean animals (14:1–21)
 - d. Tithing, the Levites and the helpless (14:22–29)
 - e. The Sabbath year regulations (15:1–23)
 - f. Passover (16:1–8)
 - g. Feast of Weeks (16:9–12)
 - h. Feast of Booths (16:13–15)
 - i. Conclusion and miscellaneous laws (16:16–17:1)
 2. Government (17:2–20)
 - a. Appeal to the Levites and priests (vv. 2–13)
 - b. Proper behavior for a king (vv. 14–20)
 3. Spiritual regulations (18:1–22)
 - a. Portion of the Levites and priests (vv. 1–8)
 - b. Spiritism is forbidden (vv. 9–14)
 - c. The Prophet Who is to come (vv. 15–19)
 - d. Test of a false prophet (vv. 20–22)
 4. Governmental regulations (19:1–21)
 - a. The cities of refuge (vv. 1–13)
 - b. Land boundaries, false witnesses and their punishment (vv. 14–21)
 5. Warfare (20:1–20)
 6. Unsolved homicides (21:1–9)
 7. Familial regulations (21:10–22)
 - a. Wives taken out of captives in war (vv. 10–14)
 - b. Two wives and their sons (vv. 15–17)
 - c. Rebellious teenagers (vv. 18–21)
 - d. Public executions (vv. 22–23)
 8. Various and sundry laws (22:1–25:19)
 - a. Israelites should have a public conscience (22:1–8)
 - b. Certain mixtures prohibited (22:9–12)
 - c. Sexual morality (22:13–30)
 - d. Exclusion from the assembly of God's people (23:1–6)
 - e. Foreigners who are not excluded (23:7–8)
 - f. Cleanliness in war (23:9–14)
 - g. Mistreated slaves (23:15–16)
 - h. Prohibition of cult prostitutes (23:17–18)
 - i. Interest regulations (23:19–20)
 - j. Vows (23:21–23)
 - k. Welfare (23:24–25)

- l. Laws of divorce (24:1–5)
- m. Pledges, kidnapping, leprosy (24:6–13)
- n. The paying of wages; personal responsibility (24:14–16)
- o. The helpless and welfare provisions (24:17–22)
- p. Limitations of punishment (25:1–3)
- q. Muzzling an ox while treading (25:4)
- r. Raising up seed for a deceased brother (25:5–10)
- s. Penalty for grabbing the testicles of a man (25:11–12)
- t. Integrity in business (25:13–16)
- u. Destroy the name of Amalek (25:17–19)
- 9. The offering of the firstfruits (26:1–15)
- F. Conclusion: obey God commandments (26:16–19)
- V. The third discourse of Moses and the elders of Israel to the people (Deut. 27:1–28:68)
 - A. Cursings given from Mount Ebal (27:1–26)
 - B. Blessings from Mount Gerizim (28:1–12)
 - C. Cursings (28:15–68)
- VI. The fourth discourse of Moses to the all Israel (Deut. 29:1–30:20)
 - A. God's faithfulness (29:1–13)
 - B. Idolatry and the inevitable results (29:14–29)
 - C. The Palestinian Covenant (30:1–14)
- VII. The fifth discourse of Moses spoken to all Israel; Moses turns over his authority to Joshua (Deut. 31:1–8)
- VIII. The sixth discourse of Moses, a specific charge to the priests (Deut. 31:9–13)
- IX. God speaks to Moses, telling him of his impending death and God speaks to Joshua (Deut. 31:14–23)
- X. Moses writes a song and gives the Word of God and special instructions to the Levites (Deut. 31:24–30)
- XI. The Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1–43)
 - A. God perfect character (32:1–4)
 - B. Israel's rebellion (32:5–6)
 - C. God's faithfulness and provision (32:7–14)
 - D. Israel's apostasy (32:15–21)
 - E. God disciplines Israel (32:22–25)
 - F. God will not completely obliterate Israel (32:26–35)
 - G. God will vindicate His people (32:36–43)
- XII. Final exhortation by Moses concerning God's Word: **"It is not an idle word, it is your life!"** (Deut. 32:44–47)
- XIII. God tells Moses to go up to the mountain to die for breaking faith with Him in the wilderness (Deut. 32:48–52)
- XIV. The final blessing of Moses to the tribes (Deut. 33:1–29)
 - A. Introduction (33:1–5)
 - B. Blessing of the twelve tribes (33:6–25)
 - C. Blessings to all of Israel (33:26–29)
- XV. The Death of Moses (Deut. 34:1–12)

Synopsis: Either Moses or Joshua sets the historical scene in the first chapter and then we have recorded several discourses by Moses to the people of Israel. This is one of the few times that Moses spoke his own words as guided by God the Holy Spirit (he did not speak extemporaneously but from his notes). In his first discourse, he recalled the history of Israel and interpreted it. In the second discourse, Moses gave a lengthy set of laws and regulations. In his third discourse, Moses gave the blessings and cursings which were to be read from Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. At this point, he became very prophetic. To understand his prophecies made before (e.g., Lev. 26), recall that Moses was essentially repeating what God had told him to say. However, here Moses is not recounting God's Word but speaking God's Word. In his next discourse, Moses gives Israel some historical background and then delivered the Palestinian Covenant. Again, Moses is not repeating word-for-word what God had told him, but is explaining in his own vocabulary the result of his study of God's Word in reference to the covenant between God and Israel. The Moses turns over the reigns of power to Joshua, gives what he has written to the priests, along with instructions. At the end of Deut. 31, God speaks to Moses and to Joshua directly.

Finally, Moses writes a song, teaches it to all of Israel, gives his final blessings to the individual tribes of Israel, and then goes to the mountain and dies on the mountain.

Themes: What sticks out in my mind more than anything else is the warnings delivered by Moses to the children of Israel is the apostasy that they might fall into, against which Moses warns. One of the other great themes of this book is *love*, which is mentioned twenty-two times in this book. It is often on the basis of love for God that Moses exhorts the Israelites to obey Him (Deut. 7:7–8 8:17 9:4–6). Those who picture a God of vengeance and wrath in the Old Testament and a God of love in the New Testament just do not know what is in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ of the New Testament is Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, in the Old. Because of God's love for us, we are to obey His Word. *And let's understand one thing: the Law is good. Although I emphasize and overemphasize the fact that God cannot save us by Law, that does not imply that the Law is not good. Of course the Law is good. Do you know where the trouble lies? The trouble is with you and me. Therefore, God must save us only by His grace*¹⁵.

"Listen and obey the commandments of God" is a phrase used by Moses several times throughout this book. The Generation of Promise, and those which followed, were to listen to God's Word and to obey it. We find this phrase, or something similar to it, in Deut. 5:1 6:3–4 9:1 10:12 12:1 20:3.

The devotion of Israel to God is to be more than ceremonial; more than mere obedience to Law. The Israelite was to love his God with all his soul, and his heart and all his might (Deut. 10:12 11:1, 13, 22 13:3 19:9 30:6, 16, 20). In fact, obedience to the Law is more often tied to loving God than to the fear of God (Deut. 5:10 6:5 7:8 10:12, 15 11:1, 13, 22 13:8 19:9 30:16, 20). Ideally, your own child obeys you because he loves you and his trusts you, rather than out of simple fear (which is, of course, a motivating factor).

"Remember God's deliverance of you out of Egypt." Moses continually goes back to what God has done on behalf of Israel—to events observed by his listeners, in order to convince them that Y^ehowah is a God unlike any heathen god. Deut. 5:15 7:18 8:2, 18 9:7, 27 11:2 15:15 16:3, 12 24:9, 18, 22 25:17.

Related to God's deliverance of Israel is the uniqueness of God and the uniqueness of the relationship between God and Israel. There is no God like the God of Israel and God has chosen Israel above all other nations (Deut. 4:35, 39 5:26 6:4 10:17 32:39). Since Israel was set apart to God, she was not to pursue other gods (Deut. 6:14–15 7:4, 6 8:19–20 11:16–17, 20 30:17–18). This is analogous to being married and then cheating on the one that you love above all others. Therefore, God is jealous of all rivals for His love and He despises all forms of idolatry (Deut. 7:4, 25–26 12:31 13:14 18:12 20:18 27:15 29:24–26 31:16–17).

As has been previously mentioned, Moses desires for this generation to enter into the Land of Promise and to take it. Therefore, Moses uses the phrase "go in and possess" thirty-five times; and thirty-four times he says "the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you." I recall that my parents expected me to go to college; I don't recall them even using the phrase *if you go to college*; the phrasing they used was *when you go to college*. Moses does the same thing here.

One of the great themes of this book is the teaching of God's Word to one's children. "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen, and so that they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and to your grandsons. Remember the day you stood before Y^ehowah your God at Horeb when Y^ehowah said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth and that they may teach their children.'" (Deut. 4:9–10). "And these words which I am command you today, they will be on your heart; and you will teach them diligently to your sons and you will talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And You will bind them as a sign on your hand and they will be as frontals on your forehead. And you will write them on the doorposts of your house an on your gates." (Deut. 6:6–9; see also Deut. 11:18–22). And he said to them, "Take to your heart all

¹⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 5.

the words with which I am warning you today, which you will command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed, it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.” (Deut. 32:46–47). *By the way, I wonder if this isn't the great neglect in the modern home. We talk about the failure of the school and the failure of the church today, and I agree that both have miserably failed in teaching boys and girls, but the real problem is in the home where instruction should have originated.*¹⁶

Point of View: In general, Deuteronomy contains several sermons of Moses spoken to the children of Israel. What is unusual about this content is that Moses often speaks in the first person. When we write and when we speak, we often demonstrate a different vocabulary and, in this case, a different point of view. Although Moses wrote at least the last four books of the Torah, he speaks of himself in the 3rd person throughout Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy (a format followed by most writers of Scripture, with the exception of Luke in the book of Acts and most of the epistles and the book of Revelation). However, in speaking to Israel, Moses does not hide behind the 3rd person but speaks of himself in the first person. At the end of Deuteronomy, we have a song written by Moses, a blessing by Moses for the children of Israel and the death of Moses.

Content: There are portions of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers which are rehashed herein. This is not repetition, per se, as the listeners are a new generation of believers, the generation of promise. Those to whom the rest of the Law was given rejected it and God took them out under the sin unto death. There are times that some of the laws may seem to be a bit different from what had been presented in the previous three books. Some of the material found in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers pertained only to Israel while on foot and while temporarily encamped. Deuteronomy deals in part with their behavior and rituals once they enter the land of Canaan. [Moses]...*takes the legislation which the Lord had given to Israel nearly forty years before and adapts it to conditions of settled life in the land to which Israel was soon to go*¹⁷.

In the previous three books, there is a fair amount of narrative. This book is primarily the verbal teaching of Moses to the people. Much of this covers their immediate history and their relationship to Y^ehowah, their God. As we have gone through those books, I have interpreted the meaning of their experience. Moses does that throughout Deuteronomy. He reviews the failures of the Israelites and reprimands them; but, much more importantly, he uses their past experiences as a springboard to speak of their future choices. As the NASB notes read: *throughout this book, events are charged with meaning. Moses gives a good deal of history; but in nearly every case he relates events to the spiritual lesson which they underscore.*¹⁸

Narrative Content: The narrative in this book is quite limited. There is no movement of the troops of Israel. We have Moses speaking to the people, speaking to the priests, handing the book of the Law to the priests, teaching his song to the sons of Israel, speaking to God, blessing Israel, and then dying.

The New Testament View: As has been mentioned, Deuteronomy is the most quoted book in the New Testament, with the number of allusions being somewhere between 80 and 200. As has been pointed out, our Lord recognized Moses as the author of Deuteronomy. When asked about marriage and divorce, Jesus **acknowledges the teaching of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy.** **They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her?” He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”** (Matt. 19:7–9; Deut. 24:1). When tempted by Satan, our Lord quoted exclusively from the book of Deuteronomy (Luke 4:1–13). You know that Satan has hated the book of Deuteronomy more than ever since that time.

¹⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 7.

¹⁷ NASB, *Study Edition*; A.J. Holman Co.; ©1976, p. 177.

¹⁸ NASB, *Study Edition*; A.J. Holman Co.; ©1976; p. 177.

One of the standard ways to quote God's Word is *it stands written*. The verb is in the perfect tense, meaning that it stands written in the past with results that stand forever. Paul used this phrase when quoting from the book of Deuteronomy in Gal. 3:10: **For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it stands written, "Cursed is ever one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them."** James uses the same phrase in Acts 15:15, 17. Our Lord uses the same phrasing to quote Moses in Matt. 4:4, 7 and 10. Our Lord quotes Deuteronomy as authoritative in Matt. 18:16b. Our Lord quotes Moses from Deuteronomy in Mark 7:10 in order to clarify what had been misinterpreted by the scribes.

Finally, as has been mentioned, Deuteronomy is quoted many times throughout the New Testament as authoritative, using the phrases as *Moses said* (Rom. 10:19) and *it stands written in the Law of Moses* (1Cor. 9:9). **Peter, under great inspiration, said, "Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers; to Him you will listen in everything He says to you. And it will come to pass that every soul that does not heed that Prophet will be completely destroyed from among the people.' "** (Acts 3:22–23; Deut. 18:15, 19).

Chart: Although an outline was wonderful for me to recall the portions of Deuteronomy and to organize my thinking, I don't know if anyone else reads the outline. I don't know that I have ever read another person's outline. However, there is a section of *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts* which I found to be quite informative, and that is their chart on p. 56, which I have stolen, changed considerably and adapted to my own notes:

Heading	Introduction to the book of Deuteronomy	The first discourse of Moses	Moses sets apart the three cities of refuge the east of the Jordan	The second discourse of Moses given to all Israel
Scripture	Deut. 1:1–5	Deut. 1:6–4:40	Deut. 4:41–49	Deut. 5:1–26:19
Writing Style	Introduction	Lecture	Narrative	Lecture
Author	Joshua or Moses	Moses		
Topics	The time, the place and recent events	A review and a divine interpretation of Israel's history and stern exhortation	A refuge for unintentional manslaughter is set aside	The decalogue, ceremonial laws (12:1–16:17), civil laws (16:18–18:22), criminal laws (19:1–21:9) and laws which deal with the family and prosperity (21:10–25:19)
Writing Category	Historical	Interpretive	Legal	
Time and Place	Roughly a one week period of time around 1406 BC in the plains of Moab			

Heading	The third discourse of Moses and the elders of Israel to the people	The fourth discourse of Moses to the all Israel	The fifth discourse of Moses spoken to all Israel	The sixth discourse of Moses, a specific charge to the priests
Scripture	Deut. 27:1–28:68	Deut. 29:1–30:20	Deut. 31:1–8	Deut. 31:9–13
Writing Style	Lecture			
Author	Moses		Moses edited by Joshua	
Topics	Blessings and cursings from Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim	Prophecy of the stern discipline to come; the Palestinian Covenant; exhortation	Moses publicly recognizes Joshua and encourages Israel in war	Moses gives the Law to the priests and tells them to read the Law when all Israel gathers

Heading	The third discourse of Moses and the elders of Israel to the people	The fourth discourse of Moses to the all Israel	The fifth discourse of Moses spoken to all Israel	The sixth discourse of Moses, a specific charge to the priests
Writing Category	Prophetical			
Time and Place	Roughly a one week period of time around 1406 BC in the plains of Moab			

Heading	God speaks to Moses, telling him of his impending death and God commissions Joshua	Moses writes a song and gives special instructions to the Levites; The Song of Moses; concluding remarks to people	God tells Moses to go up to the mountain to die	The blessing of Moses to the people	The Death of Moses
Scripture	Deut. 31:14–23	Deut. 31:24–32:47	Deut. 32:48–52	Deut. 33:1–29	Deut. 34:1–12
Writing Style	Narrative	Narrative; song; exhortation	Narrative	Last blessing	Narrative
Author	Moses	Joshua and Moses	Joshua editing (Moses and God speak)	Joshua	Joshua
Topics	God tells Moses what will occur and tells him to write a song	God's special protection afforded Israel; severe but tempered discipline of Israel; final vindication	God tells Moses to go die on the mountain and reminds him as to why	Moses blesses the twelve tribes; not necessarily prophetical material	Moses goes to the mountain to die; there is no prophet like Moses
Writing Category	Prophetical				Historical
Time and Place	Roughly a one week period of time around 1406 BC in the plains of Moab				

Final Comments and Conclusions: Because our Lord quoted from it against Satan, you know that this would become one of the most attacked books of the Bible. This is why so much time was spent in this introduction covering the authorship of Deuteronomy. There should be no question in your mind as to the fact that Moses wrote this just as Scripture says. Now prepare yourself for the exegesis of one of the most incredible books of the Old Testament. Enjoy!

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[Deuteronomy 3](#)

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Pentateuch

Deuteronomy 1

Deuteronomy 1:1–46

Outline of Chapter 1:

- vv. 1–5 **Introduction to the great sermons of Moses to the second generation**
- vv. 6–8 **The march toward the land of promise**
- vv. 9–18 **God allows Moses to delegate his great responsibilities**
- vv. 19–25 **Moses sends out spies into the Land of Promise**
- vv. 26–28 **The people are afraid to take the land**
- vv. 29–33 **Moses reminds the people of the strength of their God**
- vv. 34–40 **God's oath against generation X**
- vv. 41–46 **Israel's failed attempt to take the land without God**

Charts:

- v. 44 **The Interpretations Of Deuteronomy 1:44**

Introduction: Deut. 1 begins several sermons given by Moses to the generation of promise. This chapter in particular will cover a time period of one year. We will travel from Mount Sinai to the Land of Promise and end with Israel's failure at the foot of the land promised them by God. The generation of twenty years and older who left Egypt have all died, with the exception of Moses, Joshua and Caleb. The failures covered by Moses were observed by the children of generation X; now Moses will give the divine viewpoint concerning these failures in hopes that the new generation, the generation of promise, will profit by the mistakes of the elders rather than repeat them. In this chapter, as in all of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses will recall events in a topical manner.

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Introduction to the Great Sermons of Moses to the Second Generation

These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel, beyond the Jordan, in the wilderness, in the plain over against Suph, between Paran and Tophel, and Laban and Hazeroth, and De-Zahab; [Deut. 1:1]

Moses is a very exact person. We already know where he is—he is at Jordan Jericho, across from the city of Jericho where Joshua will invade in a month or so. The phrase, *beyond the Jordan*, refers to the east side of the Jordan (Deut. 3:20, 25). The term *wilderness* is a general term, referring to the uninhabited areas that the Jews transversed. The plain, or Arabah—it is a proper noun when used with a definite article as it is here—is the valley which runs from the sea of Galilee down to the Gulf of Aqaba, and this name is retained in the name *Wady el-Arabah*. These other areas might describe the border of Arabah. We have never heard of Suph before, and it occurs nowhere else in the Bible. The word means *reeds* and it might be the area of the Dead Sea which extends southward or the gulf of Aqaba extending northward. In either case, it is south of where Moses and the children of Israel are right now. Another option is that there are reeds off the Jericho River at that place. Paran is a roughly defined area north-northwest of the Gulf of Aqaba and Hazeroth, a stopping point, was along the Gulf of Aqaba. The city or area of Laban is mentioned only here and some think it might refer to Libnah, although that would be

possibly too far north. Tophel is sometimes identified with Tafile, which is fifteen miles southeast of the Dead Sea. I could not even find De-Zahab or Zahab in my Bible dictionaries or encyclopedias. The point of this geography is that these areas are pretty well spread out, however, they likely are the bordering area for Arabah.

J. Vernon McGee gives the brief description of the promised land, including Jerusalem, which he could see from Mount Nebo: *What I saw did not look like a promised land at all. It looked like a total waste, and this reveals what has happened to that land down through the centuries. When Moses looked at it, I think he was seeing a green and a good land. Today it is a desert. It looks like the desert area of California and Arizona*¹⁹.

Eleven days from Horeb, the way to Mount Seir, to Kadesh-barnea. [Deut. 1:2]

The journey from Mount Sinai (or, Horeb) to Kadesh-barnea, would be eleven days. There is a certain amount of irony exhibited by the the author here; from Mount Sinai, to enter into the land, for the average person, would have been an eleven day journey. Israel took over thirty-eight years to complete this same journey.

There are around twenty stops between the wilderness of Sinai and Kadesh-barnea listed in Num. 33:15–36. ZPEB associates Horeb (the Mount of God in Ex. 3:1) with Mount Sinai, which makes sense because the golden calf incident, which occurred when Moses was receiving the Law, was at the foot of Mount Sinai (Ex. 32 Psalm 106:19). However, Horeb is separate from Mount Sinai in Ex. 17:6 in Rephidim, which is one stop away from Mount Sinai (Ex. 17:1–17 Num. 33:14–15). This obviously causes us some severe problems. Horeb is thought to be synonymous with Mount Sinai, but then separated from Mount Sinai. So we need to tackle the **Doctrine of Horeb—not finished yet!!** Mount Seir is in Edom, where the descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother, lived. This places the Jews directly north of the Gulf of Aqaba, along which the Israelites traveled toward the Land of Promise. Kadesh-barnea was their last stop prior to sending the spies into the land. This short travelogue will be the time period which Moses speaks of in this chapter, which begins in Num. 10:11, the date being 2/20/2 AE²⁰ and ends with Num. 14:45, perhaps a few months later (with the exception of Moses choosing men to judge under him, which goes back to Ex. 18, not too much earlier than 2/20/2 AE).

These first two verses tie the book of Deuteronomy to the rest of the Pentateuch. If we leave out the areas listed, then we have **The sermons of Moses to the people up to the eleventh month of the fortieth year.**²¹

And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first [day] of the month Moses spoke to the sons of Israel according to all that Y^ehowah had commanded him concerning them; [Deut. 1:3]

The date of this message is 11/1/40 AE, thirty-eight years after the events herein described, making this roughly 1407 BC. Almost all of the book of Deuteronomy will be a quotation of Moses speaking to the children of Israel. This is his swan song, his farewell sermon. Being that this sermon is about thirty-five pages long, this would have been delivered over a period of several days. Moses will recall this history of the fathers of his listeners and properly interpret this history for them. This verse does not tell us that God specifically commanded Moses to deliver these sermons; Moses took it upon himself, operating under the influence and guidance of God the Holy Spirit, to teach the things to the generation of promise the things spoken by God to Moses and delivered to their parents, gen X.

After his striking down down Sihon king of the Amorite, who was dwelling in Heshbon, and Og, king of the Bashan [or, king of the wide, open area], who was dwelling in Ashtaroth in²² Edrei, [Deut. 1:4]

¹⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 11.

²⁰ *After the Exodus*.

²¹ As per *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, p. 270.

²² The Vulgate, Septuagint and the Syriac codices read *and in*. This does change the meaning quite a bit; as translated, it places Ashtaroth in Edrei, and with the *and* it indicates that these are two separate areas.

Having only a very rudimentary understanding of the Hebrew language, I am dependent upon my language sources, which occasionally fail me. Here, for instance, Owen's translates this as *the king of Bashan*, whereas it actually reads *king of the Bashan*; which accounts for other translations you may have read. *Bashan* means *plain, large open area, champaign*; and, as was mentioned back in Num. 33:21, is not necessarily the name given to that country by the natives, but could be a designation given it by Moses or by the Israelites. The definite article seems to indicate that.

The way v. 4 reads, it sounds as though Ashtaroth is *in* Edrei; however, this is properly understood as Ashtaroth is where Og, king of the Bashan lived; and Edrei is where he died. This is elliptical and it should read: **After his striking down down Sihon king of the Amorite, who was dwelling in Heshbon, and Og, king of the Bashan [or, king of the wide, open area], who was dwelling in Ashtaroth [whom he struck down] in Edrei.** The *and* as is found in several of the other codices, helps us somewhat with this understanding. It is clear from Num. 21:33 and Deut. 3:1 that Edrei is where the Israelites defeated Og, king of the Bashan.

Israel has just had two great victories east of the Jordan, conquering a great deal of land which has gone to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and a portion of the tribe of Manasseh. These victories were principally the efforts of the generation of promise. But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his border. **So Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. The Israel struck him down with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon [was] Jazer. And Israel took all these cities and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all her villages** (Num. 21:23–25).

There is a verb in the next verse which is difficult. First let's examine what other translators have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Moses began to explain this law, saying...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...did Moses take in hand [or, to take upon himself] ²³ to expound this law, saying...
KJV	...began Moses to declare this law, saying,...
NASB	Moses undertook to expound this law, saying, ...
NIV	Moses began to expound this law, saying,...
NRSV	Moses undertook to expound this law as follows:
Owen's Translation	Moses undertook to explain this law as follows

The verb in question is the Hiphil perfect of *yâ'al* (יָאָל) [pronounced *yaw-AHL*] and BDB gives its meanings variously as *to show willingness, to be pleased, to determine, to undertake*. In the Niphal, the easier version, this means *to be foolish*. However, the Hiphil is tougher to follow. We find this verb in the Hiphil perfect in Gen. 18:27 and 31, translated in the NASB *venture*, and footnoted as *undertaken*. We don't see this verb again in the Hiphil perfect until Joshua 7:7, where it is translated *willing, content*. We find this verb several times in the Hiphil imperfect in Ex. 2:21 Joshua 17:12 Judges 1:27, 35 17:11. What appears to be the case is that this is an act of free will, this is an act where a person desires to do something, but it comes not from lust but from contentment from a comfortable position; even from a relaxed mental attitude. I have willingly chosen to translate this *willingly chose*. Strong's #2974 BDB #383

Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses willingly chose to explain this law, saying:
[Deut. 1:5]

God had already given the Law to Moses who had given it to the people. Moses had been enjoined to write it down, which he did, and, we will see later in Deuteronomy, that the Law was, in some way, distributed (not to every person or to every tribe, but the general population did have some access to it, as they will be directed to write verses down and carry them around and learn them. So Moses is not giving them the Law here, but he is explaining it. The Law which Moses spoke of was more than the actual words spoken by God between Ex. 20 and Num. 36. Here, the use of the word *Law*, goes beyond the Ten Commandments and the ordinances and the civil and criminal laws recorded by Moses. Here, the word *law*, if we look to what Moses will begin explaining, covers

²³ According to the *Oxford Gesenius*, which is a Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, which is based upon the Lexicon of William Gesenius.

the recorded events of the previous three books of Scripture. How should I put this? God the Holy Spirit definitely, and Moses, probably, recognized that all which had been recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch was the Law of God. Near the end of his life, Moses will definitely realize that he is recording God's Word. That will be the clear indication of Deut. 4:1 and 12:32. Moses teaches, develops, interprets, and adjusts the Law throughout the book of Deuteronomy, applying it to different sets of circumstances (they were in peace outside of their country and how they were looking at entering their land, going to war and being at war for a considerable amount of time. The book of Deuteronomy renews the covenant which God had made with their fathers of the Jews.

Although the book of Numbers appeared to end artificially and abruptly, there is no doubt that this is a new topic or a new book. We have five verses which introduce this book. As you have found out, I am interested in certain details, such as, how did this come to be written down? I have three different notions: (1) Moses wrote his sermons down, much in the way that many studied pastors do, making certain points, referring back to certain doctrines and occurrences, keeping in mind that this is being spoken to an audience. (2) Moses may have verbally put this sermon together and spoke it to his servant Joshua, who wrote it down and Moses delivered it from his notes. (3) Moses may have spoken extemporaneously, which appears to be the case, but then it had to be written down in order for us to have it in the form that we do today. Either Moses wrote this down after the fact (which I find doubtful) or these are the notes that Joshua took. I favor #1 or #3. I like option #1 just because a pastor should have something to say and that comes as a result of study. The idea of a pastor just standing in front of his congregation just winging it, as though God's Word comes directly from him, makes me nauseous. Usually what is delivered under those circumstances is pap, half-truths and a great many inaccuracies. At best, the pastor might evangelize his congregation for the umpteenth time.

Moses did have a different sort of seminary professor than most of us have had (the Lord Jesus Christ Himself); but then his professor was certainly more exacting than ours. In either option, Moses had the student hours behind him. I originally leaned toward option #3, as we smoothly move from the book of Deuteronomy into the death of Moses, into the book of Joshua, both of which were recorded by Joshua. What more natural thing would there have been than to have written the sermons of Moses as he gave them and then continue with a post script? After writing about the death of Moses, then Joshua would have realized that that is part of his duties under Y^ehowah, to record the history of Israel and the doctrine of Jesus Christ. However, there is a passage or two in Deuteronomy (Deut. 31:9, 24) which tell us this was written by the hand of Moses.

One of the things which I find fascinating are the actual nuts and bolts of what is really occurring. I don't believe that I have even seen this addressed in this way? There are over two million Israelites. With a microphone system and a stage speaker, it would have been difficult to address even a quarter of that number. There is no indication that Moses had either, nor have I found yet a supernatural implication. There are millions of Christians on this planet; even in this nation. Only a fraction of those actually have a real interest in God's Word. If there is an inconvenience tied to attending church, such as distance or lack of a nursery, then some will not attend. If they oversleep or don't feel like getting up in the morning, others will not attend. If it is not a friendly church or if there are no activities arranged for the young people or for the single adults or for the retired but still active, then some will not attend. The point here is that not all two million of these Israelites have a strong interest in God's Word and there are certainly inconveniences and things that they would object to. We too often try to lump groups of people together as though they are one person. This is the essential basis of all prejudice. Here we have two million individuals, far greater than their predecessors, but all carrying within them one each old sin nature. Therefore, some would attend these talks of Moses and many would not. We will see a certain amount of repetition in these sermons of Moses—they are given in such a way, that those who attend several sessions will get something new each time, but those who attend only a few, will walk away with important information also. I recall bringing an evangelist into our high school and he spoke six or seven times in a row. The students flocked to see him, some staying for all sessions. He gave the same essential message each time, but each time it was different enough that anyone attending all sessions got something new everytime. I know this, as I attended all sessions.

So we have Moses speaking to a huge group of people, perhaps as many as several thousand during each session. We have complete silence during his message and all the weather conditions are perfectly suited for his

message to reach the entire congregation. Furthermore, this information was also recorded, word-for-word, so that others could hear what Moses had to say.

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The March Toward the Land of Promise

"Y^ehowah our God has spoken to us in Horeb, saying, 'Enough of you—of dwelling in this mount; [Deut. 1:6]

This begins Moses' first spoken discourse as recorded in Deuteronomy. This will continue until Deut. 4:40, wherein we will have perhaps a word of explanation or an appendix (vv. 41–49), followed by his second dissertation.

My hypothesis is that Horeb is a designation for several different mountains; but I have not finished its study. Here it makes sense for us to be speaking of Mount Sinai, which is the second longest place where the Jews stayed prior to entering the land (they remained there about a year). The method here is specific. God spoke directly to Moses and told Moses it was time to move out. This commandment was certainly not intended for Moses only, but for all the congregation of Israel. However, Moses, as commander and chief of two million people—was he to wander about from tent to tent saying, it's time to get going? That is impractical. [Now it came about in the second year, in the second month on the twentieth of the month that the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settle down in the wilderness of Paran. so they moved out for the first time according to the commandment of Y^ehowah through Moses](#) (Num. 10:11–13). God had already commanded the children of Israel that when the cloud was lifted up from the tabernacle that it was time to move out. They moved to Mount Sinai under those directions and, having spent a year or so there, were moving out again.

" 'Turn and journey for you, and enter the mount of the Amorite, and to all its neighboring places, in the plain [or, in the Arabah], in the south [or, in the Negev], and in the haven of the sea, the land of the Canaanites, and of Lebanon, to the great river, the river Euphrates; [Deut. 1:7]

This are the places where God has told Israel to go. This is not a travelogue, like Num. 33, but it is a list of that which God would give to Israel. The mount of the Amorite is the area east of the Jordan, around the two seas; the Arabah is the area south, south east of Israel—north, northwest of the Gulf of Aqaba. The Negev is the area directly south and southwest of Israel. The land of the Canaanites is Israel, with Lebanon being slightly north of that on the coast of the Mediterranean. The last phrase is the surprise—this is the common designation for the River Euphrates. Suddenly we are thrown into the middle of the cradle of modern civilization, to the far east of Israel, in the land of Babylon. Even as a border, it is some distance from where we consider to be Israel proper. However, this is the land promised originally by God to Abram. [On that day, Y^ehowah made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates." \(Gen. 15:18\). "Every place on which the sole of your foot will tread will be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the Western Sea \[i.e., the Mediterranean\]." \(Deut. 11:24\).](#)

" 'See, I have set before you the land; go in and possess the land which Y^ehowah has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them, and to their descendants [lit., seed] after them.' [Deut. 1:8]

This has been God's command to Israel since they left Mount Sinai—they were to go into the land and take it. God gave the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to their descendants. It was now to claim this land. Notice

that this promise was not fulfilled until after their deaths. God has promises open to us concerning our salvation and our eternal future, the complete fulfillment of which do not come to pass until after our death.

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God Allows Moses to Delegate His Great Responsibilities

Ex. 18:13–26 Num. 11:11–17

"And I spoke to you at that time, saying, I am not able by myself to bear you; [Deut. 1:9]

Moses, on several occasions, had asked God to relieve him of his duties. He was reluctant to lead the Jews in the first place, and faced incredible pressure from their incredible malcontent. Moses appointed men under him on a couple of different instances. Moses was first advised by his father-in-law: **And Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me; I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You are the people's representative before God and you bring the disputes to God. Then you teach them the statutes and the laws and make known to them the way in which they are to walk, and the work they are to do. Furthermore, you will select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you will place them [as] leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties and leaders of tens. And let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute, they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear [responsibility] with you. If you do this thing and God command you [to do this thing], then you will be able to endure, and all these people will also go to their place in peace."** So Moses listened to his father-in-law, and did all that he had said (Ex. 18:17–24). This organization petered out because all of the men who were chosen by Moses had died the sin unto death, with a very few exceptions, and Moses had to delegate the responsibility again. So Moses said to Y^ehowah, **"Why have You been so hard on Your servant? And why have I not found grace in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people upon me? Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who brought them forth, that You would say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing infant, to the land which You had sworn to their fathers'? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, 'Give us meat that we may eat!' I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too burdensome for me."** Y^ehowah therefore said to Moses, **"Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the spirit, Who is upon you, and I will place [Him] upon them; and they will bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone."** (Num. 11:11–14, 16–17).

"Y^ehowah your God has multiplied you, and, observe, you [all] [are] today like the stars of the heavens for multitude; [Deut. 1:10]

The first phrase of this verse, *Y^ehowah your God*, occurs nearly 300 times in this book alone, apart from the number of times the proper name of God is used (Y^ehowah). Moses had almost exclusive speaking rights to God, and the people themselves saw many manifestations of God and many miracles, but they did not speak to Him face-to-face. Moses emphasizes that Y^ehowah is their God as well as his; in fact, this phrase downplays Moses' special relationship with God and emphasizes that these Jews have a particularly close relationship with Y^ehowah, God of the Universe. In a very few weeks, Moses will be gone; however, Israel will not fall apart. God gave them their great leader and they still have God. They will not have the gift, but they will still have the Giver, Who is infinitely greater. Therefore, Moses will emphasize nearly 300 times that, although he will be gone when they enter into the Land of Promise, Y^ehowah their God will lead them and He will fight for them.

One of the problems in the book of Numbers was the vast quantity of Israelites that some scholars have been caused to doubt these numbers. However, there is every indication that there were an unusually large number of Jews. A hundred thousand Jews is large, but not really that unusual, other than they are traveling together as a group. However, two million Jews is an incredibly large number, appearing to the casual observer as the stars in the heavens. When God first made this promise to Abram, Abram had no sons whatsoever. **And Abram said, "O, Y^ehowah God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eleazar of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Since You have given to me no offspring, a son of my house will be my heir." Then, observe, the Word of Y^ehowah came to him, saying, "This man will be your heir, but one who shall come forth from your own loins—he will be your heir." And He took him outside and said "Now look toward the heavens and number the stars; you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." Then he believed in Y^ehowah and He determined it to him as righteousness (Gen. 15:2–6; see also Gen. 18:17–19 22:15–18). God repeated these promises to Isaac and to Jacob. And Y^ehowah appear to him [Isaac] and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I will tell you. Remain in this land and I will be with you and I will bless you, for to you and to your descendants will I give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and I will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed; because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My [designated] responsibilities [for him] and My commandments and My statutes and My laws." (Gen. 26:2–5). And he [Jacob] had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. and behold, Y^ehowah stood above it and said, "I am Y^ehowah, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie. I will give it to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, observe, I am with you, and I will keep you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Gen. 28:12–15).**

"May Y^ehowah God of your fathers continue adding to you, as you [all] [are], a thousand times, and may He continue blessing you as He has promised [lit., spoken to] you. [Deut. 1:11]

The intent of the Hiphil (or, causative) stem likely reads as translated. *Young's Translation* reads: **Jehovah, God of your fathers, is adding to you, as ye are, a thousand times, and doth bless you as He hath spoken to you.** However, in this context, it sounds reasonable for Moses to say, **"Y^ehowah, your God has multiplied you, and, observe, you are this day as the stars of heaven in multitude. May Y^ehowah, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand-fold more than you are, and bless you, just as He has promised you!"** Not only has God fulfilled the promise to Abraham to make his seed, these Jews, but Moses wishes that God continue to bless them in numbers. Recall that this time in history was a time when soaring population growth was a wonderful thing.

Even though the bulk of two million Jews had been sentenced to the sin unto death and that had been carried out, there were still a large number of believing Jews who remained. **"Your fathers went down to Egypt, seventy persons in all, and now Y^ehowah your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven." (Deut. 10:22).**

"How do I bear your [wearisome] pressure by myself, and your burden and your strife? [Deut. 1:12]

It was quite difficult for Moses. He had led the life of a quiet shepherd for a long time, his chief difficulty in life was his wife—however, he got along quite well with his in-laws. However, the Jews were under a lot of pressure and Moses felt as if he carried the weight of the world upon his shoulders. Every problem that these Jews had were his problems. People seek power for a great many reasons, but Moses did not. He took responsibility for the people under his authority and defended and protected them, although they often had roast Moses for Sunday dinner. A man with authority takes responsibility for those under him. To add to these pressures were the times that these people would complain to Moses and oppose God and God's grace. It was more than any great man could handle.

It might be worthwhile examining these three words. *Tôrach* (תּוֹרָחַ) [pronounced *TO-rahk*] is a rarely used word (here and Isa. 1:14) with a rarely used verb cognate (Job 37:11); with such scant references, we will have to go

with *load, burden, wearisome pressure*; although there are other Hebrew words which mean that. Strong's #2960 BDB #382. The second word is another word for *burden*: *massâ* (מַשָּׂא) [pronounced *mahs-SAW*] and it is found throughout the Old Testament consistently translated²⁴ *burden* (Num. 4:15, 19 2Kings 8:9 Isa. 15:1 17:1). Strong's #4853 BDB #672 The last word is *rîy*^bv (רִיב) [pronounced *ree^bv*] and it means *strife, dispute, controversy*. This word is used often for *legal contentions*. These are all the legal disputes which the Jews brought before Moses. Strong's #7379 BDB #936 You might at first think that such power and authority would be great. People come to you with their disagreements and you get to tell them how it's going to be resolved. Some love to solve other people's problems. Guaranteed, after years of these disputes, many of them petty and riddled with personal vendettas, that they would become quite wearisome.

"Give for yourselves men, wise and intelligent, and known to your tribes, and I will set them for your heads; [Deut. 1:13]

This is when Moses could no longer handle all the pressure of the continually court cases which were brought before him. Besides all of his great responsibilities, he was the judge and jury for all disputes great and small. It was actually his father-in-law who suggested that he delegate this responsibility to others. What is put into place is a system of leadership and authority.

"And you [all] answered me and said, 'Good [is] is the thing which you have said—[it would be good] to do.' [Deut. 1:14]

Moses actually had to do this on a couple of occasions. Once, when he was overburdened with court cases (this was at the suggestion of his father-in-law) and once when the sheer pressure of leadership was beyond what he could handle and God gave him men below him to delegate authority to.

"And I took the heads of your tribes, mean, wise and known, and I appointed them heads over you, princes of thousands, and princes of hundred, and princes of fifties, and princes of tens, and authorities for your tribes. [Deut. 1:15]

I must say that this sounds interesting—I can see authorities over fifty, but an authority appointed over ten, which is the size of a large, basic family unit or a very small extended family unit—that seems excessive. What I am assuming here is that there responsibilities were very limited. We have two million people who are on the move, spending forty years in a wilderness and desert area. Information has to be disseminated on a regular basis. Not everyone could see the tabernacle, nor could there be much organization when it came to movement. However, this allowed for the dissemination of information. Let me see if I can explain this on a level that we can understand. In teaching for twenty or more years, there were meetings with the entire faculty (roughly 150) and there were meetings with the heads of each teaching department, and they in turn met with their departments (5–20) and explained the pertinent information to their department. So rather than a court system designed for ten people (or even fifty), this was a way that Moses could speak to all of the people or get the word out to all of the people without publishing a daily newspaper or running the information on a computer service that everyone could download or announcing it on the morning show on TV. Depending on what was covered, groups of ten to a thousand would be pretty much the range of crowd size that any one individual could communicate to.

"And I commanded your judges at that time, saying 'Carefully listen to both sides of a dispute [literally, hearkening between your brothers], the you [all] will judge righteousness between a man and his brother and his temporary resident; [Deut. 1:16]

"There will be one standard for you; it will be for the emigrant as well as the native, for I am Y^ehowah your God." (Lev. 24:22). One of the most revolutionary aspects of Jewish Law was the emphasis upon fairness to be delivered to the temporary resident—the man from another country who was traveling through Israel or who had decided to stay for awhile. In most countries, the immigrant and the alien will be the first people to be exploited. Their treatment by employers, policemen, the court system will often be unduly harsh. Israel was a light to the

²⁴ That is, in the KJV.

world—they represented Y^ehowah, the one true God, to the world. God is a God of righteousness and justice and perfection and Y^ehowah was the God of all mankind. Therefore, his servants could not show partiality.

"You [all] will not discern faces in the judgment; as the little, so the great you [all] will hear; you will not be afraid of the face of any, for the judgment is God's and the thing which is too hard for you, you [all] will bring near to me, and I will hear it." [Deut. 1:17]

In both places where the word *judgment* appears, it is preceded by the definite article. This is not a reference to a specific judgment which is pending; Moses does not have a specific judgment in mind that he is referring to. Here the definite article is one of *species*, meaning that this refers to any particular judgment that they are faced with.

"You will do no injustice in judgment; you will not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly." (Lev. 19:15). People are prejudice in court cases and disputes for all kinds of reasons. In Houston, there is no zoning, so most neighborhoods are regulated by a neighborhood association. It is not unusual for such an association to come down hard for minor infractions on someone who they do not know or do not like, yet to look the other way for offenses committed by a friend on the board or a member of the board itself. Similarly, neighbors will report offenses of people that they do not know, but rarely report offenses of someone that they know and like. In court cases, some people will favor a particular race over another race, some will take the side of the poor over the rich or vice versa—there are so many ways that justice can be perverted. Our system of justice, based very definitely upon the Mosaic Law, is filled with discrepancies and unfair treatment. Moses urged his people against such favoritism—he urged them to listen to a case based upon the merit alone—to ignore the faces of those they are trying, whether friends, or relatives, or strangers, and to examine the facts and render a just decision based upon what is right. And in any case where a judge felt unable to render a proper verdict, then there was the appellate court, the highest court of the land, the judgment of Moses. This even allowed for a situation where a judge was prejudice and did not want to rule, afraid to rule in favor of his family or friends. Such a case could be taken to Moses.

Such a standard of justice is demanded because the Jews are to reflect the character of their God, Y^ehowah—Jesus Christ, the creator of the heavens and the earth. **"For Y^ehowah your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty and the awesome God Who does not show partiality nor does He take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You will fear [and respect] Y^ehowah your God; you will serve Him and cling to Him and you will swear by His name." (Deut. 10:17–20).** This was not a minor point of the Law—this was repeated several times: **"You will appoint for yourselves judges and officers in all your towns which Y^ehowah your God is giving you, according to your tribes and they will judge the people with righteous judgment. You will not distort justice; you will not be partial and you will not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. Justice and [only] justice you will pursue, and you may live and possess the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you." (Deut. 16:18–20; see also Deut. 24:17).**

So you are not a judge or an arbitrator; you are just Charlie Brown, off the street, whose opinion means little even **in your own household. Nevertheless, my brothers, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with personal favoritism. For if a man comes into you assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes,** have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil motives? (James 2:1–3a, 4). You do this all the time. You have this distorted view of those who are celebrities in this life, whether movie or TV personalities or sports figures, and you think there is something special about them because (1) they entertain you and (2) because they have more money than you can conceive of. These are just people; they have old sin natures; they are unfaithful to their mates and they sin; and many of them will spend eternity in hell. The person wearing trashy clothes or the homeless person—the ones you have spoken disparagingly about—they might be your next door neighbors for all of eternity. These earthly celebrities, as far as your memory goes, will be long gone. Their importance will fade just like the monetary wealth that you accumulated in this lifetime will fade. You are a witness to everyone around you, no matter how inferior or superior you consider them to be. Your giving

inordinant deference slights both the rich and the poor alike; the rich feel as though they deserve your adoration because of something they have done, and the poor feel as though you have slighted them. In either case, you have been a poor witness for Jesus Christ.

We have a long history of what results when we judge a person incorrectly. The Jews chose Saul as their king, because he was tall, handsome, seemingly intelligent with what appeared to be some spiritual life. King Saul, Israel's first king, was one of their worst kings. When his successor, David, was to be chosen, God told the prophet Samuel: "[Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for god \[sees\] not as man sees, for man looks at the appearance, but Y^ehowah looks at the heart.](#)" (1Sam. 16:7b).

"And I commanded you, at that time, all the things which you do. [Deut. 1:18]

Moses was the highest authority of the land in the human realm. One of the greatest leaders you can have is a person who has the ability to lead but does not desire that position. Most leaders are warped by lust for power and approbation, as well as greed. Moses was a man of great integrity who would have spent the rest of his life shepherding in Midian had not God specifically called for him to lead Israel.

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Moses Sends out Spies into the Land of Promise

Num. 13:1–24

"And we journeyed from Horeb and traveled all that vast and fearful wilderness which you [all] have seen—the way of the hill country of the Amorites, as Y^ehowah our God had commanded us, and we came in to Kadesh-barnea. [Deut. 1:19]

Even though this movement took place thirty-eight years ago, this is still vivid in the mind of Moses and his hearers; they were in their youth during that time, having known very little other than child slavery in a slightly more hospitable environment prior to this march. However, the descriptors *great and terrible*, repeated in Deut. 8:15, indicate a graphic recalling of what had occurred before, etched forever in the mind of Moses and his listener. Barnes wrote: *This language is such as men would employ after having passed with toil and suffering through the worst part of it, the southern half of the arabah; and more especially when they had but recently rested from their marches in the plain of Shittim, the largest and richest oasis in the whole district on the Eastern bank near the mouth of the Jordan*²⁵.

Moving two million Israelites from point A to point B in a wilderness/desert is a nightmare of logistics. This was simply done through a series of miracles. The books of the Law never hedge on that point. "[For Y^ehowah your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years, Y^ehowah your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing.](#)" (Deut. 2:7). "[He led you through the vast and fearful \[or, dreadful\] wilderness, serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. In the wilderness, He fed you manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.](#)" (Deut. 8:15–16; also see Deut. 32:10–12).

The word *Amorite* is used several ways in the Bible. In Gen. 15:16 and this passage, it refers to the pre-Israelite population in the land of Canaan. The implication might be that the Canaanites, as well as other groups such as the Moabites or the Phœnicians, may have their origins in the Amorite. This general usage of the term, as found in this verse, along with the great similarities in language as found in the Mari texts, is closely related to Ugaritic,

²⁵ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 271.

Canaanite, Hebrew and Arabic. In fact, there are certain ancient words which are found only in the Mari texts and in the Biblical Hebrew. Rather than indicating a universal trade language (or a language of convenience to facilitate trade), there are likely common origins. Gen. 10:15–16 relates the Canaanites to the Amorites (Canaan was the father of the Amorites). There was, in Gen. 11, a language confusion brought on by the Holy Spirit; so we do not know how many similarities between languages remained. However, this helps to explain why two separate groups of people, the Amorites (descended from Ham) and the Hebrews (descended from Shem) would have striking similarities in their language—they had the same father, Noah and God obviously allowed some overlap in the languages. The travelogue is from Mount Sinai to the hill country below Judea, south-southwest of the Salt Sea, then across to Kadesh Barnea.

"And I said to you, 'You [all] have come into the hill country of the Amorite, which Y^ehowah our God is giving to us; [Deut. 1:20]

This was the first approach of Israel to the Promised Land. Moses will not be giving a chronological sermon here, because (1) he is not approaching this material chronologically and (2) this is a collection of several sermons given to perhaps slightly different audiences at different times.

" 'Observe, Y^ehowah your God has set before you the land; go up [and] possess [it], as Y^ehowah, God of your fathers, has spoken to you; fear not, nor be frightened.' [Deut. 1:21]

God had given the Land of Promise, the land of Canaan to the Jews, and all they had to do was to go up into the land and take it. God had searched out the land and had determined that it was good. However, the land was filled with degenerate, cancerous groups of people who needed to be wiped out. This was not a racial or a religious or a cultural problem; this was strictly spiritual. The inhabitants of the land had rejected God as God had **revealed Himself to them and had chosen to worship the creature rather than the creator. For when they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks; in fact, they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to an immoral status, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever, Amen (Rom. 1:21–26).**

The Jews had just seen the premier army of their time destroyed before their eyes—God buried the Egyptian armed forces under millions of gallons of water before their eyes. God had performed miracle after miracle before the eyes of these people. Therefore, they did not have to fear any of the inhabitants of the Land of Promise.

"And you [all] came near to me, all of you, and said, 'Let us send men before us, and they will search for us the land, and they will bring back [to] us word—the way which we should go up into it and the cities unto which we would come in;' [Deut. 1:22]

Some of the translations translate the last portion of this verse: the way which we must go up into it and the cities unto which we must go in. These verbs are in the Qal imperfect, so I don't altogether follow from whence comes the implied imperative; however, I think this should be noted.

This verse tells us that the idea of sending out a spy force first into Canaan was an idea of the people. They wanted to know what they were getting into. On the surface, there does not appear to be anything wrong with this particular move—in fact, if anything, it seemed to be a prudent thing to do. Some of those who had the ear of Moses suggested this and he Moses took this idea to God, as he was wont to do. Y^ehowah said, **"Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you will send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, everyone one a leader among them."** So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the mouth of Y^ehowah, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel (Num. 13:2). This is God's permissive will. God knows what the lay of the land is and He knows who the people are who dwell therein. God does not need to have the land carefully reconnoitered. We do not know the motivation of the people, whether they were stalling or being prudent. However, one thing that we learn in the Bible is one of the

worst things you can do is appoint a committee to study something and give their collective opinion. The board of deacons for a church, with a few wonderful exceptions, are the weakness of the church. Often they stand in opposition to a pastor, sometimes to one who is teaching God's Word faithfully. This is totally wrong in God's plan.

"And this suggestion [lit., the word] is good in my eyes and I took from out of you twelve men, one man for a tribe. [Deut. 1:23]

Moses was to take men who were undoubtedly leaders of the tribes, men upon whom he could depend (or at least, men upon whom he thought he could depend). As things went, these men did what they were supposed to, coolly and professionally, then acted like a bunch of ninnyes when they returned.

"And they turned and went up to the hill country, and they came in to the valley of Eshcol, and they spied [lit., tracked or footed] it; [Deut. 1:24]

The land around the Salt Sea is hill country; below that to the west is the valley, which runs to the Mediterranean Sea. This valley area is mostly forested, surrounded by grassland, surrounded by (perhaps) some desert area (although, at that time, it could have been mostly forest). This valley, running through the midst of Israel was the area which was examined carefully by the spies. It is from this valley that the spies brought back the enormous grape cluster. The word Eshcol means *a cluster of grapes*.

"And they brought with their hand from the produce [or, fruit] of the land, and brought it down to us, and brought us back word, and said, 'Good is the land which Y^ehowah our God is giving to us.' [Deut. 1:25]

This is all in accordance with the promise of God. This particular area, particularly compared to the surrounding regions, was beautiful and prosperous, much more so then than now.

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The People Are Afraid to Take the Land

Num. 13:31–14:4

"And you [all] were not willing to go up, and you [all] provoked the mouth of Y^ehowah your God; [Deut. 1:26]

Both the spies, ten of them at least, and the people were guilty of the sin of fear here. The ten campaigned hard to keep from having to go into the land aggressively, and the people believed them. Joshua and Caleb, two of the spies, had the wherewithall to know that God would protect them and deliver the land into their hands. God had fulfilled all of His promises to them and they were willing to trust God. Despite the minority report and despite the signs and wonders that they had observed first hand, the people chose instead to fear the giants of the land and refused to go against them.

"And you murmured in your tents, and you said, 'In Y^ehowah's hating us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorite—to destroy us; [Deut. 1:27]

It is amazing how easily these Jews were dissuaded. They had heard two conflicting reports; the minority report of Caleb and Joshua who urged them to go up into the land and to take it; and the majority report that the giants of the land were just too big for the Jews to go in and conquer. The first report agreed with the promises of Y^ehowah and the second did not. The people had free will and they chose to go against the promises of God.

After hearing both sides, the people cried and mumbled and complained to one another, and the concensus the next morning was [Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the entire congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! And why is Y^ehowah bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder. Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"](#) (Num. 14:1–3). And the irony is that Moses is now speaking to the little ones who their parents said would become plunder. The Psalmist many years later reminds them: [They had forgot the God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt—wonders in the land of Ham; awesome things by the red Sea. Therefore, He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen on stood in the breach before Him, to turn away His wrath from destroying them. Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe in His Word, but they grumbled in their tents; they did not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah; therefore, He swore to them that He would cast them down in the wilderness](#) (Psalm 106:21–26).

"Where can we go up? Our brothers have melted our heart²⁶, saying, A people greater and taller than we, cities great and walled up [or fortified] to heaven, and also we have see there sons of Anakim.' [Deut. 1:28]

The western Samaritan and the Septuagint codices read *greater and more in number than we*; however there were very few populations which rivaled the size of the Jewish race. The inordinately large population of Israel has been attacked from several sides, including from fundamentalist Christianity. There are many reasonable arguments put forth to decrease the size of Israel, but then God's promise to make them as the stars of heaven becomes less significant in the process. Furthermore, as things stand, all the numbers in Scripture make sense; reduce the population by claiming that the word *thousand* stands for family, and the numbers no longer add up.

We have all seen the comedy routine where someone who is afraid faces a man with a gun, and, when later telling others about it, a small .38 seems to turn into a .44 magnum. The Jewish people were likely shorter than average. I hate to put any numbers on this, but let's say their males were along the lines of five foot to five foot six, for the most part. The giants in the land don't have to be seven or eight foot tall. They were likely around six foot tall. Ten of the spies, rather than just calling these people tall, they exaggerated somewhat. They referred to the people of Palestine as Nephilim. ["There also we saw the Nephilim—the sons of Anak of the Nephilim—and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."](#) (Num. 13:33). This is pure exaggeration. The Jews knew of the Nephilim (and that fact is interesting). They were a cross between the human race and angelic creation and the descendants of same. This was at a time when God allowed the comingling of angelic creation and mankind (certainly Satan suggested in his appeal trial that, if he could have some hands on ability with respect to the earth, that he would make it greater than what God had first created). The demonic acts included sexual relations with women and the earth became filled with part man, part angel inhabitants. In fact, there was so much violence in the world, that, by the time of Noah, that there were few if any 100% human males on the earth, apart from Noah and his immediate family. All flesh had become corrupted. It was this race that God removed from the earth with a flood (God used water to cleanse the earth). This race of partial man was known throughout the ancient worlds, becoming a part of their mythologies (almost all great ancient peoples have a mythological history of an earth with half-man, half-god beings existing at one time). The accurate account is found in Genesis 9 and these creatures were known as Nephilim; however, these people in Palestine were not Nephilim—that was an exaggeration to the ⁿ degree. The exaggeration is more apparent by the remark *walled up to heaven*. The noun is *mīv^etsâr* (מִיבֻצָר) [pronounced *miv^e-TZAWR*] and it is translated *strongholds, fenced, fortress*. It refers to a city where there have been precautions taken in order to preserve its integrity from attack from without. Strong's #4013 BDB #131 The corresponding verb, which is found here, is the Qal passive participle of *bâtsar* (בָּצַר) [pronounced *baw-TZAGR*], which means *walled-up, fenced, fortified* in the Qal passive participle; in the Qal active participle, it is translated *grape-gatherer* (Jer. 6:9 49:9 Obad. 5*). Strong's #1219 BDB #130 The exaggeration is obvious when we are told these cities are *walled-up to heaven*. It is another one of those portions of the Bible when it is clear that this is not to be taken literally. However, the spies who did not want to go into battle against these giants used this exaggeration in order to similarly dissuade the others of their camp.

²⁶ *Hearts* in one early printed edition of the Hebrew Bible (1482–1525 AD).

The reference to the Anakim is first found in Num. 13. We have no genealogy leading us to them. However, they were well-known to the Israelites. These Jews do have an academic background; that is, even during their time in Egypt, even under great slavery, they were aware of some of the things which went on in the outside world and the size and power of the Anakim was legend. Furthermore, the cities in Palestine were fortified. The Jews were not allowed a fortified city; it is likely that the cities in Egypt were not walled so they have the question, how can they go up? Where can they go up? How is it possible to invade this city? The cities are surrounded by great walls and behind the walls are giants. ["But the men who had gone up with Caleb \[and Joshua\] said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone in spying it out is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of stature. The people who live in the land are strong and the cities are fortified—very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."](#) (Num. 13:31–32, 28b).

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Moses Reminds the People of the Strength of Their God

["And I said to you, 'Don't be terrified, nor be afraid of them; \[Deut. 1:29\]"](#)

There are two kinds of fear herein exhibited; just a general, unshakable, unreasoning fear—and a specific fear of the inhabitants of Palestine. Moses was oriented to God's plan; however, these people were not. Moses did say this to the children of Israel; however, he did not record this in the book of Numbers. Moses also said this to them when they faced Egypt: [But Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the deliverance of Y^howah which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. Y^howah will fight for you while you keep silent."](#) (Ex. 14:13–14). God knew about the giants in eternity past and, had Israel marched into the land as per God's command, they would have beaten these giants. He knows about every adversity in our lives and has made provision for them—and God did this in eternity past. He had done the same for Israel, and 600,000 men died, along with most of their wives, because they feared when God told them not to fear.

[" 'Y^howah, your God, Who goes before you—He will fight for you, according to all that He has done with you in Egypt before your eyes; \[Deut. 1:30\]"](#)

This only stands to reason—the purpose of leaving Egypt was to go to the Land of Promise, which God had promised for centuries to the seed of Abraham and it would be illogical for God to lead the people out of Egypt with great signs against great odds, and then desert the people at the edge of Palestine. The Jews have seen God perform great miracles; why would He not keep His word and continue to perform these miracles, where needed? Moses repeats this promise in Deut. 3:22 and 20:4.

[" 'And in the wilderness, where you have seen that Y^howah your God had carried you as a man bearing his son, in all the way which you \[all\] have gone, till you came into this place. \[Deut. 1:31\]"](#)

The movement of two million people through deserts and wilderness in areas which could potentially be filled with enemies, through periods of no food and water, providing such necessities by miracles. The Jews witnessed these things day after day—assisting them in the invasion of Palestine would be a small thing for God to do. Paul spoke [to a group of Jews in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch on his first missionary journey: "And for a period of about forty years, He bore them up in His arms as a nurse in the wilderness."](#) (Acts 13:18). Furthermore, Israel is God's forever: ["Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel; You who have been borne by Me from birth and have been carried from the womb; even to your old age, I will be the same and even to your](#)

graying years I will bear [you]. I am He and I will carry [you]; and I will bear [you] and I will deliver [you]." (Isa. 46:3).

" 'And in this matter you [all] did not place trust in Y^ehowah your God, [Deut. 1:32]

The first generation, generation X, placed little or no faith in God. God made continued promises to the, showed them great signs and miracles, and they refused to trust Him. Moses trusted God in almost all things. When God **game him directions, he followed these directions explicitly. Generation X was just the opposite. "Therefore, I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways.'** As I swore in My wrath, 'They will not enter My rest.'" (Heb. 3:9–10). Jude was even more harsh than the writer of Hebrews: **Now I desire to remind you, thought you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe (Jude 5).** How do you think that you will personally fair in this life if you choose not to trust the Lord Who bought you?

" 'Who is going before you in the way to search out for you a place for your encampment, in fire by night, to show you the way in which you [all] should go, and in a cloud by day.' [Deut. 1:33]

God gave these people something that they could all see, each and every day. When they were moving toward the Land of Promise, God led them with a cloud and with fire, and they could all visually see that. **Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning. so it was continuously; the cloud would cover it, and the appearance of fire by night. And whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would then set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. at the mouth of Y^ehowah the sons of Israel would set out and at the mouth of Y^ehowah they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped. Even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep Y^ehowah's charge and they remained camped. Then according to the mouth of Y^ehowah they set out...whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out (Num. 9:15–20, 22).** This cloud and fire thing was mentioned because every Jew who wanted to could, on any given day, go to the tabernacle and see the cloud or the fire. Daily, there was a sign to them that God was faithful; that God could be trusted. This is apart from the daily sign that God provided them with manna.

Here, as in many other areas, the Jews were totally illogical—if God is going to lead them all the way from Egypt to Palestine, it makes absolutely no sense for Him to desert them at the foot of Palestine. We believers find the same thing in our lives. God leads us or deposits us in a particular geographical area, and—perhaps due to a small amount of adversity—we suddenly stop trusting Him, even though he has opened all the doors up until that point in time. God does not take us somewhere and suddenly drop out of sight and leave us to the wolves, as it were. When God leads, He remains with us. Even when we screw up, God remains with us. However, our problems and the mess that we make of our lives are to be solved by Him in His way.

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God's Oath Against Generation X

Num. 14:20–38

"And Y^ehowah heard the voice of your words, and He was angry, and He swore [to you] saying, [Deut. 1:34]

The night prior to the entrance into the land, gen X cried and complained, bitched and moaned, as they were famous for. **Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "It would have been preferable to die in the land of Egypt or to die in the wilderness!"** (Num. 14:1–2). God's stated preference was to kill every Jew and begin His nation anew with Moses. **And Y^ehowah said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? I will strike them down with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they."** (Num. 14:11–12). Moses doesn't tell this generation, at least in these messages, that God was ready to kill them all and begin all over again.

" 'Not one of these men of this evil generation sees the good land which I have sworn to give to your fathers; [Deut. 1:35]

God was actually much more graphic than this. **And Y^ehowah said to Moses and Aaron, saying, "How long [must I remain] with this evil generation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. Say to them, 'As I live,' says Y^ehowah, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.' "** (Num. 14:26–29). Moses doesn't exactly sugar coat what God told him; however, he isn't quite as graphic as *your corpses will fall in this wilderness*. One of the things which this generation X chanted was *it would have been better to have died in the wilderness*; God heard their voice and answered their prayer, so to speak. However, Moses is speaking to the children who have, over the past thirty-eight years, been bereaved of their parents, so Moses softens what God said; he is a bit more diplomatic because of his audience.

Generation X could not see past the giants and the fortified walls—the land was exactly as God had promised. God had an agenda which deals with the world, not just with the Jews (we might do well to remember that God's agenda still is with the world and it does not confined to ourselves or our church). Part of this plan included the destruction of the cancerous growth of people who recognized the beauty and wealth of Palestine and therein settled. Part of God's plane included their elimination. So far in medicine, the most effective way to stop cancerous growth, when it is possible, it to remove it completely—to cut it out. God must perform such an operation on various groups of people. We see great areas where there is continual warfare. We see great diseases decimating various populations. These things are not random—this is a part of God's plan. This does not mean that every person struck down with a horrible disease is an unbeliever or a believer out of fellowship. God has some of us die in this way as a witness to the unbeliever and to the believer who is out of fellowship. We have nothing to fear from death. Death is immediate deliverance from pain and discomfort, from distress and unhappiness, to perfect happiness and no more sorrow and no more tears. We have this confidence which takes us through the door of death. Our Lord has conquered death.

" 'Except Caleb ben Jephunneh—he saw it, and to him I give the land on which he has walked, and to his sons, because he has fully followed after Y^ehowah.' [Deut. 1:36]

The twelve men who went into the land observed different things. The ten who formed the majority report saw the giants and the fortified cities and did everything in their power to dissuade the children of Israel concerning the movement into Palestine. However, Caleb and Joshua saw the land just as God had promised—they saw the beauty of the land and its great prosperity. The giants and the fortified cities were just a detail. They noticed this and knew that God was able. The key is that Caleb and Joshua knew God's Word and they believed God. Thieme called that knowledge of doctrine and faith-rest. You, as a believer, need to start there, along with the filling of the Holy Spirit. God has tremendous earthly blessings which he has set before you—you need only take them by faith.

Caleb was forty years old when he was sent out to spy the land. At the time of this sermon, he was eighty. It will take Israel only five years to conquer most of the land given them by God, and Caleb will enter the land as strong and as youthful as he was at forty; Caleb told Joshua, **"And now behold, Y^ehowah has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that Y^ehowah spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the**

wilderness; and now, observe, I am eighty-five years old today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in." (Joshua 14:10–11). That is God's grace. Moses too was blessed with youthfulness and health throughout his 120 years on this earth (Deut. 34:7). This is by no means a promise to any of us, but God does bless by providing strength, health and youthfulness. One of the first people who comes to mind is R.B. Thieme, whose father and uncle all died at relatively young ages; however, he always appeared to be vigorous and in the best of health, with very little change in physical appearance over the final twenty or thirty years of his ministry.²⁷ The fact that God has given such strength and blessing to some would be a damn good reason to get with His Word.

Caleb also took this statement to mean that he could claim whatever piece of land that he wanted, and that he did in Joshua 14–15, which we will discuss later.

"Also with me Y^ehowah has been angry for your sake, saying, 'Also, you will not go in there.'
[Deut. 1:37]

The Jews rebelled against Moses due to the lack of water—this was the second occasion and this was the second generation, the generation of hope—and Moses made the mistake of striking the rock twice rather than speaking to it (Num. 20:11–12). Such a mistake confused the perfect analogy which God had set up.

" 'Joshua, son of Nun, who is standing before you, he will go up into there; you will strengthen him, for he will cause Israel to inherit [the land]. [Deut. 1:38]

Now here is an interesting thing: Moses, when he failed, immediately asked God to take care of his people and asked God to provide for them a leader. He was not even presumptuous enough to choose a leader on their behalf, knowing that men make serious mistakes in this regard. However, notice what is said as compared to what occurred. The Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Go up to this mountain of Abarim and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel. And when you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was; for in the wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My mouth to treat Me as holy before their eyes at the water." (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin). Then Moses spoke to Y^ehowah, saying, "May Y^ehowah, the god of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of Y^ehowah may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." (Num. 27:12–17). Moses mentions very little of this to the generation of promise. He doesn't go to the Jews and ask, "Do you think this is fair? Don't you think that god is being too hard on me?" Nor does he go to them and tell them that his first thought, hearing that he would not enter the land was for them—that they have a leader. He only mentions that he will not go into the land and that Joshua will be his replacement. Moses was very grace-oriented and, unless backed into a corner, was not going to sing his own praises to the congregation of Israel. Moses gave up his position of leadership graciously (who knows, perhaps he was relieved). On several occasions, he made it clear that Joshua, son of Nun, would lead in his stead (Num. 34:17 Deut. 3:28 31:7).

" 'And your infants, of whom you [all] had said, "For a prey they are," and your sons who have not known today good and evil, they will to in there and to them I will give it, and they will possess it; [Deut. 1:39]

Moses is speaking to the *infants*, however, he is speaking of a time forty years ago when God spoke to Moses to speak to the people, and in this way, spoke to this degenerate generation, gen X. God promised that the generation of promise would take the land, and now Moses is speaking to these people prior to their invasion of the land. [Generation X is complaining about their ot in life] **"And why is Y^ehowah bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder. would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"** (Num. 14:3). God's response: **"Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness."** (Num. 14:32).

²⁷ At the time that I am writing this, his ministry to the same church is in it's forty-seventh year.

This passage gives us some clue as to the age of accountability, but we have to be careful here. God had specific duties for the generation of men who were twenty years and older; they were to believe God, enter into the land and take it from the population which lived there. God had given them a specific responsibility and they failed at that responsibility. Those who were nineteen and below were not yet given this responsibility, so they were not yet responsible. I have heard one person place the age of accountability at age twenty because of this passage. We have that age in this place because that is the age cutoff that God assigned specific responsibilities to. However, bear in mind the context and the dispensation. These people did not have the Holy Spirit as we have the Holy Spirit. It is my opinion that today the age of accountability in a civilized society is much younger. I hesitate to place a number on it, but perhaps somewhere between age four and twelve. Children can be saved somewhere between ages three and six. Furthermore, it should be clear to any of you who know anything about young people and drugs that some children begin taking drugs at age eight or ten or twelve and it damages their lives and psyches for the rest of their time on earth. If God allows young people to do this to themselves, then that would be the time that a child has some responsibility in the presence of God.

One thing is absolutely clear: if you have children, you must begin early with them. They need to see you as an example of faith and they need to hear the gospel. They need to understand Who Jesus Christ is and that they must make a decision from their own soul. [Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it](#) (Prov. 22:6). As a child, I was stubborn, self-willed and as hard-headed as children go; and this carried on into my early twenties. However, my parents, who were both unbelievers, gave me some of the very best training and discipline along with their personal consistent daily example of moral behavior. However, although I departed from their excellent teaching on a consistent basis for many years, I returned to it. Luckily, I was not too old before I began to realize that my parents had given me a great deal in the way of love, training and discipline. So all children need consistent training, guidance, your good example, and they need the gospel.

J. Vernon McGee points out that this passage tells us that children who die in infancy are automatically saved. The children who were not faced with the responsibility of going to war under God's direction did not die the sin unto death as did their parents. They were given the exact same chance as their parents had. God allowed them to live and then, when the time was right, placed the decision before them.

What we have in the previous few verses is an example of short-term prophecy. God told Israel to go and take the land; Israel did not, so God withdrew, for that generation the promise of the land. He promised to scatter their corpses in the desert and bring their children into the land. He promised that only Joshua and Caleb would remain from generation X. All of these predictions and prophecies came true. The prophetic aspect of the Bible is both long-term (such as, Lev. 26) and short-term. God's Word must stand, both to the generation that it was written to and to the many generations that follow.

" 'And you [all], turn back and return to the wilderness, in the direction of the sea of Reeds [lit., turn for yourselves, and journey toward the wilderness, the way of the sea of Reeds].' [Deut. 1:40]

If the Jews would not obey God, then there was no reason for them to enter into the land. They could not remain right on the outskirts of the land, or the inhabitants would eventually storm down and kill many of them. Therefore, they had to back off. From the edge of the land, they were instructed to return to Kadesh-barnea. However, in keeping with their habit of disobeying God, they did just the opposite.

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Israel's Failed Attempt to Take the Land Without God

Num. 14:39–45

"And you [all] answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against Y^ehowah; we, even we, will go up and we will fight, according to all that which Y^ehowah our God has commanded us;' and you [all] prepared for yourselves [lit., gird on each his] weapons of war, and you [all] were ready to go up to the hill-country. [Deut. 1:41]

The verb *were ready* might be rendered *thought it easy*. It is a tough call, as this verb occurs only here in Scripture.

This was an interesting turn of events. The Jews whined and cried and refused to go up into the hill country to fight against the inhabitants. So God told them that they would not enter into the land but that their children would instead. This did not set well with the Jews, so they decided that they had two choices: either go back into the desert and wilderness where they had just spent the better part of two years in thirst and hunger or they could attack the inhabitants of Palestine. This was not a choice which God had placed before them—these were options which they manufactured in their own minds. God had already made a ruling and He would affirm that ruling. If this doesn't make sense to you, then you just do not know human nature. Man is not necessarily logical and he does not tend toward making the right decision all of the time. With the facts fully before him, man makes some extremely stupid decisions. There are certain men who are adulterers who give it very little thought; but there are a considerable number of men who realize, sometimes for weeks and months in advance, that a decision to commit adultery could ruin their marriage, break the heart of the woman they love or once loved, and cause years of pain suffering to their children and to themselves for years to come—and then they go right ahead and do it. That is the essence of human nature to know what is right, and then to do just the opposite. In fact, one of the fallacies of sex education in the public schools is that it is thought that if you present this material intelligently before the students that, even if they choose to have sex as minors, at least they will know enough to use contraception. Let me educate you as to how the adolescent mind works. They first of all see this as a green light to experiment, and sometimes they might use contraception (and sometimes they won't). This is human nature. I have talked to fifteen-year-olds who thought that it was okay to get wasted, to drink to excess, just as long as they didn't drive (and, most of the time, they don't drive; but sometimes they do). This generation X of Israel were given the truth day in and day out; they had seen great miracles and they had the leading of God—and whatever God told them to do, sometimes they did it and sometimes they did they exact opposite.

The insidiousness of human viewpoint is lost here in this shuffle. They have been told that they can go and take the land, yet, their leaders influenced them for fear. Moses explains that God would have led them and God would have fought for them, but no more. Here is where human viewpoint creeps in—okay, they could have gone up and taken the land. So now they will—they are not placing their faith in God or in His Word, but, since Moses has told them that they would have been able to conquer the land, the reasoning is that the ability to conquer the land lies within themselves. That is, they are the ones able to conquer the land, apart from God. Let me make this clear: apart from God, you are nothing. You are worthless at best and a spiritual detriment to those around you at worst. No matter how much personal talent that you have, or innate intelligence, or good looks, or favored background, we are nothing in this life apart from God. There are only two things that move us into God's will—and no, it is not sincere emotion and a vow to do good—it is God the Holy Spirit, Whose filling is achieved by naming your sins to God; and the study of God's Word. The psychological hoops you jumped through to walk out in front of everybody and re-dedicate your life; your promises to God to never do this or that again; your fervent emotion—these things mean nothing. This is the charge of the Israelites up into the hill country without God. God left us His Holy Spirit and His Word. Jesus Christ, in the book of John particularly, tells the disciples that He will leave, but His purpose in leaving is to send to them God the Holy Spirit. These are the two things which are left here on earth for us. If you neglect one or both of them, then your life is meaningless. Have you ever accumulated wealth or possessions or a particular possession in a dream, and then you woke up and you did not have it? This is what your life will be; you will stand before God at the end of your life and you will have nothing worthwhile that you have carried from this life into the next. Now, you will have no more sorrow, no more tears, and your shame of wasting your life will be momentary—but you will be picking cotton on my plantation and your life will not have glorified God.

"And Y^ehowah said to me, 'Speak to them: "You will not go up, nor fight, for I am not in your midst, so that [lit., and] you [all] are not struck down before your enemies." ' [Deut. 1:42]

The Jews were out of fellowship. They did not confess their sins to God. They did confess them to Moses, and then immediately went against God's will. Naming your sins to God does not do you a whole lot of good if you put yourself out of fellowship a tenth of a second later. They were operating under the strength of the flesh and they had determined in their minds that they had options which they really did not have. God had not, after that night of great fear, give them two options. He told them that it was time to back up, return to the desert, and their children would come back and take the land. So that there was no confusion, God spoke to Moses and Moses told the people that they no longer had the option of entering into the land and fighting against the inhabitants therein. God would not be with them if they did such a thing and they were enjoined not to go into the land, or they would be struck down by their enemies.

"And I said to you, and you did not listen, and you provoked the mouth of Y^ehowah and you acted proudly, and you went up into the hill country; [Deut. 1:43]

That generation X did exactly the opposite of what God had commanded them to do. *In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country, saying, "Here we are; we have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which Y^ehowah has promised." But Moses said, "Why then are you transgressing the commandment of Y^ehowah, when it will not succeed? Do not go up, so that you will not be struck down before your enemies, for Y^ehowah is not among you."* (Num. 14:40–42). They were given fair warning that this would not fall within the will of God and they were told that they would not win. However, gen X was not known for listening to God or to reason.

"And the Amorite, who is dwelling in that hill country, came down to meet you, and they pursued you as the bees do, and the struck you down in Seir, [all the way] to Hormah." [Deut. 1:44]

As mentioned back in Ex. 23:28, the meaning of this Hebrew word translated *bees* has been lost to history. The Septuagint translated it *wasp*; however, that was likely a guess. It is preceded by the preposition for *as*, meaning that, in any case, this is analogous. It does not refer to a specific people in history.

The Amorites had the most powerful nation at that time in the land of Canaan, so their name is lent here to represent all of the inhabitants of Canaan (specifically the Amalekites and the Canaanites of the hill country—Num. 14:45). This is the more general usage of the term *Amorites*, which appears to mean *westerner*. When someone says to me, a resident of Houston, *you people of the South*, in reference to myself and those in Houston, he does not take into account that a very large number of us moved here from somewhere else. We are called *southerners*, although our culture and background are decidedly different. Moses is using the name Amorite in a similar fashion.

The Interpretations Of Deuteronomy 1:44

The problem is this: in Num. 14, Israel is pushed back by the inhabitants of the hill country, which are said to be Canaanites and Amalekites. In this passage, they are called *Amorites*.

The most common explanation is what I have given already: the term *Amorite* has a general and a specific usage. In general, it means *westerners* and refers to the diverse peoples in the land of Canaan. Moses was making a point in Deut. 1 which did not require him to specifically name the groups who beat Israel down. For his flow of speech, it was simpler to name them by one name. We often find the term

1. *Canaanite* used in general, but it is because the groups referred to are Canaanite in origin. The Amalekites are not Canaanite, they are a Semitic people, descended from Esau (Gen. 36:15–16 1Chron. 1:36). Therefore, using the term *Canaanite* would be incorrect if referring to both groups. However, as has been mentioned, *Amorite* is more of a general term which alludes to factious groups in a particular territory, rather than referring to any particular racial group.

The Interpretations Of Deuteronomy 1:44

2. All three groups could have been in those hills. In Num. 14, the Amalekites and Canaanites are references and in Deuteronomy, the Amorites are mentioned. The biggest problem here is the consistency with which we find these terms—throughout all of Num. 14, we have *Amalekites* and *Canaanites*; throughout all of Deut. 1, we find the term *Amorite* used exclusively.

3. A third possibility is that Moses simply made a mistake. This would contradict the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. A similar explanation is that the person who wrote this, someone who is not Moses, made a mistake. Again, this contradicts the inspiration of Scripture.

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When this generation went before the men of Palestine, they, when faced with these men of war without God being with them, turned tail and ran. [But they went up heedlessly to the ridge of the hill country; neither the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah nor Moses left the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah](#) (Num. 14:44–45). The inhabitants of Palestine took this as great sport and pursued them, chasing them but moving slow enough to get them out of the land. They probably didn't know where the encampment of the Jews were and chased them far enough to get close to it. It wasn't that they could not catch the Jews—part of the fun was the chase and the observance of the fear; and, the closer they could get to the encampment of the Jews, the better. This would be an example to the others and there might be some more killing that could take place.

["And you turned back and you wept before Y^ehowah, and Y^ehowah had did not listen to your voice, nor did he give ear to you; \[Deut. 1:45\]](#)

God is omnipresent, and, even though the rumors were quietly spread throughout the camp, and that those very demonstrative Jews who cried aloud in public as well as the ones who did in private, were all observed by God. Everything that we do is done before God. Now these people have been beaten down and they are in tears again. God made it clear to the people the sequence of events and He made clear to them His power and when He would be with them or not. When they chose to ignore Him, He chose to ignore them. When you are out of fellowship, you have no contact with God. We are very willful in our lives and we make dozens, if not hundreds of wrong choices which strictly reveal our own will and our own lusts. God is not with us in these. God does not stay with us when we push Him away. We have one way back to Him and that is rebound and His Word.

Perhaps you have gone through some difficult times and perhaps it has been because you have been out of fellowship and because you have opposed God's will. And now, the discipline is so great, that you are caused to cry before God. Some people, under various types of psychological pressure, wander up before a church and cry there. Aren't these tears indicative of repentance? Did not the Israelites who cried in front of God after this defeat—was this not repentance before God? We live in a world of tears and tears sometimes are meaningful [and sometimes they are not. I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the changing of \[your\] mind; for you were made sorrowful according to \[the norm or standard of\] God in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to \[the norm or standard of\] God produces a change of mind leading to a salvation \[or deliverance\] without regret; but the sorrow of the world produces death \(2Cor. 7:9–10\).](#) You were wrong, you were disciplined by God, and, it hurt so bad that you are now crying. The key, is this a sorrow caused by hurting, by discipline, by not getting just what you wanted? Or is this a sorrow according to the norm and standard of God? These sons of Israel cried on three occasions with respect to this incident. The night before they were to enter the land; after they realized that they had missed the opportunity to enter the land due to their unbelief and that God had placed them under the sin unto death; and after they had been defeated when they presumptuously attacked the Canaanites of the land. ["There also we saw](#)

the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and **cried**, and the people **wept** that night. And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!" "Your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, [those of you] who have grumbled against [God]" And when Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people **mourned** greatly. [Moses is speaking]: "Then you answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against Y^ehowah; we will indeed go up and fight, just as Y^ehowah our god commanded us.' And every man of you girded on his weapons of war, and regarded it as easy to go up into the hill country. And Y^ehowah said to me, 'Say to them, "Do not go up, nor fight, for I am not among you; or you will be defeated before your enemies."' So I spoke to you, but you would not listen. Instead, you rebelled against the oath of Y^ehowah and acted presumptuously and went up into the hill country. And the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do, and crushed you from Seir to Hormah. Then you returned and **wept** before Y^ehowah, but Y^ehowah did not listen to your voice, nor give ear to you." (Num. 13:33–14:2b, 29, 39 Deut. 1:41–45). Some criminals, when they are caught or when they are sentenced to jail, weep. Do they weep because they realize they are wrong and wish they could undo the wrong that they did? Sometimes; but, usually, they weep because they were caught and because they will now suffer as a result of that²⁸.

The next verse is a good verse to expand upon, as it is crucial to the activity of the Jews during their time in the desert:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So you remained in Kadesh; many days you remained there.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And ye abode in Kadesh many days,—how many were the days that ye abode [there]!
KJV	"So you abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there."
NASB	"So you remained in Kadesh many days, the days that you spent there."
NIV	And so you stayed in Kadesh many days—all the time you spent there.
NRSV	After you stayed at Kadesh as many days as you did, [we journeyed back into the wilderness, in the direction of the Red Sea... (part of Deut. 2:1 was added here)
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and ye dwell in Kadesh many days, according to the days which ye had dwelt.

The first half of the verse is generally correctly rendered: we have the Qal imperfect of *yâsha*^bv (יָשָׁא) [pronounced *yaw-SHAH^BV*] and it means *to remain, sit, dwell*. Strong's #3427 BDB #442 *Many days* is a phrase we first find in Gen. 21:34, which could have indicated a period of time from 5 years to perhaps 20. This phrase is found again in Gen. 37:34 when Jacob has found out (incorrectly) that his son Joseph has died—his mourning for many days went on for years. He still held his children responsible as late as Gen. 42:38, which is quite a number of years later. *Many days* here was an inordinate amount of time, several years at least. Lev. 15:25 has the same phrase, which may not refer to more than a week or two, but the key is we are talking about an unusual amount of time—more than what is ordinary. They Jews remained at the foot of Mount Sinai for about a year, which was because Moses was obtaining the Law from God. There were two trips involved and this was not a period of *many days*, as this was a reasonable amount of time. However, the time that they spent at Kadesh-barnea fell under the phrase *many days*—an unreasonable amount of time.

The emphasize this, we follow this with the *kâph* preposition, which means *like, as*;. which in turn is followed by the phrase *the days*. Then there is the relative pronoun *which*, and the 2nd masculine plural, Qal perfect of *yâsha*^bv again.

"And you [all] kept remaining [or, kept dwelling] in Kadesh many days, as the days which you [all] had remained [or, dwelt]." [Deut. 1:46]

²⁸ Taken from an example of J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 18.

There is an emphasis here not just upon an inordinate amount of time, which would have been the first phrase all by itself, but that is followed by a second phrase which further emphasizes the first phrase. This is why *The Emphasized Bible* translates it as [how many were the days that ye abode \[there\]!](#) This indicates that they spend a great deal of time in Kadesh-barnea; of no other stopping place in the desert was it said that they spent *many days*. (Num. 9:19 was likely a retrospective addition to the chronological narrative, not added later but added when Moses and the children of Israel were residing in Kadesh-barnea and Moses was recording God's Word for the first time). We will also have the sons of Israel wandering around Mount Seir for many days in the following verse. Joshua used this term *many days* to describe the amount of time that the sons of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh remained with their children of Israel to conquer the land, even after they had chosen their own territory. This was a period of several decades.

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Deuteronomy 2

Deuteronomy 2:1–37

Outline of Chapter 2:

- Vv. 1–8a **Moses recalls Israel's dealings with Edom**
- Vv. 8b–9 **Moses recalls Israel traveling through Moab**
- Vv. 10–12 **Parenthetical object lessons**
- Vv. 13–18 **God removed generation X, the cancerous generation**
- Vv. 19–23 **Israel and Ammon and another object lesson**
- Vv. 24–37 **Sihon, king of Heshbon, opposes the sons of Israel**

Introduction: Deut. 2 is a continuation of Deut. 1, separated only, perhaps, due to their length. Moses covered the trip from Mount Sinai to Kadesh-barnea rather quickly, and then focused in for most of Deut. 1 on the refusal of generation X to take the land given them by God. Deut. 2 will pick up here and follow the Israelites—principally the generation of promise, around as they travel east of the promised land. The primary purpose of what Moses says to the people is God's faithfulness, His integrity, His omnipotence and His veracity. The children of Israel are about to enter into the Land of Promise and spend seven years taking it from the Canaanites and the other indigenous peoples of whom their fathers were afraid. Since they had seemingly learned from the mistakes of generation X, Moses thought it wise to teach them academically of these characteristics of God through illustration. Because Lot was Abram's nephew, God blessed Lot's descendants with a piece of land. Moses will point out that at one time, *giants* lived in that land, but God promised the land to Moab and Ammon, Lot's two children, and God gave them that land. Illustration #2: God gave land to Esau, the brother of Jacob. Great men of war lived there and God allowed Esau to possess it nevertheless. Esau is an also-ran. He was Jacob's twin and the covenant to Abraham went to Jacob, not to his older brother Esau. Still, God was faithful to Esau under the principle blessing by association. Illustration #3: when Israel was opposed by the king of the Amorites, Sihon, God deliver him and his land into the hands of Israel. Chapter 4 will continue a retrospect of the faithfulness of God in war.

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Moses Recalls Israel's Dealings with Edom

Num. 20:14–21 21:4–5

Between the second-to-the-last verse in Deut. 1 and this verse, there are the thirty-eight silent years, simply covered in Deut. 1:46: "[So you remained in Kadesh many days, the days that you remained.](#)" Most of generation X has died the sin unto death. It would seem logical that the generation of promise of Israel would move due north and take the land. [When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negev \[i.e., the southern region\] heard that Israel was coming by way of Atharim, then he fought against Israel and took some of them captive. So Israel made a vow to Y^ehowah and said, "If You will completely deliver this people into my hand, then I will completely destroy their cities." And Y^ehowah heard the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; then they completely destroyed them and their cities. Thus the name of the place was called Chormah \[meaning *devoted*; i.e., devoted to destruction\] \(Num. 21:1–3\).](#) After defeating a Canaanite tribe, it would seem even more logical for the children of Israel to march immediately into the land and to take it. However, God did not take them that direction for two reasons: (1) there were still some Israelites from generation X who needed to be removed (see Num. 21:6 25:9); and, (2) God needed to present the generation of promise with

some object lessons. Moses will explain these object lessons in this chapter. Therefore, instead of moving due north into the Land of Promise, Israel moved into the land of Edom.

"Then we turned and then we journeyed into the wilderness, the way of the Sea of Reeds, as Y^howah had spoken to me, and we went around the mount of Seir for many days. [Deut. 2:1]

The Sea of Reeds is obviously not the same from the book of Exodus. It apparently referred to any large body of water wherein were reeds. Here, we are either directly south of the Salt Sea or north of the Gulf of Aqaba. The mount or the hill country of Seir is an area south of the Dead Sea. This would indicate a route which is south of the border of Edom.

Here, *many days* means an inordinant amount of time; in terms of encampment, that was a period of thirty-eight years. In terms of marching in place, this may have been just a week or two. This was the land of Edom, given by God to Esau—and the Jews were therefore not allowed to take it from them.

There remains still a remnant of generation X, and you would think that they would have learned by now. Over the past thirty-eight years, they have seen the better part of two million people die the sin unto death. You would think that would have made an impression. It obviously did not. They think that they should go due north into the Land of Promise and they complain when God does not lead them that way. **Then they set out from Mount Hor by way of the Sea of Reeds to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. And the people spoke against God and Moses. "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loath this miserable food." And Y^howah sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died (Num. 21:4–5).** Moses does not mention this because it is not a part of what he is teaching this new generation prior to the entrance into the Land of Promise. I mention this so that you can be integrated into the historical context that we have just covered in the book of Numbers.

"Then Y^howah spoke to me, saying, [Deut. 2:2]

For some reason, the Israelites moved out of Kadesh-barnea, went into Edom, and circled Mount Seir, being guided by God the Holy Spirit. I don't think that we are specifically given a reason for this particular movement.

" 'Enough of you—the going around of this mountain; for for yourselves northward. [Deut. 2:3]

McGee writes: *I have always thought that the Lord has a sense of humor, and I think we can see it here. You see, they didn't know where to go. all they have been doing is just going around and around Mr. Seir. It was sort of a ring-around-the-rosy; round and round they go. finally God says that He is getting tired of that. He says. He says, "Let's quit this round and round business." I'm afraid many Chjristians are doing that very same thing. Because they fail to take God at His Word, they are just marking time, and are on a merry-go-round of activity²⁹.*

God is leading the sons of Israel; however, they are in a holding pattern as many of them are complaining again. **They set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Sea of Reeds to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient beause of the journey. And the people spoke against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food [the manna]." (Num. 21:4–5).** God had to remove some of these people—principally gen X—to cleanse the children of Israel completely.

God has taken His people due east, until they reached the water running between the Salt Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba (which I believe existed at that time), and they arrived at the southern portion of the mountains of Seir in Edom, in the southern portion of Edom, where there was a more scattered population and less well-defined boundaries. What Israel would like to do would be to travel through Edom along the King's Highway. Moses, from

²⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 19.

Kadesh-barnea, sent such messengers to Edom, and then set out behind the messengers. From Kadesh, Moses then sent messengers to the king of Edom; "Thus your brother Israel has said, 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us; that our fathers went down to Egypt and we stayed in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our fathers poorly. But, when we cried out to Y^ehowah, He heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out from Egypt; now observe, we are at Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory. Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or through vineyard; we will not even drink water from a well. we will go along the king's highway, not turning to the right or left, until we pass through your territory.' " (Num. 20:14–17).

We are not positive as to which mountain or mountain range is referred to . There are sets of mountains on both sides of the valley where there was like a river of reeds. Most scholars place Mount Seir east of the valley which runs between the Salt Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. This appears to line up with the end of Num. 20 and the beginning of Num. 21. Then they set out from Mount Hor by way of the Sea of Reeds, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey (Num. 21:4). It would make sense that the Israelites would become impatient because they are moving away from the Land of Promise and had they gone in a circle or two.

" 'And you must command the people, saying, "You all are passing over into the border of your brothers, [the] sons of Esau, who are dwelling in Seir, and they are afraid of you; and you [all] being abundantly on guard; [Deut. 2:4]

The Hebrew appears to be confusing at first. *Command* is in the 2nd masculine singular, Piel imperative. Context explains what is going on. This is Moses telling the people what God told him to say to them—a quote within a quote within a quote. God, in speaking to Moses, said, "You [Moses] must command the people." We have to be careful not to interpret these few verses as though they are consecutive events. The last verb, *being on guard*, is in the Niphal perfect rather than a Piel imperative again (which is what I would have expected). Rather than continue this command begun in this sentence with a further command, the Niphal is used instead. The Niphal is usually the passive of the Qal (or common) stem. However, the Niphal also emphasizes the effect of an individual on the group and can refer to an action in progress or development, so we often translate the verb along with the word *being*.³⁰ This is a continuation of the imperative mood, but said in such a way that each individual is charged here to be on their guard. These verses, 2–5 should be read together, so that we are not so far removed from the context and the meaning of what is said.

One of the first hit songs written by Moses if found in Ex. 15 written almost forty years prior to this incident as Moses was guided by God the Holy Spirit. He wrote: **The peoples have heard—they tremble; anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; the leaders of Moab—trembling grips them; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. Terror and dread fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm, they are motionless as stone until You people pass over, O Y^ehowah; until the people pass over whom You have purchased** (Ex. 15:14–16). What we read in this portion of Deuteronomy is the fulfillment of the prophecy of this song. A prophet was to be judged by the people of his time by the prophecies that he spoke and whether or not they came to pass. What Moses said almost forty years ago had come to pass.

The route covered by Israel seems to have been a movement from Kadesh-barnea to Mount Hor, which might be Mount Seir, which they circled for awhile—my guess is that they were waiting for an official statement of permission to pass through the land of Edom³¹ (Num. 20:22 33:37). They marched around Mount Seir (which may have been just a movement below the southern half of these mountains (Num. 21:4 Deut. 2:3–5 Judges 11:18). However, the Edomites refused, so the Israelites proceeded southward, skirted the southern border of Edom, and came up along the east border. This was going altogether in the opposite direction from the Land of Promise, causing some consternation on the part of some of the Israelites—mostly the generation X remnant (Num. 21:4).

³⁰ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; p 2278.

³¹ This guess does not appear to jive with Judges 11:17.

'' "Not contending [or, engaging in strife] with them, for I am not giving to you out from their land even as far as the treading of the sole of a foot; because I have given Mount Seir as a possession to Esau. [Deut. 2:5]

Whereas, I have given a fairly literal translations (apart from the word order) of this verse, the NASB gives the gist of it: "Do not provoke them, for I will not give you any of their land, even as *little* as a footstep because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession." Joshua confirms this seven years later: And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says Y^ehowah, the god of Israel, 'to Isaac, I gave Jacob and Esau, and to Esau, I gave Mount Sier, to possess it; but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.' " (Joshua 24:2a, 4). Even when King David conquered the the Edomites, they still remained in the land given them by God (2Sam. 8:14). Eventually, under the reign of Jehoram, Edom regained her independence from Israel (2Kings 8:20–22). God sets the boundaries for all nations. "The God who made the world and all the things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having predetermined [their] appointed times, and boundaries of their habitation." (Acts 17:24–26).

The sense of the imperative is continued (there must be a grammatical rule to cover this), however *contend* is in the 2nd masculine plural jussive, Hithpael imperfect. The 2nd person plural is God speaking to Moses to speak to the people of Israel; the jussive expresses volition—it is the command, instruction or granting of permission from a superior to an inferior (when it is spoken from an inferior to a superior, it expresses a request). The Hithpael is the reflexive of the Piel (intensive) stem.³² The Israelites have just come from a great victory, they are a little impatient due to wandering again, and now they are going to be taken out of their way because Esau will not let them go through (as we have seen and will see). God wants them all to be on guard, particularly careful not to provoke a confrontation, as God has not given even one footstep of their land to the Israelites. These verses, as I said, are easier to follow when taken together: "Then Y^ehowah spoke to me, saying, 'Enough of you—the going around of this mountain; for for yourselves northward. And you must command the people, saying, "You all are passing over into the border of your brothers, [the] sons of Esau, who are dwelling in Seir, and they are afraid of you; and you [all] being abundantly on guard, not contending with them, for I am not giving to you even one foot print of their land [lit., out from their land as far as the treading of the sole of a foot]; because I have given Mount Seir as a possession to Esau.' " " God had given certain portions of land which were east and south of the Salt Sea to the sons of Lot and to the descendants of Esau, the son of Abram. This is completely blessing by association.

'' "You [all] will purchase food from them with money and you will eat; and you will also buy from them water—with money—that you [all] may drink." ' [Deut. 2:6]

There are two different words here in the Hebrew for *buy*. The first is used specifically to *buy grain*; and the second is used for bartering or trading. Even though the numbers of the Israelites would be intimidating, God carefully instructed them to purchase whatever it is that they need from the Edomites.

"For Y^ehowah your God has blessed [each of] you in all the work of your hands³³; He has known your walking in this great wilderness these forty years; Y^ehowah your God is with [each of] you; not one of you has lacked anything [lit., you have not lacked anything]. [Deut. 2:7]

Moses is explaining to the Isralites why God has so commanded them and reminds them of their blessings at God's hand—which is designed as motivation and justification for believing in Y^ehowah. All of the *you's* in this verse are in the singular. The emphasis is on son of Israel has seen God's daily blessing. I have added this individual emphasis into this verse.

³² *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; pp 2275, 2277.

³³ As per most codices and some early editions of the Massoretic text; the accepted Massoretic text reads *hand*.

The chief complaint of generation X was that they were out of food or out of water, or didn't like what they had. Moses reminds them that for forty years, despite their complaining—actually, the complaining of their parents—they did not lack anything. Even though they traveled without a permanent residence, two million Israelites in a wilderness-desert, they had all of their daily needs met because God is able. It was only due to their hardheartedness that they did not have certain luxuries that they remembered from Egypt. They Israelites were traveling near trade routes occasionally, and men who traded throughout the east passed by them on a regular basis. God allowed them to do some trading, and they certainly had the wealth with which to work with. However, it is my educated guess that, had they trusted God, they would have been given a lot more in terms of exotic foods, had they been less stubborn. It would be a very little thing for God to cause their paths to cross with the paths of traders on a regular basis—including traders who had come right out of Egypt, carrying with them certain wares, goods and foods peculiar to Egypt. So, when you lack, it is not because God is not able.

David wrote, [Y^ehowah is my shepherd; I cannot lack. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside waters of refreshment. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake](#) (Psalm 23:1–3). This is the testimony of all mature Christians. I am certain that you can think of a thousand things that you want right now or think that you need. That's because you are immature. God saw to all of your needs in eternity past. When you are able to bear it, He gives you blessing. He will pour out blessing beyond anything that you can imagine—if you have the capacity to enjoy it. You can't give a three month old baby the bankbook to a savings account in his name containing \$10,000,000. He would not appreciate it. You cannot take a three year old and provide them with a Harvard education—they have no capacity for it. When you begin to grow, God will begin to pour. When you reach maturity, God will pour out blessings to you and your family and your associates and your nation like you would not believe. God does not just stop with you. His blessings overflow to all of those associated with you. [You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil. My cup overflows. Certainly goodness and prosperity and grace will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of Y^ehowah forever](#) (Psalm 23:5–6). The key is capacity and the key to capacity is the understanding of God's Word and God's plan through a pastor teacher and God the Holy Spirit. Running down a church aisle in a fit of emotion gives you an emotional catharsis at best. Praying fervently to God to give you things—please, don't waste your time. Get with His Word first; grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ first—then He will teach you how to pray and what to pray for. And He will pour blessings into your cup beyond anything that you have ever experienced in life.

The spies spent forty days in the Land of Promise, verifying that it was all that God had promised, they returned and enjoined the Israelites not to invade, God disciplined Israel for forty years. ["Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness, and your sons will be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness \[lit., bear your fornications\], until your corpses are finished in the wilderness. According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you will bear your guilt-iniquities a year—forty years—and you will know My opposition."](#) (Num. 15:31–35).

["And we passed by from our brothers, sons of Esau, who were dwelling in Seir, by the way of the plain, by Elath, and by Ezion-Geber; \[Deut. 2:8a\]](#)

Recall that Ezion-Geber is probably further north than what you find on the maps in your Bible, as is the gulf of Aqaba. I believe that there was a sizable river feeding into it (or from it) to the north. Elath is located at the gulf of Aqaba also, the north-eastern finger of the Red Sea. *Elath* means *trees* and there are still groves of palm trees in that area to justify such a name.

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Moses Recalls Israel Traveling Through Moab

Num. 21:11–15

"And we turned and passed over the way of the wilderness of Moab [or, the Arabah Road];
[Deut. 2:8b]

The *way of the wilderness* here might be more properly rendered the *Arabah Road*. This was a road which began around the Gulf of Aqaba and went north around to the east side of Moab³⁴.

What is unimportant to the train of thought of Moses was the response of Esau. The Edomites came out in great force against the Jews, refusing them entry into their land. I am confused by this particular movement by Israel. From some passages, it sounds as though they stayed at Kadesh-barnea, awaiting word from the Edomites; and had to therefore walk around the southern border of Edom and come up from the east side. In other areas, it appears as though they walked part-way into Edom (into an area which was not really populated), and were met by the Edomites in full force, meaning the Israelites had to head wouth out of the land, come up on the west side, and go through between the Salt Sea and the land of Edom. This portion of the route has me a bit confused (and it is personally aggravating, as Moses, guided by God the Holy Spirit, went to great pains to explain his actual movements in Scripture). Ezion-geber places us south of the Salt Sea, though not necessarily as far south as it is shown on most maps. As I have mentioned before, the Gulf of Aqaba probably came much further north than it does today, with a river flowing into it. Ezion-geber must be in such a place as to provide access to the Gulf of Aqaba, as it is later known for its shipbuilding. This places us, at least for a portion of this trip on the southern portion of Edom.

"And Y^howah said to me, 'Do not distress Moab, nor stir yourself up against them in battle, for I do not give to you out of their land [as] a possession; for I have given Ar a possession to the sons of Lot.' [Deut. 2:9]

We have great blessing by association here. Esau and Lot, if you will recall, were not spiritual giants. In fact, they were the also-rans. The great spiritual blessing went to Abraham rather than to his nephew Lot; Jacob, despite being an inferior human being, so to speak, was the heir of God's great promises, not Esau. However, by virtue of being blood relatives, Lot and Esau were both given great tracts of land, possessions which God honored for many generations. God honors this gift to Lot and Esau by retaining a tight leash on Israel, not allowing them to attack or to dispossess the Edomites or the Moabites. The ones in view in this context are the Moabites, Moab being one of the sons of Lot by virtue of an incestuous relationship with his daughter (Gen. 36–37). A point of moderate interest is that the Bible does not contain the history of God giving Ar or the land of Moab to the Moab, son of Lot. In fact, between Gen. 19:36 and this context, the name of Lot is not even mentioned. Furthermore, Lot will only be mentioned six more times in all of Scripture (Deut. 2:19 Psalm 83:8 Luke 17:28, 32 2Peter 2:7). This is the first time that we, several millenniums after the fact, are told that God gave this area to Moab. However, it is possible that there were ancient records, to which Moses had access, which may have mentioned this. Even if this were the case, Moses saw no reason to record this in Scripture until now.

Now the Jews need to sort through this in their own mind—if God has blessed the also-rans, those in second place; if God has provided national boundaries for Edom, Ammon and Moab; if God specifically tells Israel not to invade these areas but to abide by their rulings—how much more will God do for them who are His chosen people?

This passage helps to explain Num. 22–24 and what follows. Balak, king of Moab, sent for Balaam, who was possibly a Midianite in order to curse Israel. However, Israel does not attack Moab after this incident, but they do attack Midian in Num. 31. Moses, when writing the book of Numbers, does not mention whom God told him not to slaughter—just whom He did. The sons of Israel could have taken that entire land bordering the east of the Salt Sea, but had portions of it not already been given by God to Lot and Esau.

³⁴ NAV Study Bible, p. 244.

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Parenthetical Object Lessons

"(The Emmin formerly lived in it, a people as great, numerous and tall as the Anakim. [Deut. 2:10]

Vv. 10–12 are obviously an aside, but by whom? The purpose of this aside is to either encourage the Israelites, insofar as the land now occupied by the Edomites and the Moabites were also previously occupied by strong nations which lost them. God gave these lands over to the Edomites and the Moabites, as blessing by association. Now we have several possibilities: these things were said to encourage Israel to believe God and to follow his directions, in which case these verses could have been spoken by God for Moses to say to the people; or they could have been spoken by Moses to encourage the people. Another option is that these three verses could be an aside, either written down later by Moses (either, as *something I should have said*, or to give more evidence to the reader for following God); or this could have been appended later by Joshua, given for the same reason to encourage the reader. Joshua is a writer of Scripture who may have edited Moses' last sermons to Israel, thus giving him the right to insert points of clarification, encouragement, rationalization. At this point, until I examine a few more asides like this, I am leaning toward this being a portion of Moses' message to the people, directly from Moses, who would have had the historical background and training to know these things.

The *Emmin* may not be the exact name of the people named here (long since lost to history). This is very close to the Hebrew word for *terror*; their name could have come from the word for terror, as this was the persona by which they were known. The Anakim were reknown for their stature and strength. **"Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, great cities fortified to heaven, a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know and of whom you have heard, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' "** (Deut. 9:1–2).

"(They [the Emin] are called [lit., reckoned] Rephaim [or, giants]; they also, as the Anakim; and the Moabites call them Emim [or, like the Anakim, they are also regarded as giants, but the Moabites call them Emim]. [Deut. 2:11]

The word found here is r'pha'îym (רָפָאִיִּם) [pronounced *r'faw-EEM*] and it can be transliterated *Rephaim* or translated *giants*. Here, it is in the plural and without a definite article. We first find mention of this word in Gen. 14:5 where it appears to be a proper noun (it is also lacking a definite article and is found in the plural). It occurs next in Gen. 15:20, with a definite article and in the plural. The context of these verses lends itself to its use as a proper noun. However, here, it does not necessarily refer to a particular race, but to the concept of being really large people, like the Anakim. This word is used accurately by Moses as opposed to the use of the inflammatory name *Nephalim*, which is actually a reference to half-angel half-man beings. Strong's #7495-7497 BDB #952 (this word also means *dead ones*). However, the ten loser spies used this particular word to frighten the people of Israel so that they would not have to lead them into battle (these spies were afraid). Moses, since he is speaking the truth, cannot use this particular word when referencing any of the peoples of the land or to the previous occupants of the lands of Edom, Moab and Ammon, because that would be inaccurate.

You may recognize some of these names: the Rephaim, the Zuzim, the Emim and the Horites are all mentioned in Gen. 14:1–17 in that great war of the kings during Abraham's time. They were smaller villages and hamlets at that time and, in order to make up an army, several villages had to band together. At the time of the writing of Deuteronomy, each of them had become full-fledged nations on their own.

The problem that the Jews first had with entering the land was that those who lived there were so large, that they felt unable to conquer them. There was no trust in God. The aside here points out that the Moabites faced a

similar enemy, and they were able to triumph, and without the same kind of guidance as God has given Israel (that, of course, is not stated specifically here).

"(And the Horim lived in Seir formerly and the sons of Esau dispossed them and destroyed them from before their face and settled in their stead as Israel will do [or, as did Israel] in regard to the land of their possession which Y^ehowah gave to them). [Deut. 2:12]

Recall that we have examined the Horites (or Horim) back in Gen. 14:6. These are the Hurrians, a non-Semitic peoples who were found throughout the ancient world, primarily in the ancient Near East.

Because the Hebrew lacks a tense system, so the incident in this verse is difficult to place this in time. *Will do* or *did* is in the Qal perfect, indicating action which is viewed as from a completed stance; this does not mean the perfect tense cannot be future—the tense, in Hebrew, views an action as a completed whole or as a process, unlike our tense system, which views action as past, present or future. Here, the land is a gift by God to Israel and Israel will take control of the land. From God's point of view, this is a completed action. From the view of Moses, this is an action not yet begun, but he will not view it as a process. Joshua, if looking back after his conquering of the Land of Promise would see this more as a completed action rather than a process. In the English, it appears as though this is definitely a backward glance made after Israel has conquered the land; however, it is not that clear in the Hebrew.

Some commentators look back to the lands which Israel had already conquered east of the Jordan as the historical reference here rather than to the entirety of the land of Israel, which would be conquered seven years into the future. The phrase *land of their possession* is used specifically in Joshua 1:15 for the land of Gad and Reuben. Their position is that this verse would refer back to the historic event of Num. 21:25–35.

Now let me give you the official verdict as to who actually wrote (or spoke) this portion of Scripture. Recall what is occurring. Moses is speaking to the sons of Israel. They are about ready to invade the land. God has brought these Jews up through three different lands where giants once lived and these lands were given over to their relatives under the principle blessing by association. Moses is explaining to the Jews that these lands that they have traveled through are object lessons. If this is not spoken to the Jews by Moses, the entire purpose of God of bringing the Israelites up through this passageway is defeated. That is, this parenthetical portion, while it sounds like a later addition, is not an addendum, but it states the purpose of God in bringing the Israelites up on the east side of the Dead Sea. It would be silly to add these verses years after the conquering of the Land of Promise because this passage is motivational and it is the impartation of Bible doctrine, which includes God's essence; of which, perfection, omnipotence and veracity are key. God is fully able to deliver the land to the Jews—this is His omnipotence; He has promised to give the land to the Israelites—and, since He is veracity, He will honor His promises; and He is perfect, meaning He will perfectly keep His promises and He will perfectly bring all things to pass which He has promised.

This new generation of Israelites have learned from their fathers' mistakes—now they also learn by the successes of their relatives. Therefore, this is not an addendum of Moses or Joshua or anyone else affixed several years later, but is spoken right at this historic moment by Moses to the people, referring back to their personal conquests in v. 12 to Num. 21.

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God Removed Generation X, the Cancerous Generation

" ' "Now³⁵, arise [all of] you, and cross over for yourselves the Torrent Zered;" ' And we passed over the torrent Zered. [Deut. 2:13]

Most Bibles translate the Hebrew word nachal (נַחַל) [pronounced *NAHKH-al*] with the word *brook*. We then view this as a pleasant lazy stream of water, perhaps two to ten feet across, meandering along. Nachal refers to a torrent of rushing water through a narrow channel. Strong's #5158 BDB #636 The Torrent Zered runs due east from the southern mouth of the Dead Sea (although, the Dead Sea was likely lower at that time); this torrent is the northern border of Edom and the southern border of Moab.

In a way, the speaker of this verse changes somewhat, and helps to explain the parenthetical nature of the previous few verses. V. 9 is Moses telling the people what God said to him. Vv. 10–12 are a parenthetical break where Moses speaks to Israel, and explains that Israel has traveled this particular route so that they could observe the strength of God's power in the lives of their distant cousins. In v. 13, Moses now returns to a quotation of Y^ehowah, continuing from v. 9. The second portion of v. 13 goes from a 2nd person plural, Qal imperative (an order from God to all of Israel) to a 1st person plural, Qal imperfect, a description by Moses of his and the rest of Israel crossing over the brook Zered. There are no orders from God in this second half of the verse; it is a remembrance by Moses of only a couple of months previous—an action that all of the hearers took part in. So now, this is Moses quoting what he himself said to the Israelites a few weeks or months ago, where he was quoting what God had said to him.

"And the days which we have walked from Kadesh-barnea until that we have passed over the Torrent Zered: thirty-eight years, till the consumption of all the generation of the men of battle from the midst of the camp, as Y^ehowah had sworn to them; [Deut. 2:14]

Israel camped in Kadesh-barnea for thirty-eight years, and then traveled to where they all stand at this time. God's promise to Moses had been to take out the degenerate generation—generation X—which He did over those thirty-eight years. Quite a change took place throughout that year. Due to the sins committed at Peor, the idolatry associated with the daughters of Moab and Midian, we read: **And those who died by the plague were 24,000** (Num. 25:9). A census is taken of the new generation—the generation of promise in Num. 26:63–65, with the sobering mention: **These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan Jericho. But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For Y^ehowah had said of them, "They will surely die in the wilderness." And not a man was left of them except Caleb, the sons of Jephunneh, and Joshua, son of Nun.** Soon thereafter we read in Num. 31:49, after the battle with Midian, the report to Moses was: **"Your servants have taken a census of men of war who are in our charge and no man of us is missing."** God has a plan for everyone of us. If our rebellion against this plan becomes too great, God removes us from this earth in the sin unto death, just as He removed gen X.

The bible continually holds up generation X as an object lesson themselves. **"And I also swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands, because they rejected My ordinances, and as for My statutes, they did not walk in them; they even profaned My sabbaths, for their heart continually went after their idols. Yet My eye spared them rather than destroying them, and I did not cause their annihilation in the wilderness. And I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers or keep their ordinances, or defile yourselves with their idols. I am Y^ehowah your God; walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and observe them. And set apart My sabbaths; and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am Y^ehowah your God.' "** (Ezek. 20:15–20). In spite of all this they still sinned and did not believe in His wonderful works. So He brought their days to an end in futility, and their years in sudden terror. When He killed them, then they sought Him and returned and searched diligently for God; and they remembered that God was their rock and the Most High God

³⁵ The western Samaritan and Septuagint codices read *now therefore*.

their redeemer (Psalm 78:32–35; this Psalm looks at the two generations as one cohesive whole). See also Psalm 106 and Heb. 3–4.

"And also the hand of Y^ehowah had been against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp, until they were consumed. [Deut. 2:15]

Over 600,000 men had to be killed. Likely, the degeneracy had spread to their wives. This is over a million people that God placed under the sin unto death in the short period of thirty-eight years. This means that roughly seventy-five people died each and every day over that thirty-eight years, most of them while they were encamped in Kadesh-barnea (the other significant plagues which occurred before and after were recorded in Scripture). Even **Jude mentions this: Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe (JJude 5).**

"And it came to pass, when all the men of battle had finished dying from the midst of the people, [Deut. 2:16]

The people left Kadesh-barnea while there were still some of generation X alive. In fact, there were as many as 24,000 of that generation remaining. Their influence was felt during the second no-water incident of Num. 20:1–13 (which may have taken place almost any time during those thirty-eight years; an educated guess is that it took place at the end). They complained when they had to go around the land of Edom (Num. 21:4–6), which resulted in a wide spread execution of the sin unto death (the exact number was never specified here). Their final influence upon Israel occurred when they participated in idolatry with the daughters of Moab and Midian (Num. 25:1–9). After this, we have the updated census, and no more deaths from the sin unto death are reported.

"Then Y^ehowah spoke to me, saying, [Deut. 2:17]

This occurred, in time, before the last of generation X died out; however, logically and topically, it occurs afterward, which is how Moses is presenting it here.

" You are passing over today the border of Moab, even Ar, [Deut. 2:18]

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Israel and Ammon and Another Object Lesson

" And you will come near over--against the sons of Ammon; you will not distress them nor stir up yourself against them, for I am not giving the land of the sons of Ammon to you [as] a possession.' [Deut. 2:19]

Once the Israelites cross northward, through Moab, to the east will be the land of Ammon. God did not give them that land. This is apparently followed by an aside from Moses still spoken to the people, as Y^ehowah will be mentioned consistently in the third person from hereon in. Moses will be in the first person singular and Moses and the Israelites (a good name for a band) will be in the 1st person plural.

"(It was regarded as a land of giants; giants lived in it formerly, and the Ammonites called them Zamzummin; [Deut. 2:20]

Vv. 20–23 are parenthetical again, as were vv. 10–12. They are still being spoken by Moses to the Israelites, but he is pointing out, in between quoting Y^ehowah, that they have traveled through land after land which Y^ehowah had given to their distant cousins (Esau, Ammon and Moab). God gave these lands to them by virtue of the fact

that they were related to the Israelites—that is all that was required for God to bless them. Their lands also had *giants* dwelling in them, and God was able to give the land to them regardless. The point is, God is able. You personally have a lot of asperations. You have things you want to possess, you see someone you want to marry, there is a position you desire, a vocation you want to be in—but you don't have it. What's the problem? The problem is not with God. God is able. God is able to dispossess heavily fortified lands which are ruled by giants and God is able to give these lands to whom He pleases. So God is able to get for you a job, a possession, a marriage partner, etc. This is easy; this is nothing for God. The problem is you. Perhaps you haven't ask God for what it is that you want, perhaps you ask Him out of personal lust; perhaps it is a matter of you not being ready for that particular blessing. 90% of the people who are put into direct contact with their right person mess it up. Some of you, if you were given your right person right now, you would not must ruin the relationship, but you would see to it that the relationship was ruined forever. You men might slug this woman; you might be unfaithful to her; you might brow beat her. There are a hundred ways you would think of to destroy your relationship. You women—you might reject him out and out because he is not as handsom as you think he should be, nor as rich. Or, you may run around on him, bailing out of the relationship because you found someone who is more attractive and richer and sexier, who has more power and prominence. Generation X did not take the land because they rejected what God gave them; as if God could be mistaken. What is your priority in life? Certainly, you might say, God is #1, as though giving Him some sort of declared prominence counts as something. God has given you two things on this earth: (1) the Holy Spirit and (2) His Word. Our Lord Jesus Christ left this earth in order to send back the Holy Spirit, our Helper and our Comforter. Do you rebound—personally name your sins to God—each and every time you sin, so that you are filled with the Holy Spirit? Do you pursue God's Word fervently so that you can understand His purpose for your life in this world. No; what you do, is God puts up a brick wall in front of you and you spend your entire life banging your head against the brick wall. You are stupid. Go with what God has given you. I know how to get along with humble neans, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of gaving abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me (Philip. 4:12–13). God has given you His Spirit and He has given you His Word. Take from both of them and leave the details to Him.

The word for giants is sometimes rendered Rephaim in some translations. The Jews did not enter into the land originally because it was occupied by giants. During this travelogue, it is pointed out to them that giants have occupied most of the land that they are traveling through. In fact, this helps explain to us why the Jews, after the last of generation X died out—why didn't they just cool their heels in Kadesh-barnea, and then head straight north? This portion of Deuteronomy explains why. These other nations that they pass through are object lessons. Giants used to live here in Ar, but God gave that land to Lot; so, descendants of Lot live there now. The Horites lives in Seir, but God gave that land to Esau, so his descendants, the Edomites live there now. Oh, notice this other territory off to your right; giants used to live in that land, but God gave it as an inheritance to Lot, so his other son's descendants, the Ammonites, live there now. Every land that they travel through are object lessons. God gave this land to so-and-so; used to be giants living there; now so-and-so lives there.

The Zamzummites (or, Zanzummin) were possible to Zuzites of Gen. 14:5. The NIV Study Bible claims that their name might mean *murmurers*, but I don't see any justification for that. It is really not close in spelling to any other Hebrew word.

"([The Zamzummin are] a people great and numerous, and tall, as the Anakim, and Y^ehowah destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them, and dwelled in their stead. [Deut. 2:21]

What God does makes sense. We cannot always understand His purpose and design, but God is very focused and very purposeful. He does not act without reason nor does He act at random. With generation X, it would not have made any difference how many object lessons they received; they would have failed. Had God hauled them north through Edom, Moab and Ammon, they would still have failed. God revealed tremendous miracles to them as never seen before, yet they failed more miserably than we can even imagine. Day in and day out, they were recipeints of God's grace, and they—every day brought with it miracles of water, food and sustenance on the wilderness hike—and every day, they failed. Not only would an object lesson been wasted on them, but that would have placed Israel in enemy territory with enemies on all sides of them. At Kadesh, Edom hadn't given them much thought, Ammon, Moab, and the Amorites were too far away; the giants of the Land of Promise had killed many

of them and chased them off for sport; and Egypt was too far away and at its weakest point to do anything. This gave the Jews thirty-eight years of relative peace, but no prosperity. God took that opportunity to decimate their population.

"(As He has done for the sons of Esau, who are dwelling in Seir, when He destroyed the Horim from before them, and they disposed them, and [the sons of Esau] dwell in their stead, to this day; [Deut. 2:22]

This is the beginning of a logical progression of thought.

"(As to the Avim who are dwelling in field inclosures as far as Azzah [or, Gaza], the Caphtorim, who had come out from Caphtor, they have destroyed them, and dwell in their stead). [Deut. 2:23]

In the KJV, the word for *field inclosures* is transliterated as though it were a proper noun—Hazerim. This is a Hebrew word which should be rendered *villages*; and it is found that way in Gen. 25:16 Psalm 10:8 and Isa. 42:11. These are generally thought to be a camps for nomads who built walls of stone on the boundaries for protection. A more proper translation might be *field inclosures* or *secured encampments*³⁶.

We have an unfinished protosis and apodosis. It should read, *as God has done for them, He will do much more for you, His children of promise*. However, the apodosis (the latter half) will go without being said. The point was not lost on the generation of promise, even though it has been totally lost to many theologians throughout history. What you may be wondering is, just who the heck are these Caphtorim? The Study NASB lists them as the Philistines and Caphtor is being Crete. Rotherham calls the Caphtorim *Cretans*. ZPEB says they are probably related to the Philistines in some way. I don't recall anything about them. Zodhiates names them as the ones who conquered this area, prior to being conquered by Israel.

The first question, is who has destroyed who and who lives in whose stead? The Caphtorim are mentioned early on in Scripture (here and Gen. 10:14 1Chron. 1:12), they were apparently a great people, well-known to the Israelites and throughout the ancient world. Their early mention, but lack of later mention indicates that the Caphtorim were deposed. They came out of Caphtor, possessed a great deal of the Land of Promise, and then along came the Avim, who are mentioned only a few times in Scripture, but later than this passage, indicating that the Avim destroyed the Caphtorim. The Avim, as is implied by the general context, are a group of people whom you would not expect to overthrow the Caphtorim, whose strength and power was legend. In fact, so well-known, that their former principle residence Caphtor that it is named several times in Scripture (Jer. 47:4 Amos 9:7), whereas the Caphtorim are not. They, like the Philistines, are descendants of Cush (Gen. 1:10). They are not equalent to the Philistines, as the Study edition of the NASB claims, but they are their brothers. Where they dwelt in the Land of Promise, they were completely destroyed. It appears as though their brothers, the Philistines, either lived side by side to them in Caphtor, or took Caphtor from them. The latter seems to be more likely, as in Joshua 3:13, we read: **The five Lords of the Philistines: the Gazaite, the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, the Ekronite, and the Avvite**. The Philistines appear to have overrun this area and their lords are identified with the areas wherein they have a stronghold. Gazaite is the Azzah that we find here and Avvite is the area first occupied by the Avim. This is less than seven years after Moses has spoken to the Israelites. This would indicate that the Philistines overran their brothers in Caphtor and in the Land of Promise, completely destroying the Caphtorim, who retained such a reputation as to retain the name of their original occupation for centuries afterward. The Philistines occupied certain areas of the land, given in Joshua 3:13. Then mention here of the Avim would actually be a branch of the Philistines. Zodhiates points out that their name means *ruins*³⁷, although it is only close (the names are fairly different). Benjamin occupied the area belonging to the Avim (Joshua 18:23). Although dispossessed, the Israelites apparently allowed some of the Avim to remain in the land, and they continued to be heathen in their religion (1Kings 17:31). We find practically nothing about the Avim in the ZEPB. This is the first time that we have heard of these people and it is unclear as to what has happened to

³⁶ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 102.

³⁷ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; p 477.

them. They lived in villages as far as Azzah (which is Gaza in the RSV—the same Gaza of the New Testament—and found in Deut. 2:23 1Kings 4:24 Jer. 25:20 47:5).

V. 23 ends the parenthetical aside of Moses to the people. He picks up again with his repeating what God said to him.

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Sihon, King of Heshbon, Opposes the Sons of Israel

Num. 21:21–31

" [All of] You arise and journey and pass over the torrent Arnon; see, I have given into your hand Sihon, king of Heshbon, the Amorite, and his land; begin to possess [it] and stir yourself up against him [in] battle. [Deut. 2:24]

This is not really bonus land, as is sometimes implied. God gave to the Jews the land from this point over to the Euphrates, land which they have never yet possessed. Arnon is a bordering river running east from the middle of the Dead Sea; above it is Ammon and the land which did belong to Moab, then to the Amorites and then to Israel. Below the Arnon river is Moab.

" 'This day I begin to put your dread and your fear on the face of the peoples under the whole heavens, who hear your fame and have trembled and have been pained because of you.' [Deut. 2:25]

The 1st person in this verse will be different from the first person in the following verse. It is God who placed fear in the hearts of the nations around Israel. However, it will be Moses who is the 1st person speaker of the next verse. Because of their great victory of Egypt (although, you will recall that the Israelites did absolutely nothing but stand like scared sheep), the people throughout the ancient world were afraid of them. Even though Esau brought out warriors on their border, this was a bluff. The Moabites and the Midianites, rather than form and alliance and attack, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites. Whoever did make an attempt to oppose the sons of Israel were beaten down (the Amorites and Og, the king of Bashan). God made this promise to Israel some time ago. **"I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw all the people among whom you come into confusion and I will make all your enemies turn [their] backs to you [and run]."** (Ex. 23:27). Moses recognized this and, inspired by God the Holy Spirit, wrote in his first hit song: **"The peoples have heard, they tremble; anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; the leaders of Moab, trembling grips them. All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. Terror and dread fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm, they are motionless as stone; until Your people pass over, O Y^ehowah. Until the people pass over whom You have purchased. You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, the place O Y^ehowah which you have made for Your dwelling. the sanctuary, O Y^ehowah which Your hands have established. Y^ehowah will reign forever and ever."** (Ex. 15:14–18). Moses later promised the people: **"There will be no man able to stand before you; Y^ehowah your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you."** (Deut. 11:25). Rahab the harlot recognized that the Jews had been given the Land of Promise and could see no reason to oppose them. She said, **"I know that Y^ehowah has given you the land and that the terror of our has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you."** (Joshua 2:9). The key here, by the way, is that she was not looking to align herself with the winner from a human viewpoint, but to align herself with Y^ehowah.

"And I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth, unto Sihon king of Heshbon, words of peace, saying, [Deut. 2:26]

Kedemoth means *eastern region*³⁸. Moses, seeing no reason to discontinue this peaceful process of movement, continued to deal peacefully with the inhabitants of the rest of the lands in that area. Recall that this area belonged to the Moabites in the not too distant past, and now it was under the control of the Amorites, over whom Sihon was king. Even though there was no prohibition by God against attacking the Amorites, there was no instruction to do so either; therefore, Moses sent messengers conveying the message that the sons of Israel would just pass over this land; they were not looking to take it.

" 'Let Me pass over through your land; in the several ways I go; I turn not aside, right or left; [Deut. 2:27]

The messengers sent from Moses made it clear that this would not be an attack of any sort (the inhabitants are given advanced warning) and it is promised that the Israelites would not veer from the path along the King's Highway.

" 'You will sell me for for money, and I will eat; and you will give to me water for money, and I will drink; only let me pass over on my feet; [Deut. 2:28]

The Israelites would not even take from the land; in fact, their passing through would bring great prosperity to Heshbon, as the Israelites would be paying for a lot of food and drink. We have more details listed here of the content of the message from Moses to king Sihon than was given back in Num. 21.

" 'As the sons of Esau who are dwelling in Seir, and the Moabites who are dwelling in Ar, have done to me, till that I pass over the Jordan, into the land which Y^ehowah our God is giving to us.' [Deut. 2:29]

Although not mentioned before in the book of Numbers, it sounds as though Israel did some buying from the Moabites and the Edomites, even though they did not pass directly through their lands. This may strike you as disharmonious. Au contraire—People of an entire country do not all do exactly the same thing. Even though the people were afraid of Israel and even though their leaders would not allow Israel to travel through Edom and Moab, this does not mean that some entrepreneurs did not barter with Israel. It doesn't matter if the inhabitants were prejudiced against the Jews or not—the Israelites had money (recall the riches which they received from Egypt) and they were both hungry and thirsty. This would have been a financial boom to these areas, so there would have been a lot of trading going on as the Israelites passed along the borders of Edom and Moab.

" 'And Sihon, king of Heshbon was not willing to let us pass over by him, for Y^ehowah your God hardened his spirit and strengthened his heart, so as to give him into your hand as this day. [Deut. 2:30]

In studying the pharaoh of Egypt, we have learned that God does not reach into the soul of a person and change the negative signals to positive or vice versa. When a person is negative toward the gospel or toward God's plan, their heart become covered over with scar tissue; it becomes a strengthening of conviction against God and His plan. A person who sees combat can become hardened and insensitive to death as he observes so much of it. Sihon was also one who was negative toward Jesus Christ, the God of Israel and his negativity was strengthened enough to go into battle against the Israelites.

There is a strengthening which God gives the heart of a person who is opposed to God's Word. You have a hundred times in the past walked away from a situation thinking to yourself, *I wish that I had done that* or *I wish that I had said that*. You usually didn't wish that because it was the right thing to do or so, it was just such a snappy comeback or some an ironically mean thing to do, that you wish that you had thought of it in time. In an emergency situation, you may have, in retrospect, have wished for more strength or more courage, not necessarily, again, to do the right thing, but to follow a course of action that your degenerate heart did not. God

³⁸ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 245.

gave these men here and throughout the land the courage to stand before God's people; they opposed them and despised them and their God, Y^ehowah. God made certain that they had the strength to act on this negative volition. *Many days has Joshua made war with all these kings; there had not been a city which made peace with the sons of Israel, except the Hivite, [the] inhabitants of Gibeon. The whole, they hae taken in battle, for from Y^ehowah it had been to strengthen their heart, to meet in battle with Israel, in order to devote them, so that they had not grace, but in order to destroy them, as Y^ehowah commanded Moses (Joshua 11:18–20).*

"And Y^ehowah said to me, 'See, I have begun to give before you Sihon and his land; certainly begin to possess [lit., begin to possess to possess] his land.' [Deut. 2:31]

One of the interesting things about this verse (and v. 24) is that this alludes to a prophecy stated by God to Moses, but it was never recorded in Scripture (until now). This may have been recorded in *The Book of the Wars of Y^ehowah* and obviously this was something spoken by Moses to the people of Israel. God promised Israel that He would give over Sihon and his land to Israel. What is the significance of this? One of the attacks upon the inspiration of Scripture is that events would come to pass and then *prophecy* was written in order to *predict* these events. Under those circumstances, since this particular prediction is quoted twice in retrospect (here and in v. 24), you would think that it would have been inserted and edited into the book of Numbers. However, it was not. Moses spoke it to the Israelites, they heard the prediction, they believed it and they took the land of Sihon. They will later read this verse in Scripture and it will make perfect sense to them. If, as it is alledged, these books of Moses were not written by Moses but written hundreds of years later and then edited hundreds of years after that, what happened here? Moses is here saying, *remember when I predicted this?* The Israelites do, even though we do not since it was not recorded. Had these books of MOses been so carefully edited, then why is this prediction not *edited* into the book of Numbers? It couldn't be a matter of forgetfulness; this prediction is quoted **twice** almost in succession. How could the editors *miss* that? The reason we don't find this in the book of Numbers is that Moses wrote these things himself—these books were not edited hundreds of years later. There were things which occurred and things which were predicted and things which God spoke to Moses (which he in turn said to his people), that Moses neglected to record, as per his human abilities and as per the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. The Torah is not a carefully edited set of books which contain a prophecy and then a fulfillment, a prophecy and then a fulfillment. That is strictly human viewpoint from people who grimace at the thought that God could predict something to Moses and then it would come to pass. It is short, simple verses like this one which argue against the concept of successive reduction—that is, against the supposed continual additions and revisions made to the books of Moses. The few times these verses were changed, it fell outside God's plan.

"And Sihon came out to met us—he and all his people, to battle to Jahaz; [Deut. 2:32]

Jahaz was just north of the Arnon Riverf. Sihon did not give the Israelites much choice here. He was feeling overconfident due to his recent victory over the Moabites. He was one of the few peoples who were not afraid of the Jews. This was a serious mistake on his part.

"And Y^ehowah our God gave him before us and we struck him down and his sons³⁹ and all his people; [Deut. 2:33]

The Israelites are about to go into battle for the next seven years to take the land given them by God. What they need is a realization that God would do their fighting for them. In this chapter, Moses encourages the children of Israel by giving them illustration after illustration of God's faithfulness. God has been faithful to the also-ran's and God is faithful to His people Israel.

"And we captured all his cities at that time, and devoted the entire city, men and the women and the infants—we have not left a remnant. [Deut. 2:34]

³⁹ This is spoken *sons*, but written *son*.

When something was devoted entirely to Y^ehowah, this meant that it was completely and totally destroyed. Everything that could be destroyed was. There were metals, like gold, silver and bronze, which could not be destroyed. According to the NIV Study Bible, these items were placed into a secure place as God's possession. The other things which were completely destroyed beyond the ability to be used by people—these things were considered to be God's. **"Only, no devoted [cherem] thing which a man devoted to Y^ehowah, of all that he has, of man an dbeast, and of the field of his possession is sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to Y^ehowah. No devoted thing, which is devoted of man, is ransomed, it is surely put to death."** (Lev. 27:28–29). Sometimes cherem was limited and excluded certain things, such as livestock (see v. 35 3:7 Joshua 8:2). For more information on cherem, see Lev. 1:2 27:28 in this study.

"Only the cattle have we spoiled for ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we have captured.
[Deut. 2:35]

The people were destroyed in their entirety. The reason was that they were too degenerate a people to allow to live. Their cancerous essence would have eaten up the Jewish people.

"From Aroer, which is by the edge of the torrent Arnon, and the city which [is] in the torrent, even to Gilead, there had not been a city which [was] too high for us; the whole Y^ehowah our God has placed before us. [Deut. 2:36]

As is stated here, Aroer is a city along the river Arnon. Barne's Notes describes it so: *They valley of the Arnon is here deep, and the descent to it abrupt. In roman times it was spanned by a viaduct the ruins of which still remain, and which was probably built on the lines of hte original structure of Mesha (2Kings 3:5). Aroer here must not be confounded with "Aroer, which is before Rabbah (Joshua 13:25). This latter place was "built," i.e., rebuilt, by the Gadites (Num. 32:34); it belonged to taht tribe, and was consequently far to the north of the Arnon. A third Aroer in the tribe of Judah is mentioned in 1Sam. 30:28.*⁴⁰

When the Israelites captured Aroer, it belonged to the Amorites. It will be subsequently assigned to the tribe of Reuben (Joshua 13:9, 16). Gilead, here, refers to the city of Gilead. This impression given here is that both of these cities were heavily fortified and the Israelites were able to take them both and all cities in between. The Israelites are about to attack the rest of the Land of Promise, so Moses points out to them that they conquered every city, no matter what its elevation (some were built on mountains and hills to make them difficult to overthrow)—if God gave them the city, then they took it.

"Only, unto the land of the sons of Ammon you have not drawn near, any part of the torrent Jabbok, and the cities of the hill-country, and anything which Y^ehowah our God has [not] commanded." [Deut. 2:37]

Jacob, also known as Israel, from whence the Israelites received their name (they were not called *Jews* until the country of Judah was established), crossed over this particular torrent years ago in Gen. 32:22. The Jabbok river flows in a three quarters circle moving in a counter-clockwise direction, from the city of Rabbath Ammon flowing into the Jordan river somewhat below the midpoint of the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. The land of Ammon would be found to the east of the Jabbok, whereas the Amorites had captured the land west of its beginning point (it flows north for forty miles or more). According to ZPEB, it drops an average of eighty feet per mile and is more than 2000 ft. below the Gilead Plateau. The northern portion of this river will form a geographical as well as a political division of the area of Gilead. Ammon and Moab were off-limits, as they were the territories of the sons of Lot; and the Israelites were not allowed to overrun Edom, as it had been given by God to the sons of Esau.

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⁴⁰ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 275.

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Deuteronomy 3

Deuteronomy 3:1–29

Outline of Chapter 3:

- Vv. 1–6 **War against Og, king of Bashan**
- Vv. 7–11 **The spoil of Bashan**
- Vv. 12–17 **Distribution of Trans-Jordanian area**
- Vv. 18–22 **Commands given to the sons of Reuben and Gad and to Joshua**
- Vv. 23–29 **A prayer of Moses and the answer to that prayer**

Introduction: Deut. 3 continues the message of Moses to his people. He recounts their victory over Og, king of Bashan with more detail than we actually have previously. He will also review the land grant to Reuben and Gad. However, the most heart-wrenching portion of this chapter was his prayer to God when Moses was been told that he will not enter into the land. We only saw a portion of this prayer; we saw Moses requesting that God choose a new commander to lead Israel into the land. However, Moses also pleaded with God to allow him to lead Israel into the land. We will see that in this chapter.

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War Against Og, King of Bashan

Num. 21:33–35

"And so we turned and went up the way [or, road] to Bashan. Then, Og, king of Bashan, came out to meet us, he and all his people, to battle—Edrei. [Deut. 3:1]

Both of these sentences begin with the wâw consecutive; the first I translated *and so*; the second *then*. I believe that once they got this far, they were finally on the King's Highway, a request which they had made of Edom some time ago.

Bashan chose not to allow Israel safe passage, although Israel exhibited no threatening behavior. Bashan was apparently content having things the way their were and did not relish the idea of the Israelites dwelling so close to him. He did not necessarily know what the plans of the sons of Israel were; however, it had been their policy, after traveling through or beside the lands of Moab, Ammon and Edom to politely request permission to pass through. However, they were not going to pass through his land, but move due west now, across the Jordan, into Jericho. Bashan chose not to allow them to do that just yet. See **the doctrine of Bashan—not finished yet!**

"And Y^ehowah said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have given him and all his people and his land into your hand; and you will do to him as you have done to Sihon, king of the Amorite, who was living⁴¹ in Heshbon.' [Deut. 3:2]

To give you a better idea about the tense system in the Hebrew, we have an incident here which, in reference to when God spoke to Moses, occurred in the past—as *you have done to him*—and one that will take place in the

⁴¹ A personal note to myself: I have continually used the word *dwelt* when I should be using the more modern *lived*.

future, with reference to when God spoke to Moses—you will do to him. God is using a past occurrence to encourage Moses in a future event; however, *do*, in both instances, is in the 2nd person singular, Qal perfect. In the English, we translate this *will do* and *have done*; but, in the Hebrew, the verbs are exactly the same.

Sihon occupied a smaller territory than Bashan, having just taken it from Moab. Bashan was better established with very well-fortified cities, as we will see, and his people covered a greater area. Whereas Bashan apparently tolerated the movement of the Amorites to the south, he was not going to tolerate the Israelites, as they were greater in number.

"And Y^ehowah our God also⁴² gave into our hand⁴³ Og, king of Bashan, and all his people, and we struck him down until there were no survivors [lit., was not left to him a remnant]; [Deut. 3:3]

Moses is still speaking to the generation of promise, holding up to them what is a very recent memory—their victory over Og, king of Bashan. In their movement to Jordan Jericho, the battles with Sihon and Og occurred quickly—they were given no chance to think about it. They were in a situation where they had to fight and there was no time to ruminate. Had they thought about what they were going to do in advance, the defeat of Bashan would have seemed impossible. Og of Bashan was a giant of a man with a powerful fighting force, occupying fortified cities. The armies of Bashan most certainly had some weapons of iron, if Og's bed was made of iron (we will see that later in this chapter).

Now the Jews are going to go into the land, and they already know that it is occupied by giants (according to their fathers and according to the spies who went into the land). The encouragement here is that God has proven to them against two powerful kings and their nations that He can deliver them. The skirmishes with these other kings which ended in victory are to encourage them in dealing with the Canaanites in the land.

To compare, the fight against the people of Bashan from Numbers 21:33–35: **Then they turned and went up by the way of Bashan, and Og, the king of Bashan, came out with all his people to battle at Edrei. But Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have given him into your hand, and all his people and his land; and you will do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites who lived at Heshbon." So they struck him down and his sons and all his people, until there was no remnant left him; and they possessed his land.** As you can see, the recollections are almost word-for-word.

One thing which may bother some of you is the complete and total destruction of these people. During those days, we had a unique situation. Jesus Christ, the revealed member of the trinity, the Creator of the Universe, had allied Himself specifically with the nation Israel. This was made clear in Israel's departure from Egypt, with the use of many signs and wonders. The signs and wonders, as in the gospels, acted as a credit card. As Creator of the Universe, God is able to temporarily suspend the laws of nature and act above and beyond their restrictions. This is done in such a way that only the most hardened of hearts, the most negative volition can know of the miracles and not recognize that these were the miracles of God. During the incarnation, the Scribes and the pharisees did not dispute that a miracle had occurred—they attributed His power to Satan. Og and the people of Bashan have heard of what occurred in Egypt. They are now facing these same people who were led there by God. They had two simple choices: they can send out an embassy and ally themselves with Israel, and thereby be allied with God, or they can go to war against Israel, and thereby go to war against God. It is a simple matter of their volition.

We face the same thing in salvation. In order to be lost, in order to spend eternity in hell, and in order to spend eternity separated from God, we must spend every waking moment holding God at arm's length. We must spend our entire existence on this earth, whether it be twenty years or ninety years, pushing God away, refusing to consider the claims of Jesus Christ and refusing to believe in Him. We must spend our entire lives in total and complete rejection of God (as He is) in order to spend eternity apart from Him. So there is no question about it,

⁴² In the Hebrew, *also* immediately precedes *Og*; however, it is better understood placed where I have placed it. God gave Sihon into the hand of the Israelites and He also gave Og into their hand.

⁴³ Plural in Vulgate, Septuagint and with three early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible.

when we make God in our own image, that is a complete and total rejection of God as He really is and an arrogant move to deify ourselves. If we desire to know God, if we have a desire to know His plan for our lives, His perfection, and, most importantly, His grace, love and provision, God will reveal these things to us. This is a **promise which He will honor in every instance. Jesus therefore answered them, and said, "My teaching is not Mine but His who sent Me. If any man is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or if I am speaking human viewpoint [lit., from Myself]." (John 7:16–17).** All it takes is just a few seconds of positive volition, and God will see that the gospel is delivered to you—the gospel being the good news that Jesus Christ has paid the full and complete penalty for the sins and wrongdoing that you have committed and, because of that, God is willing to receive you as His son in Christ; all you have to do is believe in Jesus Christ. We can be Og, king of Bashan, and lose everything that we have ever had and spend eternity in misery. All it takes is a lifetime of negative volition. If you are an unbeliever and you are hearing this, something inside of you is now clicking. You recognize that there is a decision to be made and that this is a decision of utmost importance. Don't put it off; don't think maybe you will consider this later. You have nothing to lose by believing in Jesus Christ right now and everything to gain. Og and his people made a decision against Y^ehowah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and every single one of them will die and spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. What could they have done? After all, they were the enemy right? There can always be exceptions. We will see Rahab the prostitute in the next chapter, who, by birth, was an enemy of God, yet she believed in Jesus Christ and she was delivered from the destruction which would come to her people. What comes with that moment of positive volition is greater than any of us can **imagine. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we will be delivered by His life (Rom. 5:10).**

My point in all of this: don't worry about Og and don't try to over think this. He was given the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ and to ally himself with the people of God. He chose not to and he paid the penalty, which is death. The issue today is will you believe in Jesus Christ? Will you ally yourself with the people of God?

"And we captured all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them—sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. [Deut. 3:4]

Argob means *clods, rich in clods, deep-soiled, fertile*. According to *Barne's Notes* it means *stone-heap*. H.L. Davies equates it today with the city Rājib. ZPEB also places Argob in the Golan Heights, approximately twenty miles south of Damascus. This verse appears to equate the sixty cities with the region of Argob and with the kingdom of Og in Bashan. Maps place the area of Gilead as running along the eastern portion of the Jordan, with Argob and Geshur being north of that, even with the Sea of Galilee (then the Sea of Chinnereth), and Bashan being north of those areas. Due to its proximity, Argob is sometimes considered to be in Bashan (1Kings 4:13).

When Israel moved on them, Israel moved quickly. It is unlikely that Israel went into each and every city and take it. They were met by Bashan and his men at Edrei. All of the men were destroyed in that battle. Marching into the cities resulted in the deaths of all who lived there: men, women and children. It is not unlikely that some of the cities were deserted when they went into them. Furthermore, these are not cities as we would think, but relatively small, but well-fortified villages. However, to have the power and authority over sixty different communities speaks well of the charisma and leadership and power of Og.

"All these cities were fenced with a high wall, two-leaved door and bar, apart from the very many encampments [lit., cities] of the rural area [Deut. 3:5]

The NASB reads: **"All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates and bars, besides a great many un-walled towns."** *Gates* is in the dual, meaning there were two—this is how we get the *two-leafed door* in from *Young's Translation*. *Bar* is in the singular, meaning each door perhaps had a metal bar across it in order to strengthen it. *Wall* is also in the singular. *Besides* or *apart* from these sixty cities, there were smaller encampments which were overrun by the Israelites. The word for *cities* occurs twice in this verse, although almost every translation translates it as though there are two different words here: *cities, towns* (*The Emphasized Bible*, KJV, NASB), *towns, villages* (NRSV), *cities, villages* (*The Amplified Bible*, NIV, Owen, Young). The word for *cities* is עִיר (עִיר) [pronounced eer or geer] and this is used in the very widest sense of a group of people, from an encampment, to a village, to a city. Strong's #5892 BDB #746 The second time 'âr is used, it is in the construct, modified by the

word p^orâzîy פְּרָזִי) [pronounced p^oraw-ZEE] and it is found only three times in the Old Testament (here and 1Sam. 6:18 Esther 9:19) and each time translated differently in the Authorized Version: *un-walled, country, villages*. It should be translated *country* or *rural*. With the wide application of the word פְּרָזִי, the change of the English translation of the word is acceptable. Strong's #6521 BDB #826

The Israelites with Moses now had spent half or more of their lives traveling across the wilderness from Egypt to the Land of Promise. They do not recall a lot of what occurred in Egypt. Much of what they have traveled through is a limestone region, where protection is afforded the occupants by digging caverns into the limestone. In an area of the much harder basalt, the occupants cannot simply dig a cavern out—the rock is too difficult to cut through. Therefore, they built cities and placed walls around the cities. There still exists today a large number of these walled cities of Bashan, along with *their black basalt houses, gates, doors and bolts*.⁴⁴ Porter, in *Giant Cities of Bashan*, p. 84, wrote: *Time produces little effect on such building as these. The heavy stone slabs of the roofs resting on the massive walls make the structure as firm as if built of solid masonry; and the black basalt used is almost as hard as iron.* Macgregor describes the construction of the houses within. The doors were made of stones seven feet high and six inches thick, with four inch long pivots, turning in stone sockets—even stone window shutters (4'X3'). A bedroom was 14'X9'X11' (high). There were stone rafters for a stone roof and four the six foot thick walls. There were two and even a few three-story homes.⁴⁵ We do not know if these are the same houses as soon by the Israelites or not—in any case, they are likely similar in construction and appearance.

In case you have the picture in your mind of the army of the Israelites going from one city to the next and taking it over—this would be inaccurate assessment of the situation. We have roughly 600,000 men overrunning the area of Bashan, where the armies might enter into twenty cities simultaneously. There is every indication that Israel had one of the greatest populations of any people of that time. They made up roughly 1% of the total world population at that time. Since we today make up roughly 5% of the world population in the United States and Mainland China is almost a quarter of the world population, this should not be a difficult thing for us to fathom (although it is for some Christians).

"And we completely destroyed [lit., devoted] them, as we had done to Sihon, king of Heshbon, completely destroying [lit., devoting] every city, men, the women⁴⁶ and the infants; [Deut. 3:6]

Here, we are not given any details. When the entire population was *devoted to Y^ehowah*, this means every man, woman and child was killed. We are not told what God had commanded the Israelites; however, there seem to be no repercussions for this particular situation of destroying every single person who was part of Og's kingdom. In fact, we will run into several instances where, when Israel does not destroy an entire population, that it returns to cause them serious grief. This in no way justifies genocide today, as the movement of Israel into the Land of Promise at that time was guided by God. No other nation, including Israel, can make that same claim today. You may be thinking, isn't the Promised Land the eternal possession of the sons of Israel? Absolutely true; however, the time of God working through the Jewish race was temporarily suspended and inserted is our time, the church age. We live in a parenthetical age, however, it is a great age wherein we operate under the same power source as did Jesus Christ in His incarnation—the Holy Spirit. God will return the land of Israel to the sons of Israel. However, as was also promised in Lev. 26:33, the bulk of the nation Israel is scattered throughout the world, with an identifiable remnant of Israel placed in every single continent on this earth. However, this is a temporary condition. **"For the land will be abandoned by them, and will they will make up their Sabbaths while it [the land] is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity because they have rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. Yet, in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am Y^ehowah their God. But I will remember for them the covenant wit their ancestors, whom I brought out of the**

⁴⁴ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; pp. 102–103; he got his information from Raumer, *Palästina*, pp. 78–79.

⁴⁵ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 103, taken from MacGregor's *The Rob Roy on the Jordan*, pp. 175–179.

⁴⁶ The Septuagint, the Syrian, the Vulgate and the western targum of Jonathan read *and the women*.

land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am Y^ehowah." (Lev. 26:43–45). Who else but God would have told us this so far in advance?

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The Spoil of Bashan

"And all the cattle and the spoil of the cities—we have kept [lit., spoiled] for ourselves. [Deut. 3:7]

The Israelite army in this instance, destroyed the entire population, and retained their possessions and their cattle. This was the exact same modus operandi which they put in place when warring with Sihon. **"And Y^ehowah our God delivered him [Sihon] over to us; and we struck him down with his sons and all his people. So we captured all his [Sihon's] cities at that time, and completely destroyed the men, women and children of every city. We left no survivor. We took only the animals as our booty and the spoil of the cities which we had captured."** (Deut. 3:33–35).

"And we took, at that time, the land out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorite, which was beyond the Jordan, from the torrent Armon to Mount Hermon;" [Deut. 3:8]

Throughout Num. 21, the only kings mentioned were Og, the king of Bashan, and Sihon, the Amorite king. The context of this passage would indicate that Og was an Amorite (or, at least, his people were Amorites). All of the land conquered on the east side of the Jordan was given over to Reuben, Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh. **So Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Joseph's son Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan, the land with its cities with [their] territories, the cities of the surrounding land** (Num. 32:33). This will be covered in more detail in Joshua 12 and 13.

Mount Hermon is about 35 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, at the northwestern corner of the kingdom of Bashan, at the edge of the area given to Manasseh. This is the southern portion of the Hittite empire with Lebanon off to the west at the Mediterraneans. At 9200 ft., it is snow-capped throughout the entire year, the NIV Study Bible describing it as *one of the most prominent and beautiful mountains of Lebanon*.

(Sidonians call Hermon, Sirion; and the Amorites call it Senir). [Deut. 3:9]

Moses, in writing this, recognizing that this is Scripture, departs to us some geographical facts. Sidon is a son of Canaan (Gen. 10:15) and the area that they lived in had been known for hundreds of years (Gen. 10:19). Sidon was on the Mediterranean (Gen. 49:13). The indication is that Mount Hermon could be seen by them. Whereas, this does not appear to be spoken directly to the Israelites and is more likely an aside to the reader, possibly from the hand of Moses or someone within a few hundred years of his time period. Whether or not this verse should be viewed as Scripture is another matter. If it was added centuries later, then it is not really a part of Scripture. The warnings not to add to God's Word imply that some will attempt to do so.

Mount Hermon was the religious center for early Syria—having many Baal sanctuaries throughout—and was named prior to the Exodus. Moses was an expert in many fields, one of them being geography, and he certainly would have learned this in school. Certainly there would have been trading between Sidon and Egypt during Moses' tenure in the Egyptian palace.

"[And we also took] all the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Sal^ecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. [Deut. 3:10]

Sal^ecah (also written Salecah and Salcah) and Edrei were both principal areas of Bashan, the latter being the battlefield when Israel destroyed the armies of Bashan. Sal^ecah marks the eastern border of Bashan. The area which the Israelites took extends up from Moab as far as Mount Hermon. With all of the cities that remained and the beautiful area, it is no wonder that Reuben and Gad liked it so well.

(For only Og, king of Bashan, had been left of the remnant of the Rephaim; in fact [lit., lo], his bedstead [was] a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the sons of Ammon? Nine cubits its length, and four cubits its breadth, by the cubit of a man.) [Deut. 3:11]

Rabbah is the only city of Ammon which is mentioned by name in the Bible and this is the first occurrence (see 2Sam. 11:1 12:26 Jer. 49:2). It is in existence at the time of writing, but Moses probably did not write this. He definitely did not say this to the children of Israel at this time. That is, the bed of Og would not have been immediately transferred to an Ammonite city after the capture of the area of Bashan. It may have been sold several years later to the Ammonites. Its size is 13.5 feet in length and six feet in width and it would have been constructed out of wood with some iron features, like the *iron* chariots of Joshua 17:16. Most of the beds at that time—those that existed—would have been made from palm sticks, the palm tree being in greater abundance then than now. However, a man of his size would require something more substantial—hence, the frame being made from basalt.

Some commentaries believe—and this makes more sense, by the way—that this is not some traveling bed on some sort of display, but that it is a sarcophagus and such a sarcophagus would have been built specifically with Og in mind before his death, as the Israelites would not have built one for him. This verse is most likely an addendum to God's Word. This does not mean that it is God's Word or is not; but it is highly unlikely that Moses spoke or wrote this. Although it is possible that Og was removed from that area by some of his followers, it is just as likely that his bed or sarcophagus was removed by a collector or curiosity seeker to put on display in their own country.

Even though we are not certain how this verse came to be placed in Scripture, we do know that it is historically accurate. Throughout the world there are old grave sites, called dolmens, which usually consist of three large stones standing upright and a large stone on top of them. Throughout North German, Denmark, England and North-west France where many of these have been found, they are called *giant beds*. In 1918, German scholar Gustav Dalman found dolmen in Jordan, near ancient Rabbath-Ammon. This *bed* was made out of basalt, an extremely hard grey-black stone. Since then, we have found that dolmens are common to the areas around Palestine, most often in the area of Trans-Jordan north of the Jabbok River⁴⁷.

Concerning the iron: the black basalt of that area was 20% iron and was possibly what is alluded to here. Iron was used at that time for tools and weapons (Gen. 4:22 Deut. 19:5) by Semitic peoples and by those who lived in the surrounding countries. However, bronze, at that time generally speaking, was the metal of choice for weapons, furniture, and other items. It is variously thought that the Iron Age began somewhere between 2000 BC and 700 BC. Understand, it is not like suddenly, one day, everyone decided to start using iron. That was the technology which would, in some cases, come and go. However, we do know from this, and other passages, that iron was used at this time. Furthermore, the stonework of granite, basalt and kiorite found throughout Egypt from this time period could not have been done apart from iron tools, even though, by most chronologies, these stone works belong to the bronze age. Israel herself did not use iron at this time, although she came across other nations and peoples which did (see also Joshua 17:16–18). In fact, the Philistines restricted the use of iron implements in Israel (1Sam. 13:19–22), indicating that even several hundred years later, the use of iron had not become an integral part of the lives of the Israelites. The simple explanation is that some nations were in the Bronze Age while other nations were simultaneously in the Iron Age.⁴⁸ Anyone who has ever picked up a copy of *National Geographic* has no trouble understanding that different nations have different technology levels.

⁴⁷ Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (second revised edition), pp. 152–3.

⁴⁸ Charles A. Clough, *Dawn of the Kingdom*, ©1974, p. 136–137.

ZPEB identifies Rephaim with the Emim and the Zamzummim and speaks of them as being different from the Rephaim from the time of David. Therefore, we ought to examine the **Doctrine of the Rephaim—not finished yet!!**

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Distribution of Trans-Jordanian Area

Num. 32:1–5, 33–42 34:13–15 Joshua 12:1–7 13:8–12

"So, we took possession [of] this land at that time—from Aroer, which [is] by edge of⁴⁹ the torrent Arnon and the half of mount Gilead, and its cities—I have given to the Reubenite and to the Gadite; [Deut. 3:12]

It has already been decided that Gad and Reuben would possess some of the area taken from the Amorites and from Og. Aroer is in the south and Gilead in the north.

"And the rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I have given to the half-tribe of Manasseh; all the region of the Argob and all of the Bashan—the same is called a land of Rephaim [or, a land of the giants]. [Deut. 3:13]

The Masoretic text reads: *all the region of the Argob as far as all of Bashan*. The codices of the western targums of Jonathan, the Septuagint, the Syrian and the Vulgate all read *all the region of Argob and all of Bashan*.

Directly above Moab, half-way up the Salt Sea to the top of the Salt Sea would be occupied by the tribe of Reuben, bordered on the west by the Salt Sea and on the east by Ammon. The land stretching along the length of the Jordan River up to the Sea of Galilee would reside the tribe of Gad, Ammon being its eastern border also. Along the Sea of Galilee and north of that was a larger area, reaching even further to the east than Gad or Reuben's land, was the area set apart for the half tribe of Manasseh.

(Jair ben Manasseh has taken all the region of Argob to the border of Gerhuri, and Maachathi, and called them by his own name Bashan-Havoth-Jair [or, the settlements or villages of Jair], even to this day.) [Deut. 3:14]

ZPEB⁵⁰ claims that this verse has been corrupted for two reasons: (1) the word *them* has no proper antecedent; and (2) this verse wrongly includes the villages of Jair in Bashan rather than their further southern location of Gilead.

The NIV Study Bible refers to the areas of the Geshur and Maacah as relatively small areas, the former found east of the Sea of Galilee (Chinnereth) and the latter east of the waters of Merom, north of Geshur.

This verse sounds parenthetical due to the last phrase *even to this day*. If this is an added sentence, it could have been added legitimately, as Joshua might have sometime after conquering the land; or it could have been added illegitimately by some one else. According to Barnes' Notes, *until this day* is close in meaning to our *until now*. That is, it does not look far back into the corridors of time, but might refer to an event or a name only from a few

⁴⁹ We find *the edge (or the lip of) of* in the codices of the western Samaritan, the Septuagint, the Syrian, the Vulgate, the Targums of Jonathan and Onkolos.

⁵⁰ *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 300.

months ago.⁵¹ I don't know that I buy that, but I include it here for your edification. A study of its occurrences might be quite helpful at this time. See the **Doctrine of *until this day*—not finished yet!**

It would make sense for Moses or Joshua to add this, as Jair taking this particular area has already occurred (Num. 32:41; see also 1Chron. 2:22). It is a difficult call here, because the two surrounding verses make this verse fall right into place. However, there are two key differences: the phrase *even to this day* and the lack of the first person pronoun. These two aspects of this verse make this an afterthought—however, this is a contemporary afterthought. That is, the speaker Moses was aware at this time who received the region of Argob. On the other hand, he has portioned this land out to the various families of Manasseh—it would not make sense for Moses to mention Machir in v. 15, but not to mention Jair in the same breath. My take on these two verses is that they have to go together; the use of the first person in v. 15 would be Moses speaking or writing, which means Moses spoke or wrote v. 14. The two families are also mentioned together in Num. 32:39–41.

(And I have given Gilead to Machir). [Deut. 3:15]

Machir is one of the families of Manasseh. He is personally a son of Manasseh, who had long since departed from this life. As time passes, his name will be almost equivalent to the name of Manasseh (see Judges 5:14). We have already seen the legal issue raised by his great-great-granddaughters—the daughters of Zelophehad—concerned that because they were not married that they may not share in any inheritance of the land (Num. 27, 31). Under anyone other than God, this would have been a bona fide fear. When we get to Joshua 13:29–31, we will find that part of the Machir family will reside in trans-Jordan and the other half will reside with the rest of the tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan.

"And to the Reubenite and to the Gadite I have given from Gilead even as far as the torrent [or, valley] Arnon, [the] middle [or, midst] of the torrent [or, valley] and the border, even as far as the torrent Jabbok, the border of the sons of Ammon; [Deut. 3:16]

In this verse, we have the same word translated several different ways: *gorge, gorge, River* (NIV); *valley, valley, river* (*The Amplified Bible*, NASB, Owen); *brook, valley, brook* (Young). Only the NRSV consistently gives it the rendering *wadi* and *The Emphasized Bible* calls the word *ravine*. We have looked at the word before: it is *nachal* (נַחַל) [pronounced *NAHKH-al*] and it means *wadi, torrent, torrent-valley*. It is rushing water down a narrow channel; today, probably more often than then, it could be a river which is only found during the rainy season. Since a torrent or a river tends to run through a valley area, this word is also used to refer to the valley that a river might run through. Strong's #5158 BDB #636. In this context, it is first found first without a definite article in the construct, meaning the phrase should be rendered *as far as valley [or, torrent, or wadi] Arnon*. Immediately after the word *Arnon* we have the phrase *middle of the valley [or, torrent, or wadi]*. This sounds a bit awkward and several translations render this parenthetically: *And to the Reubenite and to the Gadite I have given from Gilead even as far as the torrent Arnon—the midst of this torrent as the border—even to the Torrent Jabbok, the border of the sons of Ammon*. The next phrase is literally *as far as Jabbok the torrent*. This verse gives the northern and southern borders of Reuben and Gad. Reuben is to the east of the Salt Sea all the way to the border of Ammon.

"And the plane [or, Arabah] and the Jordan as [lit., and] the border, from Chinnereth even as far as the sea of the plain [or, Arabah], the Salt Sea, under the mountain slopes of Pisgah, at the east. [Deut. 3:17]

The Sea of Chinnereth is the Sea of Galilee. Pisgah is a high plain area overlooking the Dead Sea. Now might be a good time to look into the **Doctrine of Pisgah—not finished yet!** This gives us a western and eastern border for the area given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. BDB gives the meaning of 'ash^odoth (אֲשֶׁדּוֹת) [pronounced *ash^o-DÖTH*] as *foundation, mountain slopes*. Strong's #794 BDB #78

⁵¹ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 276.

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Commands Given to the Sons of Reuben and Gad and to Joshua

Num. 32:6–32

"And I commanded you, at that time, saying, 'Y^ehowah, your God, has given to you this land to possess it; being armed you [all] will pass over before your brothers the sons of Israel, all the sons of might. [Deut. 3:18]

Moses made it clear that the Reubenites could not just move directly into their new land and rest on their laurels. First of all, they cannot let their brothers cross over the Jordan without their assistance. Second fo all, it is not a matter of the first person who calls the land gets to stop fighting and keep it. This particular verse parallels Num. 32:20–21.

" 'Only your wives and your infants and your cattle—I knew that you had a lot of cattle—they will dwell in in your cities which I have given to you.' [Deut. 3:19]

Notice that throughout this chapter, with the exception of the addended material, that all of this is in the first person. Moses wrote in the third person, but spoke just like any other normal person does—in the first person. He did not speak of himself as *the president* except in his writings, under the ministry of God the Holy spirit and probably in accordance with the rules of literature in those days. These writings would survive him by thousands of years and are better written in the third person. The phrase, *I knew you had a lot of cattle* is parenthetical, and was not spoken originally to the tribes of Reuben and Gad but is said here.

"Till that Y^ehowah gave rest to your brothers like yourselves, and they also have possessed the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to them beyond the Jordan, then you [all] will turn back each to his possession, which I have given to you. [Deut. 3:20]

The term *rest* as found here is almost a technical theological term. When it comes to day-to-day activity, rest is a cessation from war, with with no external threat of conflict and no internal unrest. It is a time of separation from conflict, from famine, from plagues—a time of peace and prosperity. This is a shadow of the true rest offered by our Lord, a cessation from works for our own salvation, a place of peace and prosperity where God has provided **for us. Therefore, let us fear so that the promise does not remain unclaimed of entering His rest, so that on one of you should seem to fall short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as the exodus generation had also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by means of faith in those who heard (Heb. 4:1–2).**

In public again, Moses is making certain that everyone knows that the Reubenites were not to move directly into their land, but they were to move along with everyone else until the entire land had been subdued. Moses is not above repeating himself and God has allowed him to repeat himself concerning this topic several times and **in Scripture**. This alone indicates the importance of repetition. This, is not a prophecy, but an agreement, and it is fulfilled in Joshua 22:4: [Joshua is speaking] **"And now Y^ehowah your God has given rest to your brothers [the other tribes of Israel] as He promised them; therefore, turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses, the servant of Y^ehowah, gave you beyond the Jordan."**

"And I commanded Jehoshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes are seeing all that which Y^ehowah your God has done to these two kings—so will Y^ehowah do to all the kingdoms through which you will pass over; [Deut. 3:21]

Jehoshua is Joshua and he has observed God's grace and mercy throughout his life, choosing to follow Y^ehowah rather than man.

V. 21 is both a short-term and a long-term prophecy. God will drive the inhabitants of land out of give their land to Israel. This promise will be repeated with great frequency in Deuteronomy (Deut. 4:38 6:18–19 7:1–2, 17–20, 23–24 9:1–6 11:23–25 12:2, 10, 29–30 18:12, 14 19:1 31:3–6 33:27). We have already seen God promise this to Israel several times before (e.g., Ex. 23:23, 27–28, 31 33:2 34:10–11, 24). This is fulfilled by the book of Joshua (specifically, Joshua 21:44 11:16–20), with continued fulfillment throughout the time of King David. This prophecy will be ultimately fulfilled in the millennium, immediately following the tribulation.

"Do not fear them, for Y^ehowah your God, He is fighting for you [or, He is the one fighting for you]." [Deut. 3:22]

Moses here admonishes Joshua as he admonished the Reubenites. Moses, having dealt with over 600,000 degenerates from the generation of Joshua, he wants to make certain that Joshua is grace-oriented. One of the first things that the Israelites heard upon leaving Egypt was: **"Do not fear! Stand your ground and see the deliverance of Y^ehowah which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. Y^ehowah will fight for you while you keep silent."** (Ex. 14:13b–14). And Moses continues to remind them: **"Y^ehowah, your God, who goes before you, He Himself will fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes."** (Deut. 1:30). The Israelites, despite their numerical size, are not a large or a warlike people at this time. In fact, rather than go into war, it was the consensus of opinion of the exodus generation that they should return to Egypt. Moses continually encouraged the people, explaining that God would be the one fighting on their behalf.

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A Prayer of Moses and the Answer to That Prayer *Num. 27:15–21 (?)*

"And I appealed [to] Y^ehowah for grace at that time, saying," [Deut. 3:23]

The Hebrew word used here is *chānan* (חָנַן) [pronounced *khaw-NAHN*] means *to bend, to stoop over, to show favor, to show grace as a superior would do on behalf of an inferior*. Here, this word is in the Hithpael imperfect; which is continuous, reflexive intensive action. It is generally translated *besought, to make supplication, to entreat*. However, all of these translations are rather dated. A better rendering would be *petition for grace, make a request for grace, appeal for grace*. Strong's #2603, 2589 BDB #335. Israel did not know that when he was deposed by God that his immediate prayer was for them to have a good leader.

"Lord Y^ehowah, You, even You, have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for who [is] a god in the heavens or in earth who acts [or, does] according to Your might?" [Deut. 3:24]

There is no angelic being who can function with the strength and graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. We often have no realization of God's greatness. **"Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?"** (Ex. 15:11). **"For this reason, You are great, O Y^ehowah God, for there is none like You, and there is no God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation on the earth is like You people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people and to make a name for Himself, and to do a great thing for You and awesome things for Thy land, before Your people whom You have redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, [and from other] nations and gods? For You have established for Yourself You people Israel as You own people forever, and You, O Y^ehowah, have become their God."** (2Sam. 7:22–24).

" 'Let me pass over, I respectfully request of You, and see the good land which [is] beyond the Jordan, this good hill-country, and Lebanon.' [Deut. 3:25]

Off to the east is flat, dry desert area, probably not quite as desolate then as it is today, but still in sharp contrast to the Land of Promise. The more hilly regions toward the Mediterranean Sea had a more temperate climate, a greater amount of rainfall and its many streams kept the land green and fertile (as has been said, the Land of Promise then has been placed under great discipline today, and only the promise of beauty and prosperity can be found there).

This is a prayer that we were not aware of until now. Moses prayed to God, upon hearing his sentence of not leading the Israelites into the land and into battle against the Canaanites, first requested that God allow him to go into the land. Moses didn't even care if he was their leader. He could go in on a stretcher. Moses never needed to be in command; it was a responsibility which he accepted, and sometimes, none to graciously. But he did desire to see this great land. However, in his death, God will give to him a much greater land, a much greater piece of property in heaven.

This prayer of Moses is in keeping with his personality. Moses would both like to see the manifestation of God's glory and power (Ex. 33:18–23) and he does not want to see his people, the Jews, forsaken—he wants to bring them to fulfillment of God's promises (Ex. 32:31–35 Num. 14:12–20).

There are two points you should take down here. With a position of power and authority comes great responsibility. To some people, the mistake that Moses made was understandable and very forgivable; however, there was much more to his action than meets the eye. Furthermore, it should also be noted that even great believers sometimes have their prayers answered *no*. I am reminded of Paul, who, due to his being in great physical pain, wrote: *And because of the extraordinary quality of the revelations [which I received], for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to strike me, to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this, I begged the Lord three times that it might stand off from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I would rather boast about my helplessness, that the power of Christ may dwell in me (2Cor. 12:7–9).*

"And Y^ehowah showed Himself to be upset with me, for your sake [or, because of you or on your account], and did not listen [and obey] me, and Y^ehowah said to me, 'Enough for you; do not speak to Me [lit., add not to speak to Me] any more about this thing. [Deut. 3:26]

God answers all prayer. This particular prayer, God answered Moses *emphatically no*. God does not even desire to hear about it again. A *no* doesn't get much stronger than that. If you have forgotten, what had happened was that the new generation wanted water and there was no water to be found. When this had occurred before, Y^ehowah was upon the rock and Moses struck that rock with his stick and out came an enormous fountain which quickly turned into a river. Moses struck our Lord Jesus Christ with his staff—an analogy to the cross. From our Lord, the rock, came living waters. When this situation occurred again, Moses was told by God to speak to the rock. Once our Lord was judged upon the cross then He is never judged again. He paid for our sins one time and He paid for the sins of all at that one time. For those who desire salvation, they need only speak to the rock and from Him will flow living waters. Moses, although told to speak to the rock, struck the rock twice. Now, God was faithful to the people Israel and brought forth incredible gushing waters, but the transgression of Moses so confused the shadow analogy of salvation that God would not allow Moses to enter into the land. This was a mistake that had permanent consequences. Anyone who confuses the issue and the means of salvation faces permanent and serious consequences.

The Israelites, on both occasions when they whined and complained to Moses about water, were antagonistic and contrary. They were filled with mental attitude sins. On the first occurrence, Moses went to God and God gave him the game plan. On the second occasion, Moses was a bit cocky and he did not even go to God, God came to him and told him what to do. Moses allowed himself to remain out of fellowship, angry with the sons of Israel, believing in God's undeserved provision, but not understanding his role. **[The sons of Israel] also provoked [God]**

to wrath at the waters of Meribah, so that it went hard with Moses on their account. Because they were rebellious against His Spirit, He spoke rashly with his lips (Psalm 106:32–33).

I would like to quote from J. Vernon McGee: *Our heats go out to this man Moses as he begs the Lord to let him enter the land which has been his goal for forty years. What a lesson this is for us, friends. Though we repent of our sin, we will have to take the consequences of it in this life whether we like it or not*⁵².

We have all had times where we were in fellowship and someone else's mental or verbal sins or attitude set us off, and we got ourselves out of fellowship through our own mental attitude sins. For Moses, this resulted in disobeying God's specific demands. When Moses said *for your sake*, he was referring the attitude and the verbal sins of the Israelites from which he sinned himself. And here is rub of leadership. They all sinned; however, Moses, who has led these people through forty years in the wilderness, the great man of his generation, the spiritual Atlas of his day, will not enter into the land, yet all of the people who complained will.

Don't misunderstand, Moses is not giving excuses for what he did nor is he placing the blame for what he did upon the people present. When the incident took place historically, and Moses recorded it, there was not a word about being provoked by the sons of Israel. However, here, and in Deut. 1:37–4:21, Moses places some of the blame upon the people. We do not have enough here for a substitutionary analogy, but what the people should note is that their faithlessness and their actions resulted in their greatest leader being removed from them. Such strong discipline should be sobering, as, deep in their hearts, every Israelite knows of the great faithfulness and sacrifice of Moses.

"Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and see with your eyes, for you will not pass over this Jordan; [Deut. 3:27]

Moses was allowed to see the great land which Y^ehowah had given to the sons of Israel, the land which he had promised to lead them to over forty years ago. *And Y^ehowah said, I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.*" (Ex. 3:7a, 8). And forty years later: *Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel. And when you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was."* (Num. 27:12–13). *And Y^ehowah spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, "Go up to this mountain of Abarim, Mount Nebo which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. Then die on the mountain where you have ascended, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel. For you will see the land at a distance but you will not go there, into the land which I am giving the sons of Israel."* (Deut. 32:48–52). From that vantage point, Moses would look in all directions and see what was given by God to them. This was the same Pisgah mountain where Balaam was taken by Balak in order to see all of the congregation of Israel so that he could curse Israel. It is from here that Moses will view the Land of Promise, which, at that time, was a beautiful and prosperous land. This did not take place at the time of this verse, but Moses will observe the entire land with his eyes as a climax to his life. It would be the last thing that he did prior to his death in Deut. 34. *Now Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. And Y^ehowah showed him all the land, Gilead, as far as Dan, and all Naphtalie and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, and the Negev and the plain in the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. Then Y^ehowah said to him, "This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants'; I have allowed you to see [it] with your eyes, but you will not go over there." So Moses, the servant of Y^ehowah died there in the land of Moab, according to the mouth of Y^ehowah (Deut. 34:1–5).*

⁵² J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 24.

" 'But [lit., And] charge Jehoshua, and strengthen him, and harden him, for he will pass over before this people, and he will cause them to inherit the land which you see.' [Deut. 3:28]

Moses is not to waste his time requesting God to allow him to enter into the land leading Israel. His purpose in life, along with the recording of Scripture and his speaking to Israel, was to strengthen Joshua. This will take place in Deut. 31. Joshua will then lead Israel. Moses did not tell the sons of Israel that he prayed on their behalf for a great leader.

"And we dwelt in a valley over-against Beth-Peor." [Deut. 3:29]

Beth-Peor means the *house or sanctuary of Peor*. This is likely a direct reference to where the cult practices of demonic, heathen worship was practiced by the Moabites and the Midianites. It was in Peor where Israel had been tempted by their gods (Num. 25:1–3). This general area was transformed from a place of demon worship into a general Israeli base of operations before they crossed over the Jordan (Deut. 4:46).

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Deuteronomy 4

Deuteronomy 4:1–49

Outline of Chapter 4:

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- Vv. 9–25 **Israel is warned against practicing idolatry**
- Vv. 26–31 **Moses again predicts the scattering of Israel and the faithfulness of Y^ehowah**
- Vv. 32–40 **Israel is to obey God because of the uniqueness of God's relationship to Israel**
- Vv. 41–43 **The cities set apart for involuntary manslaughter**
- Vv. 44–49 **Conclusion of first four chapters**

Charts:

- v. 18 **Words for Idols**
- v. 40 **The Topics Covered in Moses' Sermon**

Introduction: The key phrase to Deut. 4 is the first verse: [And now, Israel, listen \[and obey\] the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to do, so that you may live and \[so that\] you will go into the land which Y^ehowah God of your fathers is giving you and possess \[it\]](#). Deut. 4 will be one of the great portions of Scripture which teaches us about the character of God. Covenant theology—the idea that the church began in the tent of Abraham and that the church is a continuation of and a spiritualization of Israel—is herein refuted. This chapter also marks the end of the first dissertation of Moses. At the end of Deut. 4, we will return to a short narrative where the three cities of refuge are set up by Moses.

Deut. 4 is filled with a great deal of prophecy. Since Moses is speaking to the generation of promise, whose parents were some of the worst failures in the history of Israel, Moses, through God the Holy Spirit, predicts what their history will be. (1) Moses tells the children of Israel that he would die prior to going into the land (Deut. 4:22). (2) Israel would be removed from this land of promise, which they had not even entered into yet (Deut. 4:26). (3) Israel would be scattered throughout the nations of their enemies (Deut. 4:27). (4) Israel would lapse into idolatry (Deut. 4:28; see Ezek. 14:1–7). Finally, (5) Israel would eventually seek and find God during their exile (Deut. 4:29–30). This was partially fulfilled in Dan. 9:3, but will be completely fulfilled during the Great Tribulation.

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Israel Is Advised by Moses to Listen to and Obey God's Commands

["And now, Israel, listen \[attentively to and give obedience\] to the statutes, and to the judgments which I am teaching you to do, so that you \[all\] may live, and you will go in and possess the land which Y^ehowah God of your fathers is giving to you. \[Deut. 4:1\]](#)

The Qal imperative of *shâma* ^ר (שׁמַע) [pronounced *shaw-MAHÇ*] is the simple word for *listen* and we find it used in that way throughout Scripture (Gen. 3:10 16:11 Psalm 6:8). However, it is also used in the sense of: *to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to* (Gen. 3:17 39:10 Ex. 3:18). It is by the context that we can determine whether it is the simple act of listening or the act of listening attentively to and obeying. Unfortunately, the very best single word for the latter meaning is the archaic *hearken*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033

After the phrase *I am teaching you* is the lamed preposition followed by the Qal infinitive construct of 'âsâh (הַעֲשֵׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. Where it is found here, it acts just like our infinitive (I only mention this because Bullinger goes off on quite an unnecessary tangent about this phrase—unnecessary, because the correct translation clears up the rendering of the Authorized Version). This is followed by the lamed prefixed preposition again and our often used 2nd person plural, Qal imperfect of châyâh (חַיֶּה) [pronounced *khaw-YAW*], a verb meanings *to live*. This word also means *to remain, to exist, to survive*. The lamed preposition here denotes purpose and intent. The difference between listening intently to God's Word and obeying it and not is the difference between life and death. This is the secret of the Christian life which seems to have eluded the average believer. "You will walk in all the way which Y^ehowah your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong [your] days in the land which you will possess" (Deut. 5:33). "All the commandments that I am commanding you today, you will be careful to do, that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which Y^ehowah swore to your forefathers" (Deut. 8:1). "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. so choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants." (Deut. 30:19). And he said to them, "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you will command your sons to observe carefully—all the words of this law; for it [the Word of God] is not an idle word for you; indeed, it is your life. And by this word, you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." (Deut. 32:46–47). "Now fear Y^ehowah and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve Y^ehowah. And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve Y^ehowah, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but, as for me and my house, we will serve Y^ehowah." (Joshua 24:14–15). "And I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if man observes them, he will live." (Ezek. 20:11). **Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of god above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ, I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain** (Phil. 2:16). See also Deut. 4:26, 40 16:20 30:16 1John 1:1

In fact, Deut. 4 might be considered the guidon or the point for the entire book of Deuteronomy. The key to this book is *listen [and obey] Y^ehowah, your God, O Israel*. As noted in the passages quoted, this is the key of the book of Deuteronomy. This continual enjoinder by Moses for Israel to listen to God's Word and to obey God's Word translates into the same message for the Christian today. We are not told to hie ourselves off to some camp, nor are we to tarry for the Spirit, nor are we to witness to ten people a day—we are to listen to and obey God's Word. Our primary advantage which we have over the people of Israel is that we have the assistance of God the Holy Spirit. In fact, God spent approximately 1500 years showing us in His Word that even with God's Word, one must be guided by the Holy Spirit—our imbedded old sin nature is too great an obstacle for any one of us. Without the filling of the Holy Spirit, God's Word, at best, condemns us. If we are not empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing; and if we have not God's Word, we are directionless.

I come up with terrible analogies sometimes, but if the president of a large corporation is lying in a coma, this is analogous to our service without the Holy Spirit. There is no true contact with life; his control of the company is meaningless because he can make no decisions which pertain directly to the corporation. Without the Holy Spirit, we are completely separated from the life of God and have zero impact in this world and in God's plan. Without God's Word in our souls—without Bible doctrine—we are like a year old child who has inherited a huge corporation. We have volition, we have life, we have control over this corporation—however, we have no direction whatsoever, other than our personal needs. The Age of Israel has shown us that God's Word is not enough; and the lives of the vast majority of Christians reveal that the filling of the Holy Spirit apart from God's direction, found in God's Word, gives us minimal impact in this life.

What kept the previous generation out of the land? They did not listen to and obey the Word of God. What kept Moses out of the land? He did not obey the Word of God. Although the land is real and, at that time, was a land of beauty and prosperity, this is also a metaphor for our lives. All we have to do is to listen to and obey the Word of God and God will bring us into that promised land—into a place of great blessing and prosperity. All we have to do is to listen to Him and we will receive blessing and prosperity beyond what we can imagine. In my own life,

in the areas where I have been faithful to His Word, I have been blessed greatly; and, in the areas where I have disobeyed His commands, it is there I have lacked.

I like quoting from J. Vernon McGee, because he addresses Scriptural doctrines simply and to the point. *If Israel had kept the Law, what a blessing it would have been. But we find here a demonstration in history of a people who were give the Law under favorable circumstances but who could not keep it. No flesh will be justified before God by the Law. Why not? Is it because God is arbitrary? No, it is because the flesh is radically wrong. That is the problem*⁵³.

"You will not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor diminish from it, to keep the commands of Y^ehowah your God which I am commanding you. [Deut. 4:2]

This is far greater than we can imagine. First of all, this tells us that Moses recognized the importance of what he was teaching the Israelites—that is, he recognized that it was God's Word. I personally do my best to consider the different options and to give what I believe is the correct interpretation and reasonable application of any verse. However, this I see as my best attempt, when filled with the Holy Spirit, to communicate God's Word. However, I know that errors will occasionally creep in and sometimes there will be important elements of a passage left out. As an author, I don't expect my work to be changed; however, as a theologian, I would expect that those who learn from me will be able to take what I have given to them and to expand and contract as needed, with an eye toward accuracy.

Moses recognizes that this is God's Word that he is giving to the Jews and therefore he tells them not to add to it nor to take from it. **"Whatever I command you, you will be careful to do; you will not add to nor take away from it."** (Deut. 12:32). What is the Mishna and the Talmud? They are Jewish additions to God's Word. The Jews obey these far more carefully than they obey God's Word. This has placed the Jewish people under a great curse, a curse that we read about in Lev. 26 and will be given again in this chapter. **Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him Do not add to His words, so that he will not reprove you and you be proven a liar** (Prov. 30:5–6). God's Word has been completed: **I testify to everyone who hears the words of prophecy of this book; if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book** (Rev. 22:18–19).

"Your eyes have seen that which Y^ehowah had done in Baal-Peor—for every man who had gone after Baal-Peor, Y^ehowah your God has caused him to be destroyed from your midst; [Deut. 4:3]

We read about this in Num. 25:1–9: **While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to prostitute themselves with the daughters of Moab. For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and Y^ehowah was angry against Israel. And Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before Y^ehowah, so that the fierce anger of Y^ehowah may turn away from Israel." So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you must execute his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor." Then, observe, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of al the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand. Then he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pieced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked. And those who died by the plague were 24, 000.** Balaam had been called upon to curse Israel and he was unable to do so; however, he had suggested a different tactic of war be taken against Israel—he suggested a cold war, so to speak, where the overtures toward Israel seemed friendly, yet the intention was to disrupt Israel internally. Those who were lured into the degenerate religion of Baal-Peor died the sin unto death.

⁵³ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 27.

"And you [all] who held fast [or continued cleaving] to Y^ehowah your God—[you are] alive, all of you, today. [Deut. 4:4]

There were those who went in for the phallic cult worship and those who held fast to God. The relationship between God and believers in His Son Jesus Christ is closely akin to the correct perspective of a marriage. God loves, provides for and protects those who are His. Just as a right man and a right woman are to cling to one another (Gen. 2:24), so a believer is to cling to God, his Savior. Those who held fast to God remained alive and those who did not die the sin unto death, the final end for almost everyone of gen X. This older generation became an object lesson. God destroyed them for their disloyalty to Him—for prostituting themselves to another god—and the remaining generation, the generation of promise, were to remember these things and tell their children these things (see Deut. 4:9).

"Observe, I have taught you statutes and judgments, as Y^ehowah my God had commanded me—to do as God commanded [lit., to do so], in the midst of the land where you [all] are going in to possess it. [Deut. 4:5]

God had specific behavior that the Israelites were to obey, behavior and laws and statutes which would set them apart from the heathen of the land. The laws were given to Moses for the sons of Israel, as we read: **These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which Y^ehowah established between Himself and the sons of Israel by the hand of Moses at Mount Sinai** (Lev. 26:46; also see 27:34).

"And you [all] will keep and you all will do [them], for that will be your wisdom and your understanding before the eyes of the peoples who hear all these statutes; and they will say, 'Only a people wise and understanding [is] this great nation.' [Deut. 4:6]

God chose, at this point in time, to work through a particular nation, the nation Israel. The laws which it had, coming directly from God, were to be fair and just—to those from outside Israel as well as those in Israel. The reasonableness of their laws and the inherent justice was beyond what the heathen knew. This would stand as a witness to all other peoples who came into contact with the nation Israel. Moses calls out to the people and says, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants. By loving Y^ehowah your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him—this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give them" (Deut. 30:19–20). "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you will command your sons to observe [and] to do—all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed, it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." (Deut. 31:46–47).

The method of evangelism of Israel and the church are quite different. We have been commanded by God to go out into the world and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. Israel was not enjoined by God to send out missionaries. They were to obey God's laws and the wisdom of these laws combined with the great blessing that they would receive, would draw people to them. One of the prime examples was the Queen of Sheba. McGee wrote: *She came from the ends of the earth. There were no jet planes at that time. She made a long, arduous hard trip. If a woman would come that distance under such circumstances, don't you think some men would come to see? And they did. That was the way Israel witnessed to the world*⁵⁴.

This verse does not mean that every nation around Israel and all the peoples therein loved and admired Israel. This means that the discerning of the land would recognize the wisdom of their laws and their ways. There are religious concepts which would appeal to some. The unbeliever can be quite sharp. A discerning unbeliever can wander into the average church and discount it immediately because (1) they have their hand out all of the time; (2) the church is corny and the pastor is corny; (3) the church, the pastor and the congregation are all phoney; (4) the pastor and the congregation are not particularly bright or discerning; (5) a majority of what is spoken from the pulpit sounds like rehashed fundamentalist slogans; (6) there is no convincing ministry of the Holy Spirit;

⁵⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 30.

(7) people running around the church putting their hands on others, calling aloud for the power of Jesus, speaking in tongues, claiming miraculous healings every few minutes either unnerves or serves to amuse the discerning unbeliever; (8) the males sound as though they are carbon copies of the pastor and the females sound as though they are carbon copies of the pastor's wife. I recall being in one church where the females said *praise the Lord* in exactly the same vocal inflection as the pastor's wife. I don't recall where I was a discerning believer or unbeliever at the time, but I found that to be quite amusing and completely separate from anything to do with spiritual matters. Even as an unbeliever, I clearly recognized that there was no spiritual impact or meaning in religious people imitating the personality of their charismatic leader. I thought it foolish at the time and regard it as somewhat sadly neurotic today.

Now, don't misunderstand me, a pastor does not need to sound as though he is a scholar of the languages and a Harvard graduate, although he should have some in depth training in the former. J. Vernon McGee was one of the outstanding pastors of the 20th century, and he sounded like a hick from the sticks. His thick southern drawl belied his great theological training, his background in the original languages and his knowledge of God's Word. He was rarely asked to *put that into layman's terms* because he spoke in layman's terms, yet still conveyed the great truth of the Scripture, as can be attested to by anyone who was heard him or studied under him.

If an unbeliever happens to wander into a church today, for whatever reason, the pastor should be teaching God's Word carefully, with respect, from the pulpit. That is, it should not sound as though the pastor just thought this up after watching some inspiring movie; it should sound as though He has complete respect for God's Word and has spent the last eight hours trying to discern what is being conveyed in the passage he is teaching. The congregation should be allowed their own speech patterns and personality traits, outside of overt sinful behavior, of course. And if an outgoing person in the congregation wants to say *hello* to the newcomer without intruding on their privacy, fine; and if a shy member of the congregation does not want to even make eye contact with them, that's fine. When it comes to the gospel, the convincing should be in the hands of the Holy Spirit. There are well over a hundred ways to convey the gospel, there is no pattern that should be adhered to other than the basic truth that Jesus Christ paid for our sins, taking the penalty for them upon Himself, thereby purchasing us from the slave market of sin. The only response required to achieve eternal salvation is to believe in Him. No believer should think that there is a requirement to raise his hand, walk forward to the front part of the church in a gush of emotion (very few shy people were ever saved if this were a tenet of salvation), to join the church, to be baptized, or to give any public indication whatsoever that believing in Jesus Christ has taken place. Furthermore, no unbeliever should be made to think that he must, right at the moment, dedicate the rest of his life to serving Jesus Christ, as His Lord and Savior. What a person does after salvation is strictly between him and God at that point. If the pastor is teaching solid, correct doctrine, then there is a good chance that a former unbeliever will return. However, progress in the Christian life following salvation is not an immediate transformation, but sometimes a very gradual spiritual growth. Although some people are seemingly transformed overnight, their devotion to God's Word that follows is the key to their true spiritual growth. In short, the unbeliever walking into a church, for whatever reason, should not be struck by the notion that he is in a room full of idiots from which he can hardly wait to extricate himself. Simple rules of courtesy and standing back and allowing God the Holy Spirit to do His job is all that is required from you, the congregation.

This translation of the next verse is a bit tricky, when taken literally:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	For what great nation is there who has a god so near to them as the Lord our God is to us in all things for which we call upon Him?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	For what great nation is there which hath gods nigh unto it,—like Yahweh our god, whensoever we have cried out unto him?
KJV	For what nation <i>is there</i> so great, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all <i>things that we call upon him for</i> ?
NASB	For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him?
NIV	What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?

Young's Lit. Translation For which is the great nation that hath God near unto it, as Jehovah our God, in all we have called unto him?

Surprisingly, there is no definite article with *great nation* (Young is usually very literal about this).

"For what great nation is there that [has] a god near to it, as Y^ehowah our God, whenever we call to him [lit., For what great nation which it (has) God (or, gods) is near as (or, for) Y^ehowah our God in all our calling unto Him]? [Deut. 4:7]

The meaning is clear—the earth is filled with great nations, those with a large number of people, an impressive culture, great education, a strong military—but none of these nations had Y^ehowah God. They had their national gods, all of whom had demons lurking behind in the shadows, but Israel was led by the real thing, the Creator of the Universe. God was close enough to call to Him and He would answer them. This nearness of Y^ehowah is testified to throughout Scripture: "Am I a God Who is near," declares Y^ehowah, "And not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places, so that I do not see him?" declares Y^ehowah. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares Y^ehowah (Jer. 23:23–24). Y^ehowah is near to all who call upon Him. To all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will deliver them (Psalm 145:18–19; see also Psalm 148:14). The tabernacle was the visible presence of God in the camp, as was the pillar of fire and the cloud; however, any one of Israel could call upon Him. **God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea (Psalm 46:1–2). "The God Who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; and He made from one every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' "** (Acts 27:24, 26–28).

"And which great nation which it [has] righteous statutes and judgments in all the law—this [law]—which I am setting before you today? [Deut. 4:8]

These two lines make up somewhat of a stanza, both of them carrying within them the same sentence structure even though this sentence structure does not fit the sentence exactly (which is why they sound stilted when translated literally). For what great nation which it gods near for Y^ehowah our God in all our calling unto Him? And what great nation which it righteous statutes and judgements as all the law—this [law]—which I am setting before you today? I underlined the portions which were the exact same words in the exact same morphology, attempting to give as literal of a translation as possible. God had set up a system of laws which were both fair and just, reflecting His perfect character. Furthermore, within these laws was a complete Christology, revealing the gospel to millions of people, while keeping it a secret from Satan. And besides this, there were laws of sanitation and quarantine which we have studied which would protect the nation Israel from an internal destruction due to disease. There is no nation which had laws of this caliber, laws which could be instituted in any nation today which would result in an improvement over whatever system of law that they have.

It is clearly and continually emphasized throughout God's Word that He and all that He does is righteous: **Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne. Grace and truth go before You (Psalm 89:14). Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live...the sum of Your Word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting (Psalm 119:144, 160).** See also Psalm 97:2 119:172.

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Israel Is Warned Against Practicing Idolatry

"Only, take responsibility to yourself and guard your soul to a great degree [or, exceedingly], so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen, and so that they [the things your eyes have seen] do not turn aside from your heart all the days of your life. Furthermore [lit., and] [each of] you will make them known [the things which your eyes have seen] to your sons and to your sons' sons. [Deut. 4:9]

This verse carries with it the 2nd person masculine singular, Niphal imperative and the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative of the same verb: *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] which means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. The Niphal is used far less than the Qal stem, and it is translated in the Authorized Version *take heed*. Such a rendering has little or no meaning to us today, so I have translated this *take responsibility*. Although the Niphal is generally the passive stem, it is also used to stress the individual effect upon the group.⁵⁵ Each person has solemn and important responsibilities toward their own nation. Even though Y^ehowah is a God of the nation Israel, each individual has a personal responsibility, a personal stake in the righteousness of their nation. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036 Moses continually places upon the Israelites individual responsibility (Deut. 4:23 6:12 8:11, 14, 19). If they, without the Holy spirit, had such a dramatic individual effect upon the nation Israel, imagine our personal impact, seeing that we all have the Holy Spirit?

We tend to, as Christians, get a very distorted view of history and think that history is filled with these great miracles that God continually performed in every generation. Some even think that these miracles continue on today as they did then. This is a total confusion of what the Scripture teaches. There were periods of time when great signs and wonders and miracles occurred—chiefly during the exodus, during the time of Elijah, and during the incarnation of our Lord. I have filled up this verse so that the antecedent for the 3rd masculine plural suffix and verbs would not be confused. Throughout this verse, we are speaking of the things which that generation of Israelites saw with their own eyes. They are not to forget these things, they are not to let these things depart from their heart (their thinking), and they are to pass on this information to their children and grandchildren. **"When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What [about] the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which Y^ehowah commanded you?' Then you will say to you son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt; and Y^ehowah brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Moreover, Y^ehowah showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; and He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers. So Y^ehowah commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear Y^ehowah our God for our good always and for our survival, as today. And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all the this commandment before the face of Y^ehowah our God, just as He commanded us." (Deut. 6:20–25).** The commandment to teach spiritual information to our children carefully and accurately has never been rescinded: **And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).**

Each person listening to Moses and each person who reads God's Word from that generation was charged with a specific responsibility: they all saw the things which Moses recorded in Scripture. It was imperative for them to confirm God's Word. Note how extremely important that is here: these parents who have just witnessed these incredible miracles are to pass this information on down to their children and to their children's children. They were to confirm what was written in God's Word. Moses desired that all that was written down was also witnessed to by the parents to the children. For a few generations, the children would know from God's Word and from the eyewitness account of their own parents of the great things which God did for Israel. The responsibility that a parent has toward his children cannot be overemphasized—particularly in the spiritual realm. When God blesses you with a child, then it is your spiritual obligation to provide that child with a stable home environment, correct and accurate values, and accurate spiritual norms and standards. The parents of the 70's and 80's in particular unleashed a huge number of children on the world without any sort of real training in anything, some males thinking the more women that they impregnated, the greater man that they were. As I have heard it said, "Any male can sire a child; only a man can raise a child." A parent is never encouraged to lay the responsibility for the training of their child on anyone else or upon any institution. One of the rewarding observations of life is to watch

⁵⁵ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; p 2278.

grown children move back in with mom and dad because mom and dad did not bother to raise them correctly in the first place.

Allow me to quote from McGee again: *The greatest undertaking of any nation is the education of the young. Probably the greatest failure of any nation is the failure in education. Look at America today and see the dismal failure we are making in this matter of education. Now I am not blaming the college and the schools. Do you know where the problem lies? It is right at home. God tells these people, "I want you to teach your children and your grandchildren." The failure to teach is the failure of Mom and Dad in the home. This was the great responsibility which God placed upon every father and mother in Israel. Friend, if you are going to bring a child into this world, you are responsible for that child. Our problem today is not foreign affairs or national economy; our problem is the home. God will hold divorced and preoccupied parents responsible for the vagrants of the world today who never knew the instruction and the love and the concern and the communication from parents. What a responsibility parenthood is! God makes this very clear to Israel. When that nation failed, it failed in the home, and God judged it⁵⁶.*

"The [lit., a] day that you stood before Y^ehowah your God in Horeb, in Y^ehowah's saying to me, 'Assemble to Me the people and I will cause them to hear My words, so that they will learn to fear [and respect] Me all the days that they are alive on the earth, and their sons they will teach. [Deut. 4:10]

In v. 9, individual responsibility was stressed, which is always the case in God's plan. *You* in this verse is singular as well. The sons of gen X were gathered at the foot of the mountain as well as gen X. As we have seen, Horeb refers to the general area within which is Mount Sinai. The incident referred to is when the sons of Israel were led by Moses to Mount Sinai. *So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were sounds and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai [was] all in smoke because Y^ehowah descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. And Y^ehowah came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. and Y^ehowah called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up (Ex. 19:16–20).*

A portion of doctrine which is too often glossed over is *fear of God*. *The fear of Y^ehowah is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline (Prov. 1:8)*. We stand judged and condemned before God because of our personal sins, because we are in Adam and bear the penalty for his sin, and because of our old sin nature. God is holy and we are anything but. It is our nature to be in rebellion to God. It is in our nature to glorify and to deify man and to denigrate that which is holy. And because of that nature, we stand condemned before God and, if we had any sense, we would fear Him. When you examine yourself in contrast to His Law, we should recognize our inherent weakness, our inability to keep His perfect Law. **"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."** (Matt. 10:28).

At Mount Sinai, the people received the Law. The Law does not save; the Law, although it is holy, just and good, to us, it is a fearful thing, because it condemns us. The writer of Hebrews contrasts Mount Sinai with Mount Zion, the first which condemns us, the second which accepts us in the Beloved: **For you have not come to [a mountain] that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to a darkness and a gloom and a whirlwind and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which [to] those who heard, begged that no further word should be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." And so terrible was the sight, Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling." But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made**

⁵⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 31.

perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than [the blood] of Abel (Heb. 12:18–24 Ex. 19:12 Deut. 9:19).

Our relationship to God and to His Word is a learned thing. "Assemble the people—the men, and the women and children and the foreigner who is in your area, in order that they may hear and learn and fear Y^ehowah your God and be careful to observe all the words of this Law. And their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear Y^ehowah you God, as long as you live on this land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." (Deut. 31:12–13). "And you will eat in the presence of Y^ehowah your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His Name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and you flock, in order that you may learn to fear Y^ehowah your God always." (Deut. 14:23). "Now it will come to pass when he [a king over Israel] sits on the throne of his kingdom—he will write for himself a copy of this Law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. And it will be with him, and he will read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Y^ehowah his God, by carefully observing all the words of this Law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left; in order that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel." (Deut. 17:18–20). Because of our old sin nature, none of us naturally seeks after God—none of us have a natural fear and respect for Him. Left to our own natures, we are irreverent—we reject God and all that He is. We are enemies of God. Even Israel, whom God took as a child and rescued from Egypt—even these people continually rebelled against Him. It took the scattering of their corpses throughout the desert for their sons and daughters to recognize the power of Y^ehowah their God. "And you will eat in the presence of Y^ehowah your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear Y^ehowah your God always." (Deut. 14:23). "And it [the Law] will be with him [the priest], and he will read it all the days of his life that he may learn to fear Y^ehowah his God by keeping by doing all the words of this Law and these statutes." (Deut. 17:19).

"And you approached and stood at the foot of the mountain and the mountain burned with fire against [possibly, in contrast to] the heart of the heavens—darkness, cloud, and gloom.
[Deut. 4:11]

In the various translations, the Hebrew prepositions are often translated rather *free-form*. That is, regardless of what has come before, the many translators seem to treat prepositions as though they were interchangeable. The one used here is אַל (אֶל) [pronounced *al*] and it means *upon, according to, on account of, beside, in addition to, to towards, together with, against*. Strong's #5920–21 BDB #752 Here, the sense is not just *together with, in addition to*; but *against* in a hostile sense, as the fire (lightning) is contrasted with—it stands against the darkness, the cloud, the thick gloom. Although very real and literal, all of this is symbolic as well. God's perfect Law is brought into a world of darkness and we see but flashes of light to occasionally clarify that which is real in the darkness in which we live. Having lived in Texas for some time, during some storms, with the clouds and the darkness and the impending gloom, you can barely perceive of the shapes of things—however, these storms will be cut through by these flashes of lightning which, for a split second, will illuminate the entire area. The giving of God's Law was presented against this meteorological back drop. Even though the actual number of people who die in storm and tornado related deaths is relatively few, still, there is nothing like a fearsome storm to instill a little fear into one's heart (admittedly, this will be lost on those who live on the West coast who see very little in the way of horrendous storms). When Moses was to meet with God, this was the scene—a tremendous storm, with little or no rain, but thick darkness, gloom, pierced by fiery flashes of lightning. **Now Mount Sinai [was] all in smoke because Y^ehowah descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently** (Ex. 19:18).

"And Y^ehowah spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; a voice of words you [all] kept hearing and a similitude [or, form] you [all] continued not seeing [lit., were not seeing]—only a voice.
[Deut. 4:12]

The word for form is תְּמוּנָה (תְּמוּנָה) [pronounced *t^e-moo-NAWH* or *tem-oo-NAW*] and it means *something portioned out, an undefinable shape, a manifestation, a form, a likeness*. This word is found in Ex. 20:4 Num. 12:8 Deut. 4:12, 15–16, 23, 25 5:8 Job 4:16 Psalm 17:15* and it is used primarily of the manifestation of

our Lord Jesus Christ. Strong's #4327 & 8544 BDB #568 During a time when other nations had gods constructed of wood or metals, the Israelites were taught that God was a Spirit, not a form which could be perceived, described and duplicated. This was not a matter of the Jews just simply having a different culture or being raised differently. Recall that after Moses had been up on Mount Sinai for 30 or 40 days, the Israelites talked Aaron into casting a golden calf idol for them to worship (Ex. 32). Therefore, their natural inclination was toward idolatry, as that is how the other nations behaved, including Egypt, from whence they had just come. So, had the religion of Israel been a natural growth out of their culture, it would not have cast aspersions upon idolatry, but rather embraced it wholeheartedly, and passages like this, which suggest that God is a Spirit, would not be found. One of the key differences between the ancient practice of idolatry is you could see an idol; the Israelites, despite their close contact with God, could not see Him. His omnipresence precludes us *seeing* Him. We can, at best, see a manifestation of Him, e.g., a burning bush or an Angel from Y^ehowah. Because of this and because the fact that Satan is the most beautiful creature to come from the hand of God (if we were allowed to see him, many of us would worship him because of his beauty alone), idolatry is forbidden. Furthermore, we know that **"God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship [Him] in spirit and truth."** (John 4:24). And the entire tenor of Scripture, from the Old Testament to the New Testament is that God cannot be represented by idols made from man's hands, nor is He a man of flesh, but He is a Spirit, omnipresent.

Because of God's perfection and holiness, the children of Israel could not look upon Him. The revealed member of the Godhead would have been Jesus Christ, where even just a small portion of His glory would be a blinding white light. **And all the people perceived the thunder [lit., sounds] and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen, but do not let God speak with us—or we will die." And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God [was]. Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Thus you will say to the sons of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen that I have spoke with you from heaven.' "** (Ex. 20:18–22). The Ten Commandments were given audibly to the children of Israel, the first time. The voice that pierced the darkness, as the lightning, was too much for the children of Israel, and they asked to be shielded from God. One of the few times that they responded in type—they required a mediator—a man to stand between them and God.

Our experience in the Church Age is quite different: **For you have not come to [a mountain] that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which, to those who heard, begged that no further word should be spoken to them. But you have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than [the blood] of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned [them] on earth, much less will we [escape] who turn away from Him who [warns] us from heaven** (Heb. 12:18–19, 22–25).

In the next chapter, Moses will be giving again to the Generation of Promise the Ten Commandments. Whether this was on his mind at this time or not is a matter of speculation. However, God the Holy Spirit sought to remind this second generation of the miraculous way that they received the decalogue. Those listening were teenagers and younger at the time and the content would not have been as meaningful to them as the deliverance of those words directly from God. So Moses reminds them of the fact that God spoke these words directly to them, and they recall that. In his next message, Moses will immediately give them, for the second time, the Ten Commandments. However, this time the Generation of Promise will be more geared toward the content of the commandments than they were forty years earlier. Moses will allow them some time to let the mode of deliverance to which they were witness gel in their souls before he gives them content. We have this same anticipatory style (as Rotherham refers to it) occurring in Deut. 19 and 20 and in Deut. 31 and 32⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ *The Emphasized Bible*, Rotherham, p. 203.

V. 12, again: **And Y^ehowah spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; a voice of words you [all] kept hearing and a similitude [or, form] you [all] continued not seeing [lit., were not seeing]—only a voice.** One of the false theories of the authorship of the Pentateuch is that someone other than Moses wrote these words hundreds of years later. Rotherham asks the question, *would any godly man in the days of Hezekiah or Manasseh have dared to invent these details?*⁵⁸ Critics don't think these things through. At some point in time, there has to be the first reading of the completed Law of Moses. If it doesn't appear until the eighth century BC, purporting to be an eyewitness account of the history centuries previous which has supposedly been with the Jews for all of those centuries, don't you think some people would get a little suspicious? Now if their parents, and their parents' parents, and their parents have attested to the existence and the content of God's Word, then in order for this to be taken as God's Word, the first time this is given a public reading or a public distribution, it will be during the time of those who witnessed the events. The Jews are intelligent people, then as well as now. They wouldn't, as a nation, embrace some book purporting to be God's Word which does not show up in their history until centuries and centuries after the fact. Even the way the Pentateuch is written indicates that the existence of Scripture was an accepted fact in the mind of the author. Moses recorded what God had done and what God said and it was taken immediately as God's Word, as those who read it had observed the historical events which took place. Certainly a cult, which is a minute portion of a population, might cling to some cult publication, e.g., the Book of Mormon, often attributed to the charisma of their founders. However, much more is required for an entire nation to embrace a book as God's Word. We have no historical documentation of any sort to indicate that the Bible was not taken by the Jews as God's Word at any time in their history. Now the literature of the Greeks to the literature of today is filled with author's who have sought to debate the authenticity of Scripture with names such as *The Bible Unmasked, Contradictions found in the Bible*, etc.; generally, very forgettable books authored by those with an ax to grind, but displaying little or no academic vigor, books that die out after a printing or two, only to be replaced by similar books for the next generation of those suffering from negative volition.⁵⁹ However, we do not have a similar type of literature from that day because the authenticity of Scripture was not an issue to them at that time.

"And He declared to you His covenant which He had commanded you to perform [lit., do]—the Ten Commandments [lit., the ten words]—and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. [Deut. 4:13]

Notice that the Ten Commandments are referred to as a covenant. In Deut. 9:9, they are referred to as **the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.** A covenant is a contract between two peoples, but, in this case, it is not a contract for salvation. This covenant, placed between God and His people, falls under the category *do these and live.* As this chapter began: **"And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, in order that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which Y^ehowah, the god of your fathers, is giving you."** (Deut. 4:1). Immediately after reiterating the Ten Commandments to this generation, Moses says, **"You will walk in all the way which Y^ehowah your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong [your] days in the land which you will possess."** (Deut. 5:33). **My sons, do not forget my teachings, but let your heart keep and guard my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. Do not let kindness and truth to leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, so you will find grace and a good reputation in the sight of God and man. Trust in Y^ehowah with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear Y^ehowah and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones. My son, do not let them depart from your sight; keep sound wisdom and discretion, so they will be life to your soul and adornment to your neck and you will walk in your way securely and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden fear, nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes for Y^ehowah will be your confidence and He will keep your foot from being caught** (Prov. 3:1–8, 21–26).

There were two sets of tables of the Law. The first one was written by God when Moses was on Mount Sinai for the first time. **And when He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of**

⁵⁸ *The Emphasized Bible*, Rotherham, p. 203.

⁵⁹ Such books, by the way, should not be banned, burned or even ridiculed; at their very worst, they bolster the negative volition of some unbeliever, and at best, the spur the intellect of a student of God's Word. From the silly *Chariots of the Gods* came the excellent *Crash go the Chariots*. There is nothing wrong about viewing your faith critically; nor, should becoming a Christian preclude thinking.

the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God. Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one side and the other. And the tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets. And it came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain (Ex. 31:18-32:15-16, 19). After the golden calf incident, during which the entire congregation of Israel was almost destroyed by God, Moses returned to the mountain. Now Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered. So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as Y^ehowah had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand. So he was there with Y^ehowah forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments [lit., words] (Ex. 34:1, 4, 28; see also Deut. 10:1-4).

"And Y^ehowah had commanded me at that time to teach [all of] you statutes and judgments, for your doing them in the land where to you over [all] are pass over to possess it. [Deut. 4:14]

Notice that Moses' train of thought is topical, not chronological; this would indicate that not all of the Law is in chronological order. In Deut. 3-4, there were sections which would chronologically, as well as logically, lead us from one point to another: e.g., In Deut. 3:1, we begin with the conquest of Og, king of Bashan, in trans-Jordan area and proceed to the new leadership of Joshua and their camping in the valley of Beth-peor. However, in v. 4, we are dealing with the Law of God and have gone back to Mount Sinai and the giving of the Law. In fact although the Ten Commandments were written down on two different occasions, it is looked on here as one instance. That is because the topic of the Law is what is being covered here and not Israel's failure during the golden calf incident.

In the instance of this verse, God had commanded Moses on several occasions to teach the Law to the Israelites—this was not just one enjoiner. Then Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, and to all the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'This is what Y^ehowah has commanded.' " (Lev. 17:1-2a). Then Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'I am Y^ehowah your God; you will not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you will not walk in their statutes. You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am Y^ehowah your God. So you will keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them. I am Y^ehowah.' " (Lev. 18:1-5). "Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them." (Ex. 21:1). Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of Y^ehowah and all the ordinances and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which Y^ehowah has spoken, we will do!" (Ex. 24:3). Then Moses assembled all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and said to them, "These are the things that Y^ehowah has commanded you to do." (Ex. 35:1). These are the commandments and the ordinances which Y^ehowah commanded to the sons of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan Jericho (Num. 36:13).⁶⁰ Furthermore, God would have commanded Moses on several occasions, not always recorded in Scripture, to teach the sons of Israel His Law, His commands, His statutes and His ordinances.

The next verse is translated in several ways, and should be examined for its correct rendering, and therefore, correct meaning:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Therefore, take good heed to yourselves; since you saw no form of Him on the day the Lord spoke to you on Horeb out of the midst of the fire,
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Ye must take diligent heed, therefore, unto your own souls,—for ye saw no manner of form, on the day Yahweh spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire;
KJV	Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day <i>that</i> the Lord spoke unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:

⁶⁰ A note to myself: surprisingly, I had to go through the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers to collect these passages; none of them were alluded to in the NASB, the NIV nor in the Scofield Reference Bible.

NASB	"So watch yourselves carefully, since you did not see any form on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire,
NIV	You saw no form of any kind the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully,
NRSV	Since you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire, take care and watch yourselves closely.
Owen's Translation	Therefore take heed good to yourselves since you saw no form in the day that Yahweh spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire.
Young's Lit. Translation	and ye have been very watchful of you souls, for ye have not seen any similitude in the day of Jehovah's speaking unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.

V. 15 begins with the 2nd person masculine plural, Niphal perfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] again. *Shâmar* comes from a primitive root word which means to hedge about with thorns; and it means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*; furthermore, in the Niphal—used far less than the Qal stem—it is often translated *take heed*. Since this rendering has little or no meaning to us today, I often translate this [*should*] *take stock, or take responsibility*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036 Although the Niphal is generally the passive stem, it is also used to stress the individual effect upon the group. This is not in the imperative but rather in the perfect tense. In most instances we would translate this *you have taken responsibility, or you have taken stock*; however, v. 16 (and v. 19) begin with *lest*, a conjunction which has the effect of transforming a verb into an imperative. Essentially it means, *you will do this; if you don't, then this will happen*. *Shâmar* is modified by the adverb *m^oôd* (מְאֹד) [pronounced *m^oohd*] and it means *very, exceedingly, extremely, greatly*; it brings greater emphasis to the verb. In order for this to make reasonable English sense, I have translated this *take careful stock*. It would be reasonable to translate this *and diligently watch [or guard] your souls; be very watchful of your souls*.

This is followed by the *lâmed* preposition, which means *to, for, with regards to*. The generally literal *Young's Translation* and *The Emphasized Bible* both reveal that the plural of the word for *soul* is found, as well as the personal pronoun *your*. There will be a moderately complex thought put together here, spanning several verses. What follows is conjunction *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *when, that, for*. It is used as an explicative, an explanatory, a justificatory or a causal conjunction. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. *Kîy* will pull together why and how the sons of Israel are to take personal responsibility or careful stock in their own souls.

This is followed by the 2nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect of the verb *to see*. and the masculine singular construct of *kôl* followed by the masculine singular of *t^emûwnâh* (תְּמוּנָה) [pronounced *t^e-moo-NAWH* or *tem-oo-NAW*] and it means *something portioned out, an undefinable shape, a manifestation, a form, a likeness*.—a word we just examined in v. 12 of this chapter. *Kôl* (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*] means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every*. This word occurs too often for the *Englishman's Concordance* to list its appearances. Without the definite article (as here), *kôl* can mean *all things*. In Gen. 9:11, with the negative, it literally *the nought of all things*; and we generally give that a more updated translation *there is nothing* (see also 2Kings 4:2 13:2). Here, in this passage, as well as in Deut. 8:9 28:55 Prov. 30:30, it means (in conjunction with *t^emûwnâh*) *the likeness of anything*. Strong's #3605 BDB #481 That is, the children of Israel, despite hearing God's voice give them the Ten Commandments, despite the great thunder and lightning, despite the fear this threw into their souls—they saw no discernable form of God that they could copy with something on earth.

Vv. 10–13 described the miraculous speaking of the Ten Commandments directly from God to the people. This was delivered so that every Israelite, including the youth present at that time, would hear God's Word. With v. 14, Moses then resumes with the other ordinances and statutes which he received directly from God, which he recorded and taught to the people later (Ex. 21–23).

"And you [all] [should] take careful stock with regard to your souls—because you [all] did not see any form [or, the likeness of anything] in the day of Y^ehowah's speaking to you in Horeb out of the midst of the lightning [lit., fire]— [Deut. 4:15]

When God gave the Ten Commandments orally to the sons of Israel, the people heard His words and could see the great meteorological disturbances, but there was no form for them to discern. **And all the people perceived**

the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw, they trembled, and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die." And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you will not sin." So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God [was] (Ex. 20:18–21).

One of the most interesting aspects of human history is that we have all of these busts and statues of various heroes and kings, most notably Cæsar, and descriptions of the physical appearance of many historical figures, including Paul (although it may be spurious); however, nowhere do we have a physical description or a painting or a picture of Jesus Christ as done by a person from the first century. The man who turned the world upside down, whose personal disciples continued for many decades after His ascension—none of them chose to record what He looked like. All we know is that He did have beard, he was very strong (which would include the physical build to accompany His human physical strength) and that he was very nondescript in a manner of speaking—that is, He could blend in with a crowd and not be discerned by His enemies. The paintings and pictures we see are an artists interpretation of our Lord, done long after His incarnation. This is because He is God and God does not desire for us to have any graven images made to Him. Therefore, we would not expect to have any sort of a physical description of Jesus Christ. That picture of Jesus that you have hanging in your hallway with the long hair—this did not come out of the first or even the second century. It is no accident that we do not know what Jesus looked like. God did not give us a picture of Jesus Christ intentionally. Nor will this picture of yours aide you in the worship of Him any more than idols would help the Israelite in their worship of Y^ehowah. It is God's Word in your heart, not a picture on the wall, which will aide you in your worship of Jesus Christ.

"So that you avoid acting corruptly [or, so that you do not cause yourselves to fall into decay; or, so that you do not become spiritually corrupt] and make [or, construct] for yourself a sculpted image [or, a graven image], a form [or, a similitude] of any figure, a likeness of male or a female, [Deut. 4:16]

V. 16 begins with the averting or deprecating conjunction *pen* (פֶּן) [pronounced *pen*], unfortunately best translated with the Old English *lest*. I tend to prefer the more modern *so that* + a negative. It could also be translated *for the aversion of, for the avoidance of, so that [you] avoid, in order to prevent*. Strong's 6435 BDB #814. This is followed by the Hiphil imperfect of *shâchath* (שָׁחַת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*], which means *to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt*. In the Hiphil, it means to cause themselves to fall into spiritual corruption. Strong's #7843 BDB #1007. Here, they are warned not to fall into idolatry, a topic which we have covered. It is important to see the analogy to today's world. The Hebrews were a very demonstrative people and they would do the same things that we do today, but in a much more demonstrative way. When they fell into spiritual corruption, they would follow other religions by constructing physical idols made out of stone and wood to represent various gods, even to represent the God Who brought them out of Egypt. It was the fathers of those listening who had become particularly spiritually corrupt (Deut. 9:12) and those listening, as well as their progeny, would also become corrupt (Deut. 31:29).

For us, this is parallel to falling into apostasy. This does not mean that we start worshiping a wood, stone or metal semblance of God—this means that we worship something other than the True God of the Universe. This can be an extremely subtle change in *modus operandi*; the changing of churches to find one which has a better babysitting service or a group for the young unmarried 's or for the new couples or whatever. The doctrine is taken as a part of the involvement with the church, even though it may stand in direct opposition to God's grace and God's plan. There may be demon infiltration of tongues and false signs and lying wonders, but the people are so nice and so loving, that you cannot help but believe them. You may have fallen for the very subtle differences of infused grace as opposed to imputed grace, in order to find a church with more convenient times or a more solemn worship service and ritual execution. These are all idolatry. You should pursue the truth of God's Word, regardless of the kind of church that provides it. It doesn't matter if the pastor is Black, and entire congregation is Black, and you are oriental and there is not an oriental with ten miles of the church—if the pastor is teaching God's Word, you should be there. It doesn't matter if the only way you can listen to God's Word is to sit in a small room with a speaker with your children in the back of the church because there are no child care facilities—if the pastor is teaching carefully God's Word, that is where you should be. It doesn't matter whether this seems to be

the most unfriendly church that you have ever gone to and nobody has spoken to you for two months—if the pastor is teaching God's Word, you should go there.

Okay, how do you know? Let me give you a few pointers on how to determine whether or not you are in a church teaching God's Word: (2) The pastor frequently teaches God's Word verse by verse, one right after another, not jumping from book to book or passage to passage, but generally picking a book and moving right through it verse by verse. (3) The pastor treats God's Word with respect. He gives every indication that he believes the Bible to be the very words of God as recorded by man, and his sermons reflect careful study and an intense desire to determine what the meaning of each passage is. (4) The pastor teaches in the literal context of the verse; that is, the pastor does not jump around from passage to passage on a regular basis, supporting his views by quoting a verse here or there. Doctrines must be taught by moving throughout God's Word; however, the bulk of a pastor's teaching should be verse by verse, in context. (5) Whereas, there might be giving, singing, various groups and various activities, and some ritual—the focus and the thrust of the church in both emphasis and time is on God's Word. Teaching God's Word is primary; everything else is secondary. (6) The pastor should not—even if he counsels you—try to run your life. No deacon and no other person in the church who apparently has some authorization of the church, should try to run your life. Now there are forms of behavior which are sinful which should not be known to the other members of the congregation. That is, you are not to come into a church and parade your sinfulness in front of everyone else. This may get you disbarred from the church. No one is trying to run your life in this situation; they are just protecting the other members of the flock who might become confused thinking that the church condones certain kinds of behavior which it does not. If you are the least confused about some aspect of your personal life and its validity in the Christian life, keep it private—do not parade it in front of the congregation, and a Bible-teaching church will not try to personally correct your life for you. Many pastors are confused in this area—they think that the less sin there is in the world, the better everything is; and if they can, by any means, reduce the amount of sin in the world, then they have done good. God is glorified when you choose God's ways over yours—God is not glorified because you have been bullied into some course of action by someone else. (7) A Bible-teaching church should exalt Jesus Christ as the God-man, as our only means of salvation; and that by believing in Him, we are saved forever, despite anything which has occurred in our lives before and after our moment of salvation. When I became interested in the things of God, I believed in Jesus Christ a dozen times or more, to make certain it took. I did not want to leave anything to chance. It took the first time that I believed in Him and placed my trust in Jesus Christ to deliver my soul. Now, you will note the things which I left out: (1) if your church is a vibrant, growing church; (2) if your pastor is on television or on the radio; (3) if there are good child care facilities; (4) your pastor gives lip service to the Word of God, although he never really teaches much of it. It is important that we separate what is important from what is not.

At the time that I believed in Jesus Christ, I was faced with a strong intellectual curiosity in what I had just done. I do not recall if I was saved first and then started exploring the options or whether I explored the various options and then became saved. I read materials given me by several cults, I listened to various speakers, I ordered tapes, I listened to shows on Christian radio programs. To a new Christian, or to someone who is just beginning, it is very difficult to make a correct choice. I do not think that I was predisposed and tried to filter through all of the material without making a choice based upon human viewpoint. My feeling was that if, for instance, the Children of God cult or the Jehovah's Witness cult were the only true teachers of God's Word, then I should align myself with them. It is a difficult determination to make. Cultic literature generally all sounds reasonable (with a few notable exceptions)—they have their doctrines which they support with passages from God's Word. However, I began listening to the tapes of R.B. Thieme, Jr. (whom I did not like as a person), to the radio program of J. Vernon McGee, and to a radio program by Dr. Duane Spencer. Insofar as I was aware, I did not know of a connection between any of these three people (I later found out that Thieme was acquainted with McGee). However, the basic doctrines of these men were very similar; Thieme and McGee both taught verse by verse through God's Word—and I thought that they must be onto something, if they agree in the most important points of doctrine, they believe that the Bible is God's Word and if they came upon these conclusions independently. I continued to read literature put out by various cults and studied the pros and cons of it, and eventually placed my time under the ministry of R.B. Thieme for my spiritual growth. I believe that God led me to that point. Of all the people that I knew and all of the people that I listened to, I personally liked Thieme about the least—however, he was teaching God's Word and he did eventually grow on me. For awhile, this meant that the bulk of my spiritual growth came out of a tape box and not in the church that I attended (which held to the same basic

important doctrines which I then did, but did not spend nearly enough time teaching God's Word). This is where I also discovered the the majority of those believers who are saved have no interest in God's Word—a fact which totally took me by surprise; but that's another story. Back to our passage:

"A likeness of any beast which [is] in the earth, a likeness of any winged creature which flies in the heavens; [Deut. 4:17]

The only problem in teaching carefully verse by verse, is that sometimes the verses by themselves mean very little. We will need to look at this passage as one contiguous whole (which we will do) and examine the different words which we find here that are variously translated as *form*, *similitude*, *likeness*, *graven image*, etc. It is foolish that there is an animal or a bird whose image should be taken to worship as though that image represents God. However, what is also ridiculous is to assume that you can create or perceive of God as being in your own image.

"A likeness of any creeping thing in [or, against] the ground, a likeness of any fish which [is] in the waters underneath with respect to the earth; [Deut. 4:18]

Below the earth does not refer to underground streams and systems of water, but to set those who live in the water in contrast with those which live upon the ground, contrasted those the birds who live in the heavens, contrasted with animals who live upon the ground.

Culture has changed over the past several centuries, as these verses do indicate. Although there are cultures who build various physical things that they worship, our idolatry today in most cultures is one of the soul. However, statues of the one-time virgin Mary, pictures of our Lord and similar items, when made a part of one's worship are herein strictly forbidden.

There are certain words that are found in here which mean *likeness*, *similitude*, *form*. They are:

Words for Idols	
Hebrew Word	Meaning
T ^e mûwnâh (תְּמוּנָה) [pronounced t ^e -moo-NAWH or tem-oo-NAW] Strong's #4327 & 8544 BDB #568 Deut. 4:12, 15–17	It means <i>something portioned out, an undefinable shape, a manifestation, a form, a likeness</i> . This word is found in Ex. 20:4 Num. 12:8 Deut. 4:12, 15–16, 23, 25 5:8 Job 4:16 Psalm 17:15* and it is used primarily of the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Peçel (פֶּעֶל) [pronounced PEH-cell] Strong's #6459 BDB #820	Peçel comes from a verb which means to <i>hew into a shape, graven image, sculpted image</i> . Ex. 20:4 Deut. 4:16, 23 Judges 18:20 Habak. 2:18
Çemel (צֶמֶל) [pronounced SEH-mel] Strong's #5566 BDB #702	Çemel is taken from a root that means <i>to resemble</i> and it means <i>image, statue, a figure of anything, an idol-image</i> . Found in Deut. 4:16 2Chron. 33:7, 15 Ezek. 8:3, 5.*
Tabnîyth (תַּבְנִיט) [pronounced ta ^b vb ^e -NEETH] Strong's #8403 BDB #125	This word means <i>model, likeness, resemblance, pattern, figure</i> . Ex. 25:9 Deut. 4:16–18 1Chron. 28:11 Ezek. 10:8

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Now let's examine these last few verses as a contiguous whole in a table:

In the English	In the Hebrew
"And you [all] [should] take careful stock with regard to your souls—because you [all] did not see any form	The masculine singular of t ^e mûwnâh (תִּמְוֹנָה) [pronounced t ^e -moo-NAWH or tem-oo-NAW]. Kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kole] means <i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i> . Without the definite article (as here), kôl can mean <i>all things</i> . In Gen. 9:11, with the negative, it literally <i>the nought of all things</i> ; and we generally give that a more updated translation <i>there is nothing</i> (see also 2Kings 4:2 13:2). Here, in this passage, as well as in Deut. 8:9 28:55 Prov. 30:30, it means (in conjunction with t ^e mûwnâh) <i>the likeness of anything</i> . Strong's #3605 BDB #481
in the day of Y ^e howah's speaking to you in Horeb out of the midst of the lightning [lit., fire]—so that you avoid acting corruptly [or, so that you do not cause yourselves to fall into decay; or, so that you do not become spiritually corrupt] and make [or, construct] for yourself a sculpted image [or a graven image],	No definite article; peçel (פֶּסֶל) [pronounced PEH-cell]
a form of	The construct of t ^e mûwnâh (תִּמְוֹנָה) [pronounced t ^e -moo-NAWH or tem-oo-NAW]
any statue	Çemel (צֶמֶל) [pronounced SEH-mel]
a likeness of male or female,	Tabnîyth (תַּבְּנִיִּת) [pronounced ta-b ^e -NEETH]
a likeness	Tabnîyth (תַּבְּנִיִּת) [pronounced ta-b ^e -NEETH]
of any beast which [is] in [lit. against]	Bêyth preposition b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b'] and it denotes proximity. It is translated <i>in, among, into, against, with, at, through</i> . BDB #88
the ⁶¹ earth,	ʿErets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets] means <i>earth (all or a portion), land</i> . Strong's #776 BDB #75
a likeness	Tabnîyth (תַּבְּנִיִּת) [pronounced ta-b ^e -NEETH]
of any winged creature which flies in the heavens,	Bêyth preposition b ^e (בְּ) translated <i>in, among, into, against, with, at, through</i> . BDB #88
a likeness of any creeping thing in [or, against]	Bêyth preposition b ^e (בְּ) translated <i>in, among, into, against, with, at, through</i> . BDB #88
the ground,	ʿĂdâmâh (אֲדָמָה) [pronounced uh-daw-MAWH] and it means <i>ground, soil, tillable earth, surface of the earth</i> . Strong's #127 BDB #9

⁶¹ My two reference books note a definite article here and with *heavens*, but I do not see it.

In the English	In the Hebrew
a likeness of any fish which [is] in the waters underneath with respect to the earth ;	Tabnîyth (תַּבְּנִיִּת) [pronounced <i>ta-b^e-NEETH</i>], bēyth preposition b ^e (בְּ), ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>] means <i>earth (all or a portion), land</i> . Strong's #776 BDB #75

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"And you [all] [should] take careful stock with regard to your souls—because you [all] did not see any form [or, the likeness of anything] in the day of Y^ehowah's speaking to you in Horeb out of the midst of the lightning [lit., fire]—so that you avoid acting corruptly [or, so that you do not cause yourselves to fall into decay; or, so that you do not become spiritually corrupt] and make [or, construct] for yourself a graven image, a form [or, a similitude] of any figure, a likeness of male or a female, a likeness of any winged bird which flies in the heavens, a likeness of any beast which [is] on the earth, a likeness of any winged creature which flies in the heavens; a likeness of any creeping thing in [or, against] the ground, a likeness of any fish which [is] in the waters underneath with respect to the earth." (Deut. 4:15–18).

Charlie Clough comments: *Here is the biblical repudiation of every non-Israelite religion. It is not a matter of bigotry; it is a matter of truth. Every religion outside of Israel is formed by human construction built upon depravity. Israel's religion alone is of divine construction built upon grace. Neither Abraham nor his descendants had superior insight to their neighbors; rather, they were chosen by God, through no merit of their own, to be the mediating nation between God and man. All objections to this religious exclusivism, therefore, rest upon ignorance of history, rebellion against God's character, and/or a misunderstanding of gracious election*⁶².

"And [you all should take careful stock with regard to your souls] so that you do not lift up your eyes towards the heavens, and, having seen [lit., and you have seen] the sun and the moon and the stars and all the host of the heavens that [lit., and] you are compelled [or, drawn away] and [caused to] worship them and serve them which Y^ehowah your God has apportioned to all the peoples under the whole heavens. [Deut. 4:19]

The conjunction *lest* (translated here, *so that...not*) ties this verse to the protosis of v. 15. *Lift up* is in the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect—Moses is speaking to each individual. I have translated *having seen* like an imperfect participle, but it is in the Qal perfect. Owen's has a similar rendering: *and when you see*. *Drawn away* is the 2nd masculine singular, Niphal perfect of nādach (נָדַח) [pronounced *naw-DAHKH*], which means *banish, cast away, cast down, compel, draw away*. The Niphal is the passive stem and it means specifically *to compel, to be drawn away*. The Niphal perfect is also found in Deut. 19:5 30:17 Job 6:13 Jer. 40:12 43:5 49:5 (*listing of all Niphal perf) This same word is found in the Hiphil in Deut. 13:5, 10, where it speaks of a false prophet drawing away, or seducing or compelling the people to worship the creature rather than the Creator. Strong's #5080 BDB #623. This is all followed by the Hithpael (reflexive intensive) perfect of *worship*. *Serve* is the simple Qal perfect. The heavens and all that is in them has been divided up or apportioned to or allotted to all of the peoples under the heavens. What is meant here is that every person under the heavens has the stars and the sun and moon; what is implied here is that some of them worship these things. What the Jews have is very special—they have the One Who created all of these things—the Lord God given primarily to them. They are not to worship things given just to anyone.

⁶² Charles A. Clough, *Dawn of the Kingdom*, ©1974, p. 27.

It does not matter how small or how grand the object is—we are to worship the Creator, not the creation. When speaking of the degenerate heathen, Paul wrote: **Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever. Amen** (Rom. 1:22–25). The stars and the heavens are all creations of Jesus Christ, no more or no less so than the animals on this earth. For that reason, they are not to be worshiped either. During the Age of Israel, there was not a lot of religious tolerance taught. **"If there is found in your midst in any of your towns, which Y^ehowah your God is giving you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the sight of Y^ehowah your God by transgressing His covenant, and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or, the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, which I have not commanded, and if it is told you and you have heard of it, then you will inquire thoroughly. And listen carefully [lit., behold], if it is true and the thing [is] certain that this detestable thing has been done in Isreal, then you will bring out that man or that woman who has done this evil deed, to your gates and, that man or that woman, you will stone them to death."** (Deut. 17:1–5).

There are reasons for the existence of the stars, the sun and the moon beyond their ascetic value. **Then God said, "Let there be light in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from night, and let them be for signs, and season, and for days and years."** (Gen. 1:14). It is by these heavenly bodies that we have developed our calendar; by which we calculate time; and with which we determine when we should plant and reap.

What has been covered in the previous four verses is to preclude all forms of idolatry popular during that period of time. There are some denominations which are known for attempting to make Christian doctrine palatable to the heathen by incorporating some of the heathen practices into their doctrine. God never directs us to water down His truth. It would have been easy to assume a few of the idolatrous practices of that day, leaving out those things we would deem inappropriate (such as child sacrifice), and thereby make God's Word more palatable to the Jews and to the surrounding heathen. Vv. 16–19, however, forbids the practice of any sort of idolatry, citing every kind of idolatry extant at that time and specifically prohibiting the same. These verses contain *a complete and comprehensive survey of the various forms of idolatrous and corrupt worship practised by the surrounding Oriental nations, and as particularly and successively forbidding them every one.*⁶³ God is not a religious liberal. All roads do not lead to Rome and all religions are not valid pathways to God⁶⁴.

"And you Y^ehowah has taken and he is bringing you out from the iron furnace, out from Egypt, to be to Him for a people, an inheritance, as this day. [Deut. 4:20]

The iron furnace is a reference to the heat of the desert through which they traveled and to Egypt (1Kings 8:51 Jer. 11:4). The iron furnace was used to separate the precious metal from the dross, or the metal from its impurities. One of the more common methods employed to extract silver from ore is cupellation. Silver ores and lead or lead ores are melted together in a furnace, resulting in a lead-silver alloy. The lead combines with the oxygen in the air to form a molten lead-oxide, which draws out the other metal impurities which are also oxidized. This lead-oxide is skimmed away or poured off, leaving silver, platinum and or gold behind. The lead-oxide and the various impurities with it which are removed are called dross. **And the word of Y^ehowah came to me, saying, "Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross [metal impurities] to Me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are the dross of silver. Therefore," thus says Y^ehowah God, "Because all of you have become dross, therefore, behold, I am going to gather you into the midst of Jerusalem, as they gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into the furnace to blow fire on it in order to melt it, so will I gather you in My anger and in My wrath, and I will lay you and melt you. And I will gather you and blow on your with the fire of My wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it. As silver is melted in the furnace, so you will be melted in the midst of it; and you will know that I, Y^ehowah, have poured out My wrath on you."** (Ezek. 22:17–22). The two principle

⁶³ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 278.

⁶⁴ And to head off the criminally insane; no, this does not mean that we should persecute those who do not hold to true Christian doctrine, but embrace something substantially less, nor should we outlaw their religion. What was standard operating procedure under the economy of Israel has changed somewhat in the Church Age.

generations of the exodus, gen X and the Generation of Promise, had to be smelted in the iron furnace in order to remove the dross—generation X—and leave behind the silver and precious metal—the Generation of Promise. The iron furnace speaks of testing, discipline, and purification, resulting in strengthening.

At the judgment of our works, God exposes our works to a similar process. Every Christian has spend much of his lifetime engaged in activity, some of which is divine good and some of which is worthless. God has to separate these things. **For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet, so as through fire** (1Cor. 3:11–15). What is described here is a much simpler process than cupellation described above. Fire is set to our works and what burns is wood, hay and stubble, and what remains is silver, gold and precious stones. That is the symbolic explanation. The differentiation of our works is just as simple; that which we have done while filled with the Holy Spirit will be preserved and that which we have done when controlled by our old sin nature will be burned. It is not a matter of the particular acts; two people can give \$20 to a church—one has this act burned and the other has this act preserved to be rewarded in eternity. The key is whether it was done in the Spirit or in the flesh. **"For Y^{ehowah} your God is a consuming fire."** (Deut. 4:20a).

"And Y^{ehowah} had shown Himself angry with me because of your words and He swore to my not crossing over the Jordan, and to my [not] entering the good land which Y^{ehowah} your God is giving to you—an inheritance. [Deut. 4:21]

Moses never confesses his own sin directly to the generation of promise, but places the responsibility with them. He is fully cognizant of what he did wrong; however, telling them that would do them no good. Only Moses can benefit by knowing what he did was wrong (and we do later when we study God's Word). They can do something about their complaining and bitching and moaning. That is an individual choice over which they have control. The principle here is privacy—the sins of Moses are private, at least temporarily, from this particular generation. After he has died and the Torah has been distributed, they will know more as to what exactly happened (although even then they will not fully comprehend as we do).

"For I am dying in this land; I am not crossing over the Jordan, and you [all] are crossing over and you will possess this good land. [Deut. 4:22]

Before Moses dies, he will be allowed to see this land, but he will not set foot in it.

"[So] you [all] [should] take careful stock with regard to yourselves—so that you do not forget the covenant of Y^{ehowah} your God, which He has made with you [so that you do not] [lit., and] construct for a sculpted image, a form of anything which [possibly, as] Y^{ehowah} your God has commanded [or, mandated] you. [Deut. 4:23]

Occasionally, it takes two sources to call my attention to something. Bullinger makes reference to the last verb of this sentence meaning *forbid* as well as *command*; however, he really gives no justification for this. Nevertheless, several translations go with this:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...which the Lord your God has forbidden you.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...the which Yahweh thy God hath forbidden thee;
KJV	...which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.
NASB	...against which the LORD your God has commanded you.
NIV	...the LORD your God has forbidden.
NRSV	...that the LORD your God has forbidden you.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...concerning which Jehovah thy God hath charged thee:

The verb in question is *tsâwâh* (תָּצַו) [pronounced *tsaw-WAW*] and BDB lists its meanings as *to lay charge upon, give charge to, charge command, order*. The latter two are probably the most consistently used. Strong's #6680 BDB #845. Other than the precedent of the KJV, there is not a lot of reason to use the rendering *forbidden*, other than it seems to sound better. However, the footnote on this verse in *The Emphasized Bible*, Rotherham, p. 203, mention is made of a special class of variant readings to which Dr. C.D. Ginsburg subscribes—he suggests that *as* here is the better reading, as opposed to *which*. The verse then reads "[So] you [all] [should] take careful stock with regard to yourselves—so that you do not forget the covenant of Y^ehowah your God, which He has made with you, and construct for a sculpted image, a form of anything, as Y^ehowah your God has mandated you." *Constructing a sculpted image* is the result of forgetting the covenant of Jehovah their God. *Which He made with you* is tied directly to *as Y^ehowah your God has mandated you*. The command or mandate of God was simply the forbidding of idolatry. For a person quickly reading through this passage, *forbidden* works fine; however, the correct ending to this verse is *as Y^ehowah your God has commanded you*.

We face the exact same forces every day. Satan and his demon legions are constantly drawing us away from God and from His Word into human viewpoint and the doctrine of demons. It is only through a dose of doctrine every day that we are able to withstand his pull. This is not a game to Satan—he believes that his very eternal life depends upon what he does and he does not intend to allow anyone to stand in his way. You are expendable and once you have served your purpose, you will be abandoned, as well as under divine discipline. It is much easier to determine what is right and to do that. The only difference between this verse and the draw of religion today is that then, the peoples of the earth were more demonstrative (at least those with whom the Jews had contact). Therefore, they depended upon sculpted images which represented deities. The things we worship do not necessarily need to be constructed, as many of us just worship ourselves.

"For Y^ehowah your God is a consuming fire; a jealous God. [Deut. 4:24]

A consuming fire is how God appeared to the Israelites when He spoke with Moses: *And to the eyes of the sons of Israel, the appearance of the glory of Y^ehowah was like a consuming fire on the mountain top* (Ex. 24:37). God, when He leads Israel and destroys the heathen before them, it will be as a consuming fire: *"Know therefore today that it is Y^ehowah your God who is crossing over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you, so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as Y^ehowah has spoken to you."* (Deut. 9:3). It is because of God's power and ability to destroy those whom He chooses that our worship should be filled with reverence and awe: *Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire* (Heb. 12:29). *"Sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling has seized the godless. Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?"* (Isa. 33:14). God being identified with fire identifies Him with judgment: *For after all, it is just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you and relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power* (2Thess. 1:6–9).

Just as jealousy would burn the soul of any man in love with an unfaithful woman, God's soul burns in jealousy when Israel chases after other gods (I am speaking anthropomorphically). *"You will not follow after other gods—any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for Y^ehowah your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise, the anger of Y^ehowah your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth."* (Deut. 6:14–15).

"When you have [lit., sire or beget] sons and grandchildren [lit., sons' sons], and you [all] have become old [possibly, fallen asleep] in the land and you have caused yourselves to become corrupt [or, you have caused yourselves to become spiritually corrupted] and have made a sculpted image, a form of anything and have done the evil thing in the eyes of Y^ehowah to provoke Him to anger; [Deut. 4:25]

Become old is the word *yâshên* (יָשַׁן) [pronounced *yaw-SHANE*] and, in the Kal and the Piel, it means *to sleep* (Gen. 2:21 Judges 16:19 Job 3:13 Jer. 51:39). The adjective (spelled the same as the vocabulary form of the verb) also pertains to *sleeping* (1Sam. 26:7 1Kings 3:20). However, in the Niphal, this word means *old, remains long, being stationary or inactive*. Strong's #3462 BDB 445.

Here we again have the word *shâchath* (שָׁחַת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*], which means *to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt*. Here, in the Hiphil perfect, it means to have caused themselves to fall into spiritual corruption. Strong's #7843 BDB #1007. Moses knows that in the future, the Israelites would fall into spiritual decay through idolatry. Some parents have the foolish idea that if their children are going to do certain things no matter what, then they are wasting their breath to tell them not to. For instance, for some parents, it is a given that a child at the age of 18 will go out and experiment with alcohol with his friends, so, no matter what they say, he is going to do that anyway. Therefore, they offer little or no resistance. This may carry over into drug usage, sexual experimentation, driving like a complete idiot in their new car. Moses knows that these people will fall into idolatry, but he does not stop telling them what is right and what is wrong. I am speaking to people who will hear these words and totally ignore them. Does this mean that I should not teach God's Word? Absolutely not! I have a responsibility, Moses had a responsibility, and all parents have a responsibility. There are times that we may not be able to do anything about the behavior of our children—still, this does not let us off the hook as parents to provide them with the best counseling, the best parenting and the best discipline that we are capable of. This is application that you, as an individual, would not have noticed without a teacher pointing it out to you. Moses will now point out what the consequences are:

Deuteronomy 1	Deuteronomy 2	Deuteronomy 3	Deuteronomy 4	Deuteronomy 5
Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10
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Moses Again Predicts the Scattering of Israel and the Faithfulness of Y^ehowah

"I have been caused the heavens and earth to testify against you this day: that [lit., and] you, in perishing, will perish quickly from upon the land [lit., earth] which you are crossing over the Jordan there to possess it. You will be caused not to lengthen days upon it but, in being destroyed, you will be destroyed. [Deut. 4:26]

There are the doublings of two verbs in this verse, making it particularly powerful. Moses tells them that they will perish and that they will be destroyed. To begin this verse, we have the Qal infinitive absolute and the Qal imperfect of *ʾâvad* (אָוַד) [pronounced *aw^b-VAHD*] which means *to perish* (Lev. 26:38 Esther 4:16 Joel 1:11) Strong's #6 BDB #1 The final verbs of this verse are the Niphal infinitive absolute and the Niphal imperfect of *shâmad* (שָׁחַד) [pronounced *shaw-MAHD*] and it means *to be exterminated, to be destroyed*. Strong's #8045 BDB #1029. The word translated *earth* and then *land* are the exact same word; however, a consistent translation in this verse would sound funny to us. When the Jews will turn to the religion of those around them, God will remove them from the land.

There were several occasions when Moses called upon heaven and earth to bear witness to the free will of the Israelites. **"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants."** (Deut. 30:19). **"Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death, you will become corrupt and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of Y^ehowah, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands."** (Deut. 31:28–29). The witness of the heavens and the earth was not the witness of some land and a great sky, but this was the witness of man and of angels. All of mankind were called to witness against the Israelites as they have access to God's Word and to these words in particular; all of angelic creation was assembled to observe Israel and the choices that she made.

As has been pointed out in this context, one of the things which will lead the sons of Israel astray will be false religion. "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of Y^ehowah will be kindled against you, and He will quickly destroy you." (Deut. 7:4). "And it will come to pass if you ever forget Y^ehowah your God, and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. Like the nations that Y^ehowah makes to perish before you, so you will perish; because you would not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God." (Deut. 8:19–20).

"And Y^ehowah will scatter you among [or, in] the peoples—and you [all] will have been left [or, allowed to remain] men of counting [less literally, few in number]—among [or, in] the nations, where Y^ehowah drives you; [Deut. 4:27]

I believe the correct rendering of this verse allows us a brief aside. The *men of counting* (indicating a small population) refers to those who remain in the land, not to those who are *among the nations*. This verse begins with Y^ehowah scattering the Jews among the peoples, mentions that there will be only a countable number left in the land, and resumes with the scattering in the nations. That is, *few in number* does not pertain to the number of Israelites found in the nations to but to the number of Israelites who remain in the land God gave them.

God will, on several occasions, drive the Jews out of the land, for a variety of reasons, one of which is idolatry. This is marvelous to see this particular prophecy given prior even to their entrance into the Land of Promise. "Moreover, Y^ehowah will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you will serve other gods, [gods of] wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. And among those nations you will find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there Y^ehowah will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul." (Deut. 28:64–65) "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and you have delivered them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near; if they take thought in the land where they have been taken captive, and change their minds and make supplication to You in the land of those who have taken them captive, saying 'We have sinned and have committed iniquity; we have acted wickedly.' If you return to You will all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who have taken them captive, and pray to You toward their land which You have given to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for Your name, then hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven, Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You and all their transgressions which they have committed against You, and make them [objects of] compassion before those who have taken them captive, that they may have compassion on them—for they are Your people and Your inheritance which You have brought forth from Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace." (1Kings 8:46–51; see also Lev. 26:27–35 Deut. 29:14–29 2Kings 17:5–20 Psalm 106:24–27 Micah 1:16). As our nation becomes more corrupt, we may even find ourselves invaded and scattered. With God's truth comes a great deal of responsibility.

You may point out that the Jews are in the land now. You are mistaken; a very small percentage of the population of Jews are in the land and they face continual bloodshed and difficulty; and their land is no longer a land flowing with milk and honey. When God brings them back into the land, then, after seven years, we will see great peace and prosperity. What we have there is a population of Jews just as we have such a population found in almost every nation under the heavens. There will be no peace for them in that land and there will be no prosperity in that land. Don't misunderstand me—we are not to add to their difficulties, unless we desire severe discipline from God. Even though the Age of Israel has been suspended for a time, God will still discipline us for anti-Semitism.

"And there you will serve [other] gods, work of men's hands—wood and stone that neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. [Deut. 4:28]

These things are but symbols, standing for, at best, nothing, and, at worst, demon personalities. They have no life of their own. Why should the nations say, "Where, now, is their God?" But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. Their idols are silver and gold—the work of man's hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak; they have eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but they cannot hear; they have noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but they cannot feel; they have feet, but they cannot walk. They cannot make

a sound with their throat. Those who make them will become like them, everyone who trusts in them (Psalm 115:2–8).

This curse is promised throughout these messages of Moses. "Y^ehowah will bring you and your king, whom you will set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you will serve other gods, wood and stone." (Deut. 28:36). "So I will hurl you out of this land into the land which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers; and there you will serve other gods day and night, for I will grant you no grace." (Jer. 16:13; see also Deut. 28:64 29:17). What they would do would be no worse than a person with a statue of Mary or a statue of our Lord. It is equivalent to following other faiths today, apart from the faith delivered to us by Jesus Christ.

"And you will seek from there Y^ehowah your God and you will find him if you seek after him with all your heart and with all your soul. [Deut. 4:29]

God is not attached to the land of Israel, not even during that time. God gave that particular piece of real estate to the Israelites, but He remained the God of all mankind, the God of Creation. He was working through the Jews. Even when the Jews were scattered, God would not be far removed from them. He is no further away than their own positive volition: "So it will come to pass when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call to mind in all nations where Y^ehowah your God has banished you, and you return to Y^ehowah your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then Y^ehowah your God will restore you from captivity and He will have compassion upon you, and He will gather you against from all the peoples where Y^ehowah your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there Y^ehowah your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. And Y^ehowah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you will possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers." (Deut. 30:1–5).

This applies just as well to the Gentile of any age and to the Jews of the Church Age: "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one blood every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined appointed times and boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' " (Act. 17:24–28). Even though Paul spoke this to a crowd of Gentiles, this now also applies to the Jew, scattered throughout the world in various nations, maintaining their racial identity. During their exile in the Jewish Age, there will be some supergrace heroes who will call upon God and He will lead them back into the land.

This next point is rather difficult to make. We are in the angelic conflict and there have been several programs which God has run. During the Age of Israel, the Israelites were given the Law—God's perfect Law—by which they could regulate their lives. Certain generations had seen incredible miracles from the hand of God. However, Israel failed again and again. This is because in us dwells no good thing. Our degeneracy and our sinfulness is far beyond what most of us realize. The Israelites did not have the Holy Spirit to guide them—the Holy Spirit was given to a very small percentage of believers during the Age of Israel—and this is why they continually failed as a nation. God came to Israel with His Law and later with His Son, and Israel rejected both. In the Church Age, we have two tremendous advantages—we have the complete revelation of God to man and we can, in any instant, be filled with the Holy Spirit, which guarantees that portion of our life results in divine good.

"In distress [or, tribulation] to you and all these things have found you, in the latter days [lit., in the end of the days], then [lit., and] you [all] will turn back to Y^ehowah your God, and you [singular] will listen [and obey] His voice [lit., in (close proximity to) His voice]; [Deut. 4:30]

Distress here is the word *tsar* (צַר) [pronounced *tzahr*]. In the singular, it generally seems to mean *distress, tribulation, trouble* (1Sam. 2:32 Job 15:24 Psalm 3:1); in the plural it means *enemies, adversaries, those who would cause distress and trouble* (Gen. 14:20 Deut. 33:27 33:7 Job 19:11). Strong's #6862 BDB #865 In my

distress, I called upon Y^ehowah and cried to my God for help. He heard my voice out of His temple and my cry for help before Him came into His ears (Psalm 18:6). Then they called out to Y^ehowah in their trouble; He delivered them out of their distresses (Psalm 107:6; see also v. 13).

All these things are their serving foreign gods—gods of wood and metal (vv. 25a, 28), they have provoked God to anger (v. 25b), and God has scattered them throughout the Gentile nations (v. 27). Once all of these things have come to pass, then the Jews will return to the Lord Who bought them and obey His voice. This has a near and a far fulfillment. The near fulfillment is when the Israelites are removed from the land in 586 BC and they return 70 years later under Zerubbabel. The far fulfillment is still to come. God has scattered the Israelites throughout all of the nations and they will not be returned until the time of tribulation. "Remember the word which You commanded Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens; I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.'" (Neh. 1:8–9).

God has given the Land of Promise to the Israelites for an eternal possession. They do not possess the land now, nor will they until our Lord returns. However, in the latter days, the Israelites will return to Y^ehowah, Who is Jesus Christ, and the land will be given to them for an eternal possession. Until then, "The anger of Y^ehowah will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; in the last days, you will clearly understand it." (Jer. 23:20). Afterward, the sons of Israel will return and seek Y^ehowah their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to Y^ehowah and to His goodness in the last days (Hos. 3:5).

"For Y^ehowah your God is a merciful God; He will not fail you, nor destroy you nor will He forget the covenant of your fathers, which He had sworn to them. [Deut. 4:31]"

Moses has just described despicable behavior which would result in the Jews being scattered throughout the Gentile nations, yet he points out that God will not fail any one of them (*you* is in the singular), nor will He destroy them (*you* again is in the singular, but this is taken as the entire Jewish race) and God will never forget the covenant which He made to their fathers. There are several denominations and cults which spiritualize Israel and think that they are the fulfillment of the covenants made by God to Israel. We are not! Those in the Church Age belong to an entirely different program. We are not unrelated, by any means, but we are not equivalent to the Jewish race. God has promised that the Jews would remain on this earth and maintain their racial identity, and they have. God will never forget the covenant which He has made to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. One of Satan's programs is to eliminate the Jewish race. From where do you think comes all of this anti-Semitism? Satan would like to completely destroy the Jewish race—then God could not keep His promises which He has made to the Jews and God would be shown to be a liar. Throughout God's Word, we will continually be reassured of Israel's place in history. But Zion said, "Jehovah has forsaken me, and Jehovah has forgotten me." "Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me...Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations and set up My standard to the peoples, and they will bring your sons in their bosom and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders, and kings will be your guardians and their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and they will lick the dust of your feet, and you will know that I am Jehovah. Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame...Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, and the prey of the tyrant will be rescued, for I will contend with the one who contends with you and I will save your sons. And I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, and they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine, and all flesh will know that I, Jehovah, am your Savior, and your redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." (Isa. 49:14–16, 22–23, 25–26). God has not forgotten Israel and God will never forget Israel. No man can study the Old Testament or the book of Revelation, and think even for a moment that Israel is no longer in God's plan.

The sons of Israel would fail God over and over again; however, Y^ehowah is compassionate. "The Lord, Y^ehowah God, [is] compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in grace and truth, who preserve grace for thousands, who forgive iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave [the guilty] unpunished." (Ex. 34:6b–7a). Covenant theologians, those who believe that the church is the spiritual Israel and that God has

completely cast Israel aside, ignore God's Word: To Abraham, God said, "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:7–8). "Y^ehowah, your God, is the one Who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you." (Deut. 31:6b). "For Y^ehowah your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy your nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them." (Deut. 4:31). Go's grace extended to all nations, even during the economy of Israel. Jonah was called by God to evangelize the Assyrians in Ninevah, and he chose to go the other way because he knew that if they responded to his message, then God would bless them and not discipline them. And he prayed to Y^ehowah and said "Please, Y^ehowah, was not this what I said while I was still in my country? Therefore, in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in grace and one who relents concerning calamity." (Jonah 4:2). **Let your character be free from the love of money; keep on being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never not ever not never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."** (Heb. 13:5 Deut. 31:6).⁶⁵ "For I am with you," declares Y^ehowah, "To save you. For I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you; only I will not destroy you completely, but I will chasten you justly and will by no means leave you unpunished." (Jer. 30:11). "Yet in spite of this when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am Y^ehowah their god. But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am Y^ehowah." (Lev. 26:44–45). God knew in eternity past that the Jews would fail—over and over again. Prior to their entrance into the land, God spoke of their dispersion amongst the Gentile nations due to their apostasy. If God did not know what Israel would do, then God is not God. Today, we have exactly what God predicted: (1) the sons of Israel remain with us even to this day; (2) they are scattered throughout the Gentile world just as God had predicted; (3) they are under severe discipline; and, most importantly, (4) God has not forgotten them nor has He forgotten His covenant to Abraham, Isaac or to Jacob. The land of Canaan will be their everlasting possession; it will become a land once again flowing with milk and honey, rich in prosperity. And it will not be occupied by members of the church but by the sons of Israel, just as God had promised. We do not have to spiritualize God's promises to Israel; He will keep them in the same literal sense in which He gave them.

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Israel Is to Obey God Because of the Uniqueness of God's Relationship to Israel

"For, inquire, I implore you, with respect to the former days [or, days past] which have been before your face, from the day that God created man [or, Adam] upon the earth, and from the [one] end of the heavens even unto the [other] end of the heavens—has such a great thing ever come to pass? Has [such a great thing] ever been heard of? [Deut. 4:32]

Former days is a simple idiom meaning *past history*. The phrase *from one end of heavens even unto the other end of heavens* refers to a sweeping look of one who begins where the earth seems to touch the heavens in one direction around to the opposite compass point where the earth seems to touch the heavens there; this sweeping look takes in all of the earth and all of the heavens, making this idiomatic for *the entire universe*. Although I hesitate to say this dogmatically, there appears to be good reason to believe that what has occurred here on earth is unique throughout the entire universe. That is, there are no extra-terrestrials, there are no other planets where there is life; God did that here and the other planets and solar bodies are simply "...for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it came

⁶⁵ Note that these very words of Moses are said to be the Words of God—He Himself; the context, Heb. 13:4, points directly to God and not to Moses.

to pass (Gen. 1:14b–15). Again, I am not entirely convinced of myself of this, but I would lean toward this interpretation rather than one which allows for life similar to ours on other planets. Whether something will come of the other planets off in eternity is another matter altogether.

The Israelites are enjoined by Moses here to examine the history of all mankind, going back all of the way to Adam; they are to examine what has occurred throughout the universe, from one end of the heavens to the other end. Has there ever occurred in the past, anywhere anything like the promises which God has made to the sons of Israel? What has happened to Israel is absolutely unique—the promises which God has made to Israel are absolutely unique. Denominations tend to move toward covenant theology because they do not examine verse by verse all of the Old Testament, which again and again testifies to the uniqueness of Israel's place in history.

"Has a people heard the voice of God⁶⁶ speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard—you [in particular]—then lived? [Deut. 4:33]

The Israelites have heard, most of them listening to Moses right then—had heard God speak to them out of the lightning from the sky when He spoke to them the Ten Commandments in Ex. 20; yet they were still alive. **Then God spoke all these words. And all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes [lit., fire] and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen, but do not let God speak [directly] to us, or we will die." (Ex. 20:1a, 18–19).** Speaking of the Ten Commandments, Moses said, "These words Y^ehowah spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire; the cloud, and thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. And it came about, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders, and you said, 'Behold, Y^ehowah our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. Now then, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of Y^ehowah our God any longer, then we will die. For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we and lived?' " (Deut. 5:22–26). Most of us in the Church Age have no concept of the absolute holiness of God; and those who talk personally to Jesus while washing dishes, supposedly hearing His voice; and those who view Jesus as their best pal—they never will have even a clue as to the absolute holiness of God. The fact that these people heard the voice of God and were still alive—this is a wonder in itself.

"Or has God attempted to go to take for Himself a nation from the midst of a nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a strong hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors—according to all that Y^ehowah has done with respect to you, in Egypt before your eyes? [Deut. 4:34]

God is in the plural, but treated as though it is singular when referring to the Godhead. Some translators render this verse as *or has any other god attempted to...* However, this is incorrect. The Hebrew word is *ʿēlōhîm*⁶⁷ (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*] and this word can refer to the Godhead or to foreign gods. Context inevitably points out whether this is the God, the Creator of the Universe, or foreign gods, which are the result of fertile imagination at best and representative of demons at worst. There will either be the word *other* associated with the Hebrew word (Ex. 20:3 23:13 Joshua 24:2); there will be a modifying word to indicate that *gods* is different from the God (Ex. 18:11); the word *gods* is specifically differentiated from Y^ehowah in the immediate context (Ex. 22:19); God would be associated with a singular verb (Deut. 4:34) and gods with plural verbs (Ex. 32:1, 23); *gods* will have plural antecedents (Deut. 8:19–20) whereas *God* will not (Deut. 9:3); or gods will be modified by *foreign* or *of the Gentiles* (Gen. 35:2, 4 Deut. 31:16 2Kings 18:33). Strong's #430 BDB #43 Since there are no modifying phrases and since *attempted* is in the 3rd person masculine singular, we are speaking of the God in this context. Furthermore, we have the lamed prefixed preposition and the 3rd person masculine singular suffix which refers

⁶⁶ The western Samaritan and the Septuagint both read *a living God*. Deut. 5:26 reads: "For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we, and lived?"

⁶⁷ Since this is so commonly referred to in reference books, we will use the designation *Elohim* as well.

back to *God*; therefore, God cannot be viewed in the plural here. At no previous time in history of the God of the Universe picked out a nation as He did Israel.

The *trials* mentioned in this verse do not refer to the hardships incurred by Israel during their travels through the desert, but rather to the plagues which were inflicted upon the Egyptians. Context specifies here that these things mentioned, the signs, wonders, etc., are God's direct hand—His Presence, if you will—in delivering Israel out of Egypt.

"You, even you, have been shown [this], to know that Y^ehowah, He [is] God; there is none else besides Him." [Deut. 4:35]

In ancient times, each nation had its own pantheon of gods, just as, today, each group has their own religion, some nations having hundreds of different religions. Nowhere in the Bible are we urged to find the truth, even the small specks of truth which may be found in other religions. God's exclusivity is a constant of Biblical theology: "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that Y^ehowah, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is not other." (Deut. 4:39). [God is telling Moses what to say to the pharaoh of Egypt]; "For this time I will send all My plagues to your heart and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth." (Ex. 9:14). There is no one like You among the gods, O Y^ehowah; nor are there any works like yours (Psalm 86:8). "Remember the former things long past. for I am the Mighty One and there is no other; I [am] God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times, things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.' " (Isa. 46:9–10). There is no one like You, O Y^ehowah; You are great and great is Your name in might. who would not fear You, O King of the nations—indeed, it is Your due! For among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like You! (Jer. 10:6–7). **Jesus answered, the foremost [commandment] is, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'** " (Mark 12:28–29).

Some people are confused by God's exclusivity and the trinity. There are three members of the trinity, all having the same perfect attributes, including love, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, perfect righteousness, and perfect justice. However, there are three personalities. There is God who is in contact with man, the God Who we see, generally, Y^ehowah in the Old Testament (as well as the Angel of God, the Burning Bush, the Pillar of Fire), and Jesus Christ in the New Testament, also known as the revealed member of the trinity. It is our Lord Jesus Christ Who performed the divine act to secure our salvation. There is God the Father, Who is a Spirit and cannot be seen—the One Who planned our salvation. Finally, there is God the Holy Spirit, Who reveals all divine truth to us, including the means of our salvation. "Come near to Me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret; from the time it took place, I was there. And now Lord Y^ehowah has sent Me and His Spirit." (Isa. 48:16).

"From the heavens, He has caused you to hear His voice, to admonish you, and on earth, He has shown you His great fire, and His words you have heard out of the midst of the fire."⁶⁸ [Deut. 4:36]

In this verse, we have the verb *yâçar* (יָחַר) [pronounced *yaw-SAHR*] and it means *to discipline, chasten, admonish*; in this situation, they were not being disciplined because they heard the voice, but the Law of God was an admonishment to them. Strong's #3256 BDB #415

We have already seen that God had spoken the Ten Commandments directly to all of the children of Israel. They were not a means of salvation-righteousness—although they were to be adhered to—they were laws which must be followed to insure the privacy and freedom of all. "Then You did come down on Mount Sinai and You spoke with them from heaven; and you gave to them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments." (Neh. 8:13). The writer of Hebrews warns the Jews of his day, even as he warns us: **See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking, for if those did not escape when they refused him who warned [them] on earth, much less [shall we escape] who turn away from Him who [warns us] from heaven** (Heb. 12:25).

⁶⁸ The end of v. 36 is a questionable reading according to BDB, p. 1066a halfway down (no further explanation is given).

"And previous to that [or, and a basis to that; lit., and underneath that] He loved your fathers, so He choose in their descendants [lit., seed] after them and so He [caused (you) to be] brought you out, in His presence [lit., face], by His great power, from Egypt; [Deut. 4:37]

The beginning of v. 37 is a questionable reading. The Massoretic text has a conjunction, an introductory preposition or adverb and conjunction are difficult to get a fix on; so allow me to give you what other translators have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And because...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And because that...
NASB	Because [alternative reading: And instead, because...]
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And because that...

The translations not mentioned went with *and because*.

The people to whom Moses is speaking have just spent forty years being brought out from Egypt to where they are now. Even though this is an accomplished fact from divine viewpoint, it is presented in the Hiphil (causative) stem, imperfect tense because to them, it was a process. "Y^ehowah did not place His love on you nor did he choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples; for you were the fewest of all peoples [when He chose your fathers]. But it was because Y^ehowah loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, Y^ehowah [therefore] brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (Deut. 7:7–8). "Take note: heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is in it belong to Y^ehowah your God—yet on your fathers did Y^ehowah place His affection to love them; and He chose their descendants after them—you above all peoples, as [things stand] this day." (Deut. 10:14–15). The movement of the Jews was miraculous, inasmuch as God gave them a visible presence that traveled with them—the fire by night and the cloud by day. And He said, "My presence will go [with] you and I will give you rest." (Ex. 33:14). And the Angel of His Presence [Jesus Christ] delivered them; in His love and in His grace, He redeemed them; and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old (Isa. 63:9b). "But Y^ehowah, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm, Him you will fear, and to Him you will bow yourselves down, and to Him you will sacrifice." (2Kings 17:36).

And just so you don't miss it, this is the first mention of God's love in the Bible. However, God's love is not a secondary theme only mentioned in Deuteronomy, but it will play a prominent part in this book, as well as throughout Scripture. "Y^ehowah did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because Y^ehowah loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, Y^ehowah brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Know therefore that Y^ehowah your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and his grace to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments." (Deut. 7:7–9; see also, Deut. 5:10 7:13 10:15 23:5)

"To dispossess nations greater and stronger than you, from before your presence [lit., face], to [cause to] bring you in to give you their land, an inheritance, as [He is doing] this day. [Deut. 4:38]

The peoples dwelling in the land given to Israel were groups of highly degenerate people who would act as a cancer upon society. God removes such cancerous groups so that His Word will be free to be taught and free to take root.

"And you know today and you have caused to return with regard to your heart, that Y^ehowah He [is] the God, in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath; there is none else; [Deut. 4:39]

Most translations render the first two verbs in the verse as imperatives; however, they are both in the perfect (completed) tense. However, to give you a taste of what others have rendered:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	"Know, recognize <i>and</i> understand therefore this day, and turn your [mind and] heart to it...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	So then thou must consider to-day, and bring it back to thy heart...
KJV	Know therefore this day, and consider <i>it</i> in thine heart...

NASB "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart..."
 NIV Acknowledge and take to heart this day...
 NRSV So acknowledge today and take to heart...
 Owen's Translation Know therefore this day and lay it to your heart...
 Young's Lit. Translation 'And thou hast known to-day, and has turned *it* back unto they heart...

Possibly there is an idiom here referring to coming to a point of understanding or knowledge based upon reminating and thinking and turning this matter over in one's mind as Moses speaks. In a review of all of the information which Moses has presented, information which they have confirmed with their own eyes, the Israelites realize that there is no one like God in all the earth, above or below.

"And you will keep His statutes and His commandments which I am commanding you today, so that it will be well to you, and to your sons after you, and so that you will prolong days on the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you forever [lit., all the days]." [Deut. 4:40]

This is the conclusion to the first message given by Moses, which began in Deut. 1:6.

Deut.	The Topics Covered in Moses' Sermon
1:6–11	God leads the Israelites and sets the land before them
1:12–17	God organizes Israel
1:18–25	God commands them to take the land; the sons of Israel organize a reconnaissance mission
1:26–33	The Israelites fail miserably by refusing to enter into the land
1:34–40	God pronounces judgment upon them (and Moses)
1:41–46	Apart from God, the sons of Israel charge into the land and are soundly defeated
2:1–23	God leads the Israelites east of the land, pointing out object lessons as they occur
2:24–3:11	God leads the Israelites in battle and they defeat Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon and they defeat Og, the last of the giants, the king of Bashan
3:12–20	The land east of the Jordan is given to Reuben, Gad and a portion of the tribe of Manasseh with the understanding that they will assist in the taking of the rest of the land
3:21–29	Moses, because of his failure, appoints a new commander of the Israeli forces
4:1–40	In view of what has transpired and the things which the Israelites have seen, they are encouraged to keep the commandments of God

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Notice that the topics covered by Moses are generally in chronological order, with the very notable exception of his own failure, which he mentions twice—the first time out of chronological order. This last chapter was a recap of what the Israelites should obey God, with various reasons pointed out to support that. V. 40 is the grand conclusion to the last several chapters: **"And you will keep His statutes and His commandments which I am commanding you today, so that it will be well to you, and to your sons after you, and so that you will prolong days**

on the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you forever." One of the many promises found in the Bible is the extension of one's life when they exhibit positive volition toward God's Word and obedience to same. God uses believers for many different things, including to ambush other believers; however, those who He can use the most are those whose souls are filled with doctrine. "But you will not worship their gods nor will you serve them, nor will you do according to their deeds; but you will utterly overthrow them, and break their pillars in pieces. And you will serve Y^ehowah your God and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst." (Ex. 23:24–25). "You will walk in all the way which Y^ehowah your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong [your] days in the land which you will possess." (Deut. 5:33). "For it [God's Word] is not an idle word for you; indeed, it is your life. And by this word, you will prolong your days in the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." (Deut. 32:47). The Jew prolonged their individual lives through obedience to the Word; and they prolonged the amount of time that they would remain in the land as a nation through that same obedience.

Notice specifically the message of just this particular chapter. Moses speaks of the fear of Y^ehowah in vv. 10–11; he forbids all types of idolatry in vv. 12–19; he points out the unique relationship between God and Israel (vv. 20–36), giving Israel good reason to fear God (see vv. 24, 26, 36), yet is determined to end on a note of hope, grace and promise (vv. 37–40). However, throughout this entire message, one would be blind to miss the continual punctuation of the commands to learn and obey God's laws (vv. 1–2, 5–6, 8–9, 13–15, 23–24, 39–40).

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The Cities Set Apart for Involuntary Manslaughter

We pause for a moment from this sermon and go into a narrative passage, one of the few in Deuteronomy. Moses has a few things to take care of prior to his death and prior to the entrance of the Israelites into the land. One of those items of his *to-do* list is that of determining the cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan. Recall that God had determined that there would be cities of refuge set up for those who committed involuntary manslaughter. Now, the accompanying laws were very specific. If anger and a deadly weapon were involved, then it is no longer involuntary manslaughter (see Num. 35:6–34 and Deut. 19:1–13 for the specifics).

At that time, Moses set apart [lit., divided, separated or severed] three cities beyond the Jordan, towards the east [lit., sun-rising]. [Deut. 4:41]

The adverb which begins this verse indicates that this was the next thing that Moses did after his sermon. He had been given a command, and, although he could not go into the land and set the other cities apart, he would set these cities apart as per God's commands. This was in the land of Reuben, Gad and the partial tribe of Manasseh, where the Israelites were presently encamped. See Deut. 19:2–29 for more details.

The fact that Moses is now spoken of in the third person does not indicate that this portion of God's Word was edited by someone else anymore than it means that Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers were written by someone other than Moses. As some have done many times, an author, in narrative, refers to himself in the third person. However, the sermon of Moses is essentially a direct quote, and in public speaking, Moses refers to himself in the first person, as do most people when they speak of their own experiences to an audience. A slight exception to this rule is noted in the twentieth century United States when the President of the United States speaks of himself in the third person as the holder of the office of presidency.

For the fleeing away of the man-slayer, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, and he had not hated him heretofore, and he will flee to one of these cities, and he will live. [Deut. 4:42]

The word *heretofore* is literally *from yesterday, the day before yesterday* (there are actually two words and a preposition, the latter word referring to *the day before yesterday*. This is idiomatic for *times past, heretofore, aforesaid*.

Notice that animosity cannot be a part of the equation. You don't get to fall into some confrontation with an enemy and *accidentally* kill him. I believe that the Hebrew word which meant *with knowledge* came to mean, when appended with the negative, *unintentionally*. I wonder if there were laws by other countries which took into consideration involuntary manslaughter?

Bezer, in the wilderness, in the land of the plain [or, Mishor] of the Reubenite; and Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadite; and Golan, in Bashan of the Manassahite. [Deut. 4:43]

Each of the three tribes had a city of refuge within their borders; a place for one who is guilty of unintentional manslaughter to flee to in order to receive an impartial rendering of a decision. According to Barnes' Notes, the land of the plain could be rendered as a proper noun, land of the Mishor, due to the definite article (found here and Deut. 3:10 and Joshua 13:9). This is the flat land running from Jericho far into Arabia, which was quite a contrast to the more rugged land west of the Jordan and the mountainous area north of there around Bashan. According to the NIV Study Bible, Bezer was about 20 miles east of the northwest(northeast?) corner of the Salt Sea; Barnes' Notes indicates a great deal of uncertainty concerning its location. Golan is east of the Sea of Galilee.

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Conclusion of First Four Chapters

And this [is] the law which Moses had set before the sons of Israel; [Deut. 4:44]

This sounds like some general conclusion to the Torah itself or an introduction to the next few discourses of Moses. Moses has moved from first person to third person. He recognized the historical and doctrinal import of the information that he was recording, so he spoke of himself in the third person, which we have already examined. It is not a matter of psychosis or Moses disassociating; writers will often speak of themselves in the third person. However, when speaking, with a few exceptions, most people will speak of themselves in the first person. It is a common differentiation between the recording of history and verbal discourse and it means nothing in particular; that is, there is no implication that there is any kind of editing occurring here. Furthermore, the recording of this material, unlike most of the Pentateuch, takes place immediately after the occurrence, probably within the same week, if not the same day. God has told Moses that he is not long for this world and Moses is now trying to get everything done which God has set before him.

These [are] the testimonies and the statutes, and the judgments which Moses had spoken to the sons of Israel, in their coming out of Egypt, [Deut. 4:45]

It sounds as though Moses is bringing this book to a close. It is as though he has recorded the first four books, has gotten this far into the fifth book, and feels that his previous message was good and it was his last. So now all there is to do is to put the period at the end of the sentence.

Beyond the Jordan, in the valley opposite [lit., over-against] Beth-Peor, in the land of Sihon, king of the Amorite, who dwells in Heshbon, whom Moses and the sons of Israel struck down, in their coming out of Egypt. [Deut. 4:46]

This is only half of a sentence. This ends v. 45, telling from where Moses spoke this last message (Deut. 3:39). Num. 21:21–25 gives us some the details of the taking of that land.

Furthermore [lit., and] they possessed his land, and land of Og, king of Bashan—two kings of the Amorite who [are] beyond the Jordan—the east— [Deut. 4:47]

This tells us that Og and Sihon were both kings over the Amorites, even though Og was the last of the Rephaim (the giants).

From Aroer, which [is] by the edge of the torrent [or, wadi] Armon, even to Mount Sion, which [is] Hermon, [Deut. 4:48]

This gives the boundaries of the land. Mount Hermon was called Sirion (possibly Sion?) by the Sidonians and Senir by the Amorites Deut. 3:9). Sion is the proper noun found in this verse, not Zion. Barnes' Notes also points out that Sion should not be confused with Zion. Just so you can see these similar nouns in the Hebrew:

English	Sion	Zion	Sirion	Sidon	Senir
Transliteration	Sîy`ôn	Tsîyyôwn	Siryôn ⁶⁹	Tsîydônîy	S ^e nîyr ⁷⁰
Hebrew	שִׁיאוֹן	צִיּוֹן	שִׁירְיוֹן	צִידוֹנִי	שֵׁנִיר
Pronunciation	see-OHN	tsee-YOHN	sir-YOHN	tsee-dô-NEE	sen-EER
Strong's #	7865	6726	8303	6722	8149
BDB #	673	851	976	851	972

As you can see, although these are fairly close words in the bastardized English transliteration, in their more accurate transliterations and in the Hebrew, these are all fairly dissimilar words.

And all the plain beyond the Jordan eastward, even to the sea of the plain under the springs of Pisgah. [Deut. 4:49]

This is just a further description of the land which, so far, had been captured by the Israelites.

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⁶⁹ Alternately, Shiryôwn (שִׁירְיוֹן) [pronounced *shir-YONE*].

⁷⁰ Alternately, Sh^enîyr (שֵׁנִיר) [pronounced *sh'n-EER*].

Deuteronomy 5

Deuteronomy 5:1–33

Outline of Chapter 5:

- Vv. 1–6 **Introduction to the covenant of the Law**
- Vv. 7–15 **The first four commandments—man's relationship to God**
- Vv. 16–21 **The last six commandments—man's relationship to man**
- Vv. 22–28 **Israel asks Moses to stand between themselves and Y^howah**
- Vv. 29–31 **God's response to Israel's request**
- Vv. 32–33 **Do not deviate from God's commandments**

Charts:

- v. 26 **Why Does God Use Mediators?**

Introduction: Deut. 5 repeats the covenant of the Ten Commandments, a covenant originally given to generation X and to the generation of promise. This was a covenant meant for all of Israel, and, to a certain extent, all of mankind. However, it was given specifically to those God brought out of Egypt. The Ten Commandments defined righteousness and freedom in a nation. This generation heard God's voice, but they were young, mostly teenagers and children, many below the age of accountability. Now they were very accountable to God and Moses reiterates the commandments to them. How much of the population that Moses spoke to at any given time is difficult to determine. There are two million people, half of which are female and perhaps a third or a fourth are children. In any case, there are 600,000 adult males. Anyone who has been to a football game understands the logistics of speaking to four thousand people or sixty thousand people. Scripture never explains to us the mechanics. Our Lord spoke to five thousand and four thousand on two different occasions, leading us to believe that Moses perhaps, under the best of conditions, with the best academic discipline (which he had) spoke to 10,000 to 60,000 at most. If he only spoke to four or five thousand, I would not be surprised. You see, in any given Christian community defined by whatever geographical barriers you would like, there is only a small percentage of them who really have any interest in God's Word. 1-5% is not abnormal; 10% would be unusually high. This is what struck me when I first became a Christian. There aren't many believers who give a rat's ass about God's Word. They may give a lot of lip service to God and His Word, but when it comes right down to it, their interest in it is nil. So, although there were nearly two million believers in the nation Israel, there were perhaps 2000-10,000 who were positive toward God's Word.

As was said, the bulk of this chapter will be a repetition of the Ten Commandments. One program which I personally recall of J. Vernon McGee's, had the most interesting aside concerning God's Commandments: *You hear, as I do, a great many people say that they live by the Ten Commandments, and that's their religion. If you quiz such people, as I have done several times, you will find that what they really mean is they have voted for them—they have heard them and they think they are good. But they certainly are not keeping them and are not doing them*⁷¹.

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⁷¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 36.

Introduction to the Covenant of the Law

And Moses called to all of Israel and said to them, [Deut. 5:1a]

As was discussed in the preface, we do not know how many attended this speaking engagement of Moses. Although there is every indication that there were almost 100% believers in this mobile nation (as was true with generation X), the number who have any interest in doctrine will be significantly lower. So a call to assemble was made and a few thousand attended.

"Hear, Israel, the statutes and the judgments which I am speaking in your hearing [lit., ears] today, and you will learn them and you will take responsibility to do them. [Deut. 5:1b]

Take responsibility is the word *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] and it means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. We have looked at it a couple of times recently. Since this is followed by *to do them*, it flows better than the other renderings. Neither *learn* nor *take responsibility* are in the imperative but in the perfect; however, the word *hear* is, drawing the other two verbs into the imperative sense. McGee, ever the simple man, tells us that there are three parts to our relationship to the Word of God: we listen to it, we learn it and we obey, or do it.

"Y^howah our God made with [lit., cut] us a covenant in Horeb; [Deut. 5:2]

We have a very common, but unusual word to us, here: *kâath* (כָּאָת) [pronounced *kaw-RAHTH*] and it means *cut off, cut down*. (Gen. 17:14 Lev. 17:10 Deut. 19:5 Judges 6:28, 30). I have included texts for every verb stem where the word is found in the Hebrew. However, the same word is used *to make* a covenant (Gen. 15:18 21:27 Ex.24:8) and it is only found in that sense in the Qal stem. BDB's explanation is *the cutting up and distribution of the flesh of the victim for eating in the sacrifice of the covenant...the calf which they cut*⁷² and they cite Jer. 34:18, where this word is found twice in both senses. Strong's #3772 BDB #503.

Notice that this covenant is not a covenant between God and Abraham or between God and Isaac, but this was a covenant made specifically between the exodus generations and Y^howah, the God of the Universe. These Ten Commandments were a freedom code, defining freedom for a nation of people under God, a code, if we adopted, would improve our nation (or any other nation) substantially. However, this covenant was made specifically with this generation of people, and therefore to all of Israel, the nation. God said to them, **"You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I bore you on eagles wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and guard [or, keep or take responsibility for] my commandments, then you will be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you will be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."** (Ex. 19:4–6a). And this is almost the final admonition to the children of Israel given in the book of Malachi, one of the last messages recorded to Israel: **"Remember the law of Moses, My servant, statutes and ordinance which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel."** (Mal. 4:4).

"Not with our fathers [only] did Y^howah make this covenant, but with us—we, these; all of us [who are] alive here this day. [Deut. 5:3]

According to *The Emphasized Bible*, *not with our fathers* is a well-known idiom which means *not with our father's only*.⁷³ Moses is speaking with the editorial *we*. He identifies himself with his audience, who were below the age of twenty when the Ten Commandments were first given (many were below the age of accountability) and this covenant was not a covenant made only to their parents. Their parents are dead and they are alive. Moses will repeat this covenant to them, not as a separate and new covenant, but as a ratification of what already applies to them. This covenant was first delivered to their fathers, who are all dead now, but it was given to all of Israel.

⁷² P. 503.

⁷³ *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 204.

The Ten Commandments are a freedom code designed for a nation, not for a shepherd family wandering. This freedom code is designed for those who are alive; not for the dead. These laws were given specifically to the nation Israel, first to those present and to those (I can see Moses giving a sweep of his hand to include those in the camp who were not in attendance that day) throughout the camp of Israel. In fact, it is this verbiage in this passage which indicates that all of Israel is not in attendance. Remaining alive referred to only those of the generation of promise, with a couple exceptions. **These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar, the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For Y^ehowah had said of them, "They will in dying, die in the wilderness." And not a man was left of them, except Caleb ben Jephunneh and Joshua ben Nun (Num. 26:63–65).**

The covenant had been made forty years ago and it was now confirmed. Israel, in order to receive the blessing of association with God was bound to God as their sovereign ruler and to His Law as their Law. When a woman is married, she accepts her husband as sovereign and receives the blessing that goes with that relationship and the cursing which goes with violations of that relationship. The key is making a wise choice, which Israel has done in choosing Y^ehowah. These were the seed which founded Israel and ratified the covenant made with them thereby obligated succeeding generations to the same covenant. Recall: **So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words which Y^ehowah had commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, "All that Y^ehowah has spoken, we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to Y^ehowah (Ex. 19:7–8).**

This, however does not mean that this particular covenant will last forever. In any contract, the parties to that contract can agree to another contract. **"Behold, days are coming," declares Y^ehowah, "When I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant, which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares Y^ehowah. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares Y^ehowah. "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it, and I will be their God and they will be My people. And they will not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know Y^ehowah,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares Y^ehowah. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer. 31:31–34). So much more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. For if the first covenant has been faultless, there would have been no seeking for a place for a second. When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them. After those days," says the Lord, I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will rite them. And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin (Heb. 7:22 8:6–7, 13).**

Now, having quoted these verses, I want to make certain that I do not mislead you here. The way that I have strung these verses together, I have made it seem as though the New Covenant spoken of in Jeremiah is the same one in Hebrews. This is not the case. The covenant promised in Jeremiah is the New Covenant to Israel which will go into effect in the Millennium, when **...the earth will be full of the knowledge of Y^ehowah as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9b).** However, there is the actual fulfillment of the promise delivered to Jeremiah in the Millennium and there is the covenant spoken of in Hebrews which is, in a manner of speaking, a fulfillment of that spoken of in Jeremiah. Therefore, we should examine the **Doctrine of a Covenant—not finished yet!!**

"Y^ehowah spoke to you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire. [Deut. 5:4]

The phrase *face to face* is an idiom—this is simply to ascertain, as God does not have a face. However, what is implied here by this phrase is great intimacy and exclusivity. This was not an everyday occurrence in the life of mankind. We have damn few instances recorded in God's Word of God the Father speaking to a group of people (the other instance which comes quickly to mind is on the Mount of Transfiguration). This is the only time in human history when God spoke to this many people directly. You might say, well, He ought to do it more often

and things would go a lot more smoothly down here on planet earth. Recall that 99.9% of the adults who heard God's voice here died the sin unto death.

The Ten Commandments were spoken by God to the entire congregation of Israel. God is omnipresent and they received those commandments from God as if God spoke face to face with them. God obviously has no face, but the commandments were spoken so personally to each and everyone of them that this frightened the congregation of Israel. Moses asked in the previous chapter: "[Has a people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived?](#)" (Deut. 4:33).

"[While] standing between Y^ehowah and you, at that time, to declare to you the word of Y^ehowah—for you [all] have been afraid on account of the face of the fire, with the result that [lit. and] you [all] have did not go up on the mountain—to say, [Deut. 5:5]

With the exception of the last two words, this verse was an aside by Moses to the people. God spoke to them directly, frightening the people (Moses will say more about this later), so that Moses had to be a mediator between God and man, to stand between God and all of Israel, and receive the Word of God and declare it to them. They were all young when they heard God's voice, so Moses reminds them it was *at that time*. [So it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there wre thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who \[were\] in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai all in smoke because Y^ehowah descended upon it in fire, and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently](#) (Ex. 19:16–18). Moses was told by God to keep the people from going up onto the mountain to see Him. The people were gathered en masse in front of the mountain with the priests and Moses standing between them and the mountain. Then they heard the voice of God, each and every one of them, as though God were a man speaking face to face with them.

" 'I, Y^ehowah, your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery [lit., slaves]. [Deut. 5:6]

Rotherham points out that using the word *slaves* here is the use of the concrete for the abstract. What that means is that it is valid to render this as *Egypt, the house of slavery*⁷⁴.

What will be spoken is a covenant, or a contract, between God and the people of Israel; God identifies Himself, party of the first part, and the people, those brought out of the land of Egypt, party of the second part. Moses reads these commandments to this generation again, as many of them were quite young at the time that they heard them. Deuteronomy is, as has been discussed, several messages to the generation of promise, who saw these things occur in their youth, but did not completely understand their meaning and implication. Moses clarifies their time in the desert and their relationship to God then and now.

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The First Four Commandments—Man's Relationship to God

Ex. 20:2–11

" 'There will not be with reference to you other gods before my face. [Deut. 5:7]

⁷⁴ *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 204.

This verse begins with the negative, the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAWH*] which is equivalent to our verb *to be*. This is followed by the lamed prefixed preposition and the 2nd person masculine singular suffix. This should not read *you will not have any god* or *you will have no gods* because the verb is not in the 2nd person and the 2nd person pronoun is part of a prepositional phrase—it is not the subject. Elohim, as we have said, can mean *God* or *gods*. Here it means *gods* because it is modified by the plural adjective *other*. This verse literally ends with *against My face* or *before My face*; some Bibles reasonably render this *before Me* or *before My presence*. The preposition *al* (אֶל) [pronounced *a*] can also mean *because of*, *on account of*; so this could read: **There will not be with reference to you others gods because of My presence**. A reference to God's *face* is anthropomorphic; but the meaning is clear—this is God's abiding Presence, different and personal to Israel. All religion is either self-worship, worship of the creation (animals, stars) or worship of Satan and his demon army. God placed His Presence within the boundaries of Israel which precluded all that is profane—that is, the worship of the creation rather than the Creator.

Notice that the first commandment is not to *believe* in God—it is a prohibition against idolatry. Those of the exodus generation had just seen signs and wonders which precluded the idea of God not existing. That really was not an option to that population. It was not until several hundred years later is atheism ever mentioned in Scripture (Psalm 14:1). The exodus generation had seen irrefutable proof that God existed and those in Egypt saw irrefutable proof that Y^ehowah was that God.

Every commandment, including the fourth commandment,⁷⁵ has its counterpart in the New Testament. Most people ignore this commandment, thinking that certainly they are not guilty of idolatry—nobody around their house has made or bought an idol that they worship. However, whatever you place ahead of God is idolatry; which means, whatever you place ahead of God's Word is idolatry. I knew a young lady who once began giving me her top ten things in life, naming God as #1 on her list. She went to church once a week, most of the time, and spent little or no time in God's Word. It doesn't matter what you say and, believe it or not, the key is not even church attendance. When you actually love someone—when they are first on your list, you want to spend quality time with them and you want to get to know them. There is only one way to spend quality time with God and to get to know Him and that is through His Word as taught by a pastor teacher who spends most of his time studying God's Word, cutting it up into small enough pieces for you to eat.

In the church age, this prohibition of this commandment is even stronger than what is stated here. Anything which **is placed before God is idolatry. Therefore begin to render impotent the things upon the earth: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed—which amounts to idolatry (Col. 3:5). For this you all know, that every fornicator or immoral person, or one who is greedy [or, covetous]—who is an idolater—has no inheritance in the reign of the Christ and God (Eph. 5:5). This is not the only place in the Bible with lust for things and immorality are in the same context as idolatry. Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave wrong things, as they [the exodus generation] also craved. And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and 23,000 fell in one day (1Cor. 10:6–8).** For most people it is money or their job or their family or things which they place ahead of God. In fact, for most people, it is all of those things and a few others which are placed ahead of God. And if you are in a state of lust, God's Word tells you that you are in idolatry. Just in case you don't grasp how it is that you are in idolatry when you are in sexual lust, let me make this simple. You have a choice each and every second whether to be in fellowship or out of fellowship with God. The difference is between being filled with the Holy Spirit and not. When you are consumed with sexual lust (or, actually, any sin), you are choosing to be out of fellowship. When you retain that status without rebound—without naming your sins to God—you are in idolatry. You have placed that lust, that sin, above God and above fellowship with Him.

"You will not make for yourself a sculpted image—any likeness which [is] in the heavens above or which [is] in the earth beneath or which [is] in the water under the earth. [Deut. 5:8]

⁷⁵ However, the keeping of the Sabbath as the Jews did is not the rest we are to enter into. We will see more of this in a few pages.

The *or*'s in this verse are all *and*'s; however, the negative changes them into *or*'s (this is a principle of logic as well as a grammatical principle for some languages). Another way to read this verse is: "You will not make for yourself a sculpted image—any likeness which [is] in the heavens above and [you will not make for yourself a sculpted image—any likeness] which [is] in the earth beneath and [you will not make for yourself a sculpted image—any likeness] which [is] in the water under the earth." Most of the codices (the Septuagint, western Samaritan, the Syriac, the Vulgate and the targums of Jonathan) read "You will not make for yourself a sculpted image, **nor** any likeness which is in the heavens above or which is in the earth beneath or which is in the waer under the earth."

Only a creature can be approximated with a sculpted image; God cannot be approximated with some statute or idol; God can make us in His image because He can make the immaterial part of us—just as He is spirit. This is how we were made in His shadow-image. However, we cannot turn around and make God in our image or even approximate His image because we cannot construct the immaterial spirit—we can only construct very pathetic likenesses of what God has created and foolishly call them God or associate them with God.

" You will not bow down to them and you will not be caused to serve them, for I [am] Y^ehowah your God—a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers against children and [or, even]⁷⁶ against third and against fourth [generations] with reference to those hating Me. [Deut. 5:9]

People have trouble with the third and fourth generation curse, partially because they have not seen this verse translated properly, and because they ignore the last couple words in this verse. All it takes is just one generation of people who oppose God to cause damage to the next three generations of children. In the United States the children of the 60's were unquestionably one of the most self-centered, self-serving generations ever in our country. I do not know much about the spiritual foundation of the parents of the baby boomers, but those who followed them pursued the creature rather than the Creator (with very few, but wonderful, exceptions). Our nation has gone absolutely downhill since then; their children and their children's children being essentially Godless, with most of the believers having little or no real interest in God's Word. Drug use and hedonism is rampant among the young people today, as are sexually transmitted diseases. As one person said, sexually transmitted diseases can be, for all intents and purposes, wiped out in one generation. All it takes is for one generation to embrace the Biblical boundaries of marriage—sex with one person, their right man or right woman, after marriage, and not before—and sexually transmitted diseases could no longer be transmitted. However, today, and for the last couple of generations, we have young people who believe that sexual involvement is some sort of a right that comes with puberty, and not a sacred act belonging to marriage. I've heard people speaking of trying different sexual partners to prior to marriage, comparing it to trying on shoes before buying them. I've seen teenagers, when their parents are attempting to save them a great deal of heartache, act like it is some sort of personal imposition or enormous sacrifice to go without sex during their teen years. This all came out of the *free love*, promiscuous generation of the 60's. We have seen where casual and even not-so-casual sex led these people in terms of the breakdown of the family, resulting in hedonism, gangs, rampant teenage crime, greed, and homosexual activity. All it takes is one generation of degenerates to leave their mark for the next three generations. But don't forget to notice those last words: *with reference to those hating Me*. God does not arbitrarily curse one generation and the three succeeding generations—He curses those who hate Him, which is often a result of the first generation being self-serving, self-centered and self-deluded.

" Yet [lit, and] showing grace to thousands, to those loving Me and to those keeping [and guarding] My commandments [Deut. 5:10]

My commandments is written *his commandments*; however, it is spoken *My*. Rotherham calls the word *his* a clear corruption of the Scriptures, as it reads *My* in Ex. 20:6. The mistake found here clearly reveals how much reverence was given to the reproduction by hand of Scripture (I know that you did not understand that). Here is the difference between the two words: *My commandments* = mîts^eôwthây (יְהוָה צַוָּי) [pronounced *mits-o-THAY* (?)]; *His commandments* = mîts^eôwthâw (יְהוָה צַוָּו) [pronounced *mits-o-THAW* (tahv?)]. The only difference is

⁷⁶ The targums of Onkolos and Jonathan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate all lack the conjunction *and* (usually rendered *even* by most translations).

the last letter and some scribe at some time made a slip of the pen, and turned a yodh into a wâw. It was known that this must have been the case; however, under no circumstances did the many subsequent scribes want to change it back; they did not want to change God's Word—that is how much reverence that they had for the Scripture. So, as was said, this was spoken in the synagogues as *My commandments*; however, it will be forever written *his commandments*.

The first occurrence of grace was not in the New Testament, but God is immutable and He has always been a gracious and loving God. Israel was totally undeserving of His grace yet God poured His grace upon them. Similarly, we in the Church Age are equally undeserving, yet He graces us out as well. This verse is added just in case someone is still confused about the four generation curse. God's grace abounds to those who continue to love Him.

God's love of Israel is a major theme found throughout this book of Deuteronomy. "Y^ehowah did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because Y^ehowah loved and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, Y^ehowah brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt." (Deut. 7:7–8). "Yet, upon your fathers Y^ehowah set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them—you above all peoples, as [it stands] today." (Deut. 10:15). We also have the love of Israel for God commanded: "And you will love Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." (Deut. 6:5). "And now, Israel, what does Y^ehowah your God require from you, but to fear Y^ehowah your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep Y^ehowah's commands and His statutes which I [Moses] am commanding you today for your good." (Deut. 10:12). Furthermore, love for the foreigner is enjoined in this book: "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." (Deut. 10:19; see also Lev. 19:18). But when the Pharisees heard that He [Jesus] had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together and one of the, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, what is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. And a second is like it, You will love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the entire Law and the Prophets."

" You will not lift up [the] name of Y^ehowah your God in regards to emptiness, as Y^ehowah will not quit him who lifts up His name in regards to emptiness. [Deut. 5:11]

This is God speaking (Moses is quoting Him), yet He sometimes speaks of Y^ehowah in the first person and sometimes in the third. This is easy to understand when one realizes that we have a triune God, one in essence and three in personality. The Presence of Y^ehowah in Israel is the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. However, the name Y^ehowah can be applied to any member of the trinity. See **the Doctrine of Y^ehowah in the Trinity**—not finished yet!!

At the very least, this is a prohibition of using the name of Jesus Christ lightly or any other name which refers to Him; our speech is not to be peppered with *Oh my God, I swear to God or Jesus Christ!* Deut. 6:13 and 10:20 **will be explained when we get there. But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but let your yes be yes and your no, no; so that you may not fall under judgment (James 5:12).** God has given you greater gifts and blessings than you can imagine—now, in some cases, He has to bang you over the head to get your attention, but what He has already given us is beyond our comprehension. Jesus Christ has taken upon Himself the punishment for our sins and, through one short, simple act of human volition, we are able to gain salvation and blessing throughout eternity. As you cannot imagine the blessing which God has set aside for us, you cannot imagine the pain, grief and absolute horror of our Lord coming into contact with our sins and receiving the judgment for them—the judgment which we deserve. How can you be so callous as to use His name lightly to spice up your conversation? Just get a vocabulary and treat Jesus Christ, the King of King and Lord of Lords, and God the Father with the respect due to them.

" Keeping the Sabbath day—to set it apart' [as that which Y^ehowah your God commanded you] [Deut. 5:12]

As that which Y^ehowah your God commanded you is not found in Ex. 20:8; This is added by Moses, speaking as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Some of the believers in the audience knew the Ten Commandments and, when we know something, we tend to turn our minds off when we hear it again. For any person whose mind wanders as they know these commandments, Moses grabs them with this statement. He is not adding to the Word of God as he is speaking God's Word. When the Old Testament is quoted in the New, the speaker or author sometimes gives a paraphrasing of the text, sometimes quotes it even though it does not directly apply to the situation at hand, and sometimes quotes the Septuagint, even when there is a difference between the Septuagint and the original version. Under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, which all writers of Scripture were, this is acceptable. When done in order to support some personal theory, this is a misuse of Scripture. One of the strengths of God's Word is that one can even hear verses from *The Living Bible*, which translation is an affront to anyone with an I.Q. over 85, and these verses will have the power and truth of God's Word come through loud and clear. The key here is motivation and guidance of the Holy Spirit, rather than the act of adding a phrase to the Ten Commandments.

I need to speak to the 1% now, so most of you don't have to worry about the next paragraph: doing that which is clearly sin, even if you *feel* led by the Holy Spirit is still sin. You cannot do that which is wrong and then claim your motivation is pure and you have been led by God the Holy Spirit. You are delusional. You need the therapy of God's Word and your best action in life is no action. How can I explain this? You can do that which seems right and good, but if your motivation is wrong and you are not filled with the Spirit, then that act is wood, hay and stubble, to be burned on the last day. You can do that which is sin, and think you are, under your own personal delusion, doing what is right. That sin puts you out of fellowship (which you probably were already) and was judged on the cross. Thieme explained it in this way, giving four scenarios: you can do a right thing in a right way, a wrong thing in a right way, a right thing in a wrong way, and a wrong thing in a wrong way. The first option is divine good and it is the production of gold, silver and precious stones. When you do a right thing in a right way, it is like having your own gold factory and you produce chunks of gold which stay with you as wealth forever. However, the latter three options are acts of human good and sin and sin was judged on the cross, human good was rejected, and human good will be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The Sabbath was a day of rest; they were to sit back and to do nothing. God did all of the work. Prior to man coming on the earth, God created everything for man. Man was to rest and enjoy the earth and enter into a perpetual Sabbath at his creation. However, man's sin caused man to have to work with the sweat of his brow. The Sabbath is a memorial to God, just as the seventh day rest period is a memorial to God's act of creation. It was no accident that every country in the world from the beginning of recorded history has observed a seven day week. This was one of the first commands given to the human race as a memorial to God's work on man's behalf. We are to take a hold of the cross as well, wherein God has done all of the work, we can only take what He has provided for us.

" You will labor six days and do all your work; [Deut. 5:13]

The principle of the Sabbath was simple—for six days man worked. We covered the Doctrine of the Sabbath back in Ex. 20. To sum up, the seventh day is Saturday—Saturday means *seventh day*; and this is the only commandment of the Ten which is not reiterated in the New Testament. Whereas the Jews worshipped on the seventh day, we, in the Church Age worship by giving on the first day of the week, and we take in doctrine and are filled with the Holy Spirit seven days a week.

" But the seventh day—a Sabbath to Y^ehowah your God. You will not do any work; [not] you nor your son nor your daughter; nor your male slave or your female slave; nor your ox nor your donkey nor any of your cattle; nor the sojourner who is within your gates; in order that your male servant may rest and your female servant, as well as you. [Deut. 5:14]

Note that the Israelite is to allow his servant the opportunity to rest as he was a servant himself in the land of Egypt. The Sabbath illustrates salvation to us—God does all the work and we rest in Him. Salvation is for everyone, including the servants of the people of Israel and including those visiting the nation Israel.

This was for the entire nation Israel and everyone in Israel at that time. The point was that God had done all the work. Salvation was for everyone—God's rest was for everyone. Therefore, let us fear so that promise does not remain unclaimed of entering into His rest, so that no [lit., any]⁷⁷ one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they [a reference to the Exodus generation] also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, they will not enter My rest." although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works." And again in this [same passage], "They will not enter My rest." Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of obstinacy. He again fixes a certain day, "Today," speaking through David after so long a time, just as has been said before, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rest from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one fail through the same example of disobedience (Heb. 4:1–11 Psalm 95:11 Gen. 2:2 Psalm 95:11, 7). This rest, taught from the almost the beginning of creation, was one where man rested because God did all of the work.

" You will remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt and then Y^ehowah your God brought you out to here by a strong hand and by an outstretch arm. Therefore, Y^ehowah your God commanded you to do [or to make] the day of the seventh [possibly, to make *this* a day of rest]. [Deut. 5:15]

Translated literally, the end of v. 15 is a little more abstruse. Most translations render this *to keep the Sabbath day; to observe the Sabbath day*. The word for *Sabbath* and the word for *rest* differ only in vowel points so it is possible that this should read **Therefore, Y^ehowah your God commanded you to make a day of rest.**

Of the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath was the very first delivered to man. The original rationale was that God had worked for six days and had provided in those six days everything that man, in his uncorrupted state, would need. Furthermore, there is a significant divergence between the parallel passage in Exodus and this one. After the command to observe the Sabbath, Ex. 20:11 reads: "For in six days Y^ehowah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore, Y^ehowah blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." The rationale given here in Deuteronomy was that God brought them out of Egypt—God again did all of the work. Therefore, they should rest when He commands them to rest as a commemoration to His work. Now why the change of rationale? (1) This is actually a change in the Sabbath, a portion of the full metamorphosis of the Sabbath. (2) When God first gave the commandment to observe the Sabbath, it was given to all man as a commemoration of God doing all of the work. (3) In perfect environment, God did everything for man and then created man. (4) In the corrupted earth, God would do everything on behalf of man to provide him a way of escape. So the Sabbath continued for all mankind after the Fall. (5) However, although the original Sabbath was continued with the original rationale, the rationale changed to match the change in the Sabbath. What change was that? (6) The Sabbath became the property of the nation Israel, as representatives of God here on earth. "So I took them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live. And I also gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am Y^ehowah Who sanctifies them." (Ezek. 20:10–12). (7) So, even though every nation follows a seven day week, based upon the six days of creation and the seventh day of rest, the Age of Israel saw the responsibility for keeping the Sabbath to fall upon the shoulders of the Jews in the land and this was not specifically given to any other group of people. (8) So that is the key: the Sabbath was originally given to all mankind and, at Mount Sinai, it was given specifically to Israel. Man still observes the seven day week, although he does not realize that this is in commemoration to the six days of God's restoration and one day of rest. (9) In the Church Age, the only day which has some unusual significance attached to it is the first day of the week. However, it does not supplant the Sabbath day, it is just a day which has a very slight prominence in the Church Age. (10) So what happened to the Sabbath? It changed again. It was

⁷⁷ This is a follow through with the conjunction *lest*.

a memorial to what God had done and was a sign of what God would do on our behalf. We can only take what He has done for us—we cannot add to it and we cannot work for it. (11) In the Church Age, the Sabbath is the rest that we enter into at salvation—we have entered into His rest; we have rested from our works. (12) The whole key to salvation is resting from one's works. The original Sabbath looked forward to this rest as well as backward to the rest commanded by God. (13) God's rest in the Church Age is believing in Jesus Christ, depending upon His work on the cross and resting from our works. (14) We do not retain the literal Sabbath day in the Church Age; i.e., a day of worship and of no work. Therefore, let not one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day; [These are] things which are a shadow of what is to come; but the substance [or, reality] belongs to Christ (Col. 2:16–17). (15) Therefore, the change in the rationale here was to closely ally Israel with the Sabbath day and such a command is no longer incumbent upon the human race in general.⁷⁸

This time of rest commemorates the fact that God has done all of the work on our behalf. The legalism of the Israelites changed the keeping of the Sabbath into a work in itself.

With the fifth commandment, we enter into man's relationship to man:

Deuteronomy 1	Deuteronomy 2	Deuteronomy 3	Deuteronomy 4	Deuteronomy 5
Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

The Last Six Commandments—Man's Relationship to Man

Ex. 20:12–17

"You will honor your father and your mother as Y^ohowah your God commanded you, that your days in the land may be prolonged and that is it well with you [in the land] which Y^ohowah your God is giving you. [Deut. 5:16]

We find these next commandments quoted throughout the New Testament, both together and separately, in this same basic order and sometimes transposed. One of the great failures of the Jewish people in their relationship was their relationship to each other. Their great additions made to the Mosaic Law made it possible for children to neglect their parents, for so-called spiritual giants to be filled with a variety of mental attitude sins, and for people to think that they had some in with God because they followed the Law to the letter, even though they rejected the Lord Who bought them.

The place of the Mosaic Law in our lives and its meaning should never be misconstrued. The Law is holy, just and good. It gives us a basic framework for protecting the freedom, rights and property of those in a national entity. Any nation which uses these laws as a basic framework for their own laws will prosper and be blessed by God. However, these laws do not save us, they do not qualify us for eternal life with God. They condemn us. If we had only the tenth commandment, we would all be condemned by it. However, when we view the Law honestly, we should come to the conclusion that we don't measure up. Try as we might, we are unable to fully obey the Law. Our inherent sinfulness always stands between us and God. It is here where we realize that we need a Savior, we need God's mercy and forgiveness, and we can only approach him on the narrow path of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

This fifth commandment speaks to divine institution #3—family. Family is the basis for freedom and human maturity and growth. When the nuclear family breaks down, so does society. The family unit is much more important than whether there is a Democrat or Republican in office, a conservative or a liberal. Although Israel

⁷⁸ Like many things which are found in this examination of the Pentateuch, I don't believe that you will see this complete of an explanation for the change of wording anywhere else in non-secular writings.

was guided in its political system, we are given no such mandate today to fight, vote or campaign for any particular type of political system. This doesn't mean that we should be apolitical—it just means that what you are as a father, as a mother—as a family unit, is a thousand times more important than the person that you vote into office. It wouldn't matter much whether you got to choose every candidate for every office you desired; or if I had the same opportunity—the difference here would be negligible. However, how we operate within the realm of our family, our faithfulness, our dedication, our providing for, our love, our guidance—these are issues of real impact. This is an unusual commandment to give at this time for several reasons: (1) notice that this commandment is put forth to the generation of promise, whose parents were slaughtered in the wilderness by God for their degeneracy—their sons and daughters are told to respect, honor and obey their parents. (2) The parents of this generation are all dead. (3) This is a commandment given to young people, not to the older generation. This is a commandment for people who are just coming into God consciousness and they are just becoming responsible for their decisions. They are taught respect for their parents.

To the young child, his parents are as God. A child is to learn love, guidance, discipline and sacrifice from his parents. A mother and a father are real life illustrations of God to the child. The child cannot even begin to fully comprehend the love of his parents for him. And, if the parents have any character at all, they are the first persons to tell their child Who God is.

With the Church Age, a great many relationships were expounded upon. Children, obey your parent in the Lord, for this is the [just and] honorable thing. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise) that you may be prospered and that you may live long on the earth. And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the integrity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will, render service, as to the Lord, and not to me, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him (Eph. 6:1–9). Since we do not have slavery, per se, this divine laws concerning slaves and masters can be applied in the workplace between labor and management. Since most of us are in labor, note that you should do your job as to the Lord—as though He were your boss and you were doing your job in order to please Him. A parallel passage is found in Colossians: Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is commendable in the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart. Slaves, according to the norm of all things, obey those who are your masters according to the norm of the flesh, not with external service, as those who please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord, rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. Masters, grant to your slaves justice and equal proportions, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven (Col. 3:20–4:1).

"You will not murder. [Deut. 5:17]

This is an attack against human volition. Once a person is murdered, then his volition no longer functions and he can not longer believe in Jesus Christ. This does not preclude killing in war nor does it preclude capital punishment—this is a mandate against first and second degree murder. A soldier in war has the duty to kill the enemy. As Thieme has said over and over again, a Christian with doctrine should be the best killer in his outfit. Keep in mind, Israel is about to enter into the land of Canaan and will be under strict orders from God to kill their enemies. In fact, in many cases, they will be commanded to kill their enemies and their women and children as well. The commandment not to kill was also one of the first recorded commandments delivered by God to man. But remember, the penalty was capital punishment. **"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood will be shed."** (Gen. 9:6a). **"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You will not commit murder,' and 'Whoever commits murder will be liable to the court.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother will be guilty before the court; and whoever will say to his brother, 'Raca,' will be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever will say, 'You fool,' will be guilty [and cast] into hell fire."** (Matt. 5:21–22).

" 'And you will not commit adultery. [Deut. 5:18]

A difference between the Ex. 20 version and this version is the leading conjunction found in this and the next three commandments. It would be reasonable to translate this **neither will you commit adultery**. *Neither* is a common rendering of the conjunction plus the negative. The western Samaritan, the Septuagint and the Syriac lack these conjunctions. My educated guess is that they are matching these Ten Commandments with Exodus in this situation. However, I think the primary difference is one of speaking. When these are listed as commandments in stone, there would be no conjunction. However, a person delivering these commandments orally would have a tendency to include the conjunction. This would either be a Hebraism or a particular speech pattern of Moses at that time. Therefore, the *and* remains as this is likely the way it was spoken. In terms of meaning, it does not affect this passage one whit.

You have heard that it was said, "You will not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:27–28). This is an attack against marriage. Few marriages of even right man/right woman can survive when one or the other of the two parties commits adultery. The enormous numbers of people committing adultery today has ruined the family and the second divine institution of marriage. And when you have sex outside of marriage, prior to marriage, you have committed adultery against your future husband or wife and your marriage will suffer because of that. In fact, it is for reasons of sexual promiscuity (which is having **one** or more partners prior to and/or during marriage), that many people never hook up with their right man or their right woman. There is a perfect time for a lot of things to occur and meeting one's right person and hooking up with them might have but a month or a year window. A sexual relationship with anyone during this time will have ruinous affects upon your relationship with that person. When one-half of the married people have cheated on their spouses during marriage and a third of those (or more) cheated on their spouses before marriage, we have all but destroyed the institution of marriage. The marriage between right man and right woman can be the greatest thing in the world—a daily illustration of God's love and faithfulness. Yet this same marriage can be transformed into a life of hell if one or both partners have committed adultery either before or during their marriage.

I am personally convinced that in a nuclear family where there has been no divorce and where sexual experience is confined to marriage for both the adults as well as their children, that the number of those who believe they are *homosexual* becomes negligible—perhaps a portion of 1%. It is in a society where sexual promiscuity is touted as a right, as a human need in or out of marriage, that homosexuals might make up as much as 5% of the population. As a society becomes more and more degenerate, that number can grow increasingly high (as in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah when homosexual males made up nearly 100% of their population).

If you are a young person, wait for God to provide you with your right person. You don't need to go looking and you don't need to experiment. Your body will not detonate or self-destruct when you choose not to have sex outside of marriage. Your mind should be consumed with God's Word, and allow God to deal with the details of your life. One of my favorite quotes from Thieme is *the key is not finding the right person; the key is being the right person*. You develop your character through listening to God's Word, through remaining in the Spirit and through your volition.

We are bombarded daily with television, movies, music and commercials which encourage us to seek sexual partners. 99% of the sexual relationships portrayed in the medium are those between unmarried people. The so-called responsible position is to be in love first. God's Word tells you to be married first. If you have found a person who, if you were a male, you would give your life for; and, if you are a female, you have found a person to whom you are willing to surrender your volition to, then you have probably found the right person. The key is character, not physical attraction and personality. That is when you get married and enjoy a sexual relationship for the rest of your lives. If the other person has no character (or, if you have no character) you have doomed your relationship.

" 'And you will not steal. [Deut. 5:19]

Property is a right of all men, whether regenerate or not. In a degenerate society, there will be an increase of stealing and vandalism. Notice how all of these things seem to increase or decrease together. A society never **sits still. It moves closer or farther away from God. Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have to share with him who has need** (Eph. 4:28).

Verse 20 is one of the poorer translations found in most Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Neither shall you witness falsely against your neighbor.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Neither shalt thou testify against they neighbour with a witness of falsehood.
KJV	Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor.
NASB	You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
NIV	You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
NRSV	Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Thou dost not answer against they neighbour—a false testimony.

I didn't catch this until I was reading through the footnotes for Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*. He gives an alternate rendering of one word which got me started. When you see the better translations essentially agree, I tend not to examine the verse more carefully as to its correct rendering. The first problem is the word for *false* is not found anywhere in this verse. Is that a surprise or what? Furthermore, no one is *bearing, lifting or carrying* anything. Only Young catches this and Rotherham footnotes it.⁷⁹ In the Hebrew, that word is *ʿânâh* (עָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*] and it generally means *to answer*. It is found well over 300 times in the Bible: Gen. 18:27 Ex. 4:1 Deut. 1:14). This word occasionally has a very technical meaning of giving a response in court, as in Deut. 19:18. This is perhaps its rarest usage in Scripture. It can mean *words which stand as a witness against someone* (Deut. 31:21 Ruth 1:21 2Sam. 1:16). The key in this usage seems to be (1) in context, this stands alone—it is not the answer to a question, and (2) a negative is associated with *ʿânâh*. Strong's #6030 BDB #772. This word is found here with the *bêyth* preposition of proximity and here it means *against*. *Witness* is the word *ʿêd* (עֵד) [pronounced *gáide*] and it is a word used outside the courtroom (Gen. 31:44 Ex. 22:13) as well as in (Deut. 17:6–7, 19:18). It is a statement given as truth, a solemn testimony or something which stands as a testimony or memorial to a fact (e.g., Gen. 31:48 Deut. 31:19). Strong's #5707 BDB #729. The last word is particularly interesting, as we have already seen it in the third commandment. *Shâv*⁸ (שָׁו) [pronounced *shawv*^e] and it does not mean *false*. It means *vain, empty, worthless*. Strong's #7723 BDB #996. This does not have to be testimony in court, although that is implied here.

Now you may wonder why I do this—you're thinking, *well, it means just about the same thing once you are all done with all that Hebrew gobbledegook*. So let me answer that in points: (1) It does not mean the same thing exactly. (2) This is God's Word—this is the only testimony of truth left on this earth for us and we would do well to ascertain its exact and correct meaning and interpretation. (3) Often, one Scripture is compared with another to clarify the meaning of a particular word, sometimes a nuance or a usage is examined and it would be nice to have a translation which is consistent and accurate so that these comparisons can be done by a person without a working knowledge of Hebrew. (4) Sometimes the meaning of a very important or somewhat obscure passage depends upon the meaning of another verse. If the other verse is poorly rendered, then the meaning of the obscure verse is difficult to ascertain. (5) Finally, given the choice between doing something right or half-assed, assuming that you have the time and the ability, do it right.

"And you will not answer against your neighbor—a worthless [or, empty] witness [or, testimony]."
[Deut. 5:20]

This is the commandment against lying—specifically against someone as a solemn witness. However, just as adultery and murder are extended to include sexual lust and hatred, this can be extended to include lying in general. You do not lie to make yourself look good or to remove personal guilt. **Lying lips are an abomination to**

⁷⁹ I spent an additional 1½ hours studying and working on this passage because of the footnote which reads: M.I.: "answer."

Y^ehowah; but those who deal faithfully are His delight (Prov. 12:22). Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its practices (Col. 3:9). "You will not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another." (Lev. 19:11).

" 'And you will not desire your neighbor's wife and you will not desire your neighbor's house, his field, and his male servant and his female servant; his ox and his donkey; and anything that is your neighbor's.' [Deut. 5:21]

Notice that in this verse, as opposed to its parallel passage, we have the additional work *field*. Whereas the Israelites had houses in Egypt, they did not own the fields that they served. They labored on fields for the Egyptians as slaves. They are about to enter the land and God is going to give them a land grant. That is, every Israelite will own a piece of land. Therefore, Moses, as guided by the Holy Spirit, adds *field* to this commandment. Certainly you have looked at someone else's house, the lot that it was on, the neighborhood that it was in, and you lusted for it. Just rebound that sin and move on.

According to Edersheim, the word *desire* is awaked from without by that which is seen to be beautiful and *desire* springs from within, from the evil inclinations. In the Hebrew, desire is the word *châmad* (חָמַד) [pronounced *khaw-MAHD*] and it means *to desire, to covet, to take pleasure in*. It is found first in Gen. 2:9 and 3:6 in the Niphal participle (*desirable*). Strong's #2530 BDB #326. The other word is *âwâh* (אָוָה) [pronounced *aw-WAWH*] and it means *to desire, to crave, to lust*. This latter word is not found in Exodus and makes its first appearance in the Bible in Num. 11:4, 34 34:10 Job 23:13 This is the word used of the desire of David for water in 2Sam. 23:15. Strong's #183 BDB #16 My reasonable guess is that *châmad* is a something desirable seen from the outside and that *âwâh* is the festering lust for it on the inside.

For this: "You will not commit adultery, you will not murder, you will not steal, you will not covet;" and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in the saying, "You will love your neighbor as yourself." Love does not evil to a neighbor; love, therefore, is the fulfillment; [it is] law (Rom. 13:9–10). And He [Jesus] said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." (Luke 12:15). Let your character be free from the love of money. Keep being content with what you have, for He Himself has said, "I will never not never not even never desert you nor will I ever forsake you." (Heb. 13:5). But godliness is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. for we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. and if we have food and covering, with these we should be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction, for the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by intensely desiring for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many categories of pain (1Tim. 6:6–10). We do not need to lust because, God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it stands written: "He scatters abroad, He gave to the poor, His righteousness abides forever." (2Cor. 9:8–9 Psalm 112:9).

As has been pointed out several times before, the Law is not designed to save man. Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:16). McGee said: *The Law actually is like a plumb line to determine the verticality of a crooked wall. The Law is a mirror that is held up to the heart. It is a headlight on a car to show the way into the darkness and to reveal the curves ahead. The Law is a mirror held up to us. We are to look in it, and it will reveal to each of us that we are sinners. The mirror in the bathroom will show the smudge spot on the face, but the mirror won't wh off that spot. The Law can show us our sin, but it cannot save us. In no way can the mirror remove the smudge spot. We must come to the basin and wash it away. The Law is the mirror that tells us to start washing. It tells us to come to Christ. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that will wash us and keep on cleansing us from all sin. The important thing is not whether you approve the Ten Commandments or what you think of them; the important question, my friend, is: Have you kept them? If you are honest, you know that you haven't measured up. That means you need a Savior. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet,*

they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).⁸⁰ By the works of the Law will no flesh be justified in His sight; for through the Law [is] the realization of sin (Rom. 3:20). It is the Law which condemns us. It is the Law which tells us we are lost. "Cursed is every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law—to perform them." (Gal. 3:10b Deut. 27:26). The Law is a school bus which takes us to Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:24–25). What shall we conclude? Is the Law sin? Hell, no! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said "You will not covet." (Rom. 7:7 Ex. 20:17). Keeping just nine out of ten commandments is not good enough. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one [transgression], he has become guilty of all. For [you see], He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now, if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law (James 2:11 Ex. 20:12, 14).

As I had mentioned earlier, there are a number of different scenarios which God set up by way of examples for us. It was not that He had to try this, and it didn't work; then he tried that, and it didn't work, so He tried something else. He will demonstrate that man, apart from the indwelling Holy Spirit, even raised up from a young age with the Law, cannot keep the Law. The debater between genetics and environment is certainly not solved, but this shows clearly that no one can claim that if someone is raised from an early enough age under the perfect Law of God, then they will be able to follow it. Everyone is born with an indwelling old sin nature and no matter how good the environment, that aspect of man does not change. Man is born in rebellion to God, and, apart from the work of God the Holy Spirit, man remains in rebellion against God. "If you had only paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea." (Isa. 48:18).

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Israel Asks Moses to Stand Between Themselves and Y^ehowah

Ex. 20:18–21

"Y^ehowah spoke these words to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness—a great voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. [Deut. 5:22]

These Ten Commandments were not the end of God's revelation to man. They give us a bare bones outline for the function of Israel as a priest nation under the economy of the Jewish Age. These do not define sin, per se, nor are the only laws a nation is to have. They are a framework for national freedom and they are a basic honor code for a people of God.

And when He [God] had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God. And it came to pass, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the [gold] calf [or idolatry] and dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain. Now Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered. So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as Y^ehowah had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand. So he [Moses] was there with Y^ehowah forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And He [God] wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments [lit., words] (Ex. 31:18 32:19 34:1–2, 28). It is my guess that the dramatic moment of breaking the tablets when Moses came down and saw the

⁸⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 36, 42–43.

behavior of the Israelites may not have been altogether in God's will. However, God did not discipline him for that; He must make Moses cut out the tablets of stone this time. Moses would be less likely to *drop* them after that. This is conjecture, by the way.

As has been discussed, God did not run out of room on one tablet and write commandments 6–10 on the second. Each tablet contained all ten commandments.

"And it came to pass as you [all] heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, and the mountain burning with fire, that you [all] would come near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders, [Deut. 5:23]

Moses is not really speaking of those present, but of their parents. The *you* here refers to Israelites—these Israelites came near to God, after having seen the great signs and wonders and after hearing God's voice.

"And then you [all] said, 'Look, Y^ehowah our God has shown us His glory [or, splendor] and His greatness; and His voice we have heard out of the midst of the fire; this day we have seen that God does speak with man, and he [man] [continues to] live. [Deut. 5:24]

Said is in the imperfect tense, meaning that the various elders came up at different times and said these things to Moses. This is a compilation of the various things said by them to Moses. The Old English *behold* was closer to the way that they spoke, in a more formal language than we do today—the Brits would have, in recent times, said, "See, here." We might say, "Look." It doesn't mean that we want someone to look at something with their sense of sight—we want them to pay attention to what we are saying; we want them to *look* at what we are saying. So, God spoke to all of Israel out from the midst of the fire, and the Israelites still lived. That was their first point.

" 'And now therefore, why should [lit., do] we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we continue to hear the voice of Y^ehowah our God any more, then [lit., and] we will die. [Deut. 5:25]

This is not a reference to gen X several years later when they began to die like flies in the desert. This is the comments of their elders at the time that God spoke directly to all of them. **And all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but do not let God speak [directly] with us, or else we will die." (Ex. 20:18–19).**

Let me tell you one of the concerns that I had in the back of my mind. When I read God's Word, I read it semi-critically. I am certainly biased, but correctly so. However, occasionally the thought comes to me, what if all this was a sham on Moses' part. What if he's hoodwinked this people? Maybe he went up on the mountain and it took him forty days to carve out the ten commandments on the stone himself. This passage and similar passages help to show why that would not have been the case. The people heard God speaking to them—this is two million people; this is a miracle which modern science has a difficult time duplicating. When there are 60,000 people in a football stadium, can they all hear what is going on? It has only been in recent decades that we have a sound system which could reach the majority of people in a football stadium. At this time, there was what appears to be lightning flashes, possibly thunder—in any case, there is a great deal of unusual commotion about the mountain, yet they all hear the voice of God. Moses, in this message, points this out. He is verifying the history that they lived through and the people listening are not objecting to what he is saying, because it's true—they were there, they saw it all occur. This was also recorded and there was some distribution, although nothing like we have today, and there were no objections that we are aware of as to the content of this book or of the content of the rest of the Pentateuch. It would be difficult for one man, no matter how charismatic he is, to write a history which is totally fallacious and not have a portion of the roughly one million people who were alive when this history took place object to the content. Charismatic leaders in cults appeal to small portions of populations—never to a population as a whole. Those charismatic leaders whose cult gains a wide following, such as the Mormons, has some truth mixed in with the lies, and the historical events which led up to the genesis of the cult has become past history. Such as, Joseph Smith, like any charismatic leader, even as goofy as his story was, could appeal to a few people. Throw in some truth and another charismatic leader (Brigham Young), and you end up with a larger

following. However, this was Moses speaking to the people of Israel and they can confirm in their minds, *yes, this did happen or it did not*. They were there. They heard the voice of God and there was no question in their minds that that was what they had heard.

After the Ten Commandments, the Israelites were stunned. The last commandment was a killer: *you will not covet*; or, in more modern English, *you will not lust; you will not desire; you will not envy; you will not crave*. On the one hand, they understood the truth of what they heard; on the other hand, they recognized themselves as all being guilty. Furthermore, they were scared to death. Moses had to speak to them on many occasions and they knew that only a small portion of them were actually able to hear what Moses had to say. However, here, they all heard the voice of God and it frightened them tremendously. The people told their elders to go speak to Moses immediately. They were concerned about the lightning, the voice of God, their own sinfulness. A quasi-normal person would be scared witless in a similar situation. The elders, due to being prompted and some of their own accord, went to Moses immediately concerning God's voice. The audience to this message of Moses were all there; they all witnessed these things, as they heard God's voice.

"For who of all flesh [is] he who has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire like us—and [still] lives? [Deut. 5:26]

What had occurred on Sinai was unprecedented. There was no history, written or spoken, where a large group of people had heard God's voice directly like this. God has always worked through mediators prior to this, and would continue to do so. This should raise some questions in your mind as to why.

Why Does God Work Through Mediators?

(1) God is holy, perfect righteousness and justice. (2) We are sinful, devious and corrupt. (3) A perfect God cannot come into direct contact with imperfect man. This would result in our immediate destruction. (4) God came in the form of a man, experiencing all the pain and trials and tribulation of living upon this earth, and then He took upon Himself our sins and paid the penalty for all the wrong that we have done and ever will do. (5) God, the Son, became our mediator: One equal to both man and God. (6) This for us is an historic fact. However, there are 3000-8000 years of history which occurred prior to the cross. God has given them the gospel as He has given us the gospel. (7) The Old Testament people heard the gospel in several ways, but it was all in shadow form. The cross was future, God chose not to reveal the cross to Satan, but He had to reveal it to all of mankind. (8) Therefore, God worked in shadows of what was to come, and through the Holy Spirit, revealed the gospel to individual man, as man observed the animal sacrifices or as man thought of the continual mediator relationships, all of which represented Jesus Christ as our great Mediator between God and ourselves. (9) However, there would always remain the objection *if God had spoken directly to me where it was unquestionably God's voice, then I would believe and I would do whatever He asked of me*. Human history removes all human and demonic objections to God's character and plan. These Israelites, two million of them, heard the voice of God. Those who had reached the age of accountability and who heard God's voice rebelled against God anyway and died the sin unto death in the desert. (10) These are the same ones who saw great signs and wonders when God removed them from Egypt. How many times have you heard someone say, *if God would just come down and show me a great sign, then I would believe. If God wants me, then He can prove to me He exists*. Generation X is a case history of those who saw great and incredible signs and God killed them in the wilderness because of their degeneracy and negative volition. (11) Everyone who has positive volition toward God will hear the gospel. The only to assure yourself a place in the Lake of Fire is to spend 100% of your time on earth rejecting God as He really is and spend 100% of your life rejecting Jesus Christ as your Savior. You must be unwavering in your lack of faith toward God. (12) For most people, *prove to me that God exists* is a deception. It is an excuse that they think gets them off the hook. Haven't you ever caught a child red-handed (or, even, almost red-handed) and they are in trouble because they just broke something or they have just done something wrong, and they look at you with these big, wide sincere eyes and they tell you that they didn't do it? Children, due to their old sin natures, learn to lie at a very early age—even in the face of unquestioning damning evidence, they will lie to get themselves off the hook. And, here is the extraordinary part of human nature—people whose weakness is lying will come to a point where they partially believe their own lies. They bury their own guilt that deep inside their souls; inside their scar tissue. This is the person who

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tells you, *prove to me that God exists, and I will believe in Him. Or, all God needs to do is prove to me He exists, and I will believe Him.* That is a smokescreen. God will make Himself known to anyone on positive signals. It won't necessarily be in a dramatic, miraculous way—99% of the time it is not; but He will make Himself known. Everyone on positive signals when they actually hear the gospel for the first time know there is a decision to make. (13) Generation X is an example of people who would have believed in Jesus Christ no matter what. God not only impressed them with signs and wonders, but gave them tremendous responsibilities commensurate with these signs and wonders and they were spectacular failures, with only a small handful of exceptions. (14) God has allowed the greatest super creature of all time, the most intelligent, charismatic and attractive super creature of all time to rule over the earth. Man was given this responsibility and man defaulted to Satan. With all of Satan's creature genius, it is demonstrated in human history that his plan results in nothing but human misery, suffering and death. (15) For all men who have positions of power who operate apart from God, it will be shown that their fleeting moment in the sun, regardless of how much good they even sincerely wanted to do, will result in human misery, suffering and death. (16) Have you not noticed that every time a politician, albeit sincere, attempts to solve a problem, five more problems arise because of his solution? (17) The welfare program was instituted by some whose intentions were thoroughly humanitarian. They had not clue one that this would result in many generations of people who would be raised under welfare and think that this nation owes them a living, whether they choose to work or not. And, if they choose to go out and get pregnant, they sincerely believe that this government should pay for the birth of their children and assist them financially for the next twenty or so years to raise them so that they can also go on welfare. I use this by way of example of a program whose founders had intentions which may have been very sincere and humanitarian, but had not the foresight to see where it would lead. (18) Finally, this passage, where all of Israel heard the voice of God, helps to explain why God has had several different programs or dispensations or economies on this earth. Human history will show to all of those who survive it that God is perfect, righteous and good; and that His plan is perfect righteous and good; and that His judgments are perfect, righteous and good. And, at the end of human history, there will be no possible objections remaining as to God's character, motives or perfection. Every possible objection and every possible scenario will have been played out, and it will be demonstrated unquestionably each and every time that God is perfect and that we can always place our complete trust in Him.

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"You approach [or draw near] [to God] and hear all that which Y^ehowah our God says, and you—you [personally] will speak all that which Y^ehowah our God has spoken to you, and we will listen and we will do it." [Deut. 5:27]

Qâra^{bv} (בָּרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RA^BV*] is a word which we have seen several times in the past and it means *come near, approach*. It is incorrectly translated *offer, sacrifice*. Here, as in many other passages, its meaning is clear. The people want Moses to go near to God. They aren't asking him to sacrifice anything; it just that hearing the voice of God has them scared witless. Qâra^{bv} is in the imperative. They are ordering him to go directly to God and leave them out of this direct communication. BDB #897 Strong #7126 **Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen, but let not God speak to us, or we will die."** (Ex. 20:19).

"And Y^ehowah heard the content [lit., voice] of your words, while you were speaking to me, and Y^ehowah said to me, "I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you; they have spoken correctly [lit., they have done well all which they have spoken]. [Deut. 5:28]

The word *while* is the bêyth preposition, generally translated *in, into*; proximity is indicated with this preposition. When bêyth is followed by an infinitive construct, it forms a periphrasis for the gerund,⁸¹ generally translated as a verb and conjunction in the English. The proximity implied is more one of time. Therefore, the literal *in their being created* of Gen. 2:4 could be reasonably rendered *while they were created* or *when they were created*. The implication of this kind of phrasing could also be translated *after that*, as in Gen 33:18 Ex. 3:12 13:17 (again, the proximity is one of time rather than of place). Proximity of time does not mean within a few minutes or a few hours. If the event spoken of, such as the exodus, took a long period of time (forty years), that period of time is treated as a block of time and proximity of time is relative to the length of time referred to (Deut. 4:25 23:5 Joshua 5:4 2Kings 2:1).⁸² BDB #88

This was the literal translation. God is omniscient. After hearing the Ten Commandments, the people sent hand fulls of representatives to Moses, some coming to him of their own accord, requesting to stand between them and God. This request was pleasing to God. God is pleased when we go to the Mediator who stands between ourselves and Him.

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God's Response to Israel's Request

"O that their heart had been shown to them, to fear Me, and to keep My commands all the days, that is may be well with them and with their sons—to a long duration [or, eternity]! [Deut. 5:29]

As we have seen repeatedly, gen X was a waste of a generation—all believers and all in reversionism. They were an embarrassment to the family of God. God loathed that generation. They were accurate and they were correct in asking Moses to stand between them and God; this was the right thing for them to do. If only they would have stayed with this—to keep Moses as their intermediary, to obey all of God's commands given through Moses. They would have lived long in the land and the divine consequences would have lasted forever.

For a nameless person to become involved with drugs and crime, you are happy to hear when they receive the just rewards for their actions. However, if you have had children and, regardless of the reason, they have turned to drugs or to crime or to an unsavory lifestyle, your heart goes out to them. Because of the pain they will cause themselves, you hurt as well. Even if you are put in the position where you must turn them in or you must take action which will cause them pain, the pain is yours as well. Anthromorphically speaking, this is how God feels. **"But My people did not listen to My voice; and Israel did not obey Me. So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, to walk in their own devices. Oh that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways. I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their adversaries...I would feed you with the finest of the wheat and I would satisfy you with honey from the rock."** (Psalm 81:11–14, 16). Thus says Y^ehowah, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; **"I am Y^ehowah your God, Who teaches you free enterprise [lit., to profit]; Who leads you in the way you should go. If only you have paid attention to My commandments; then your well-being would have been like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sand and your offspring like its grains; their name would never be cut off or destroyed from My presence."** (Isa. 49:17–19). **"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who murders the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not!"** (Matt. 23:37).

⁸¹ Okay, I admit it; here I don't have a clue as to what I just wrote.

⁸² BDB, pp. 90–91. I didn't look up the references.

Again and again it is repeated to Israel in this great book Deuteronomy: trust God, follow His commands and He will prosper you. "And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, in order that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which Y^ehowah, the God of your fathers, is giving you." (Deut. 4:1). "So you will keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving your for all time." (Deut. 4:40).

" **Go, say to them, "Return to your tents [lit., Turn back for yourselves, to your tents]."**
[Deut. 5:30]

Deuteronomy is also famous for quotes within quotes within quotes. Moses is quoting what God told him to say to Israel.

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Do Not Deviate from God's Commandments

" **'And you, stand here with Me and I will tell you all the commandments [lit., word] and the statutes and the ordinances which you will teach them and they will do them in the land which I am giving them to possess it.'** [Deut. 5:31]

This is all paralleled in Exodus: Now Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment [lit., word] which I have written for their instruction." (Ex. 24:12).

"**And you all have observed to do as Y^ehowah your God had commanded you; you [all] will not deviate from it [lit., turn not aside, right or left].** [Deut. 5:32]

Moses is now speaking directly to the people of Israel. God is giving them a perfect, holy and just Law. They are not to add to it or subtract from it, nor are they to deviate from it. With the Mishna and the Talmud, the Israelites went into over-think and, in their attempt to specify the Law, they essentially added to it, took away from it and deviated far from what God had intended. "And do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods, to serve them." (Deut. 28:14). [God commanding Joshua]: "Only be strong and very courageous. Be careful to do according to all the Law which Moses My servant command you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the Law will not depart from your mouth, but you will study it day and night so that you may be diligent to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success." (Joshua 1:7; see also Joshua's farewell address in Joshua 23).

"**You will walk in all the way which Y^ehowah your God had commanded you, so that you [all] will live and [so that] it is well with you, and [so that] you [all] will have prolonged days [lit., and you may live long—days] in the land which you [all] possess."** [Deut. 5:33]

It was very simple for Israel—obey God and prosper, disobey Him and suffer discipline. Our lives are equally simple. God's promises to Israel were not just for that period of time long ago, nor were they all transferred over to the church. "Observe, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath, and in [My] great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. They will be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may revere Me always, for their own benefit, and for [the benefit of] their children after them. And I will make an everlasting

covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will place the fear [reverence] of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. For, thus says Y^ehowah, Just as I brought all this calamity on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them." (Jer. 32:37–42).

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Deuteronomy 6

Deuteronomy 6:1–25

Outline of Chapter 6:

- Vv. 1–9 **The sons of Israel are enjoined to learn and obey God's Laws**
- Vv. 10–19 **Moses warns the Israelites not to flunk the prosperity test**
- Vv. 20–25 **What the Israelites are to teach their sons concerning the Law**

Introduction: Our Lord said, "If you love me, then keep My commandments." (John 14:15). God's love, His Law and obedience to the Law are all intertwined, and nowhere is this better illustrated than in Deut. 6. It is in this chapter where we find God's greatest commandment, which reads: **You will love Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might** (Deut. 6:5). The way we manifest our love toward Him is in our obedience to his commandments. And God's commandments are not an arbitrary collection of do's and don't's designed to take the fun out of living. God delivered them to Israel out of love—to give Israel some precise boundaries and to provide for human freedom in that nation. Our understanding of God's love is furthered by the New Testament, where, rather than lead us with His omnipotence, God becomes a man and dwells among us, suffering the same things that we suffer and much more. Finally, the ultimate show of His love is the death of **Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf: Herein is love—not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins** (1John 4:10).

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The Sons of Israel Are Enjoined to Learn and Obey God's Laws

"And this—the commandment—statutes and the ordinances which Y^ehowah your God commanded to teach you to do in the land which you are going over there to possess it.
[Deut. 6:1]

In the Hebrew, this verse stands completely apart from Deut. 5:33. Whereas the previous verses were filled with fairly common Qal perfect and imperfect verbs, this verse has three infinitive constructs. With the prefixed preposition *lamed*, these verbs can indicate *purpose, result, explanation or an imminent event*.⁸³ The commandment, statutes and ordinances are the Word of God which is to be taught to the people. Moses does not affix the personal pronoun to the word *commanded*, as this is his swan song and others will take over the teaching ministry from here. *To teach* is purpose; *to do* is result and purpose; *to possess* is an imminent event.

For the next several chapters, Moses will expound somewhat on the Ten Commandments, not necessarily explaining each one, but he will deal with the importance of learning God's Law, of teaching God's Law to their sons, of the obedience of the Israelites to the Law. He will focus primarily upon idolatry as illustrative of the Law, as when one places anything before God, the rest of the Law becomes inconsequential. That is, the person who does not recognize the God Who brought them out of Egypt to the Land of Promise, and the person who does not both worship and fear Y^ehowah, will have no reason to obey the rest of the Law, as it specifically came from the God of Israel. Barne's Notes expresses this quite well: *Moses proceeds to set forth more particularly and to enforce the cardinal and essential doctrines of the Decalogue, the nature and attributes of God, and the fitting*

⁸³ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zoghiates; p 2277.

mode of honouring and worshipping Him. Two objects are indicated (vv. 2, 3), the glory of God and the welfare of man, as the grand aims he has in view⁸⁴.

"So that you fear Y^ehowah your God, to keep all His statutes and His commands, which I am commanding you—you and your son and your grandson [lit., sons's son], all days of your lives, and so that your days are prolonged. [Deut. 6:2]

Moses generally speaks to individuals. Those to whom he is speaking are all found in the singular. This is very personal. In reference to his audience, only *lives* is plural (but it has with it a singular possessive pronoun). To each and every person listening, Moses is commanding him personally, and Moses is commanding that person's son, and that person's son personally. The purpose of them keeping these commandments is to prolong their days in the land. The time that they spend in the land will correspond directly to their obedience to God's Word. "And now, Israel, what does Y^ehowah your God require from you, but to fear [or, revere] Y^ehowah your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep Y^ehowah's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your God?" (Deut. 12–13). A recurring theme throughout the Old Testament is obedience to God's Laws and reverence toward God based upon what Israel has already observed: "Only fear [or, revere] Y^ehowah and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But, if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away." (1Sam. 12:24–25). And all this came about due to Abraham's simple obedience to God; [this is God speaking to Isaac]: "Remain in this land and I will be with you and I will bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants, all the nations of the earth will be blessed—because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My expectations, My commandments, My statutes and My laws." (Gen. 26:3–5).

"And you have heard, O Israel, and you will take responsibility to do, that it may be well with you, and that you may be prospered with many children [lit., multiply exceedingly], as Y^ehowah, God of your fathers, has promised [or, spoken to] you—a land flowing with milk and honey. [Deut. 6:3]

One of the most common words in the Hebrew is the relative pronoun 'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], which I generally translate *which, when* or *who*. It is a particle of relation, a sign of relation or a connecting link. As a connective, it can mean *so that, in that, since, for that, inasmuch as, forasmuch*. Strong's #834 BDB #83. In this verse, it follows the verb *to do*. Moses has taught these Israelites for forty years; they have heard it directly from God's mouth. They are to continue listening to His Word and taking the responsibility to do these commands—and the result will be prosperity.

God had promised Abraham, several centuries previous, that his seed would be great in number and greatly prospered: And He [God] too him [Abraham] outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens and list the stars, if you are able to list them." And He said to him, "So will your descendants be." (Gen. 15:5). "Indeed, I will greatly bless you and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the and which is on the seashore; and your descendents will possess the gate of their enemies. And in your descendants, all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." (Gen. 22:17–18).

"Hear, O Israel, Y^ehowah our God—Y^ehowah alone! [Deut. 6:4]

This verse is very elliptical. It begins with the Qal imperative of *shāma'* (שָׁמַע) [pronounced *shaw-MAH*] is the simple word for *listen*. Moses calls out to the people in a loud voice: *LISTEN, O Israel!* Then, the literal translation is *Y^ehowah our God; Y^ehowah one!* *One* can mean *unique, only*. Let me give you some of the other translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord—the only Lord.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Hear, O Israel: Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone.

⁸⁴ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 283.

KJV	Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God <i>is</i> one LORD.
NASB	"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"
NIV	Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
NRSV	Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.
Owen's Translation	Hear, O Israel; Yahweh our God one Yahweh.
Septuagint	Hear, Israel: Lord the God of ours, Lord is one.
Young's Lit. Translation	'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God <i>is</i> one Jehovah.'
Jesus Christ	"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" or "The Lord [is] our God; the Lord is one." (Mark 12:29b)

Whether our Lord quoted from the Septuagint or from the Hebrew Bible and translated (they would both be pretty much equivalent), the word for *one* occupies 1½ pages in Arndt and Gingrich. *One* in the Greek can mean *one [as opposed to a larger number], [one] alone, the whole in contrast to the parts.*⁸⁵ This could read: **Y^ehowah our God, alone, apart from all else, unique [is] Y^ehowah!** Therefore, this God to Whom the Israelites are related is unique, alone, apart from all else. All of these are applicable. Whereas we are not in the immediate context of idolatry, this idolatry was mentioned in Deut. 6 and will be covered again in chapter 7. There is no comparison or similarity to any national deity. Barne's notes read: *This weighty text contains far more than a mere declaration of the unity of God as against polytheism; or of the sole authority of the Revelation He ahd made to Israel as against other pretended manifestations of His will and attributes. It asserts that the Lord God of Israel is absolutely God, and none other. He, and He alone, is Jehovah the absolute, the uncaused God; He Who had by His election of them made Himself known to Israel.*⁸⁶ In retrospect, we know now that this speaks of Jesus Christ, the God of Israel, Who is the Unique Person of the Universe.

But how about the word in the Hebrew? 'Echâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced *eh-KHAWD*] and it means *one*, but it can also mean a *composite unity*. We have seen this word used specifically in that way in Gen. 2:24: **For this cause a man will leave his father and his mother and he will cling to his wife; and they shall become *one* flesh.** See also Gen. 34:16, 22 Strong's #259 BDB #25. There is an adjective in the Hebrew which means *single, solitary, only one*. That is *yâchîd* (יָחִיד) [pronounced *yaw-KHEED*]; Strong's #3173 BDB #402

Although there were hints of a triune God in the Pentateuch (chiefly in the first two chapters of Genesis), this is a doctrine which would have perplexed the Israelites. It perplexes theologians and laymen alike today. However, the Bible is given as progressive revelation. That is, Noah did not know about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross any more than he knew about the Church Age and the Tribulation. Noah understood sacrifice and trust in Y^ehowah God, and he had a much better understanding of the dispensation in which he lived as well as the previous dispensation than we do. However, we have a better understanding of the person and character of God. God is one in essence and three in person. In the garden, in Sodom and Gomorroah, in the desert, Y^ehowah is the revealed member of the trinity—the person of the Godhead with Whom man had visual contact. The idea of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit was not completely grasped by the Israelites. However, Moses is calling attention to the uniqueness of their God, how He stands apart from all else. Just as Jesus Christ stands apart and alone, separate from all other supposed deities, such as Shiva, Buddha, etc., Y^ehowah God stood apart, alone, separate from all other gods of Canaan. It was not a matter of different people using different names for the same God—the difference was that they worshipped different deities. The Israelites worshiped the True God of the Universe and the heathen of the Land of Promise worshiped Satan and his demon corps (the same is true when Christianity is contrasted with other religions).

When it comes to human viewpoint, certainly the more liberal of us would think that every religion is just a local manifestation of sincere men worshiping the same God. When I was young, I thought the same thing. It is normal to assume, particularly when young and unlearned, that all roads lead to Rome and all religions teach essentially the same thing and worship essentially the same God—they just have different names for Him. However, that is not according to divine revelation. God has been quite specific with Israel—He is their God and He is the only

⁸⁵ Arndt and Gingrich *A Greek English Lexicon*, ©1957, p. 230.

⁸⁶ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. 283, p. .

God. The heathen in the land with their own way of worshiping God and their own deities—God orders Israel to destroy them. You may or may not like that—but that is divine viewpoint. God is not a liberal and all roads do not lead to Rome.

Isaiah had much to say concerning the uniqueness of Y^ehowah of Israel. Yet, at the same time, Isaiah spoke of the Truine God. Actually, God had much to say and Isaiah quoted Him. Thus says Y^ehowah, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you out from the womb: "I, Y^ehowah, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth—who wa with Me?" For thus says Y^ehowah, Who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it. He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited): "I am Y^ehowah, and there is none else! There is no other God besides Me; a righteous God and a Savior—there is none except Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other. I hae sworn by Myself; the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back. That to Me, every knee will bow, every tongue will swear. Come enar to Me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret; from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord Y^ehowah has sent Me and His Spirit." (Isa. 44:24 45:18, 21b–23 48:16). To that last phrase, let us add the words of our Lord: "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent." (John 17:3). Therefore, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us, there is one God, the Father, from Whom are all things; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and we through Him (1Cor. 8:4–6).

The first word of Deut. 6:4 is sh^ema' (שְׁמַע) [pronounced sh^e-MAH] and it means *to hear, to listen*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. This verse is known as the Jewish confession of faith and it includes Deut. 6:4–9 11:13–21 Num. 15:37–41. Although the whole force of the context of this chapter is the pre-eminence and uniqueness of Y^ehowah our God, those of the Jewish faith take this to be an emphasis upon their monotheistic faith (which is certainly a part of their understanding of this passage). At the end of v. 9, we will read through this liturgy.

Just as this verse—"Hear, O Israel, Y^ehowah [is] our God, Y^ehowah is one!"—has become a legacy of the Jewish faith, we have: [There is] one body and one Spirit, just as you also were called in one confidence of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all (Eph. 4:4–6). As James warned, it takes more than belief in one God to save: You believe that God is one—you do well. The deomons also believe and shudder (James 2:19). Our Lord clarifies this: "You believe in God? Believe also in Me. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote of Me." (John 14:1b 5:46).

"And you will love Y^ehowah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your ability [lit., might]; [Deut. 6:5]

The imperative came from v. 4; the Qal perfect is a continuation of this imperative. Possibly, the force of the verb could be: **and you should love Y^ehowah your God...** God has done for Israel beyond what is possible for them to imagine. God is worthy of their love and devotion. Directly connected to loving God is God's Word. You cannot separate the two. We can only love who we know and you can only know God through His Word.

I must confess that here, as in almost every other commandment, I fall short of what God expects—and not by just a little, either. To love God with all my heart, soul and might? With all that I know, I know enough that I fall far short of what is expected of me in this verse. Sometimes I think of particular believers and I immediately know that I am not keeping the commandment of this verse. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brothr, he is a liar, for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God Whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also (1John 4:20–21).

The Old Testament is filled with commands; a common question which our Lord probably fielded more than once is which if the commandments was the most important. Since the Bible is the mind of Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit, this would have been one of the easier questions for Him. And one of the scribes came and heard

them arguing, and recognizing that He [Jesus] had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and you will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You will love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets" (Mark 12:26–31 Deut. 6:4–5 Lev. 19:18 Matt. 22:40). In the book of Luke, this was quoted by a lawyer who was trying to justify himself; he possibly had heard the interchange recorded in Mark or one similar to it. And, observe [that] a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He [Jesus] said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered and said "You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." (Luke 10:25–28 Lev. 18:5 19:18 Deut. 6:5).

One of the more interesting quotes from the Old Testament is found in 2Kings. Josiah was one of the few good kings over Judah (the southern kingdom). However, because he ruled over a degenerate people, what he did was short-lived. But it is important to note the Biblical slant on him: **And before him there was no king like him who turned to Y^ehowah with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to the Law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him** (2Kings 23:25). Also see Joshua 22:1–5.

From *Barnes' Notes*: *As there is but One God, and that God Israel's God, so Israel must love God unreservedly and entirely. The "heart" is mentioned as the seat of the understanding; the "soul" as the centre of will and personality; the "might" as representing the outgoings and energies of all the vital powers*⁸⁷.

We owe our entire being to God. It is He Who has given us life and breath; and it is He, although we stand in complete rebellion against Him, Who died on our behalf, taking upon Himself the sins which we have committed and suffering the equivalent of eternal punishment for us all. His sacrifice on our behalf is despite the fact that our entire being is set at enmity against Him. God has made the same sacrifice on behalf of every person on this earth, which gives us the rationale for: **We love because He first loved us. If someone says "I love God" and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should also love his brother** (1John 4:19–21).

"And these words which I am commanding you today will be on your heart; [Deut. 6:6]

The heart in this verse, and elsewhere, is not our emotions, but our entire thinking. **You will therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul** (Deut. 11:18a). **[Concerning the righteous]: The law of his God is in his heart; his steps to not vacillate** (Psalm 37:31). **I have treasured Your Word in my heart, that I may not sin against You** (Psalm 119:11). The Israelites are to have God's Laws imprinted upon their souls and they are to operate under those laws. Notice that love for God in the previous verse is immediately tied to Bible doctrine in this verse. Moses is speaking doctrine to these people. If you have doctrine in your soul, you will fear, love and respect God. The less doctrine in your soul the more that you try to work God—to play Him. The heart here refers to the entire mentality of the soul. **He [Moses] said to them, "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you will command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this Law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed, it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land** (Deut. 32:46–47a). One of the great blessings of the millennium is that God's Word will be in Israel's heart—it will automatically be a part of her soul: **"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declared Y^ehowah. "I will put My Law within them, and on their heart I will rite it, and I will be their God and they will be My people."** (Jer. 31:33).

"And you will will repeat them to your sons, and you will speak of them while sitting in your house, and in your waking in the way, and in your lying down, and in your rising up; [Deut. 6:7]

⁸⁷ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, p. 283.

Notice that this verse does not read *you will study the Bible every Sabbath day* or *you will study the Bible every Sunday*; God's Word is a daily part of their lives. They are to think doctrine in the morning and in the evening, throughout the day, and they are to teach these words to their children. It is obvious that you cannot always study God's Word day and night; however, it should be studied enough until you constantly think doctrine. If you are concerned about divine guidance and do not feel as though you have a grasp of it; then you are weak in doctrine. In teaching high school, I noticed that if one student was able to tutor another, the tutor often got more out of the lesson than the tutored. He was forced to put his understanding into definable terms and to explain what he knew to a person a level below. When you teach your children doctrine (hopefully not legalism), you gain a certain amount in your teaching. Furthermore, you are a god to your children. I don't mean that in a blasphemous way. You are their first and main contact with maturity, character and love. This is why God is called our Heavenly Father. You have few if any responsibilities which are greater than the impact which you have on your children. Our society is falling apart and the chief reason is the disintegration of the family unit. Some children may have greater material things than we could have imagined in our childhoods; but without love, guidance and teaching, these children will grow up to have damaged souls. **"Only take responsibility to yourself and guard your souls diligently, so that you do not forget the things which you eyes have seen and so that these things do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and to your grandsons."** (Deut. 4:9). **And Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord** (Eph. 6:4). **Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it** (Prov. 22:6).

"And you will bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they will be as frontlets between your eyes." [Deut. 6:8]

Today, the equivalent would be to carry around note cards with Scriptures to memorize; promises to know and to call upon God to fulfill. Or, if you don't want to be carrying the note cards, this is like memorizing a verse in the morning and repeated it mentally throughout the day. This would be your notebook which you would refer to from time to time. This would be God's Word permeating your soul. The Israelites tended to be very demonstrative in their worship and in many of the things that they did, so they took this verse literally and tied what are called phylacteries to their foreheads and left arms. Our best guess is that this practice began sometime after their exile to Babylon.⁸⁸ These are two small leather boxes which contained the text of four passages (Ex. 13:1–10 13:11–16 Deut. 6:4–9 11:13–21). **Our Lord spoke of these in Matthew: "The Scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore, all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say and they do not do. They do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels [of their garments]."** (Matt. 23:2–3, 5).

However, even though I am a literalist, this is not the key to this verse. The words found here are a figure of speech, as in Ex. 13:9: **"And it will be a sign to you on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, that the Law of Y^ehowah may be in your mouth; for, with a powerful hand, Y^ehowah brought you out of Egypt."** I believe what we have here is a marriage between ownership, action and thought. My educated guess is that some Jewish slaves of Egypt may have been branded on the hand or on the forehead to indicate their ownership to a particular family. Since God purchased them, this became a sign of His ownership.⁸⁹ In any case, the hand is related to that which we do and the head is related to that which we think. Doctrine should permeate our actions and our thinking. That is the correct interpretation of what God expects of us. Unbelievers should have a respect for you based upon your job performance, your kindness and your consideration. You do not need to preach to them; however, your personal integrity should set you apart. Your actions as a father, as a mother, as a student, as an employee, as an administrator, should set you apart from everyone else. You shouldn't be the fanatic that everyone avoids or the scary fundamentalist; you do not need to argue every point of doctrine with other Christians, nor do you need to trash the lives of the unbelievers with whom you work and associate (they are sinners by nature; obviously they are going to sin and obviously, some of those sins will offend you). Many of the unbelievers with whom you come in contact will spend eternity in hell and there is nothing that you can say or do that will change that. Others, you will have the good fortune to lead them to Jesus Christ. However, many of the

⁸⁸ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 105.

⁸⁹ I need to point out that this is an educated guess and I do not have any sources here to back me on this.

unbelievers that you come in contact with, despite the fact that their souls are filled with human viewpoint, should respect you and not view you as some self-righteous religious fanatic to be avoided at all costs. Everything that you do and everything that you think should be a product of doctrine in your soul.

"And you will write them on door-posts of your house and on your gates. [Deut. 6:9]

First we have to deal with the words found here. The Jews use the word translated *door-posts* to designate the square piece of parchment upon which Bible passages are written, which are then rolled up and placed into a small cylinder of wood or metal and then attached to the right-hand side of the door post of every door to the house. On one side of this parchment, the Biblical passage is written, and on the other side we find the Hebrew word for *Almighty* written. This has been a long-standing Jewish tradition. Today, the passage cannot be seen, but *Almighty* can through a piece of glass. As a pious Jew or his company meanders about his house, they touch this cylinder or he kisses his finger and recites Psalm 121:8 in the Hebrew.⁹⁰ However, this word means *door posts* (Ex. 12:7, 22 21:6).

Their environment is to be surrounded in Bible doctrine. Today, we might put verses from the Bible on stickies and place them on our computers. However, again the key is not some external action, but the learning of God's Word and writing His doctrines on our hearts. 99% of Christians today completely underestimate the importance of Bible doctrine. In some churches, the act of giving is overemphasized, far beyond doctrine. Listen, you cannot give until you have doctrine in your soul. If your church spends more time with ritual than it does in God's Word, it is confused. If your church evangelizes the congregation each and every day that you meet, it is confused. Salvation is a part of doctrine and we should all fully understand the gospel so that we can teach it; however, evangelizing the church is not our primary calling (a pastor is to do the work of an evangelist; but that is not his soul duty). In fact, if the study of God's Word comprises just a portion of your worship, then you are confused. Moses, under the power of God the Holy Spirit, told these people to write the commandments on their door posts and on the gates. In the Church Age, we are to rebound; silently name our sins to God as often as need be, whether once a day or once a minute, in order to be filled with the Spirit; and we are to study God's Word. Now, nowhere are we ever commanded to dig out God's Word for ourselves. There are some who will have no duties within a church other than to show up, listen to God's Word and split. However, if we desire to know God's Truth, He will provide a pastor-teacher to teach us. We need to look over the **Importance of Bible Doctrine—not finished yet!!**

God's Word should be the thrust of your life. Your soul needs to be washed in God's Word each and every day. Satan and his demon army continually will bombard you with their doctrines and the people you know will bombard you every waking moment. Advertising, radio, television, movies, education—every medium of communication today is geared to fill your soul with human viewpoint and doctrine of demons. Do you think that you have the ability after being armed with a fifteen minute sermon (75% of which is evangelism, announcements and meaningless tripe) twice a week from church to stand against all of that? Moses had God's Word. He did not tell the people: "Listen to it now, concentrate, and that should do you for another week or so." **"And these words, which I am commanding you today, will be on your heart [the thinking of your soul]; and you will teach them diligently to your sons and you will talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way [along the roadside near your house] and when you lie down and when you wake up [in the mornings]. And you will bind them as a sign on your hand and they will be as frontals on your forehead. And you will write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."** (Deut. 6:6–9 11:18–20, as well). Moses did not take God's Word lightly and made it clear that learning Bible doctrine was not an option, nor was it a minor aspect of the spiritual life.

A personal observation from 1996: I have seen a lot of my students from high school come to school having memorized commercials. They are one of the most product-oriented groups that I have ever seen. They will verbally play back commercials to one another, sometimes playing opposing parts in the commercial. I recall a beer commercial in particular. They carry the advertising logos on the outside of their clothing. I have seen other

⁹⁰ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 283–284.

students criticized because the manufacturer of their clothing was unfamiliar to their peers. "Who made those shoes? Where did you buy *that* shirt?" As a result of the commercials and as a result of the way life is portrayed on television and in the movies, I see children who are twelve years old and somewhat older smoking cigarettes, drinking beer, chewing tobacco, having sexual relationships, and if they or their parents could not buy them the products that they wanted, they would steal to obtain them, as well as to obtain money for drugs. Our advertisers have hit upon just what it takes to grab the attention of our youth and to mold and exploit them. They are bombarded with these images and notions day and night and they so respond. They are motivated to do things because they are *cool*, not because they are right. If you similarly thought of God's Word when you got up, when you go out, when you come in and when you go to sleep; if God's Word was a part of your actions and deeds—you would sin less, you would be under less divine discipline and you would be happier. Furthermore, God would bless you as never before.

Recall that these previous few verses are the beginning of the Jewish liturgy known as the sh^ema' (שְׁמָעָה) [pronounced *sh^e-MAH*], which is the first word found in Deut. 6:4. Sh^ema' means *to hear, to listen*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. The Israelites read this sh^ema' twice daily—when they wake up and before they go to sleep—crediting that tradition to Moses from v. 7 (which is an incorrect interpretation of that verse; as we saw, that verse emphasized the importance of thinking doctrine constantly). The sh^ema' reads: "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God—the LORD is one! And you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, will be on your heart; and you will teach them diligently to your sons and you will talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you will bind them as a sign on your hand and they will be as frontals on your forehead. And you will write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deut. 6:4–9). "And it will come to pass, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and the late rain that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle and you will eat and be satisfied. Beware, so that your hearts are not deceived and so that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them. Or the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you. You will therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you will bind them as a sign on your hand, and they will be as frontals on your forehead. And you will teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you will write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens [are] above the earth." (Deut. 11:13–21). The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and tell them that they will make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they will put the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. And it will be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, [and] in order that you may remember to do all My commandments, and be holy to your God. I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God." (Num. 15:37–41).

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Moses Warns the Israelites Not to Flunk the Prosperity Test

"And it will come to pass when Y^ehowah your God brings you into the land which He had sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to you; [to bring you to] cities great and good, which you have not built; [Deut. 6:10]

From this verse until the end of the chapter we have two great temptations which Israel will face. They have been out in the desert dependent upon God for their every need. In fact, God has caused many miracles to occur in order for them to survive. As they enter into the land and begin to enjoy the good life, they will be tempted to forget God in the midst of their prosperity and they will be tempted to pursue the gods of the indiginous heathen. The balance of Deut. 6 will be Moses warning them concerning both of these sins.

V. 10 begins a prophetic sentence which will run for three verses. Vv. 10–11 are the first half of a temporal clause, which typically begin with *and it will come to pass when*. Although these two verses will be filled with verbs, they will be in the imperfect or the perfect tense (or as modifying participles) and it will conclude with an imperative. Moses is saying that *when these things occur* (and he will list them), *then* [a word which will be implied by the change of verb tense] *you will do this*. V. 12 will be the conclusion of this temporal clause.

God has been promising generation after generation that He would bring the Israelites into a land flowing with milk and honey. In that land, God would alternately prosper and punish the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Israelites are about to see the fulfillment of promises which reach back several hundred years into their history—this is the Generation of Promise—the first generation to set foot in the land, to take it. God is bringing them into this land, to take over cities and home that they did not build. This would be fulfilled in the time of Joshua: "And I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities which you did not built; and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive yards which you did not plant." (Joshua 24:13). The Psalmist also celebrates this: And He brought His people forth with joy—His chosen ones with a joyful shout. He gave them also the lands of the nations, that they might take possession of the peoples' labor, so that they might keep His statutes and observe His laws. Hallelujah! [lit., praise the Lord!] (Psalm 105:43–45).

"And [when Y^ehowah your God brings you into] houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and wells dug which you have not dug, vineyards and olive yards which you have not planted, and you have eaten and been satisfied; [Deut. 6:11]

Some might object to the fact that these Jews will go into this land, kill most of the people and take their possessions. This is first of all, God's idea, not theirs. We are dealing with a cancerous people, these who occupy the Land of Promise. They will continue to pull down all those people with whom they come in contact. In Genesis, we saw how degenerate the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had become. Their homosexual population was nearly at 100% and they were clearly believed that it was reasonable to commit forcible rape on any new person with whom they came into contact (Gen. 19). This population of the land, we will find, was involved in child sacrifice to their local deities. The demons had so hardened them, that, in order to appease their gods, they would kill their own baby sons and daughters and offer them to the demons. Such a people should be destroyed. Furthermore, the Jews had just spent 400 years in the land of Egypt digging wells which were not their own, planting fields which were not their own, and building houses which were not their own. As they did this, God prepared a land and homes for them.

Like much of the Old Testament, this is analogous to our spiritual future. We are working here on earth, digging wells, as it were, which we will not own, building houses that we will not live in forever. However, as we work down here, doing that which is temporal, building things which we only live in for a short time, our Lord Jesus Christ is **preparing a place for us so that, at our death, we will soon possess great things which we did not build: "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God—believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, you may be also."** (John 14:1–3).

A further analogy to us in the Church Age: even in the realm of spiritual matters, sometimes the things which we do have no spiritual impact. We build things, so to speak, which will crumble into dust. **"For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of Living Waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."** (Jer. 2:13). **For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it will be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, we will**

receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1Cor. 3:11–15).

Like much of the Old Testament, there are hidden analogies in each situation or passage, as well as applications and implications. Even though the Church Age is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and even though the exact nature of our Lord's work on our behalf is found only in shadow form in the Old Testament, any church could properly teach the Old Testament and still prepare the congregation for all that God has for them. Here, by implication and application, God has provided us with everything that we have and we ought to be thankful to Him for every bit of prosperity and adversity which we enjoy. "When you have eaten and are satiated, you will bless Y^ehowah your God, for the good land which He has given you." (Deut. 8:10). I mentioned adversity; for some of us, adversity is the only way that we learn. As I am certain I have mentioned, I was brought to Jesus Christ at a time when I felt I was under terrible adversity and heartache. Remove those pressures and I likely would not have come to Jesus Christ. Unbelievers often must be put into a place of hurting before they will consider the claims of Jesus Christ on their life. And, even though believers can learn through God's Word and God will provide them with His doctrine, most believers learn things the hard way—they are disciplined; God has to knock them in the head a few times to get their attention.

In addition to being thankful to God for our prosperity, we are to share that which God has given us: "And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow, who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that Y^ehowah your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do." (Deut. 14:29).

One of the greatest deterrents to learning God's Word and to leading a life of devotion to God is prosperity. Most people cannot handle prosperity. Put you in a 6000 square foot house with servants, a limosine and chauffeur, a huge bank account, and you would say goodbye to God so quickly your head would spin. Human nature is such that when things are going well, we tend to forget the Lord Who bought us and the God Who daily sustains us. There is nothing in the world wrong with having wealth—the Bible never speaks disparagingly of those who do. However, those who have an exaggerated opinion of themselves because they have wealth, even if they built it up from a \$25 savings bond—these are those with whom the Bible takes issue. Now, if all you have is a ratty old car on its last legs, a crummy apartment and the clothes on your back—that is all the prosperity you are able to handle for right now. How many people have you talked to who have fantasized what they would do when they win the lottery? How many of you have fantasized what you would do when you win the lottery. Now, I realize that the first thing that you think is that you'll give 10% to the church; but you don't spend much time thinking about that—that is thrown in there as an incentive to God to let you win. It is not something that you would actually do nor is it anything that you dwell upon. But the first thing that you would do, in all actuality, is quit your job—that is what most people who engage in these fantasies talk about. You would quit your job, buy stuff and travel. God has given you the job where you are. He has placed you there for a reason. Winning or coming into a large sum of money entails a great deal of responsibility and integrity far beyond anything most of you are capable of grasping. Anyone who has a great many of the possessions of this earth has a tremendous burden and responsibility before God to use this wealth wisely. These Israelites are about to be placed into an environment far beyond anything they could imagine. Recall, they have just spend the better part of their lives, forty years, camped out and/or wandering through the desert, living on manna. For gen X, that was the sum total of their ability to handle prosperity. They couldn't even handle that. So, as the first part of this temporal phrase, God tells Israel that when they have moved into these houses which they did not build (many of them could barely, if at all, even remember living in a house), when they ate from the gardens which they did not even have to cultivate, when they have had a tremendous meal with a variety that they could not recall having before—when these things come to pass—they are not to forget the Lord Who bought them. They are not to lose sight of the giver through the gifts. The source of their future prosperity is Y^ehowah their God. When God has prospered you, where will your soul be? Where will your heart be? Will it be consumed with your daily affairs and your wealth and your possessions?

"[Then] guard yourself [or, take personal responsibility] so that you do not forget Y^ehowah [your God]⁹¹ Who caused you to be brought out of the land of Egypt, out of a house of slaves. [Deut. 6:12]

This is the #1 problem with those to whom God has given prosperity—they forget the God Who gave it to them. They become more and more consumed with their possessions, that they spend less and less time operating under divine guidance, using God's Word. Whereas, we today may have viewed Israel's life as more Spartan than we are used to, to them it would be like winning the lottery. It would be equivalent to you trading in the keys to your automobile that only occasionally gets you from point A to point B to a chauffeur-driven stretch limosine and your crummy apartment in a questionable neighborhood has been replaced with a 4500 sq. ft. home in River Oaks. This is what they will face. This is the prosperity test, a test which several Christians face. Some fail and some succeed; but this test often separates, as they say, the men from the boys. The spiritually mature from the unstable opportunist.

The emphasis of this passage is the relationship between Israel and God is that God does all of the work—God promises and God delivers. Moses expounds on this theme soon thereafter: "Guard yourself so that you do not forget Y^ehowah your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; so that, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived [in them], and when your herds and your flocks multiply and your silver and gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied—then your heart becomes lifted up, and you will forget Y^ehowah your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves. He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, [through] fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint. In the wilderness, He fed you manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you at your end. Otherwise, you might say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you will remember Y^ehowah your God, for it is He Who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as this day." (Deut. 8:11–18). "Hear, O Israel! You are going to cross over the Jordan today to go into dispossess nations greater and mightier than you—great cities fortified to heaven; [to dispossess] a people great and tall, the sons of Anakim, whom you know and of whom you have heard, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' Know therefore today that it is Y^ehowah your God who is crossing over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you, so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as Y^ehowah has spoken to you. Do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land.' But because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before you." (Deut. 9:1–4).

"You will fear [or, reverence] Y^ehowah your God, and you will serve Him, [Deut. 6:13a]

We have touched on the fear of God in Deut. 4:10, but I think that it is about time that we examined the **Doctrine of the Fear of God—not finished yet!!**

I know that when I quote some verses, I occasionally will leave the end of a verse out or the beginning of a verse out. I do this because they are not pertinent to the point which is being made. The verse separation in the Bible, while, on the one hand, quite handy, is not inspired, and is sometimes quite arbitrary. In the three temptations of our Lord, Satan took Him to a high vantage point and showed him the kingdoms of the world and offered these kingdoms to Jesus Christ without going to the cross. Satan is the ruler of this world, which, therefore, made this a valid offer. Again, the devil took Him [Jesus Christ] to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You will worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'" (Matt. 4:8–10 Deut. 6:13a).

⁹¹ This is added as per the western Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac and the Targum of Jonathan.

In his one chance to tempt our Lord, Satan was rebuffed twice from the book of Deuteronomy. Because of that, Satan hates this book, but his attacks are subtle. His attack at the end of the 1800's which is carried on until today is called *documentary hypothesis*. This theory supposes that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, but that it was composed nearly a millennium after his death by a whole slew of characters. Someone wrote most of the verse where we find the Sacred Tetragrammaton (Y^ehowah); someone else composed most of the verses where we have the name *Elohim* used for God; the priestly code was written by perhaps several priests, someone during the time of King Josiah, and the other books were written by someone who was aware of the first two sets of compositions, but not the priestly code. Somehow, all of these different writings were mixed together and the final product was almost immediately accepted as God's Word. If you are not a seminary student, you well may never have heard of this theory—and you haven't missed a thing. This is the way that Satan attacks. Then, many Old Testament professors in seminaries teach this as truth. What better way to attack what claims verse after verse to be God's Word than to say, *it wasn't written by Moses, as he claimed*. Another attack of Satan is the implication that the Old Testament is no longer relevant to where we are today. I would hope that through just the past ten or so verses, you can see the relevancy of Deuteronomy to your life today. And this is the proper understanding of this book; some cults confuse the Law with grace and end up with a confusing mixture of both—again, another attack by Satan. This is one of the great books of the Bible, and yet, after being a Christian for some twenty-five years, I can recall hearing a consistent teaching of this book one time on one program—*Through the Bible Radio* by J. Vernon McGee.

"And you will swear by His name. [Deut. 6:13b]

None of those in Satan's demon army will give Israel their prosperity. This is a gift from God. The relationship between God and Israel was unique and Israel, in the land, was to revere the God Who gave them the land; their service was to be to Him. This brings up two doctrines: the **Doctrine of Israel's Service to God—not finished yet!** And you may want to review the **Doctrine of Oaths and Swearing—not finished yet!!** (from Num. 30?).

"And you [all] will not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples who are in your vicinity [lit, round about you]. [Deut. 6:14]

"And it will come to pass that if you ever forget Y^ehowah your God, and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish [just] like the nations that Y^ehowah makes to perish before you, so you will perish; because you would not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God." (Deut. 8:19–20). There was no religious liberalism allowed in Israel—even in the days of Jeremiah, our Lord said, "And do not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands, and I will do you no harm." (Jer. 25:6). So that we do not misapply that: Israel was a nation chosen by God above all other nations to represent Y^ehowah to the world. God's Word was written by Israelites (with perhaps the exception of Luke) and preserved by same. In the United States, our relationship to God is somewhat different. Even though we are similar to Israel inasmuch as we are a client nation—that is, we do a great deal of evangelism throughout the world from the base of our country—the United States is not a *Christian* nation (despite the fact that we were founded by nearly 100% Christian men and women). The church has the special relationship to God that Israel once had. There are certain areas of legalism and sin which, although acceptable in the world, are not acceptable in the confines of the church. Whereas, we might accept someone who was blatantly homosexual in the world, allowing a person like that to continue in the church and simultaneously flaunting his immorality before the congregation would be a different matter. We would certainly allow someone who believed in the speaking of tongues or someone who believed that all religions are valid (such as those who belong to the Unity church) out in the world—however, these things would be unacceptable and not taught in this church. Idolatry was not allowed in Israel just as idolatry is not allowed in the church.

As we have seen, idolatry takes several forms. You may have read this a hundred times and each time you have thought to yourself: *Right here, I am okay with God. I practically never pray to heathen gods; I don't carry around a little idol in my glove box; and I don't have some portion of my home dedicated to idol worship.* Idolatry is the act of placing anything before God and His Word. You chose to watch a football game instead of going to Bible class? You are in idolatry. You skipped Bible class in order to attend a financial seminar which promised to net you millions? You are in idolatry. You went on a date with the most beautiful woman (or, the richest, most

handsome man) that you have ever met before, but this entailed missing Bible class? You are in idolatry. When you go on positive volition toward the gospel and later, positive volition towards God's Word, be prepared—Satan and his demon army will place every temptation in your path to dissuade you from being saved and from pursuing God's Word. I can recall several temptations, all delivered at various crucial points in my Christian life—some of which I fell for and lost ground over and a few of which I overcame.

Israel will allow some of the heathen peoples to remain in the land. They will not clean house completely. In any race, there are attractive men and women and the most likely person to lead you astray when it comes to your relationship with God is the person, or persons, with whom you fall in love. This, for many of you, will become one of your greatest areas of testing. They will be of a different faith, or they will believe in God, but not in Jesus Christ; or, they might even be Christian, but this obsession with doctrine that you appear to have— isn't that just a little too much? The men of Israel will be continually threatened by the women of other cultures. They will have their gods and their religions and their idols. They may not ask their new found men to totally give up their God, but to attend the woman's church once and awhile; to understand that religion is a function of culture, not of truth. It's what you're brought up with; and they are sincere. And this will be the downfall of the men of Israel.

"For Y^ehowah your God, in your midst, is a jealous God—[therefore, revere Him], so that the anger of Y^ehowah your God will not burn against you and [so that] He [won't] destroy from the face of the ground. [Deut. 6:15]

We have a figure of speech here known simply as exaggeration. God is not going to ever completely destroy the Israelites. He will take them out of the land and scatter them throughout the nations—but God will not annihilate them. Bullinger also identifies exaggeration as an hyperbole⁹².

Throughout the Bible, we have seen the anthropopathism *jealousy* associated with God: "For Y^ehowah your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." (Deut. 4:24). "You will not worship them or serve them [idolatrous gods of the heathen of the land]; for I, Y^ehowah your God, am a jealous God." (Deut. 5:9a). "Take the responsibility so that your hearts are not deceived and you turn away and serve other gods and worship them. Of the anger of Y^ehowah will be kindled against you." (Deut. 11:16–17a). God is betrothed to Israel. Just as any husband who is in love would be jealous to the point of rage if his wife was seeing another man, so is the relationship between God and Israel when Israel is pursuing other gods. God does not feel jealousy nor does He act in rage; however, to the Israelites, this explains His behavior on the level which the Israelites could understand. Any man who has been in love can understand falling into a jealous rage and even destroying the person whom he is in love with. The anthropopathisms of jealousy, anger and rage explain quite nicely the behavior of God toward Israel.

Israel represents God here on earth, at least during that dispensation. When they get to the point that they are completely contrary to His plan, then God removes them from history. Israel got to a point during the time of our Lord when the very one who represented Him in shadow form, the High Priest, with the support of much of the populace of Israel, sought the life of our Lord. Today, we have an analogous situation: believers who are too far out of fellowship are also removed from this earth. Sometimes God lets them remain as object lessons and sometimes God keeps them around to tempt other believers. So we, just like Israel, have good reason to fear God; He can remove us in an instant; he can make us feel pain as we cannot imagine. If we choose to serve Satan, God sometimes turns us over to our master as a part of the sin unto death. There are all kinds of paths that we can take which lead us to this type of destruction; here, the illustration is idolatry, and, as we have seen, idolatry is essentially putting anything or anyone before Jesus Christ, our God.

"You [all] will not put Y^ehowah your God to the test as you tested [Him] at Massah; [Deut. 6:16]

Recall that when the Israelites began their journey in the wilderness, they came to a point of *no-water*. **Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by states from the wilderness of Sin, according to the mouth of Y^ehowah and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. There, the people quarreled**

⁹² Incidentally, this is one of the very few times I caught the figure of speech and Bullinger did not!

with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test Y^ehowah?" But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt? To kill me and my children and my livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to Y^ehowah, saying, "What will I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me. Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you will strike the rock, and water will gush out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he named the places Massah [lit., test] and Meribah [lit., quarrel], because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested Y^ehowah, saying, "Is Y^ehowah among us or not?" (Ex. 17:1–7). Their salvation from believing in Jesus Christ, and their failure to follow this up was commented upon by Paul: **And all drank of the same spiritual drink, ofr they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them, God was not well-pleased, for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave wrong things, as they also craved (1Cor. 10:4–6).**

Our Lord quoted this particular verse when He was confronted with Satan during His third temptation. And he [Satan] led Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the highest point of the temple and said to Him, "Since you are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from here, for it stands written: **He will give His angels charge concerning You to guard You. And, On their hands they will bear You up, so that you do not strike Your foot against a stone.**" And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'You will not tempt the Lord your God.' " (Luke 4:9–12 Psalm 91:11–12 Deut. 6:16a).

"And you will keep [lit., *in keeping*, you will keep] the commandments of Y^ehowah your God, and His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you; [Deut. 6:17]

A part of being related to the True God of the Universe is behaving as though you are. There is nothing more embarrassing to the Christian community than to have a Christian who is a very public figure fall from grace. It allows unbelievers to point the finger and chide him, calling him a *typical hypocrite*, fueling their own negative volition. This is why God holds those who are in the public eye *more accountable*, as it were, than those who are not. Those who evangelize or those who teach His Word are subject to strict discipline for their shortcomings. And God sees to it that they are exposed and that they are disciplined. One of the great Christian evangelists of our time was Billy Graham, who personally sought to do God's will in all things, and recognized the importance of his own behavior. We are all sinners and we will all sin—however, the more public you are, the more you are connected to the dissemination of God's Word, the more you will suffer for your shortcomings. With the privilege of getting His Word out to those who need it, comes great reward and blessing and great discipline as well.

As the one nation on the earth to whom God had come, the Israelites were enjoined continually to keep and obey God's commandments to them. **"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandment so as to carry them out, then I will you you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit."** (Lev. 26:3–4). You have ordained You precepts that in keeping them, we should keep them. Oh that my wyas may be established to keep You statutes! Then I will not be ashamed when I look upon all Your commandments. I will give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments. I will keep Your statutes; do not forsake me utterly! (Psalm 119:4–8). In fact, in this famous Psalm portraying the march into slavery of the faithful, this theme is repeated several times. **"O Y^ehowah, that I remember You name in the night and keep You law. This has become mine that I observe Your precepts. I understand more than the aged because I have observed You precepts. Redeem me from the oppression of man that I may keep You precepts. Make Your face sine upon Your servant and teach me Your statutes. Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble. I hope for Your salvation, O Y^ehowah and I do Your commandments. My soul keeps You testimonies and I love them exceedingly. I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies for all my ways are before You. Let my cry come before You, O Y^ehowah; give me understanding according to Your word. Let my supplication come before You. Deliver me according to Your Word (Psalm 119:55–56, 100, 134–135, 165–170).**

"And you will do what is right and good in the eyes of Y^ehowah, so that it will be well with you, and will go in and possess the good land which Y^ehowah had sworn to your fathers; [Deut. 6:18]

God has promised the Land of Promise to the seed of Abraham. It does not have to be this particular generation. The previous generation, generation X, could have entered into the land and enjoyed this gift, but they chose not to. These promises will be fulfilled eventually—Moses is encouraging this generation to be the one which takes the land given to them by Y^ehowah. "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart that Y^ehowah, His is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. So you will keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you for all time." (Deut. 4:39–40). "Take the responsibility to listen to all these words which I command you, in order that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of Y^ehowah your God." (Deut. 12:28). The land that God gave Israel was much different then than it is today: "Therefore, you will keep the commandments of Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways and to revere Him. For Y^ehowah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can mine copper. When you have eaten and are satiated, you will bless Y^ehowah your God for the good land which He has given you." (Deut. 8:6–10).

"To drive away all your enemies from before your face, as Y^ehowah has spoken. [Deut. 6:19]

This is a continuation of the previous verse; *doing what is right and good in the eyes of Y^ehowah* entails driving out their enemies from the Land of Promise. As has been discussed, those who inhabited the land were a cancer upon humanity, practicing such religious rites as child sacrifice. Such people should be removed from the earth. "When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you will drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places; and you will take possession of the land and dwell in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it." (Num. 33:51b–53). God would see to it that Israel would be victorious: "I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn backs to you [running in defeat], and I will send hornets ahead of you, that they may drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites and the Hittites from before your face." (Ex. 27–28). And this was fulfilled a scant seven years later: And Y^ehowah gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers and they possessed it and lived in it; and Y^ehowah gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; Y^ehowah gave all their enemies into their hand (Joshua 21:43–44).

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What the Israelites Are to Teach Their Sons Concerning the Law

"When your sons asks you hereafter, saying, 'What [of] the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which Y^ehowah our God had commanded you?' [Deut. 6:20]

A theme of this chapter is the passing on of this information to their sons and their sons' sons. The quote here is literally, *what the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which Y^ehowah our God command you?* Here, there has been a reasonable amount of interpretation as to the general understanding of this verse; a look at other translations will reveal that:

The Amplified Bible	What is the meaning of the testimonies...
The Emphasized Bible	What mean the testimonies,...

KJV What *mean* the testimonies...
 NASB 'What *Idol* the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments *mean* which...'
 NIV "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws..."
 Young's Lit. Translation What *are* testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which...

As you can see by the italics found in the KJV and the NASB, the word *mean* is not found in this verse. It is a matter of interpretation, a great deal of deference being given to the original KJV (this occurs a lot in difficult translations). However, the interrogative found here means that the door has been opened for a dozen different questions about God's commands, including *what does this mean* or, *why was this commandment given* or, *what are the circumstances concerning the giving of this commandment* or, *at what point in time was this commandment given* etc. Any question or comment is an opening between a father and son for discussion. The father should always be prepared to answer all questions concerning the Law of God.

"Then you will say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Y^ehowah brought us out of Egypt by a strong hand; [Deut. 6:21]

Upon their leaving Egypt, Moses called for the attention of generation X and the Generation of Promise when he cried out: **"Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slaves; for by a powerful hand Y^ehowah brought you out from this place."** (Ex. 31:3b).

This verse tells the son the circumstances under which the commandments were given—the Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians and God rescued them with His omnipotence. The many ordinances and festivals which were observed by Israel were all designed to provoke conversation between fathers and sons. *Just why are we doing this?* is to be the question of the son. When God gave Israel the festival of the Unleavened bread, He added, **"And you will tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what Y^ehowah did for me when I came out of Egypt.' And it will be a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the Law of Y^ehowah may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand, Y^ehowah brought you out of Egypt. Therefore, you will keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year."** (Ex. 13:8–10; see also 10:2–2 13:12–14).

" 'And Y^ehowah gave signs and wonders, great and sad, on Egypt, on Pharaoh, and on all his house, before our eyes; [Deut. 6:22]

Prior to the deliverance of Israel, God had to force Pharaoh to let them go. This was not an easy matter, as no one had exhibited this much negative volition against God as Pharaoh did, in view of all the signs and wonders which he had seen. The great impression of God's power was to be made with Pharaoh, the nations round about and with Israel. **"Has a people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard and survived? Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within a nation by trials, by signs, and wonders, and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched army and by great terrors, as Y^ehowah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"** (Deut. 4:32–34).

Speaking of Pharaoh's negative volition, there are people in this world, that no matter what happens to them, no matter how God speaks to them, they are 100% completely negative toward God's Word and salvation. They don't want to spend eternity with God in heaven because they do not want to spend even five seconds with God here on earth. If you don't want to give God a hearing, if you choose not to believe in His Son Whom He sent on your behalf, God has given you the freewill to make that choice; however, we are responsible for that choice. In order to avoid God's Presence in eternity, we must push God, as He truly is, away from us for every moment of our lives.

" 'And He brought [or, led] us out from there, in order that he might bring us [to here], to give to us the land which He had sworn to our fathers. [Deut. 6:23]

There are two different words in this verse generally translated *to bring*. First in this verse, there is the Hiphil (causative) perfect (completed tense) of *yâtsâ'* (אָצַא־) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*] and, in the Hiphil, it means *to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out*. It is found well over a thousand times in the Bible. Strong's #3318 BDB #422 Then we have the Hiphil perfect of *bôw'* (אָבַח־) [pronounced *bo*] which means, in the Hiphil, *to take*

in, to bring, to come in with. It is translated quite consistently by the KJV in the Hiphil stem as *bring*. It generally requires a direct object, as it is the object which is being brought somewhere. Strong's #935 BDB #97 I mention this because the redemption of a slave has both the aspect of removing the slave from his life of servitude (*bringing him out*) and delivering him to a life of freedom (*bringing him into*). The Israelites were not brought out of Egypt for the purpose of wandering throughout the wilderness. God brought them out of Egypt in order to bring them into the Land of Promise. In our case, we have been purchased from the slave market of sin. We carry with us the imputed sin of Adam, our own old sin nature and the stain of our person sins—any one of which condemns us before God. However, not only are we delivered from that three-fold count against us, but we are brought into a life of blessing. Salvation is more than just the cleansing from sin. Jesus Christ died for our iniquities, but he **was also raised for justification. Jesus...Who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification** (Rom. 4:24b, 25). God's great plan calls for more than just our deliverance from sin; it is a deliverance to justification. As usual, we find a spiritual parallel between our lives today and the lives of the Israelites then.

Shâ^bva' (שָׁוָא) [pronounced *shaw^b-VAH*] means *to swear, to take a solemn oath*, and often *to extract an oath (from someone else)*. It is very close to the word *seven* and could be translated *to seven oneself, to take an oath seven times, to bind oneself seven times (or, by seven things)*. It is found primarily in the Niphal stem, which is known as the passive stem. However, this is not always the case. Several verbs in the Hebrew (*fought, swore, remained, entered*) are found in the Niphal stem, although their action in the English carries a simple active connotation. Shâ^bva' is one of these words—it is found in the Qal stem one time (Ezek. 21:23), approximately 150 times in the Niphal and about 30 times in the Hiphil. In the Niphal perfect, God is the subject and in the Niphal imperfect, man is the subject. Strong's #7650 BDB #989

Some Bibles end the quotes within quotes here (they are partially a matter of interpretation); however, I believe that vv. 24–25 are a continuation of the response that an Israelite should give to his son when asked about the Laws of God.

" 'And Y^ehowah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Y^ehowah our God, to [the] benefit [or, good] to ourselves all the days, to keep us alive, [as He has] in this day; [Deut. 6:24]

The two *to*'s in this verse are both the lamed prefixed preposition and they could be rendered *in regards to*. *To keep us alive* is the lamed prefixed preposition and the Piel infinitive construct of *châyâh* (חָיָה) [pronounced *khaw-YAW*], and it means *to live, to preserve one's life, to keep alive*. The phrase *as He has* is interpretive, but not found in the original Hebrew. This could be more accurately rendered: **And Y^ehowah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Y^ehowah our God, to benefit in regards to ourselves all of the days, to preserve us alive in this day.** Following God's precepts and fearing Him are to the benefit of Israel all of their days on the earth and it is this action which will preserve Israel to this day. **"And now, Israel, what does Y^ehowah your God require from you but to revere Y^ehowah your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul—to keep Y^ehowah's commandments and His statutes which I [Moses] am commanding you today for your benefit?"** (Deut. 10:12–13). One of the great themes of the book of Deuteronomy, one which Moses repeats time and time again, is obedience. **"And you will again obey Y^ehowah and observe all His commandments which I command you today. Then Y^ehowah your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your womb and in the offspring of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground, for Y^ehowah will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers. If you obey Y^ehowah your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law; if you turn to Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and soul, for this commandment which I command you today is not unobtainable for you, nor is it out of your reach."** (Deut. 30:8–10).

" 'And it is [the doing of these statutes] righteousness for us, when we observe to do all this commandment before Y^ehowah our God, as He had commanded us.' " [Deut. 6:25]

Here, as in v. 1, the singular of *commandment* seems to stand for the entire Law of Moses, as though it were one commandment. We find a similar usage in Deut. 7:11: **"Therefore, you will keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them."** See also Deut. 15:5.

Furthermore, their obedience made them righteous. Here, we have to be careful. They Israelites were not saved by keeping the Law, just as we are not saved by works. However, once we are saved, God does have a plan for our lives which includes works. We can go along with that plan or we can go off and do whatever it is that we feel like doing. This would mean that we have received salvation sanctification, but we would have no temporal sanctification. That is, our actions would not set us apart as God's. Their actions in following the Law and fearing God set the Israelites apart from the other peoples of the earth. This caused them to be temporally righteous. The difference is simple. You might be chosen for the varsity team. This is salvation. If you sit on the bench all year long, that is equivalent to having no temporal righteousness. You are not involved with the game, although you are on the varsity team. However, those who play are analogous to those who followed the precepts of God—they have temporal righteousness. In no wise are we saved if we *try* to keep the Law. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin—you are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but you do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law (James 2:9–11 Ex. 20:13–14). But Israel, pursuing the Law by righteousness did not arrive at the purpose of that Law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone Rom. 9:31–32).

Because of what our Lord did on our behalf on the cross, when we apprehend Him by faith, we stand righteous before God, as one who has fulfilled all the requirements of the Law (as Jesus fulfilled the Law). For Christ is the end of the Law with reference to righteousness to each one because he believes—if you confess with your mouth Jesus Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Rom. 10:4, 9).

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Deuteronomy 7

Deuteronomy 7:1–26

Outline of Chapter 7:

- Vv. 1–5 **Israel's relationship to the conquered peoples of the land**
- Vv. 6–11 **Israel's unique relationship with a faithful God**
- Vv. 12–16 **The blessings of obedience**
- Vv. 17–24 **Y^ehowah will cause Israel to defeat and dominate the indigenous peoples of the land**
- Vv. 25–26 **Their graven images are under cherem**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

v. 1 **Brief Summary of the Perizzites**

Introduction: Deut. 7 sandwiches a set of blessings which will be afforded those who obey God between warnings and instructions concerning the conquering of the land and the peoples therein. We will examine such diverse topics as intermarriage, warfare, gross religious practices and God's exclusive relationship with Israel.

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Israel's Relationship to the Conquered Peoples of the Land

"When Y^ehowah your God bring you into the land where you are going to possess it, and He has cast out many nations from your presence—the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, seven nations more numerous and mighty than you; [Deut. 7:1]

Although I cannot find it, it seems as though we have already covered the Hittites in a doctrine and we have definitely covered the Amorites. See the **Doctrine of the Girgashites**, the **Doctrine of the Perizzites**. At the time of Abram, those occupying the land, in addition to the peoples already named, were the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites and the giants (the Rephaim). The Hivite was not mentioned in that list of Gen. 15:18–21. Gen. 15 took place 800 years prior to the exodus, so there would have been some changes in occupancy. Some tribes were perhaps overrun by others; some amalgamated, the Rephaim may have been just a general name for some of the occupants of the land. Some tribes may have been forced out, may have relocated. Moses, during the 38 years at Kadesh-barnea, in a study of the information yielded him by the spies and through whatever trading they might have done, knew what tribes were in the land and their rough sizes.

This is only a...

Brief Summary of the Perizzites

1. We can conclude that the Perizzites were indeed an actual, specific people who lived in the Land of Promise for many generations, from the time of Abram (Gen. 13:7) even to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 9:1–2). However, the time during which they were mostly at odds with Israel seems to be the time of Joshua into the early period of the Judges. It appears as though a peace between Israel and the Perizzites eventually came to pass, with intermarriage as well as religious conversion to idolatry as being part of the peace (Judges 3:5–6 Ezra 9:1–2).

Brief Summary of the Perizzites

2. The Perizzites primarily lived in the hills of Judah and Ephraim (Joshua 11:3 17:14-15).
3. Their racial background and origins are unknown to us.
4. It is possible that their *name* had a generalized application: that is, it either referred to those who lived in villages (as opposed to being nomadic); or it referred to those whose origins were unknown or Perizzite may refer to an amalgamation of several peoples.

These points are expanded, discussed in much more detail, and substantiated in the actual Doctrine of the Perizzites.

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Canaan was the father and his sons (or grandsons) became the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites and the Hivites (among others—Gen. 10:15) And Canaan, along with his progeny, were the ones to settle the Land of Promise—hence, its common name, the Land of Canaan.

Ra^bv (רַב) [pronounced *rahb*] means *much, many, greater, more numerous*. Strictly speaking, you could not make a case that each population exceeded 2,000,000, but there was certainly a fighting force greater in numbers to Israel's. Furthermore, their expertise and experience in warfare was superior to that of Israel's. This does not mean that these seven nations were the only ones to occupy the Land of Promise, but they were certainly the primary nations to be found in Palestine. As Paul said, "**And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance.**" (Acts 13:19). The area was a much more fertile area, but this allows for a huge number of people in this general area. As of 1978, Israel had 2.9 million, Jordan had 2.3 million, Syria had 5.9 million, and Lebanon had 2.8 million. Given that these tribes were spread out perhaps beyond the boundaries of the land, this population is not too much different than it was in those days. However, we will see, in the chapter of Joshua, a good deal of elimination of the tribes which opposed Israel—their population will go from 14 million to probably less than 4 million.

The idea that these various groups grew into a population in excess of 2 million is not difficult to fathom; the Israelites did the same in a lot less time. The families named above were one or two generations after the flood whereas Abram was perhaps ten generations after the flood and he began slowly (one son to whom applied the promise). What is more difficult to grasp is the huge number of people in that area. However, more of it was livable then and it was not unlike California in its beauty, climate and prosperity.

When it comes to the actual battle and the leading into battle, this is always attributed to God and God's man in charge. "It is Y^ehowah your God who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before you, and you will dispossess them. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as Y^ehowah has spoken." (Deut. 31:3). "Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than you—great cities fortified to heaven; [and] a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know and of whom you have heard, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' Know therefore today that it is Y^ehowah your God who is crossing over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you, so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as Y^ehowah has spoken to you." (Deut. 9:1–3). You [God] with Your own hand drove out the nations, then You planted them [the Israelites]. You afflicted the peoples then You spread them abroad. For by their own sword, they [the Israelites] did not possess the land; and their own arm did not deliver them; but Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your presence—for You gave grace to them." (Psalm 44:2–3).

"And Y^ehowah your God will place them before you [lit., to your face], and you [will be caused to] strike them down—you will completely [and utterly] destroy them [lit., you *in* devoting them will

devote them]. You will not make a treaty [lit., covenant] with them nor will you be gracious to them. [Deut. 7:2]

In this verse, we have the Hiphil infinitive absolute and the Hiphil imperfect of the verb *châram* (חָרַם) [pronounced *khaw-RAM*] which is usually translated *completely devoted to*, *devoted to*, or *completely destroyed*, the connection between the two seemingly disparate meanings is that it is completely removed, either from man's use or from the planet earth. Strong's #2763 BDB #355 (& 356). Certain enemies of Israel were devoted entirely to God and were therefore totally destroyed.

What is suggested here is rather strong. And it is repeated several times elsewhere. "Only in the cities of these peoples that Y^ehowah your God is giving you as an inheritance, you will not leave anything that breathes alive. But you will place them under the ban of *cherem*—the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as Y^ehowah your God has commanded you in order that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against Y^ehowah your God." (Deut. 20:16–18). There will be warfare with absolutely no mercy. God knows the hearts of these people. They will all have an opportunity to be saved. However, generally speaking, only one person will be on positive signals and that is Rahab the prostitute, whom we will meet early in the book of Joshua. However, the others who live in this land will be degenerate beyond rehabilitation. For this reason, it was generally the case that Israel would destroy all or most all of the peoples: "Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man intimately; but all the female children who have not known man intimately, spare for yourselves." (Num. 31:17; also see Deut. 2:33–35 Joshua 11:11). One of the most interesting parallelisms is offered in a blessing by Moses in Deut. 33:27: "The eternal God is a dwelling place and underneath are the everlasting arms; and He drove out the enemy from before your face and He said, "Destroy!"

If there were even a spark of interest in things divine, God would have kept these people alive to hear the gospel message through Israel. However, even the religious among them—in fact, especially the religious among them—had no interest in what was truly divine. "You will make no covenant with them or with their gods. They will not live in your land, so that they will not make you sin against Me; for serving their gods will certainly be a snare to you." (Ex. 23:32–33). There was to be no bonds between Israel and the Canaanites—not social, religious or political. "Since Y^ehowah your God walk in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to place your enemies before your face; therefore, your camp must be set apart and He must not see immorality among you or He will turn away from you." (Deut. 23:14). This is one of the reasons there is some confusion in the Land of Promise today. There are very conservative, almost radical Jews, who adhere to this. Prior to the birth of our Lord—primarily during the seizing of this land, was this verse to be vigorously followed. Today, there are Jews in the Land of Promise just as there are Jews in almost every nation under the sun. However, they are not there because God has regathered them there and has given them the land. They are there out of human tenaciousness and God's grace.

Liberals do not like this. They have this thought that there is this innate good in all mankind and that with a little education, anyone can be brought around to whatever it is they think they should be brought around to. At one time, the trump card of the liberal was education—all that had to be done is to present a person with the facts, and they could (and would) then make an intelligent choice. We see this little ditties on television all the time; a 30 second sound byte from some celebrity giving us information that will solve this problem or that. However, it appears as though education does not seem to produce the effect that we want. AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are still rampant; children are having their own children at a younger and younger age; and young people are becoming increasingly more disinfranchised with law and authority. A recent addition to the great icon of education has been therapy—if someone is having problems adjusting, then all they need is some good therapy to solve their problems. One wonders how long it will be until we have state-supported therapists on demand, mandated for criminals of certain offenses. God knows the end from the beginning. There are groups of people who cannot be rehabilitated. We were given a glimpse of them when we examined Sodom and Gomorrah in the book of Genesis. God did not send down additional angels to provide therapy and education for those people. God burned them with fire. This is the correct, Biblical response to some criminals and most often the correct stance to take in warfare.

God gave these people 440 years to reform. Recall that in Gen. 15:16 told Abraham that his descendants would not return to this land until the fourth generation because *the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full*. God gave these people about 440 years to clean up their act, to turn from their sins to Him. They knew of the coming of the sons of Israel and they knew of God's power as demonstrated in Egypt. They had more than enough time to change their minds and attitudes. As McGee put it: *Do you know any other landlord who will give his tenant that long a time to pay his rent/ God gave them a time of mercy that last for 430 years. Then the cup of iniquity was full, and the judgment of God fell upon them. So let us not have a false kind of pity for these nations. Rather, let us learn from these events. God is a God of mercy and of love in the Old Testament as well as He is in the New Testament*⁹³.

" 'And you will not join in marriage with them; you will not give your daughter to his son, and his daughter you will not take to your son; [Deut. 7:3]

Moses has begun to paraphrase what Y^ehowah had commanded him in Ex. 34:15–16, as we will see with the change of person in v. 4a.

The key here is not racial purity—the key is spiritual purity. Racists sometimes use passages like these to support segregation and to prohibit inter-racial marriages. Segregation and integration are not the true issues here. Although I did not know any Blacks during the times when we were more segregated, it is my guess that they were a lot stronger spiritually. This is not to say that segregation is right or wrong; it is a non-issue. If you are brought up in an era of segregation, you remain segregated; if you are brought up in an era of integration, then you integrate. We saw in Num. 12 that Moses was married a second time late in life to possibly a Black Egyptian. This precipitated a minor rebellion from Miriam (who got impressionable Aaron to go along with her). The Jews were raised among Egyptians, most of whom were dark-skinned. A mixed multitude went out with the Israelites when they left Egypt—these would be mostly Egyptians who recognized Y^ehowah as God. And, as has been pointed out, the commentators who have blamed this *mixed multitude* for all the problems of Israel have got it all wrong. It was gen X which was to blame, and it is upon their shoulders that the Bible clearly places this blame. In this verse, Israel is told not to intermarry because these people are in a highly degenerate state. This does not mean that their men are not handsome and their women are not beautiful. But they are empty shells, thoroughly turned against the God of the Universe. It was here where many of the Israelites failed: **And the sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and they took their daughters for themselves as wives and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Y^ehowah and forgot Y^ehowah their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. Then the anger of Y^ehowah was kindled against Israel, so that He sold them into the hands of the Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia; and the sons of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years (Judges 3:5–8).**

" 'For he [the son or daughter of the Canaanite] will turn away your sons from following [lit., after] Me and they [possibly, he] will serve other gods;' [Deut. 7:4a]

We have a very unusual change in speech here. Moses is speaking in the place of God, possibly even quoting himself. The only two passages similar to this first portion of v. 4 are Num. 14:43 and 32:15. **"For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following Y^ehowah. And Y^ehowah will not be with you."** (Num. 14:43). **"For if you turn away from following Him, He will once more abandon them in the wilderness; and you will destroy all these people."** (Num. 32:15). Both speak of turning away from following Y^ehowah and both are stated by Moses with God in the third person. What this implies is that Moses is quoting himself as an authority, as a writer of divinely-inspired Scripture, and can therefore place God in the first person.⁹⁴ That is, Moses recognizes that what he has written is God's Word and he can therefore quote it as if he were quoting what God has said.

⁹³ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 55–56.

⁹⁴ This could possibly be a paraphrase of Ex. 23:24, 33, but these verse are too different to quote as Moses has.

The Massoretic text has the plural *they shall server other gods*; whereas this is in the singular in the western Samaritan, the Syriac and the Vulgate.

This first half of v. 4, along with Deut. 29:26 31:16, 20, 29 32:15–21, 32–33, 37–38 predicts that intermarriage with the Canaanites would turn Israel away from God, to the point of warning that the vine of Israel would become like the vine of Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut. 32:32). This was fulfilled several times (Judges 2:11–13 3:6).

Here is the rationale given: *he* (referring to *he* or *she*)—this is the non-Israelite in the marriage—will turn away your *sons* (which can, in proper Hebrew, stand for *sons* and *daughters*) from following Y^ehowah, the God of the Israelites. There is no racial motive given here. "So take the responsibility to love Y^ehowah your God. For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you; know with certainty that Y^ehowah your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which Y^ehowah your God has given you." (Joshua 23:11–13). It was in this precise area where Solomon failed to be near as great as his father David. Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh; Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which Y^ehowah had said to the sons of Israel, "You will not associate with them, neither will they associate with you, for they will certainly turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. And he had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 mistresses, and his wives turned his heart away. For it came to pass when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to Y^ehowah his God, as [had been] the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of Y^ehowah and did not follow Y^ehowah fully, as David his father. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus he did also for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrifice to their gods. Now Y^ehowah was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice (1Kings 11:1–9; see also Ezra 9:1–3 Neh. 13:23–27). What about *mixed marriages* in the New Testament? The Scripture is quite clear here as well: **A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes—only in the Lord** (1Cor. 7:39). **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers—for what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?** (1Cor. 6:14).

And so that we are completely clear on racially-mixed marriages, Ruth was a Moabite who married Boaz, a Jew. Their son was Obed, who sired Jesse, who sired King David (Ruth 4:5, 13–22). Furthermore, she was in the line of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:1, 5–6). See also Mal. 2:10–17 and Matt. 19:4–6. In the case of differences based entirely upon race, the Bible makes no distinction. Throughout the Bible, there are people distinguished not by race, but by the nations that they belong to. Differentiating between people due to skin color is artificial and not recognized in the Bible, since there are, as we know, heavily-tanned Caucasians who are darker than very light Blacks. It is clear that we have all been descended from Adam (Gen. 1:27 2:20 Rom. 5:12–21) and we have all been descended from Noah (Gen. 7:23 9:18–19). **"He made from one blood, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined appointed times and boundaries of their habitation."** (Acts 17:26). In other words, racial distinctions are man-made, they are not ordained by God.

One of the things which we have observed with the Catholic religion is its assimilation of other religions and cults into its own practices. Most of the things which we associate with Easter and Christmas were incorporated by the Catholic religion from pagan cults.

V. 2 prohibited political treaties, v. 3 prohibited social contracts and v. 4 prohibited shared religious rites between the Israelites and the Canaanites in the land. "Take the responsibility to make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, so that it does not become a snare in your midst. But, you are to tear down their altars and smash their pillars and cut down their Asherim. For you will not worship any other god, for Y^ehowah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Therefore, you will not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods, and sacrifice to their gods and someone invite you to eat of his sacrifice; and you take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods

and cause your sons to play the harlot with their gods." (Ex. 34:12–16). Again, this is so clear, that you have to watch out for the 1% who cannot correctly divide the Word of God. This applies to one point in time, the overrunning of the land by Israel. Today, we follow the words of Paul: **Therefore, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols: we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no god but one. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us, there is one God, the Father, from Whom are all things, and we [live] for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and we [live] through Him.** However, not all men have this knowledge; but some, going accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak, is defiled. But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care, so that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. (1Cor. 8:4–9).

"And the anger of Y^ehowah will burn against you and He will quickly destroy you. [Deut. 7:4b]

Moses returns to referring to God in the third person in this portion of the verse.

For several chapters, Moses has warned the Israelites against falling into spiritual adultery. **"For Y^ehowah your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise, the anger of Y^ehowah your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth."** (Deut. 6:15). The quickest way for this to happen is through romantic involvement with those outside of God's plan. Satan looks to neutralize us in this life by confronting us with great sexual lust and with those who stand in opposition to God (although their opposition can be very subtle, as Satan is capable of great subtlety). In marriage, when a believer hooks up with an unbeliever or with a believer in reversionism, his—and I use *his* to refer to either men or women—Christian life is continually compromised. Such a Christian will generally fall by the wayside, or spend their entire lives just trying to keep their spiritual head above water. What I mean is that from such a marriage, there are so many opportunities to do that which is wrong and in total opposition to God's Word, including compromising His Word, divorce, adultery, spousal abuse, neglect. When married to an unwitting agent of Satan, the opportunities to screw things up are continual. In most cases, the marriage leads the believer astray and God has to remove them through the sin unto death. The Israelites failed in this area, as was recorded in Judges 2:2–4: **"And as for you, you will make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you will tear down their altars." But you have not obeyed Me; what is this you have done? Therefore, I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they will become [thorns] in your sides, and their gods will be a snare to you.'** " And it came to pass when the angel of Y^ehowah spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.

"But this you will do to them: you will pull down their altars and you will break their standing pillars [into pieces] and you will cut down their shrines [or, Asherim], and you will burn with fire their graven images; [Deut. 7:5]

There were quite a number of different cults surrounding Israel. However, we come across Asherah quite frequently. Therefore, we should examine the **Doctrine of Asherah—not finished yet!!**

Peçel (פֶּֿעֶל) [pronounced *PEH-cell*] is an idol which is a carved or engraved image; it can possibly refer to a molten image which would have had the finishing touches put upon it by a chisel.⁹⁵ The word found in this verse is listed under a different Strong's number (#6456) but it might just be the plural form of a word which may or may not be Hebrew originally. Strong's #6459 BDB #820

This verse pertains directly to the Israelite of that day. The nations they were about to dispossess were in complete and total degeneracy—they worshiped the creature rather than the Creator. Israel was a theocracy, a nation ruled directly by God; and this was done through Moses as requested by the people (recall that when God spoke to all of the people, they requested for him to speak to Moses and for Moses to speak to them). Nevertheless, they were a nation ruled by God, Who spoke to Moses, who spoke to them. This arrangement will

⁹⁵ I took this from *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 207, who in turn got it from Dr. Benjamine Davies Student's Hebrew Lexicon (Asher, 1872).

continue through Joshua. God has spoken to them directly to destroy the religious idolatry of the peoples they are about to dispossess. And with regards to their own who develop an interest in other religions: "If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or you friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods (whom neither you nor your fathers have known—of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end).' You will not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye will not pity him, nor will you spare or conceal him. But you will certainly kill him; your hand will be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. So you will stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from Y^ehowah your God, Who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves." (Deut. 13:6–10; see also Deut. 16:21–22).

We are not given any sort of a similar command today. Our command would be to eschew all that is false, but we have no right to infringe on the religious rights of someone else, no matter how totally wrong they are. Passages in the gospels and the book of Acts do not pertain to this application here because what Jesus and the Apostles did in the temples were because the temple spoke of our Lord; the Old Testament was filled with prophecies concerning the coming of our Lord. However, we are not given a similar command to go out and to attack in any way the religion of another person. I say all of this for the 1%. Even though the Old Testament is rich with contemporary application, we must constantly recognize that God had a different program going on at that time.

On the other hand, God's will for the Israelites under these circumstances was unequivocal. Every trace of heathen religion was to be removed from their borders. The destruction of all forms of creature worship was to be total. "And you will tear down their altars and smash their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you will cut down the engraved images of their gods and you will obliterate their names from that place." (Deut. 12:3; see also Ex. 23:24 34:13). As discussed, the prohibition against intermarriage was one which was given due to spiritual repercussions, not racial ones.

Deuteronomy 1	Deuteronomy 2	Deuteronomy 3	Deuteronomy 4	Deuteronomy 5
Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10
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Israel's Unique Relationship with a Faithful God

"For you [are] a holy [set apart] people to Y^ehowah your God; [and]⁹⁶ in you Y^ehowah your God has chosen to be to Him a people of personal treasure out of all the peoples who [are] on the face of the ground; [Deut. 7:6]

Although the phrase *a peculiar treasure* seems quite familiar to me, it is found only five times in the Bible when used with the nation Israel (Ex. 19:5 Deut. 7:6 14:2 26:18 Psalm 135:4). צ^egullâh (הַצִּלְהָה) [pronounced s^egool-LAWH] comes from a verb which means *to shut up, to close up*. This adjective is a reference to *personal treasure* which one would *shut up, put away, close up, place under lock and key*, as it were. The KJV inconsistently renders this *peculiar treasure, special, peculiar* in these five places. It is found also in 1Chron. 29:3 Eccl. 2:8 and Mal. 3:17. In all eight places, this can be rendered consistently as *personal treasure*. Strong's #5459 BDB #688.*

I gave this verse a fairly literal rendering, although I changed the word order somewhat to correspond with the English placement of subjects and verbs (which is the reverse of the Hebrew order). When God chose Israel to be His, He knew in advance how they would behave. He knew that they would all believe in Him, yet, in regards to generation X, they would not pursue Him, but continually rebel against Him. He knew that the house of Israel would pull further and further from Him, finally, during the time of our Lord, try to be saved by keeping the Law. He knew that there would be a few—very few—super grace heroes to step forth, out of the house of Israel, but that their greatness would stand for millenniums to come.

⁹⁶ *And* is found in the western Onkolos, the targum of Jonathan, the Septuagint and the Vulgate.

In this verse, as well as in others, Israel is clearly given pre-eminence over all other nations in its personal relationship to God. "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you will be My personal treasure among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine." (Ex. 19:5). "He will place you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and you will be a people set apart to Y^ehowah your God, as He has spoken." (Deut. 26:19). "But you, Israel, [are] My servant—Jacob, whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham, My friend. You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth and called from its remotest parts, and said to you, "You are My servant. I have chosen you and not rejected you. do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, certainly I will help you; I will uphold you with the righteousness of my right hand." (Isa. 41:8–10). See also Gen. 17:7 Ex. 8:22 Isa. 43:1 Ezek. 20:5–6. Today, we are under a different dispensation, where Israel has been **temporarily** set aside. **For I could wish that I myself were accursed, [separated] from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the worship service and the promises, from whom are the fathers and from whom is the Christ, the One in the flesh Who is over all, extolled by God forever (Rom. 9:3–5a). Peter, through God the Holy Spirit, speaks to the Jews outside of the Jewish Age, but as to believers in the Church Age: But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people—a personal possession, that you may proclaim the virtues of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. For you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1Peter 2:9–10 Deut. 10:15 Isa. 61:6 Ex. 19:6 Hosea 1:10).**

"Y^ehowah has not placed His love in you and then has chosen [in] you because of your great abundance out of all of the peoples, for you [were] the least of all of the peoples; [Deut. 7:7]

This was difficult to render, so let me show you how others translated this:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	The Lord did not set His love upon you and choose you, because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the fewest of all people;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...not because ye were more in number than any of the peoples did Yahweh become attached to you, and make choice of you,—for ye were fewer than any of the peoples;
KJV	The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people;
NASB	The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.
NIV	The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.
NRSV	It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all peoples.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Not because of your being more numerous than any of the peoples hath Jehovah delighted in you, and fixeth on you, for ye are the least of all the peoples.

In terms of general meanings, these vary but little. However, a literal translation is difficult for several reasons. The word translated *set his love, delighted, attached* is *châshaq* (חַשַּׁק) [pronounced *khaw-SHAHK*], which means *be attached to, love*. This is always used with the *bêyth* preposition and an object of the preposition. The prefixed preposition *bêyth* means *in, into, at, by, with, against*; proximity is implied. We find it used this way in the Qal stem in Gen. 34:8 Deut. 7:7 10:15 21:11 Psalm 91:14 (Isa. 38:17 is likely a misreading). However, there is no *bêyth* preposition in 1Kings 9:19 or 2Chron. 8:6. We find this same word used with respect to constructing the tabernacle in Ex. 27:17 38:17, 28.* Although I am not entirely convinced, I think that the word *attached* basically covers the meaning of this word and that there are different ways of attaching things, the method corresponding to the preposition given. When used in a nonconstruction sense, the idea of attachment is still very much a part of the meaning, although it may have to be implied until I can find a suitable rendering. Right now I am going to go with *placed his love in, set his love with* (taking into account the preposition which follows). Without that preposition, I would go with the rendering *desire*. Strong's #2836 BDB #365.

This is followed not by the wâw conjunctive but by the wâw consecutive, meaning *and then, and so, so then*. Châshaq is in the Qal perfect, referring to a completed action; the next verb is in the Qal imperfect, indicating a continued action. Bâchar (בָּחַר) [pronounced *baw-KHAHR*] means *to choose* and is pretty consistently rendered that way throughout the Authorized Version. However, it is also followed by the bêyth preposition, which is generally not translated. With the bêyth preposition, it can refer to divine choice (Isa. 44:2 Ezek. 20:5 1Sam. 10:24) or to man's choice (Deut. 30:19 Prov. 3:31 Isa. 66:3). Strong's #977 BDB #103.

The order of these two words is important, as well as their tense. God placed His love, His desire in a point in time in Israel. He set His love in Israel as a completed action. Then He would select Israel or choose them. We have to have God's love within us—that is, we must be accepted in the Beloved; and then God chooses us. What follows is grace. It is easy to bet on the strongest and the best. God placed His chips on the weakest of nations. Israel had been subdued in slavery for four centuries and they had a slave mentality. They began accumulating a population many generations after the nations named in this passage, and therefore, they were fewer in number. God knew exactly what would occur in His relationship with Israel and still chose Israel for all time. Just because God has set Israel aside for a short time, don't think that we, as the church have somehow inherited their position. God didn't, after 1600 years, suddenly decide, "You know, I made a terrific error with those Jews. I mean, they seemed alright at first, but I just don't know what happened to them. I think that I am going to go with plan B instead and see how this works." God is not man. He does not choose a people and then cast them aside forever. He knew exactly what He was doing. We make bad choices; we choose husband or wives or careers which are total mistakes; we do things in our lives that cause us problems for decades to come. God does not make mistakes. Choosing Israel was a part of His perfect plan. They are only temporarily on the sidelines and any Jew today who chooses to believe in Him will be saved. **From the stand point of hte gospel, they [the Jews] are enemies for your sake, but form the standpoint of God's choice, they are beloved for the sake of the patriarchs; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you once were disobedient to God but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, in order that because of the mercy shown to you, they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He might show mercy to all** (Rom. 11:28–32). **He will remember His covenant forever. The word which He commanded to a thousand generations; that covenant which He made with Abrahm and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel, as an everlasting covenant** (Psalm 105:8–10).

As has been mentioned, the great races of that day were begun soon after the flood. Wthin two to four generations after the flood, we had the beginnings for the major nations of Moses' day. The Jews began long after that and had spent the bulk of their growth under slavery. For this reason, despite their phenomenal population growth, they were considered the least of all peoples. God chose them apart from any human merit, which is how He chooses us. **"Do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out from before your face, 'Because of my righteousness Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land.' But because of the wickedness of these nations [that] Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before you."** (Deut. 9:4).

"But on account of Y^ehowah's loving you, and His keeping the oath which He had sworn to your fathers—[it is because of these things that] Y^ehowah has brought you out by a strong hand and so He is redeeming you from a house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.
[Deut. 7:8]

We have a parallel set up in this verse. God brings the Jews out—Qal perfect; this is followed by the wâw consecutive and then the Qal imperfect of *redeem*. God brought the Israelites out of Egypt in one fell swoop, but He continues to redeem them. God had sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He would bring their seed into this Land of Promise. Because God's love has been placed in them and because of his promises that He made to their fathers, because of these things, God brought them out with a strong hand and continues redeeming them. Everyday, God must preserve the Jews and lead them through the troubles and particularly through Satanic attack. This is the protection and redemption which God provides.

You cannot underestimate the power of God's promise to Abraham. We make various promises and some we keep and others we do not. God's character does not work that way. Moses stood in the gap between God's wrath and the people of Israel, holding before God a promise: **"Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Your**

servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and you said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken, I will give to your descendants, and they will inherit it forever.' So Y^ehowah changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people." (Ex. 32:13–14). Nor can we underestimate His unfailing love: "Yet, on your fathers, did Y^ehowah set His affection to love them and He chose their descendants after them—you above all peoples, as this day." (Deut. 10:15). "Because Y^ehowah love his people, He has made you king over them." (2Chron. 2:11b).

"And you have known that Y^ehowah your God—He [is] God, the faithful God, keeping the covenant, and the kindness, to those loving Him, and to those keeping His commandment—to a thousand generations. [Deut. 7:9]

In this verse, *commandment* is written in the singular, but it is spoken in the plural.

The God of Israel is the God of the Universe. He is immutable. When He swears to something, then He will perform it. There will be a new Jerusalem and God will regather all of Israel into the land in the Millennium. Until that point in time, we will be in the Church Age (with the exception of the Tribulation, which is a continuation of the Jewish Age). When people love God and keep His commandments, then He remains faithful to a thousand generations. This is, in essence, saying for all time. There is an incredible impact when a generation loves and serves and obeys God, and that impact is felt for centuries. The United States was founded by Protestants—born-again Christians. Our population, as originally settled, was perhaps as high as 97% born-again believers. Now many of them were small-minded and petty, but just being regenerated gave the United States a great beginning and much of the blessing which we have today is in part due to their spiritual place. Some looked merely to escape the stifling Church of England and of Rome, in order to worship God as they believed correct. Because of this, we have become one of the greatest nations on the earth. In our short history, we have seen the banner carried by the client nation to God handed off from England to us. Even though we were enemies in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, England was a client nation who eventually lost her client nation status. She passed the baton to us and we have carried this for over a century. Where it will go from here is hard to tell, but as far back as the 1970's I have heard various people predict that Russia could become the next client nation to God. Some made that prediction just because it seemed so preposterous at first. From the changes which have occurred there over the past couple decades and the positive volition which they have shown, such a transfer of the baton is not unthinkable. It is clear that we are a nation on its way down.

We have heard of the three and four generation curse; however, this is the thousand generation blessing. All it takes is one obedient generation, and there is blessing for a thousand generations. This is teaching through exaggeration, but it gets the point across. Negative volition, although devastating, is limited. It tends to wear itself out in a few generations. However, there is nothing more fantastic than positive volition toward God's plan. This goes on for hundreds of years. "Oh Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, there is not God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, [no one] who is keeping [your] covenant and showing grace to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart." (1Kings 7:23b). Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and Your dominion [continues] throughout all generations (Psalm 145:13). "But there will be a showing of kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Ex. 20:6). He remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations (Psalm 105:8). Then Y^ehowah passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "Y^ehowah, the Y^ehowah God, [is] compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in grace and truth—Who preserves grace for thousands, who lifts up punishment, rebellion and sin; yet He by no means leave [the guilty] unpunished, punishing the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." (Ex. 34:6–7). The last verse quoted combines both the grace of God and His perfect justice.

Some people, when they read portions of the gospels, have no idea how closely what our Lord says parallels what is found in the Old Testament. However, He made promises similar to those made by God, making His authority equal to God or, to the unbelieving Jew, sounding absolutely blasphemous. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, is he who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." (John 14:21).

To quote McGee: *What is man's answer to the love of God? It is obedience. God will bless any people who respond to His love by obedience*⁹⁷.

"And recompense to those hating Him, to his face [lit., faces]; to destroy him, He⁹⁸ does not delay; to the one hating him—to his face[s] He will recompense him. [Deut. 7:10]

I believe that, like the word pants, face in the Hebrew is in the plural, even though it is a reference to one person's face in this case. There is a certain poetry here:

And recompenses
to those hating him
to his face [s]
to destroy him
he does not delay
to the one hating him
to his face [s]
He will recompense him

The verb translated *complete, repay, recompense, reward, restore* is a two-edged sword. People are recompensed or rewarded for evil as well as for good. Shâlêm (שָׁלֵם) [pronounced *shaw-LAME*] cuts both ways. God rewards those who have done evil to their faces; and He rewards those who have participated in divine good to their faces. BDB #1022 Strong's #7999. *According to recompensing, He will recompense: wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies—[even] to the coastlands, He will recompense (Isa. 59:18).*

One is reminded of the promises made in Lev. 26:27–28: "Yet, if in spite of this, you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, then I will act with wrathful hostility against you; and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins." When it comes to repaying evil with what it deserves, this is God the Father's prerogative, not ours: "Vengeance is Mine, and retribution. In due time, their foot will slip, for the day of their calamity is drawing near and the impending things are hastening upon them." (Deut. 32:35). Or, how about: *A jealous and avenging God is Y^ehowah. Y^ehowah is avenging and wrathful. Y^ehowah take vengeance on His adversaries and He reserves wrath for his enemies (Nahum 1:2). And it came to pass when the ark set out that Moses said, "Rise up, O Y^ehowah, and let Your enemies be scattered and let those who hate You fleet from your face." (Num. 10:35).*

And there are some, like me, who pray for vengence upon certain ner-do-well's. God will take care of that, but in the proper time frame. *But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. However, to not let this one [thing] escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to a change of attitude (2Peter 3:7–9).* God does not seek vengeance on those who oppose Him when we believe it is time. If we have been put under pressure by some jackass who is either out of fellowship or an unbeliever, and we are sick and tired of it, we are ready for God to immediately punish them. We want God to squash them like a bug. However, God does not work that way—God takes His vengeance when the time is correct. What if God took us out of this life before we believed in Him? This wouldn't be that good of an idea, all of a sudden. But there was a portion of our life when we were in complete and total rebellion against God. Furthermore, we spend time out of fellowship—sometimes for weeks in complete and total rebellion against God. We will get punished, but perhaps not removed from this life (although we may certainly deserve that). *God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come in a change of mental attitude.*

"And you will take responsibility [to keep] the commandment, and the statutes and the ordinances which I am commanding you today to do to them. [Deut. 7:11]

⁹⁷ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 53.

⁹⁸ We find *and He* in the western Onkolos, the targum of Jonathan, the Septuagint and the Vulgate.

This is our good friend, the verb *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] which means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. It means not only know the law, the precepts, the Word of God, but to *observe* it and to *obey* it and to *guard* it. This word occurs approximately 500 times in the Old Testament. *Shâmar* comes from a primitive root word which means to hedge about with thorns; although it is often translated *keep*, I believe that a better translation would be *to guard, watch, preserve*. Here we find this verb in the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect tense. I have translated this *take responsibility to keep*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036

The Israelites will be a part of God's judgment against these degenerate peoples occupying the land. Moses is making it clear how they must deal with the indigenuous peoples of the land. Just as God will reward them for their faithfulness and their obedience, God will also, through their obedience, strike down the other nations for their degeneracy. Notice that Moses is not afraid to repeat himself here. So far in this particular message alone, Moses had told the Israelites this in 13 different verses (Deut. 5:1, 29–33 6:1–3, 17, 24–25 7:9).

Deuteronomy 1	Deuteronomy 2	Deuteronomy 3	Deuteronomy 4	Deuteronomy 5
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The Blessings of Obedience

Lev. 26:1–13 Deut. 28:1–14 30:1–10

"And it will come to pass, because you [all] hear these judgments, and you have kept and done them, that Y^ehowah your God will keep with respect to you the covenant and the grace which He had sworn to your fathers; [Deut. 7:12]

For this generation to take the land successfully, they had to obey the judgments given them by God. If they did not go into the land and take it, that would not have meant that God did not keep His promises, as He did not specify which generation would be given the Land of Promise. This is what made this a conditional covenant. No matter what, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would receive the land. However, the generation to do so would be the generation to fulfill this portion of the covenant to God. Generation X began strongly. Actually, they faltered a few times, but when God gave them their assignments concerning the building of the tabernacle and the donating of the gold and silver to build same, they did just exactly as they were told. Had they kept that up, things would have been find for that generation.

Three fairly lengthy passages describe the fact that obedience will result in blessing: Lev. 26:1–13 and Deut. 28:1–14 30:1–10; the middle passage I will quote: "Now it will come to pass if you carefully listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, Y^ehowah your God will place you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessing will come upon you and overtake you, if you will listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God. Blessed you [will be] in the city and bless you [will be] in the field. Blessed [will be] the fruit of your womb and the produce [lit., fruit] of your ground and the produce [lit., fruit] of your livestock—the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. Blessed [will be] your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed [will be] when you come in and blessed when you go out. Y^ehowah will give to you your enemies who will rise up against you—struck down before your face; in one way they come out to you and in seven ways they flee from you. Y^ehowah commanded with you the blessings in your store-houses, and in every putting forth of your hand and He has blessed you in the land which Y^ehowah your God has given to you. Y^ehowah will establish you to Himself as a holy people, as He had sworn to you when you keep the commands of Y^ehowah your God and have walked in His ways; and all the peoples of the land have seen that the name of Y^ehowah is called upon you, and they will be afraid of you. And Y^ehowah has made you abundant in good, in the fruit of your womb and in the produce [lit., fruit] of your cattle and in the produce [lit., fruit] of your ground, on the ground which Y^ehowah had sworn to your fathers to give to you. Y^ehowah will open to you His good treasure—the heavens—to give to rain of your land in its season and to bless all the works of your hand, and you will lend to many nations and you—even you—will not have to borrow. And Y^ehowah will give you for head and not for tail; and you have only been above and you are not beneath, because you have heard the commands of Y^ehowah your God which

I am commanding you today and you have kept and done [them]. Furthermore, you have not turned aside from all the words which I am commanding you today, [to the] right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them." These are not parallel passages insofar as they will match up verse for verse; they simply list the blessings which follow obedience, which is quite the long list, when you place these passages end to end.

"And he has loved you and He has blessed you and He has multiplied you, and He will bless [or, has blessed] the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, your grain, and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock,⁹⁹ upon the land which He had sworn to your fathers to give to you. [Deut. 7:13]

All of these things God has given to this generation of Israel from eternity past. Christmas is coming up; you have purchased a gift for your mother and you mailed it. She has not opened the package yet nor has she received it yet. However, when speaking to a friend, you say, "Yeah, I got my mom thus and so for Christmas."—past tense, because, insofar as you are concerned, this is a done deal. You would not say, under the same circumstances, "I will be getting this for my mom;" nor would you say, "I'll be giving this to mom for Christmas." You will speak of it as an event which has already come to pass. Some of these blessings have already been delivered to this generation of Israel and some are still to come. Nevertheless, God gave these things to them in eternity past. Therefore, all of these blessings are given in the perfect tense.

The phrase *grain, new wine and oil* is often used to describe the blessings of their own land. Up until that point in time, the Israelites had been wandering the wilderness desert area and before that, they had farmed someone else's land. This speaks of the produce of their own land, the grain from the fields, the wine from the grapes and the oil from the olive groves. "And it will come to pass, if you listen to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love Y^ehowah your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that I will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and the late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil." (Deut. 11:13–14; see also Gen. 27:28 Num. 18:12 Deut. 14:23 18:4).

The promise of blessing through a population increase is found in Lev. 26:9 Deut. 13:17 Deut. 30:5 reads: "And Y^ehowah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you will possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers." Generation X possessed this land by promise.

"You will continue to be blessed [or, to receive blessing] above all the peoples—there is not in you a barren man or a barren woman; nor among your cattle; [Deut. 7:14]

The absolute status quo verb *to be* is found twice in this verse: first in the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect—however, it follows the Qal passive participle of *to bless*. That means that *blessing* is emphasized. Then *to be* occurs again with the negative, in the 3rd person, Qal imperfect.

Recall what God had promised Abraham: "And I will make you exceedingly prolific [Abram was in his 90's at the time of this promise and without any children] and I will make nations from you and kings will come forth from you." (Gen. 17:6). At that point in time in history, a great blessing was that of being able to have children (it is still that way today, to a certain extent). We hear of couples who agonize over not being able to conceive and some right man/right woman marriages dissolve because of this. Every person of the Generation of Promise was able to have children. "There will be no one miscarrying or barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days."¹⁰⁰ (Ex. 23:26). This accounts for the great increase in population enjoyed by Israel over a very short period of time. But the sons of Israel [then living in Egypt] were fruitful and increased greatly and multiplied and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them (Ex. 1:7). Recall what Moses said to the people at the beginning of his first recorded sermon in the book of Deuteronomy: "Y^ehowah your God has multiplied you,

⁹⁹ According to Barnes' Notes, this could be rendered *the ewes of your sheep*, and is a phrase peculiar to Deuteronomy. Ashtoreth is the goddess of the Zidonians, also called Ashtarte by classical writers, and is the goddess of sex and reproduction. The plural of this word is the Hebrew word translated *young* or *ewes* (Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 285).

¹⁰⁰ *Fulfilling the number of your days* is simply the gestation period; that is, when one become pregnant, she will carry the child to term.

and behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. May Y^ehowah, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand fold more than you are, and bless you, just as He has promised you!" (Deut. 1:10–11). This promise of fertility would be fulfilled immediately and in the millennium.

"And Y^ehowah has turned aside from you every sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you have known, will He place on you; and he has placed them on all those hating you.

[Deut. 7:15]

The Jews just came out of a land infested with all kinds of disease, and with great potential for continued disease. These diseases were placed upon the Egyptians by God. However, God saw to it that these diseases did not affect the Israelites. And He [God] said, "If you will carefully listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, [then] I will place none of the diseases on you which I have placed upon the Egyptians, for I, Y^ehowah, am your healer." (Ex. 15:26; also see 23:25). Later, in their rebellion against God, God killed many of the Jews with the sin unto death, using disease as the instrument of that death. He still saw to it that the innocent were not punished with the guilty. Furthermore, there is the implicit promise of this verse to send plagues upon the current enemies of Israel as they take the land. The alternative to what God has offered them is disobedience; "Y^ehowah will strike you down with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. Y^ehowah will strike you down with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of the heart." (Deut. 28:27). These lack of diseases would both have an immediate and a far (millennial) fulfillment (see also Deut. 28:4, 11).

"And you will consume all the peoples whom Y^ehowah your God is giving over to you; your eye will have no pity on them and you will not serve their gods, for they are [lit., and] a snare to you.

[Deut. 7:16]

This verse is the antithesis of what you would think a kind and loving God would require. However, these people whose land the Israelites are taking are a thoroughly lost people. At their best, they would ensnare the Israelites into worship of false gods. At their worse, they will lie dormant for years like the AIDS virus, and then spring up and destroy Israel. God had spoken to them about this forty years previous. "And I will fix your boundary from the Sea of Reeds to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates River, for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. You will make no covenant with them or with their gods. They will not live in your land, or else they will make you sin against Me; for in serving their gods, it will be a snare to you." (Ex. 23:31–33).

There are some who see man as evolving and that this was man in a fairly unevolved state. This is incorrect. Despite the horrors of war, we are not in a society where war can be outlawed. Many of us were foolish in the 60's and thought that by marching down a few streets carrying placards and flowers that we would somehow end war. While not an act to be entered into flippantly or casually, war will remain a part of human society forever. Man is not evolving and we will never reach a state where war is no longer a part of our lives. There are times when we are particularly blessed by God and war might skip a generation, or we might be involved in only limited warfare, or we may not have to do battle within our own country. However, war is a fact of life and there are some instances where we have no choice. The easy illustration is Hitler, who gave us no choice. Our attack upon the Japanese was also justified, even though it is possible that several leaders of the United States may have had advance warning concerning Pearl Harbor. I would even dare say that at any point in time when genocide is attempted against Jewish population, we should be there with as much force as we can muster. All attempts of genocide against the Jews are promoted by Satan.

In the time period which we are studying, whether to war or not is a simple matter. God had determined that certain peoples had to be removed from the earth, and He placed this responsibility into the hands of His people. Since God is not speaking to anyone directly today, it is not quite as easy. However, at this point in time, the Canaanites and their first cousins in the land had reached a point of degeneracy which is almost beyond our comprehension. God did not grant His people the right to conquer as much land as possible—they had a specific geographical location and specific peoples that they were allowed to attack and to conquer. Other nations would certainly come to the Jews for their spiritual light. Unfortunately, the Israelites did not completely eliminate all of

their enemies in the land, so we will later read: [And the sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and they took their daughters for themselves as wives and gave their own daughters to their sons and served their god. And the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of Y^ehowah and forgot Y^ehowah their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth \(Judges 3:5–7; see also Ezra 9:1–3\).](#) In fact, they did not destroy the peoples, as Y^ehowah had commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and learned their practices and served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughter to the demons and shed innocent blood—the blood of their sons and their daughters (Psalm 106:34–38).

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Y^ehowah Will Cause Israel to Defeat and Dominate the Indigenous Peoples of the Land

"If you say in your heart, 'These nations are more numerous than I—how am I able to dispossess them?'" [Deut. 7:17]

Erotasis [pronounced *ER-o-TEE-sis*] is asking a question where an answer is not expected. Moses is taking the view of the Israelites and asking a question in the *affirmative negation*. That is, the question is put in an affirmative, but the answer implied is a strong negative. Israel is saying, "How am I able to dispossess them?" and what is meant is, "It does not seem possible that we are able to take this land from the indigenous population."

Moses, in counseling the people of Israel, sounds completely natural and in character, considering the times and his relationship to the people. However, if this book were written centuries after the death of Moses, as some have supposed, this verse seems silly and not in keeping with the fact that the Israelites did go into the land and had dsipossessed the Canaanites long before.

Their fathers, in spying out the land, found a land filled with giants and greatly fortified cities, even beyond what they had seen in Egypt. Their fathers, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, though that there was no way that they could dispossess the indigenous population. Moses was aware that these men would have second thoughts and doubts. As you recall, the majority report of the spies was: ["The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of stature. There also we saw the Nephilim \(the sons of Anak are part of the Nephalim\); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."](#) (Num. 13:32b–33).

"You will not be afraid of them; you will surely remember that which Y^ehowah your God has done to Pharaoh, and to all Egypt;" [Deut. 7:18]

Most of these people who are of the age to fight came out of Egypt and saw the great signs and wonders which God did in Egypt, to take Israel out of Egypt. There is a fighting population of young men between 20 and 40 who have only heard of this from their fathers. However, it is clear to those who are forty and older than God has powers beyond what we can imagine and, since He has brought the Israelites this far, He will give them the land as well. The sons of Israel need to heed what Joshua had said forty years previous: ["If Y^ehowah is plesed with us then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against Y^ehowah; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them and Y^ehowah is with us. Do not fear them."](#) (Num. 14:8–9). They need to take hold of what God had promised them: ["And you will take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land to you to inherit."](#) (Num. 33:53). Moses would continue to reason with the people concerning the strength of Jesus Christ

Who led them out of Egypt: "Y^ehowah your God Who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes." (Deut. 1:30). For us today, we have the words of the Psalmist: Seek Y^ehowah and His strength; sweek His face continually. Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth (Psalm 105:4–5).

"The great trials which your eyes saw, and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm [by] which Y^ehowah your God brought you out—so Y^ehowah your God will do to all the peoples concerning whom you are afraid before their face; [Deut. 7:19]

Moses is speaking to the Generation of Promise, here, and not to their sons (although some of their sons will be the proper age to go to war). All the elders observed these signs and wonders performed in Egypt; therefore, despite the great size of their opponents, Israel is not to be concerned nor are they to be afraid. Moses reasoned with these people. Israel was unique. "Or has God tried to go to take for Himself a nation from within [another] nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors as Y^ehowah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" (Deut. 4:34). It is important that this people continually refer back to what they saw: And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "You have seen all that Y^ehowah did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants and all his land; the great trials which your eyes have seen, those great signs and wonders." (Deut. 29:2–3). Psalm 136 is a memorial to the works of God, from creation to His deliverance of Israel.

"And furthermore Y^ehowah your God will sent also the hornet among them, until those remaining and those who are hiding from before your face perish; [Deut. 7:20]

The *hornets* are identified in BDB as allies of Israel. That seems unlikely as we read nothing of alliances of Israel in the book of Joshua which are beneficial to Israel. We are not that certain of the rendering of this word and it is found only in Ex. 23:28 and Joshua 24:12. We covered this in much greater detail in Ex. 23:28. There are two verbs in this sentence which have definite articles and are in the Niphal participle; since they are joined by an *and*, and they seem to both take the action of the second main verb, they act as the subjects of the verb, the Qal infinitive construct of *perish*. I originally chose to place *from before your face* with this verb, rather than a continuation of *those who are hiding*; however, the contrast of v. 23 indicates that this modifying phrase should go with *hiding*. It would be a good idea to see how other translators handled this:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Moreover, the Lord you God will send the hornet among them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Moreover, also the hornet will Yahweh thy God send among them,—until they are destroyed who are left remaining and who are hiding themselves from thy face.
KJV	Moreover, the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed.
NASB	Moreover, the LORD your God will send the hornet against them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you perish.
NIV	Moreover, the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until even the survivors who hide from you have perished.
NRSV	Moreover, the LORD your God will send pestilence against them until even the survivors and the fugitives are destroyed.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And also the locust doth Jehovah they God send among them, till the destruction of those who are left, and of those who are hiding from thy presence;

Both *Young's Translation* and *The Emphasized Bible* tend to be literal, even to the point of preserving the word order, which sometimes causes the language to seem convoluted (because it is to an English-speaking person). The emaning of any of these translations is fairly clear, in any case: those who remain alive in the land and those who are hiding from the Jews—they will perish from before the face of the Israelites.

What may help is to go back to Exodus and look at a few verses: "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you, to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before Him

and obey His voice; do not be rebellious toward Him, for He will not pardon your transgression, since My Name is in Him. For My Angel will go before you and bring you to a land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them. I will send My terror ahead of you and throw all the people among whom you come into confusion, and I will make all your enemies turn backs to you [in retreat]. And I will send hornets ahead of you, that they may drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites and the Hittites before you; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you." (Ex. 23:20–21, 23, 27–28, 31b). Who are these *hornets*? The translation is but a guess; probably based upon the Septuagint's rendering of *wasp*, which could be an educated guess itself. However, even though we do not know the definite meaning of this word, it is in the feminine singular. However, the feminine gender when in the singular is occasionally used to represent a collective noun. For instance, we have the masculine singular *travelor*; but the feminine singular of that noun is translated *caravan*.¹⁰¹ This *hornet* simply refers to the Angel of Y^ehowah and to the terror of Y^ehowah. These are things which preceded Israel into the land over which Israel had no control. It is because of God going into the land first that the Israelites will be able to conquer it. And what is most important here, as the NIV Study Bible points out, is the effect of the *hornet* preceding the Israelites into the land.

"You will not be terrified on account of their presence [lit., faces], for Y^ehowah your God [is] in your midst, a God great and fearful [or, imposing and awe-inspiring]. [Deut. 7:21]

I recall from Sunday school in my youth that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament were, in a manner of speaking, two different Gods. The One in the Old Testament was somewhat of a violent, fire breathing, revenge taking dictator and the One in the New Testament was a let's hold hands, smile and sit out in the flowers kind of God. God is immutable. His character has never changed from the Old to the New Testament. In some situations, we observe what, at first, seem to be contradictory character traits: **"Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty and the awesome God, Who will keep a covenant and grace."** (Neh. 9:32). His character and essence are so vast, that we see only bits and pieces of it depending upon the circumstances. This should be easy to comprehend. When we are exposed to difficult circumstances, we may seem one way. When life is easy and we have no immediate problems, we may appear to be somewhat different. When we are offered a chance to somewhat compromise between right and wrong, yet there is great gain to come from it, we might behave yet a different way. We are the same person, but the circumstances change, so we appear to be different. There are circumstances which will reveal God's justice, others which will reveal His love, and others which will demand His vengeance. Our God is always a God to be feared and revered. As our Lord said, **"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but, rather, fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."** (Matt. 10:28). This is the New Testament mirror image of our passage. The Israelites were not to fear those in the land, as Y^ehowah was in their midst. **For Y^ehowah Most High is to be fears—a great King over all the earth** (Psalm 47:2).

For those who are under judgment, God is one to be feared. However, this did not mean that God favored the Israelites over all others. **"He [God] executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So, therefore, show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You will fear Y^ehowah your God; and will serve Him and cling to Him and you will swear by His name."** (Deut. 10:18–20).

This is a continual reminder to retain the divine perspective. God brought them to this land, God has promised them this land, so it does not matter who occupies it, God will see that they are ferreted out and killed. The war is not simply between Israelites and those who now occupy the land, but between God and the forces of darkness—a conflict whose outcome has already been determined.

"And Y^ehowah your God will clear away these nations from before your face little [by] little—you will not be able to finish them quickly, so that the beast of the field does not multiply against you [Deut. 7:22]

¹⁰¹ Owen's *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, Vol. I, p. 341; Davidson's *Introductory Hebrew Grammar—Syntax*, J.C.L. Gibson, pp. 17–18.

Nâshal (נָשַׁל) [pronounced *naw-SHAHL*] means *draw away, clear away* in the Qal; *cast off* in the Piel or the Hiphil. Strong's #5394 BDB #675. One of the meanings of yâkôl (יָכֹל) [pronounced *yaw-COAL*] is *to be able, to have the ability, to have the power to*. Strong's #3201 BDB #407. This is followed by the Piel infinitive construct of kâlâh (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which means *to complete, to bring an end to, to finish* (Piel meanings). Strong's #3615 BDB #477

This is an interesting consideration. There is a large enough indigenous population so that there is no fear of wild animals, apparently a real concern in those days. There is also a high animal population in this area. Certainly many wild animals were killed for food and possibly some for sport, otherwise their population would not be a consideration. This was also made mention of in Ex. 23:29–30: "[I will not drive them out before you in a single year, that the land may not become desolate, and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. I will drive them out before you little by little, until you become fruitful and take possession of the land.](#)" This gradual removal of the Canaanites will mostly take place in the seven years it took Joshua to conquer the land, but it would never be complete.

"And Y^ehowah your God will place them before your face and he will throw them into chaos—a great chaos until they are exterminated [or, annihilated]. [Deut. 7:23]

Young's Translation here is quite weak—it reads: [and Jehovah thy God hath given them before you, and destroyed them—a great destruction—till their destruction](#). It sounds as though we have the noun used twice and its verb cognate once. However, there are three different words here. As we have seen in the past, nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*] is a Hebrew verb which is translated **84 different ways** in the Authorized version. It actually means *give, place, put, set*. Strong's #5414 BDB #678. In v. 20, they were hidden from the face of Israel; here, God will place them before Israel.

Then we have this verb hîym (הִיַּם) [pronounced *heem*]*—also, hûm (הִוַּם) [pronounced hoom]**—to which, BDB gives the meanings murmur, roar, discomfit.* The Authorized version gives the following noun cognate, mêhûmâh (מְהוּמָה) [pronounced *m^ehoo-MAWH*] five different translations (*vexation, tumult, destruction, trouble, discomfiture*) out of the twelve times it occurs in Scripture. These are not close enough for all of them to stand. Here, what we are seeing is *widespread panic due to the loud noise of war*. We'll go with *chaos*. Verb: Strong's #1949 BDB #223 Noun: Strong's #4103 BDB #223. Shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw--MAHR*] means *to be exterminated, to be destroyed* in the Niphal; *to annihilate, to exterminate* in the Hiphil. Strong's #8045 BDB #1029.

This verse is a prediction, not dissimilar to the prediction found in Ex. 23:27: "[I will send My terror ahead of you, and will throw all the people into whom you come into confusion, and I will make all your enemies turn back to you \[and run\].](#)" And this prediction has been fulfilled many times over, one example being Joshua 10:10–11: [And Y^ehowah confounded them before Israel and He struck them down with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it came to pass as they fled from before the faces of Israel, they were at the descent of Beth-horon, that Y^ehowah threw large stones from heaven upon them as far as Azekah, and they died—more who died from hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.](#) By the way, these hail stones are examples of the hornets sent ahead by God.

As I have pointed out before, I have an interest in the nuts and bolts of a passage; who delivered the message, under what circumstances; when was it recorded. Here, it would be my person conviction that Moses, even though he wrote the book of Exodus, still went back to it and studies Ex. 23 in particular prior to giving this message to the Israelites. There are so many parallel verses that we know Moses is not speaking extemporaneously (similarly, Deut. 5 was almost a word-for-word quote from Ex. 20).

"And He will give their kings into your hand,¹⁰² and you will make their name perish from under the heavens; no man will station himself in your presence until you have caused them to be annihilated. [Deut. 7:24]

We have a parallelism between vv. 23 & 24. God will *set* the people before the *face* of Israel and He will *give* the kings into their *hand*. It is the same verb found in the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect each time (it is suffixed with the 3rd person plural in v. 23). We have another and different word often rendered *destroy*. 'Ā^bvad (אָבַד) [pronounced *aw^b-VAHD*] in the Qal stem means *to perish* (Lev. 26:38 Esther 4:16 Joel 1:11); in the Piel it means *to destroy* (Num. 33:52 Deut. 12:2–3); in the Hiphil it means *to cause to languish, to cause the destruction of, to put to death* (Num. 24:19 Joshua 7:7). Strong's #6 BDB #1. Here it is in the Hiphil perfect, but probably read as the Hiphil infinitive construct.

The prophecy of this verse was given several times in several ways: "There will no man be able to stand before you; Y^ehowah your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you." (Deut. 11:25). And Y^ehowah said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them will stand before you." (Joshua 10:8). See Ex. 23:31 as well.

This verse is fulfilled several times; among them: And Y^ehowah said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors." (Joshua 6:2). Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave." And they did so, and brought these five kings out to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon. And it came to pass when they had brought these kings out to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of th men of war who had gone with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." So they came near and put their feet on their necks. Joshua then said to them, "Do not fear or be dismyed! Be strong and courageous, for thus Y^ehowah will do to all your enemies with whom you fight." So afterward, Joshua struck them down and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees; and they hung on the trees until evening (Joshua 10:22–26). "For Y^ehowah has driven out great and strong nations from before you; and, as for you, no man has stood before youu to this day. One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for Y^ehowah your God is He Who fights for you, just as He promised you." (Joshua 23:9–10). And Y^ehowah gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; Y^ehowah gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good words which Y^ehowah had spoken to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass (Joshua 21:44–45). Also see Joshua 10:42 12:1–24.

What we should examine now is **the Religion of the Canaanites—not finished yet!** Also, let's look at **Degeneracy and the Land of Promise—a part of the above doctrine.**

Deuteronomy 1	Deuteronomy 2	Deuteronomy 3	Deuteronomy 4	Deuteronomy 5
Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

Their Graven Images Are under Cherem

"You will burn with fire the graven images of their gods; you will not desire the silver and gold upon them, nor will you [lit., and you will] take [it] to yourself, so that you will not be ensnared by it, for it [is] the abomination of Y^ehowah your God; [Deut. 7:25]

The negative of the first clause applies to the second clause as well. All that is connected with the idol is considered an abomination to God, including the gold and silver which was used to plait the idol with. This exact situation occurred with Achan when Joshua invaded the land. We will study it in Joshua 6:17–19 7:1, 16–25. Barnes believes that Paul was making a similar reference in Rom. 2:22, when he wrote: **You who say that one**

¹⁰² *Hand* is in the plural in the western Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate.

should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? Riches always have the potential of turning around the believer, as we will see with Gideon in Judges 8:22–27. This is why more believers are not rich—most could not handle the prosperity test in the realm of wealth.

"And you will not bring in an abomination into your house, or [lit. and] you will be devoted [i.e., under a ban of destruction] like it; you will absolutely detest it [lit., in detesting, you will detest it], and you will completely abhor it [lit., in abhorring, you will abhor it], for it [is] devoted [transliterated, cherem—under a ban of destruction]." [Deut. 7:26]

The Israelites, despite the richness of an idol found, are to recognize that it is under the ban—that is, it will be given completely over to Y^ehowah and those things under cherem were completely destroyed before God. God requires minimal contact and destruction. Perhaps I could draw an analogy. Let's just say you discovered a large quantity of uncut heroin, worth millions of dollars on the street. Regardless of the value of the drug, it would be under cherem. It is to be turned over to the police and eventually destroyed. How much it is worth is not even a slight consideration.

We were originally exposed to the concept of cherem in Lev. 27:28–29: **"Nevertheless, any thing dedicated to God [until it dies] which a man sets apart [transliterated: cherem] to Y^ehowah out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, will not be sold or redeemed. Everything dedicated to God [until it dies] is most holy to Y^ehowah. No one who is dedicated to God [until it dies] will be ransomed—he will certainly be put to death."** The last sentence is any man or group of people put under the ban, or under cherem; no amount of money will redeem them—they must be put to death. **"And nothing from that which is put under the ban will cling to your hand, in order that Y^ehowah may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He had sworn to your fathers."** (Deut. 13:17).

[Deuteronomy 1](#)

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Deuteronomy 8

Deuteronomy 8:1–20

Outline of Chapter 8:

- vv. 1–6 **Know and obey God because of what He has done so far**
- vv. 7–10 **The promise of the land which God is giving the Israelite**
- vv. 11–20 **Remember Y^howah in prosperity, or you will perish as will the heathen of the land**

Introduction: Much of the early portion of Deut. 8 is quoted in the New Testament or we find several parallel passages in the New Testament. We also will see that Israel was a much different land during that time period. The difference between prosperity and scarcity in a land is often something as simple as water, or the lack thereof. Israel had, at one time, a great many streams and rivers, meaning it was once well-watered by rain. This is strictly a matter of God's choice. He has set up certain natural laws, however, after years of schooling, the best predictor of the weather tomorrow is the weather today—and when you go by that prediction, you will be right as often as your weatherman. Throughout the last two-thirds of this chapter, Moses will point out instance after instance where the Generation of Promise should have good reason to trust God.

Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10
Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
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Know and Obey God Because of What He Has Done So Far

"All of the commandment [or, the entirety of the decree] which I am commanding you today, you [all] will take responsibility to do, so that you [all] will [continue] live [or, living], and you [all] will multiply, and you [all] will go in and you [all] will possess the land which Y^howah had sworn to your fathers; [Deut. 8:1]

This new generation is to listen carefully to what Moses was commanding them that day. The series of *and's* along with the continued use of the 2nd person plural, Qal perfect of three verbs led by the Qal imperfect of *live* is a linguistic method of emphasis. The result will be continuing to live in the land, to increase their population, to enter into the land and, finally, to be able to wrest the land from the indigenous population.

In looking at this verse and the continued use of *command* or *commandment* in the singular, a better translation might be *decree*. This might better give meaning to the continued use of singular of this noun. God views His commandments to Israel as a unified whole. All of them together are His decree for Israel. He didn't sit around and think up a dozen commandments; then, after a little more thinking, decide we need some laws about homosexuality; and then, God does some more thinking, and decides, we also need some laws about the tabernacle. This was one decree which came from the mouth of God. We perceive it in parts, as that is how our minds work; however, the Law came forth as a decree from God just as the heavens and the earth were all created instantly by the decree of God.

This particular verse parallels Deut. 4:1, which reads: **"And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, in order that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which Y^howah, the God of your fathers, is giving you."** Or, as God said to Moses: **"Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you will be My personal possession among all the peoples, for all the earth"**

is Mine.” (Ex. 19:5). This kind of relationship to God was always know—that is, obey God and prosper: “If they hear and serve [God], they will end their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.” (Job 36:11). Also see Deut. 6:24 30:16 Psalm 16:11 Ezek. 20:19.

"And you will remember the entire journey [lit., all the way] which Y^ehowah your God has caused you to go [or, has led you] these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, to test you, to know that which [is in] your heart, if you will keep [guard, or take responsibility for] His decree¹⁰³ or not. [Deut. 8:2]

These men and women are about to enter into a land prepared for them by God. Israel will become the representative of God here on earth. God had to take them through the wilderness for several reasons—the reasons listed here were to examine those He left alive carefully, to examine them to their very souls, to determine if they would obey God's Word or not.

Moses will repeat the purpose of the forty years in the wilderness—to humble and to test the Israelites in Deut. 8:16. One of the very first tests was in Ex. 15:22–27, where Israel face thirst due to the bitter waters of Marah. V. 25 specifically calls it a test. God's appearance to Israel to give them the Ten Commandments was also by way of testing them. Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us or we will die.” And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.” (Ex. 20:19–20). We recall one of the most important tests of all, when God asked Abraham to offer his uniquely-born son (Gen. 22:1–18). God's omniscience is not limited by time; therefore, God has known from eternity past what is in our hearts. Therefore, this would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of Testing—not finished yet!!**

God will often remind Israel that it was He Who led Israel through the desert into the Land of Promise. “And it was I Who brought you up from the land of Egypt. And I led you in the wilderness forty years, that you might take possession of the land of the Amorite.” (Amos 2:10). See also Deut. 2:7 29:5a Psalm 136:16. We are also to look back at what God has done for us: **I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you were perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus** (Philip. 1:6).

I love quoting McGee on these verses: *Why did God test Israel in the wilderness? It was to humble them and to prove what was really in their hearts. That explains why God puts you and me through the mill. Sometimes He puts us in the furnace and heaps it on very hot. Why? To test us and to humble us. Little man is proud, he's cocky, he is self-confident, and to be frank, he is an abomination! Listen to the boasting and bragging and the pride with which little man walks the earth. So God must take His own people and put them through the mill in order to humble them and to prove them¹⁰⁴.*

"And then He had humble you, and then He caused you to hunger, and then He had caused you to eat the manna (which you had not known; even your fathers have not known), in order that to cause you to know that man does not live by bread [or, food] alone, but by all of [the] proceedings [lit., produce or fruit] of the mouth of Y^ehowah does man live. [Deut. 8:3]

We have three wāw consecutives here, followed by a Piel (intensive stem) imperfect and then two Hiphil (causative stem) imperfects. There is a marvelous play on words here. Unregenerate man thinks that his lives because He eats the produce or the fruit of the land—he eats what the land issues forth. The manna which God fed them with was unknown up until that time and is still unknown today (there have been a lot of guesses by scholarly men, but they are wrong). God commanded it to come forth and it came forth. The manna was the fruit or the produce of His mouth. Manna was analogous to His Word. The Israelites were to eat of the manna, just as they were to partake of His Word—at least once a day. Although we have examined this before, allow me to remind you that (1) manna had never been seen by the Israelites before; (2) it was everywhere they wandered in the wilderness, through every kind of landscape; (3) it would disappear when they enter into the land and are able to produce food

¹⁰³ Written *commandment* (or, decree) and spoken *commandments*.

¹⁰⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 58.

from the land; (4) it would spoil and breed worms on the second day if kept, but the manna gathered on Fridays would last two days, through the Sabbath; and, (5) there was enough to feed two million people. Much as it would be great to find some kind of food and say that is manna, it just won't fly. Manna was a supernatural phenomena. Just as the Israelites were forced to subsist on food which came at God's command, they would also be required to live by the eating of His Word. This is why manna here is called the produce or fruit of God's mouth. How many Christians today live by means of the produce of God's mouth? Damn few.

This verse means that life consists of more than eating and drinking and the clothes that we wear. **And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for life—to what you will eat; for for your body—to what you will put on. For life is more than food and the body [is more than] clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; and they have not storeroom nor barn; and yet, God feeds them; how much more aluable you are than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his life's span? If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why are you anxious about other matters? Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so [clothes] the grass in the field, which is [here] today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more [will He clothe] you. O men of a little faith! And do not seek what you will eat, and what you will drink, and do not keep on worrying. For all these things the Gentiles of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. But seek for His kingdom and these things will be added to you."** (Luke 12:22–31). Our very life is sustained not by food, but by every Word which is the produce of God's mouth. The manna was a type, if you will, of the Word of God. The Israelites would not be able to sustain their lives for forty years without this manna. Our spiritual lives cannot be sustained without regular meals on God's Word. Once or three times a week is not enough. We must join in with David, who wrote: **Make me know Your ways, O Y^ehowah; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day. Remember, O Y^ehowah, Your compassion and Your graciousness—for they have been from eternity past** (Psalm 25:4–6).

There is always the 1% who must be dealt with. After they read or hear one passage out of God's Word, then they go out and practice it. This passage from Luke is not a call for you to quit work and go out and sit on a park bench and dedicate that time to God. God told Adam, **"Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil [or, sorrow], you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it will grow for you. And you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face(s), you will eat bread till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust and to dust you will return."** (Gen. 17b–19). **Paul told the Thessalonians: For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat** (2Thess. 3:10). In other words, at salvation, we don't quit work and sit around waiting for God to provide. The key to the passage in Luke is not one of have faith and do not work; the key is emphasis. If the emphasis of your life is upon providing for your basic needs to the exclusion or to the undermining of your dependence upon God, then your values are wrong. Our lives should reflect our dependence upon God and our trust in Him. Our lives should not be characterized by constant worry about obtaining food and clothing and shelter. This was the exact problem of gen X; they could not place their needs in the hand of God. They whined and complained instead: **And the whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the sons of Israel said to them, "It would hae been preferable for us to die by Y^ehowah's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat; when we ate bread to the full—for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this entire assembly with hunger."** (Ex. 16:2–3). Our lives should feed upon God's Word. **"I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."** (Job 23:12).

There are times when God must humble us; when He leaves us to operate on our own. **Yet, You have rejected us and You have brought us to dishonor; and you did not go out with our armies** (Psalm 44:9). **"Do not Go up [to battle the Amalekites and the Canaanites], or you will be struck down before you enemies, for Y^ehowah is not among you."** (Num. 14:42). When we get to a point where we think we have caused our own prosperity; where we think we have fought all of our own battles; where we think we are self-reliant, God removes a small portion of His support: **Before destruction, the heart of man is haughty; but humility [grace-orientation] before honor** (Prov. 18:12). **The proud man will be abased and the arrogance of man will be humbled. And Y^ehowah alone will be exalted in that day** (Isa. 2:11). **"But if they have not become humble [grace-oriented] even to this day, nor have they feared nor walked in My law or My statutes, which I have set before you and before your fathers, therefore, thus says Y^ehowah of the armies, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am going to set My face(s) against you for woe,**

even to cut off all Judah.’” (Jer. 44:10–11). There are also times when God provides for us (in fact, quite often), when we are way out of line. And Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, saying, “I have heard the gurmblings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight, you will eat meat, and in the morning, you will be filled with bread; and you will now that I am Y^ehowah your God.’” (Ex. 16:11–12). However, do not forget: “The [one in] exile will soon be set free and he will not die in the dungeon, nor will his bread be lacking.” (Isa. 51:14). For Y^ehowah will not abandon His people; nor will He forsake His inheritance (Psalm 94:14). Though he fall, he will not be utterly cast down because Y^ehowah is the One holding his hand (Psalm 34:24).

Most of us have heard Deut. 8:3 quoted before. When Satan tempted our Lord, he attacked the function of our Lord’s deity in God’s plan. Now I don’t expect you to fully grasp this, but it was not a part of God’s plan for our Lord to use His deity essence in order to satisfy his own personal needs, to resist temptation, or to negate personal suffering and tragedy. I do not know how much of this Satan understood, but he certainly understood that if God came to earth as a man, how meaningful is that if every time He was hungry, He snapped His fingers and had an orange juice and a burrito? So, our Lord depended upon the Holy Spirit, Whom we are given, for all personal needs. **And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, “Since You are the Son of god, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It stands written, ‘Man must not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”** (Matt. 4:2–4).

As an aside, when it comes to the translation here: the Authorized Version inserts *word* into this verse, because it is found in the Septuagint, which is what our Lord quoted in Matt. 4:4 and Luke 4:4. So the KJV reads: **And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which you knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live** (Deut. 8:3). This is why we find the word *word* in italics in the KJV.

"Your clothing has not worn out from off you, and your feet have not swelled these forty years;
[Deut. 8:4]

A miracle which probably went unnoticed by most until now was the fact that their clothes lasted them for forty years. Moses [speaking in the place of God; this is dramatic license] points this out again in Deut. 29:5: **"And I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandal has not worn out on your foot."** Nehemiah quotes Deut. 8:4 in Neh. 9:21. The Israelites, upon leaving Egypt, received clothing, as well as silver and gold, from the Egyptians (Ex. 12:35). However, since they were going to be carrying this with them, forty years worth of clothing would have been quite a huge amount. Furthermore, they did have sheep and oxen; therefore, they had the material for clothing with them. They likely used some of this to barter with the Moabites and other nomadic tribes. And, the children outgrew their clothing, of course, but the bulk of their clothing—the clothing which they wore—lasted forty years, and, through the wandering that they did, their feet did not swell up. Out of two million people walking in a wilderness for several years, someone is going to have foot problems. In this population of two million, no one had foot problems. These are quiet and less than spectacular miracles; miracles that would have gone unnoticed had they not been pointed out by Moses. However, God provides for our most menial needs in ways that may not seem to be all that spectacular. Your job, your clothes, your shelter and your car are things which you often take for granted—yet these are things which God has provided for you, despite your worthless spiritual life. These are given to us as a part of provisional grace or logistical grace. These are the things which we do not deserve, we do not work for—yet God provides them for us apart from our spiritual lives.

McGee’s comment: *Imagine having a suit of clothes that would not wear out. I know the ladies would not like this at all. Year after years the wife could tell her hubby that she needed a new dress, and year after year the husband could say the one she was wearing looked brand new. I tell you, after that went on for forty years, the women would be pretty far behind in the styles*¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 58.

When your diet is limited (recall that the Jews primarily ate manna), the lack of vitamins could bring on a case of beriberi, a symptom of which was swollen feet.¹⁰⁶ They didn't have to walk to be in danger of this. However, God saw to it that the manna they received was vitamin enriched and provided for their every bodily need. God's Word, our spiritual manna, provides the same perfect nourishment for our souls. It is through the study of His Word, through a pastor-teacher, that we gain great insight on the life that we lead.

"And you have know, with your heart, that as a man disciplines his son, Y^ehowah your God has been disciplining you; [Deut. 8:5]

There are times when God disciplines us, that we either refuse to recognize that we are being disciplined, or, we keep asking God *why* when, with a short search of the heart, we know why. When a child is disciplined by his father, it is difficult for the child, to be spanked by the hand that has provided for him—however, the discipline is absolutely necessary. Children grow up to be out of control when they are not disciplined. Some need it more than others and there is no magic formula—but without it, you destroy the child's future. There are as many as one out of ten parents—or more—who medically discipline their children. Their behavior is out of control—the child does not know that he can effectively control his own behavior—so the child is given ritalin, so that he can be managed medically. A parent who obtained speed on the street and then gave it to his child would be guilty of all kinds of wrong and would be severely punished by the law. However, this is thought to be today as normal.¹⁰⁷ This does not mean that you have a command from God to beat your children. **The New Testament warns us: And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord** (Eph. 6:4). Paul again warns the Colossians: **Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart** (Col. 3:21).

As further application, there are different types of discipline. Our Lord said of David, **"I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men—but My grace will not depart from him."** (2Sam. 7:14–15a). Spanking, although quoted often, and absolutely necessary, is not the only way that a child is to be disciplined. **"Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth, He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire."** (Deut. 4:36). Discipline here is simply hearing the voice of God.

The Israelites learned that they required discipline. **And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness—and [those] to whom He swore that they should not enter into His rest, but to those who were disobedient? And so we see that they were not able to enter [into His rest] because of their unbelief** (Heb. 3:17–19 Psalm 95:11b). **"For forty years, I loathed [that] generation, and said they are a people who have gone astray in their thinking [lit., heart]. And they do not know My ways. Therefore, I solemnly promised in My anger, 'Truly, they will not enter into My rest.' "** (Psalm 95:10–11). **"If they violate My statutes and do not keep My commandments, then I will visit their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes."** (Psalm 89:31–32). **Do not despise the discipline of Y^ehowah or loathe His reproof; for whom Y^ehowah loves He reproveth, even as a father [reproves] the son in whom he delights** (Prov. 3:11–12). This verse, as written in the Septuagint is quoted by the writer of Hebrews: **My sons, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord nor faint when you are reproveth by Him. For those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines, and he scourges [with a whip] every son whom He receives. It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom [his] father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which you all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, he had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet, to those who have been trained by it, afterwards, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** (Heb. 12:5b–11). A growing Christian learns to respect the discipline that he receives: **I know, O Y^ehowah, that Your judgments are righteous and that in faithfulness, You have afflicted me** (Psalm 119:75). **Observe, how happy is the man whom God reproveth; so do not despise the**

¹⁰⁶ This is according to a missionary doctor friend of McGee's; J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 59.

¹⁰⁷ This in no way means that patients cannot be treated with drugs; the point is that this has gotten out of hand, and ritalin is given to children who often had no real discipline when they were young and therefore cannot manage their own behavior. That is the parent's fault.

discipline of the Almighty (Job 5:17). As Jesus Christ told the church in Laodicea: **"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; become hot, therefore, and change your mind."** (Rev. 3:19). The Generation of Promise observed their fathers being disciplined by the sin unto death because of their continued rebellions. They were disciplined themselves when they participated in these rebellions; however, God is able to determine who can be disciplined and will learn from it and who can be disciplined and will then do it again as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

"And you will keep [or, guard or take responsibility for] the decree [or, command] of Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways and to fear [and, reverse] Him. [Deut. 8:6]

The imperative is not used very often in the Hebrew; the ten commandments are primarily in the Qal imperfect (I believe there is a perfect tense thrown in there and maybe a Hiphil stem). This sentence is presented in the same way—*keep* is in the Qal imperfect, which is the simple active stem, and the action of the verb is seen as continuous or applied at various points in time. *To walk* and *to fear* are both in the Qal infinitive construct, indicating purpose or result. The stance taken in the verse, and repeated throughout the Bible, is that the suffering that the Israelites went through was a matter of humbling, testing and discipline, absolutely necessary to them and because God, even though He disciplined them, also provided for all of their needs—because of these things, they were to take the responsibility for the decree of God, His Law delivered to them, to live as God expected them to live, and to have a healthy reverence for God.

God told Solomon: **"And if you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days."** (1Kings 3:14). In exasperation (I am speaking anthropopathically), our Lord said, **"But My people did not listen to My voice; and Israel did not obey Me. So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, to talk in their own devices. Oh, that My people would listen to Me. That Israel would walk in My ways! I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their adversaries."** (Psalm 81:11–14). And Moses in this verse, basically repeats what he had already said several times before: **"You will walk in all the way which Y^ehowah your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong days in the land which you will possess."** (Deut. 5:33). And Moses will repeat this once again: **"And now, Israel, what does Y^ehowah your God require from you, but to revere Y^ehowah your God, to walk in all His ways and to love him and to serve Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul; to keep Y^ehowah's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?"** (Deut. 10:12–13).

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The Promise of the Land Which God Is Giving the Israelite

"For Y^ehowah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of torrents of waters, springs, and of deep waters [or, raging seas]—their coming out in valley and in mountain; [Deut. 8:7]

This is a description of the Land of Promise which is in great contrast to its condition today. I have mentioned in the past that Palestine was a lot different during the time of Moses and David than it is today. If one would examine the Los Angeles area in the early 1900's, in the 40's and in the 90's, it would be like seeing three different areas. It began as a desert; water was brought in and it grew into one of the most beautiful areas in the world in a short few decades; and later, the overburdening of population have caused it to turn to one of the smoggiest, congested, overcrowded, and generally one of the more unpleasant areas of the world. We have several words for water in this verse, so we will quickly examine them all:

Nachal (נַחַל) [pronounced *NAHKH-al*], a word we have examined before, is usually rendered *brook*. We see a pleasant lazy stream of water, perhaps two to ten feet across, meandering along. Nachal refers to a torrent of rushing water through a narrow channel. Strong's #5158 BDB #636 Today, probably more often than then, it

could be a river which is only found during the rainy season. Since a torrent or a river tends to run through a valley area, this word is also used to refer to the valley that a river might run through. Here, to indicate that we are not speaking of a valley, but of a torrent, *nachal* is in the construct and is tied to the word for water. The word *water* is *mayim* (מַיִם) [pronounced *MAH-yim*] is the simple word for *water* found everywhere in the plural. Strong's #4325 BDB #565.

ʿAyin (עַיִן) [pronounced *ĠAH-yin*] is a word with three different meanings. It means a *spring* in this context (this word very occasionally is a proper noun standing for a particular location; however, it generally means eyes). Its use is determined entirely by context, and both uses are found in the same context continually: *spring* (Gen. 49:12 Ex. 15:27 Num. 33:9); *eyes* (Gen. 49:22 Ex. 15:26 Num. 33:3). Strong's #5869 BDB #745.

The final word is *t^ehōwm* (תְּהוֹמִים) [pronounced *t^e-HOME*] and it is a *surging mass of water, either a sea or a subterranean water-supply*. I will translate it *deep waters*. Strong's #8415 BDB #1062. Finally, after listing four different words indicating an abundance of water, this water is said to be going through the valley and the mountain. This indicates a great deal of rain. The Dead Sea is no big whoop. If it does not support life, it is just a huge hole of contaminated water. However, the indication here is that the water flows throughout the hills and throughout the valleys, which requires rain to place it there in the first place. In Deut. 11:11–12, Moses later says, “But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, which [land] drinks water from the rain of heaven, a land for which Y^ehowah your God cares; the eyes [possibly, springs] of Y^ehowah your God are always in it, from the beginning even to the end of the year.”

In any case, it is quite the extreme opposite as we would see Palestine today. Palestine is a desert—a land under great judgment—that a lot of very foolish men fight over. It is no longer the Land of Promise, the great oasis in the midst of a desert, that we find here. It has been under millenniums of judgment, meaning little or no rain.

Will Durant wrote: The climatic history of the land tells us again how precarious a thing civilization is, and how its great enemies—barbarism and desiccation—are always waiting to destroy it. Once Palestine was “a land flowing with milk and honey,” as many a passage in the Pentateuch describes it. Josephus, in the first century after Christ, still speaks of it as “moist enough for agriculture, and very beautiful. They have abundance of trees, and are full of autumn fruits both wild and cultivated...they are not naturally watered by many rivers, but derive their chief moisture from rain, of which they have no want.” In ancient days the spring rains that fed the land were stored in cisterns or brought back to the surface by a multitude of wells, and distributed over the country by a network of canals; this was the physical basis of Jewish civilization. The soil, so nourished, produced barley, wheat and corn, the vine thrived on it, and trees bore olives, figs, dates or other fruits on every slope. When war came and devastated these artificially fertile fields, or when some conqueror exiled to distant regions the families that had cared for them, the desert crept in eagerly, and in a few years undid the work of generations. We cannot judge the fruitfulness of ancient Palestine from the barren wastes and timid oases that confronted the brave Jews who in our own time returned to their old home after eighteen centuries of exile, dispersion and suffering.¹⁰⁸

It is not the land of the Israelites because God has them under discipline. God told Jeremiah, “And I brought you into the fruitful land, to eat its fruit and its good things, but you came and defiled My land and My inheritance you made an abomination.” (Jer. 2:7; see also 3:20–25 Ezek. 20:6–24). No matter how many Jews return to Palestine, they will constantly be at war and the vast majority of Jews will be scattered throughout the rest of the world, finding no country of their own. God promised them a long time ago: *Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe in His Word, but grumbled in their tents; they did not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah. Therefore, He swore to them that He would cast them down in the wilderness [this is gen X] and that He would cast their seed among the nations and scatter them in the lands [these are the Israelites today]* (Psalm 106:24–27). The few places which treat the Jewish people hospitably are blessed greatly (the blessings given to us are based a great deal upon our general treatment of God's people).

¹⁰⁸ *The Story of Civilization; Volume I Our Oriental Heritage; Will Durant; MJF Books; ©1963; pp. 299–300.*

Note that God waited a long time before describing this land as one of an abundance of water. He spoke in more general terms in the past; that is, a land flowing with milk and honey. Here, Moses, speaking through the Holy Spirit, has become much more descriptive. You will see this in the next couple verses as well. Now is the time to more specifically describe the land—prior to this, it would have been just holding a carrot in front of gen X—a carrot that they would never have. For the rest of Israel, the Generation of Promise, God waited until now to allow them to hear more specifics. Otherwise, their thirty-eight years roasting at Kadesh Barnea, living in tents, living at the edge of the desert, would have caused them to become most impatient.

"A land of wheat and barley and vine and fig and pomegranate; a land of olive oil and honey; [Deut. 8:8]

We do not tend to view Israel as a nation of farms and orchards—however, this is what it was during those times. When you take an area of very pleasant weather and give it a great deal of rain, that land will naturally be agriculturally prosperous. This would sound like a phenomenal array of choices, given that the Israelites had lived primarily upon manna for most of the past forty years. This passage and the one quoted from Deut. 11 are the most descriptive passages concerning the Land of Promise. Only the spies who went into the land thirty-eight years previous have any clue as to the great prosperity of the land. They returned with a cluster of grapes carried on a pole which required two men to carry (Num. 13:23, 27). This is a tremendous variety of food stuffs from which the Israelites could cook a great many things, and trade for a great many others. We will not have a description of the land like this until we come to the millennial Israel.

Because of the great grape vines, Israel once was a great producer of wines. In the records of the battles of Thutmose III, we have mention of the great wine production in both Palestine and Syria. Since God has withheld the rain from the land, the growing of huge grapes has all but ceased, halting the production of wine.

"A land which [is] without scarcity—you will eat bread in it and you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones [are] iron, and out of its mountains you will dig copper; [Deut. 8:9]

In it is a 3rd person feminine singular suffix affixed to the word *eat* which refers back to the land, which is in the feminine, and not to *bread*, which is masculine.

According to the NIV Study Bible, the mountains of southern Lebanon and the area east of the Sea of Galilee and the area south of the Salt Sea could be mined for iron. Copper and iron were found in great quantities of the Arabah, south of the Dead Sea. There are copper mines which date back to the time of Solomon and possibly earlier. 1Kings 7:45–46 names Zarethan as a center for bronze works during Solomon's day. We have found bronze objects which date to before Solomon's time and we have copper works at Timnah in the Negev¹⁰⁹.

Barnes notes that the Israelites do not seem to have much of a history in mining (supported by 1Sam. 13:19), although mining certainly took place during the times of Canaanite occupation. Barnes points out that *traces of iron and copper works have been discovered by modern travelers of Lebanon and in other parts of Palestine. The district of Argob contains iron-stone in abundance*¹¹⁰.

The Jews only survive in Israel today partially out of a huge welfare grant which we, the United States, give to them, which provides for their military and probably for some of their sustenance. Besides, God wants them to be spread throughout the world, and the near east is part of that world.

"And you will eat and you will be satisfied and you will bless Y^howah your God on the good land which He has given to you. [Deut. 8:10]

We have a great contrast to their time in the desert, where they were hungry, they were under discipline—where God had humbled them with discipline. In the land they will eat without scarcity of food (God will no longer find

¹⁰⁹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 253.

¹¹⁰ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, p. 287.

it necessary to provide them with manna), they will be satisfied with the food, and, if their spiritual life is good, tht will be reflected by their prayers which thank God for what they have been given. Moses has already described much of this to them: “Then it will come to pass when Y^ehowah your God bring you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you great and splendid cities which you did not build, and house full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you will eat and be satisfied; then watch yourself, so that you do not forget Y^ehowah Who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves.” (Deut. 6:10–12).

In fact, here, we ought to look at the word *bless*. It is presented in Scripture and in churches too often as this vague religious term of little consequence. That is, if you cannot express what it is that it actually means, then it doesn't mean anything to you. When man *blesses* God, man recognizes that God has provided him with what he has received. *Blessing*, in this case, is gratitude and recognition of God's provision which comes out of God's character. When we say a *blessing* at meal time, ideally this is what we are doing. When God *blesses* us, He is providing us with prosperity which overflows from His perfect character. When we *bless* other men, we are asking for God to give them His blessings—His prosperity and grace.

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Remember Y^ehowah in Prosperity, or You Will Perish as Will the Heathen of the Land

"[Continue to] Take personal responsibility, so that you do not forget Y^ehowah your God in regards to not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you this day. [Deut. 8:11]

V. 11 begins with the Niphal imperative of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] and it means *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. It means to know the law, the precepts, the Word of God, to *observe* it and to *obey* it and to *guard* it. I have translated this *take responsibility*. Although the Niphal is generally the passive stem, it is also used to stress the individual effect upon the group. The Niphal also describes an action in progress, so the verb is accompanied by the word being; in this verse, due to the imperative, I used the addition of *continue to*. This is followed by the lamed prefixed preposition and the 2nd masculine singular suffix. Instead of rendering this to *you* I have inserted the word *personal*. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036. For personal reference, other translators have rendered these words as *be careful* (NIV); *beware* (*The Amplified Bible*, KJV, NASB); *take heed to thyself* (Young's); *take heed of yourselves* (Owen's); *take care* (NEB, NRSV); and *take heed* (RSV). This is followed by the averting or deprecating conjunction *pen* (פֶּן) [pronounced *pen*],¹¹¹ best translated with the word *lest*. I prefer the more modern *so that + a negative*. It could also be translated simply *else*, or *for the aversion of*, *for the avoidance of*, *so that [you] avoid*, *in order to prevent*. Strong's #6435 BDB #814

The idea here is that the Israelite become so overpowered by this great prosperity—they become so enamored by the gift, that they lose sight of the giver. We have almost the same construction in Deut. 4:9: **Only continue to take personal responsibility and guard your soul diligently so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and so that they [the things your eyes have seen] do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; also make them known to your children and your children's children.** As we have seen back in Deut. 4:9, the call of God to the Israelites to remember His past redemptive acts is a continuing theme throughout this book.

As has been mentioned many times before, God has all the material blessings that we could even imagine, yet He does not pour them out upon everyone because most believers could not handle material prosperity. King David could; King Solomon became obsessed with it, attempting to turn his material wealth into happiness. Solomon did have several years of spiritual lucidity; however, the bulk of his life was wasted, much of his life

¹¹¹ BDB: *pen* (פֶּן) [pronounced *pen*].

dissipated on wealth. The Israelites are about to receive blessings as they have never seen or, in some cases, barely remember even the likes of which. In all of this, they must continue to recognize the Giver—the Provider of these great gifts.

"So that when you have eaten and are satiated and you have built good houses and you have lived in them; [Deut. 8:12]

This verse continues the thought of v. 11. The word *pên* (פֶּן) [pronounced *pane*] begins this verse as well. The negative aspect of this conjunction will be brought into v. 14. Agur, in Proverbs, wrote: **Keep deception and lies far from me. Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is my portion, so I that don't become full and deny [You] and say, "Who is Y^ehowah?" Or, so that I am not in want and steal, and profane the name of my God** (Prov. 30:8–9). So Agur mentions two areas wherein we might lose sight of God—in both riches and poverty. We might forget God in riches and we might steal bread and profane His name in poverty. In Hosea 13:4–6, God tells the Israelites that they forgot Him due to being satiated: **Yet I [am] Y^ehowah your God since the land of Egypt; and you were not to know any god except Me; for there is no Savior besides Me. I cared for you in the wilderness in the land of drought. In their pasture, they became satiated; and being satiated, their heart became proud; therefore, they forgot Me.** God has an alternative for those who forget Him when He gives them prosperity: **"Therefore you will serve your enemies whom Y^ehowah will send against you—in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things—He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you. Y^ehowah will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you do not understand."** (Deut. 28:47–49). Much of the end of this book will be devoted to the alternative to trusting in Y^ehowah.

"And when your herds and your flocks multiply and silver and gold is multiplied to you, and all that you have is multiplied; [Deut. 8:13]

Again, v. 13 is a continuation of the prosperity that the Israelites will enjoy. There are two kinds of wealth mentioned in this verse: the herds and flocks are animals which can be traded, used for food and used for clothing. There are the necessities in life, which the Israelites will own in abundance. Gold and silver is wealth beyond being financially comfortable. This is surplus wealth and savings and investments. This is wealth which is not absolutely necessary to have in order to be successful and prosperous, but it is a sign of superabundance. I don't mean that in a negative way. God does bless some with incredible worldly wealth. However, Bible doctrine says to you: **"Seize my instruction and not silver; and knowledge rather than choicest gold. For wisdom is better than jewels and all desirable things cannot compare with her!"** (Prov. 8:10–11). This in no way implies that it is wrong to have great wealth; this states priorities—if your priority is Bible doctrine and you just happen to be wealthy, there is nothing wrong in that.

"And your heart has been lifted up, then [lit., and] [see that you don't] forget Y^ehowah your God—the One bringing you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of slaves. [Deut. 8:14]

The negative with *forget* comes from the word *lest* from v. 12. Rather than use the Old English *lest*, I have chosen to render it *so that* + a negative. The occupation hazard when one becomes prosperous is that they think they have done something themselves—their heart is lifted up. **They forgot God their Savior** (Psalm 106:21a). At best, they think they deserve it; at worst, they think they deserve it and they think that they earned it through their own great craftiness and financial wizardry. In either case, they forget the Lord Who bought them and blessed them. Don't forget the words of Paul: **For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?** (1Cor. 4:7). God's alternative is: **"Therefore, observe: I will bring strangers upon you—the most ruthless of nations. And they will draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor [i.e., their opulent wealth]."** (Ezek. 28:7).

The second part of this verse could be translated basically three different ways (the examples below give only one way—as was the case with all the translations which I checked):

The Amplified Bible ...Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;
The Emphasized Bible ...who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants;
 KJV ...which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;
 NASB ...who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

The other translations are similar; each translates this as though there is a relative pronoun here following the phrase *Y^ehowah your God*. The NASB and the NIV in the following verses change this somewhat in the next verse, even though the basic Hebrew set up is exactly the same. Note what we have beginning v. 15:

The Amplified Bible Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness,...
The Emphasized Bible ...who caused thee to journey through the great and terrible desert,...
 NASB "He led you through the great and terrible wilderness,...
 NIV He led you through the vast and dreadful desert,...

However, the middle of v. 14, the beginning of v. 15 (and mid-v. 15 and the beginning of v. 16) all have the same pattern of Hebrew words: there is a definite article and the Hiphil (causative stem) participle, with a 2nd person masculine singular suffix. A definite article plus a participle is a phrase which is normally a verb, but is translated like a subject involved in an action. V. 14b should be rendered *the One bringing you*; v. 15 should begin with the translation *the One leading you*. I have so translated it throughout the next few verses.

"The One leading you in the vast and fearful wilderness—burning serpent, and scorpion, and thirst—where there is no water; the One bringing to you waters from the flinty rock; [Deut. 8:15]

Gâdôwl (גדול) [pronounced *gaw-DOLE*] means *great in quantity, great in magnitude and extent, [or, vast]*. Strong's #1419 BDB #152. What is generally translated *terrible* is the definite article and the Niphal participle of *yârê'* (ירא) [pronounced *yaw-RAY*] which is the verb for *fear*; in the participle, with the definite article, this acts like an adjective and should be translated *dreadful, fearful*. Strong's #3372–3 BDB #431.

Moses draws their attention to *Y^ehowah* their God Who performed these many miracles. In v. 15 we have a sharp contrast between the land where they wandered and the Land of Promise. V. 7 speaks of this land is having a great deal of water; however, the way they traveled was bereft of water.

We have seen all of these images several times before: the great and terrible desert (Deut. 1:19 2:7); the burning serpent and scorpion (Num. 21:6); and water was brought forth from the rock once for generation X (Ex. 17:6) and once for the Generation of Promise (Num. 20:11—see also Psalm 78:15 113:8).

"The One causing you to eat manna in the wilderness, which you fathers had not known, in order to humble you, and in order to test you, to do you good in your latter end, [Deut. 8:16]

V. 16 actually has a relative pronoun, which refers back to manna. Prior to this forty year stay in the desert, none of the Israelites had eaten anything like the manna mentioned here. God could have provided them with tremendous meals with a great deal of diversity—however, they were being tested for their performance and their volition, and gen X failed miserably. However, the Generation of Promise were greatly prospered by this testing. They made the correct choices and they would take the land.

We have already spoken of manna and its supernatural qualities in Deut. 8:3 (see also Ex. 16). As for discipline, we have also covered that; let me repeat Heb. 12:11: **All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet, to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

"And [so] you will [not] say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand has made for me this wealth [lit., strength].' [Deut. 8:17]

V. 17 goes back to vv. 12 and 14, where the verbs are in the 2nd person masculine singular—the *lest* of v. 12 follows these verbs throughout. What we have is a 2nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect which begins

v. 12 and is preceded by the conjunction *lest*. The continuous action of this verb means that lest, while they are eating, their heart is lifted up and they forget (v. 14) God, and they say in their hearts (v. 17). The previous three verbs are in the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect, which speaks of resultant actions which we do not want to occur. What we have is over 60 Hebrew words strung together into a single thought, held together by conjunctions, prefixed prepositions, proper verb forms, **spoken** to this crowd and they are able to follow the entire thought process. Later, a man separated this one continuous thought into six verses—so much for evolution!

The last substantive in this verse is *chayil* (כַּחַיִל) [pronounced *CHAH-yil*] and it means *strength, valour, power*; as well as that which is gotten through strength—i.e., *wealth*. Because one nation is stronger than a nation which it defeats, then it is able to rob them of their wealth. Therefore, *chayil* is used here as a metonymy¹¹² for *wealth*. Strong's #2428 BDB #298.

This verse carries with it the curse of wealth—those who have money generally think that they have done something particularly clever in order to obtain it. At worst, they think that they were smart enough to earn this money; at best they think they somehow deserve it because they have been so good that God just can't help Himself. We see clearly that the Israelites did not deserve this wealth, that God has given it to them out of His grace, because He had promised it to their fathers. However, Moses warns the Israelites not to be deceived—God has given them all of this out of His grace.

Moses will tell the Israelites in this same message: “Do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out before you, ‘Because of my righteousness, Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land;’ but [it is] because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before you.” (Deut. 9:4). In fact, even though this generation will take the land, subsequent generations, even those listening (or, **not** listening to Moses right now) will fail miserably. There are even many in this Generation of Promise who partook of the rebellions of their fathers; however, God obviously spared them. “For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; observe, While I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against Y^ehowah—how much more then after my death?” (Deut. 31:27). Deut. 9 will take a good hard look at this generation.

"And you will remember Y^ehowah your God, for it [is] He Who is giving to you power to make wealth, in order to establish His covenant which He had sworn to your fathers as today; [Deut. 8:18]

This is the concluding principle to the previous six verses—the remembrance and recognition of the God Who has brought them this far and has done these miraculous things on their behalf. *It is the blessing of Y^ehowah that makes [one] rich; and He adds no sorrow to it* (Prov. 10:22). “For she [Israel] does not know that it was I [God] Who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil; and lavished on her silver and gold—they made into Baal.” (Hosea 2:8). We have already had several case histories delineating God's specific blessing to them. Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. *And Y^ehowah blessed him and the man became rich and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy* (Gen. 26:12–13). Because we know, “Y^ehowah makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust; He lifts the beggar from the dung heap, to cause them to dwell in a place of blessing with nobles and to inherit a seat of honor.” (1Sam. 2:7–8a). See also Psalm 25:13 112:1–3.

One of the reasons that we have the feast of the first fruits is simply to recognize that God is the One Who provided the great wealth for the sons of Israel. Deut. 26 will cover the offering of the first fruits in the land. “‘And now, observe, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which You, O Y^ehowah, have given me.’ Then you will set it down before Y^ehowah your God and worship before the face of Y^ehowah your God. And you and the Levite and the alien who is among you will rejoice in all the good which Y^ehowah your God has given you and your household.” (Deut. 26:10–11). The blessings of obedience will be given in the first portion of Deut. 28.

¹¹² A metonymy [pronounced *me-TON-i-mee*] is the exchange of one noun for a related noun.

When the nation of Israel is in the land and is being prospered, then you can know it is obeying God. When it is not prospering in that land, it is an indication that it is not obeying God. Look at Israel today and make your own decision¹¹³.

"And it will come to pass, if in forgetting, you forget Y^ehowah your God, and you go after other gods and serve them and worship them—I am testifying against you today that you [all] in perishing will perish; [Deut. 8:19]

Moses has both predicted great blessing for this generation, but additionally warns them. This warning is recorded in Scripture and stands for all time. It is similar to that found in Deut. 4:24–30 6:14–15 and 30:17–19, which reads: "But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them—I declare to you today that you will certainly perish. You will not prolong [your] days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter to possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; so choose life in order that you may live—you and your descendants."

Serving another god (or, gods) was not the only sin which Israel could commit. Oppression of the helpless is another way they could be tossed out of the land. "If you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and you do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin; then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever." (Jer. 7:6–7). See also Jer. 13:9–11 25:4–11.

"As the nations whom Y^ehowah is causing to perish from before your faces, so you [all] will perish, because you [all] did not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God." [Deut. 8:20]

The same God Who will destroy the indigenous is also capable of destroying the Israelites. And he [Manasseh; the king, not the tribe] did evil in the sight of Y^ehowah, according to the abominations of the nations whom Y^ehowah dispossessed before the sons of Israel (2Kings 21:2). Ezek. 5:5–11 describes Israel's future in reversionism: "Thus says Lord Y^ehowah, 'This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, with lands around her; but she has rebelled against My ordinances more wickedly than the nations and against My statutes more than the lands which surround her; for they have rejected My ordinances and have not walked in My statutes. Therefore,' thus says the Lord Y^ehowah, 'Because you have more turmoil than the nations which surround you, and have not walked in My Statutes, nor observed My ordinances, nor observed the ordinances of the nations which surround you, therefore,' thus says the Lord Y^ehowah, 'Observe, I, even I am against you, and I will execute judgments among you in the sight of the nations. And because of all your abominations, I will do among you what I have not done, and the like of which I will never do again. Therefore, fathers will eat sons among you and sons will eat their fathers; for I will execute judgments on you, and scatter all your remnant to every wind.' " This passage becomes even more graphic, which we will study far in the future. See Dan. 9:9–19 as well.

With light comes responsibility. Israel had God's Word; she had His commandments, His decree for her future. Because she had access to these things and turned away from God, Israel has suffered more tragedy than those nations surrounding her. When we are given God's Word and an understanding of the true conflict in which we are engaged, this creates in us a responsibility. You might think that you will head that problem off at the pass and just not attend Bible class. When you do that, you will never know what hit you! You will be continually under discipline; you will be involved in a frantic search for happiness, and your life will be tragically cut short by the sin unto death. If you are quarterback for a football team, it helps to know the rules. If you're going to be out on the field, you might as well know how to play the game. God's Word is a manual which tells us how to play the game.

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¹¹³ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 62.

Deuteronomy 9

Deuteronomy 9:1–29

Outline of Chapter 9:

- vv. 1–6 **Moses warns the Israelites not to be self-deluded as to why God is bringing them into the land**
- vv. 7–21 **The disobedience of the Jews at Horeb (the idolatry of the golden calf)**
- vv. 22–24 **Other examples of the failure of the Israelites**
- vv. 25–29 **Moses intervenes, citing God's Own essence as reason to deliver the sons of Israel into the land**

Charts:

- v. 14 **The Testing of Moses Foreshadows the Testing of our Lord**
- v. 21 **The Chronology of Exodus and Deuteronomy**

Introduction: Deut. 9 Deals specifically with why God is giving the Land of Promise to the Israelites. It is not because of their goodness and righteousness but because of the degeneracy of those in the land. The first fifth of this chapter tells the Israelites that it is because of the corrupt nature of the indigenous tribes that they have been given the land; not because of their own righteousness. To make his point, Moses spends the balance of the chapter showing where Israel is deficient. He covers their idolatry in detail for 15 verses, then mentions four other incidents, without going into any great detail. Finally he reveals to them his own personal plea to deliver them. They did not realize, but God almost began from ground zero with the Israelites, offering to make from Moses himself a nation.

Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10
Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
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Moses Warns the Israelites Not to Be Self-deluded as to Why God Is Bringing Them into the Land

“Listen, O Israel, you are passing over the Jordan this day [lit., the day], to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than you; cities great and fortified up to the heavens. [Deut. 9:1]

Today is actually a definite article and the word *day*. This does not mean that within this next 24-hour period of time, Israel is going to invade the Land of Promise. *The day* means that sometime in the very near future; it is like saying *the time is at hand, the day of reckoning is here*. It could be immediate but it does not have to be. This is simply the time that Israel will go into the land. This is probably the case throughout the Old Testament?

Bullinger has a different take on this verse. First we must clearly understand that during this twenty-four hour period of time, the Israelites are **not** going into the land. So we have to determine what is meant and how did the Israelites understand what Moses was saying. Bullinger says this is a metonymy of the verb. The action is put in for the declaration or the permission or the promise of that action. For instance, in Gen 35:12, God says, **“And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac.”** God in His decrees has given Abraham and Isaac this land—however, at that point of time, they had not received it (although, from God's standpoint, they had). They had received *the promise* of the land; God had declared to them that day that He would give them the land. Jer. 1:10: **“I have this**

day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out, to pull down and to destroy and to throw down.” Israel was not at that time over the nations and kingdoms—Israel has not pulled down, destroyed or thrown down much of anything at the time of Jeremiah—this is a declaration of the promise that they *would* do that in the future. Deut. 9:1 is a declaration what they will go over the Jordan to dispossess the nations now living in the land¹¹⁴.

We have another metonymy in this verse, where the possessor is put in place of the thing possessed. That is, the Israelites will not possess the nations but they will possess the land which these nations now possess. It is possible that you hear or read these verses and give it no thought; but this is what is meant, although what Moses said is slightly different when taken literally (and I am a literalist when it comes to the Bible—that does not preclude, however, various figures of speech).

Near the end of this verse we have the Qal passive participle of *bâtsar* (בָּצַר) [pronounced *baw-TZahr*], which means *walled-up, fenced, fortified*. The verb itself means *to cut off, to make inaccessible, to enclose*. Strong's #1219 BDB #130. The preposition here is the *bêyth* preposition of proximity, justifying the use of the English *to, up to* (*bêyth* is usually rendered *by, against, in, into*).

Hear, O Israel is a call made by Moses to God's people several times throughout Deuteronomy (4:1 5:1 6:3–4 20:3). It is a call to their specific attention.

The nations which Israel will defeat will be (1) numerically superior to them (Deut. 4:38 9:1); (2) those nations are better equipped and better prepared to go to war (Deut. 4:38 9:1); (3) their cities are fortified with high walls, making them appear to be impregnable (Num. 13:28b Deut. 9:1); and (4) their population is physically superior to Israel's (Num. 13:28a). In terms of human viewpoint, the Israelites do not stand a chance. Ten of the spies who went into the land 40 years ago were essentially correct. They may have been overly dramatic, but they told the truth. Going strictly by human viewpoint, the Israelites would have been best to set up shop in Kadesh-Barnea and to remain there: “**Where can we go up? Our brothers have made our hearts melt, saying, “The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And, besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there.”**” (Deut. 1:28). However, God has given them the land, so divine viewpoint is that they go into the land and take it: “**For you are about to cross the Jordan to go in to possess the land which Y^ehowah your god is giving you, and you will possess it and live in it.**” (Deut. 11:31). “**It is Y^ehowah your God Who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations from before your face and you will dispossess them.**” (Deut. 13:3a).

“A great and tall people—the sons of Anakim, whom you, even you, have known; and whom you, even you, have heard: ‘Who can stand their ground before the sons of Anak?’ [Deut. 9:2]

There is a great deal of redundancy in this verse. That is, there are more words found here than proper grammar demands. For instance, it is proper to say *sons of Anak* or *the Anakim*, but *sons of Anakim* is redundant. The verbs *know* and *hear* both have 2nd masculine singular suffixes; Moses also twice throws in the 2nd person singular masculine pronoun as well. The Holy Spirit is not redundant; this is said by way of emphasis, to slow down and make a point—the Israelites are going to go in and take the land from the Anakim; these are the same Anakim who frightened Israel in the past to the point where they cooled their heels for forty years in the desert while God killed a million of them. This is almost tongue in cheek. Gen X originally discovered the Anakim in the land and were afraid to go and take the land. Now in the land we have the *sons of Ankim*—one generation later and there are now more of them.

As the ten spies spoke more and more about the futility of going into the Land of Promise and taking it, the Anakim (Num. 13:22, 28), who were legitimately a very tall people (Num. 13:32), became giants and, after the stories had made their rounds, had become like the gods of Gen. 6—the Nephilim, who were the historical basis of the mythological gods (Num. 13:33). As you will recall, God had allowed consorting between angelic and human creatures; He even allowed fallen angels to impregnate Homo sapiens; and from that union came the gods of mythology (most of whom are, as a matter of fact, a union between human mothers and gods of the heavens).

¹¹⁴ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E.W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; pp 570–571.

Once these rumors started throughout the camp, as the driving force of the campaign to not go into the land, they dreamed up a slogan—slogans are always a good replacement for thought—*who can stand before the sons of Anak?* If you have just met someone who has, inside of five minutes, quoted you three or more of the following, (mixed or matched): song lyrics, commercial jingles, a popular television or movie phrase (or any popular saying or proverb); then head the opposite direction. You are dealing with a person who cannot think, but allows others to do his thinking for him. One of the bulwarks in the hippie movement was a proliferation of sayings and slogans. *Make love, not war; power to the people; if it feels good, do it; no more war!* When the philosophy of a generation can be properly represented with a few stock sayings, you have a generation in trouble. The fathers of those present sent their persistent cry throughout the camp: *Who can stand before the sons of Anak?* It is a wonder that, as they repeated that phrase, God did not strike them dead on the spot.

Caleb did not have a press secretary. He did not develop a slogan. He stated his case simply: *“We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will certainly overcome it.”* (Num. 13:30b). Time proved Caleb to be right. Then Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab and from all the hill country of Judah and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. There were no Anakim left in the land of the sons of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain (Joshua 11:21–22). This would be a good place to examine the **Doctrine of the Anakim—not finished yet!**

“And you will know this day [lit., the day] that Y^ehowah your God—the One passing over in your sight [lit., in your faces], a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will humble them in your sight [lit., in your faces], and you will dispossess them and you cause them to perish quickly, as [lit., in which] Y^ehowah has spoken to you. [Deut. 9:3]

We have seen the noun *pânîym* (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*] before. It is generally in the plural (even though it refers to *one* face, as the face has several features—we similarly use the word *pants* when we are speaking of a singular object). However, this can be preceded by several different prepositions. With the *lâmed* preposition, it means *in the sight of*, or, more literally, *in your face*. With *mî* (- מִי) [pronounced *me*] it means *from before your face*, *out from before your face*. Strong’s #6440 BDB #815 (*lâmed* is BDB #510; *mî* is Strong’s #4480).

Moses expresses divine viewpoint here, as he did in Deut. 7:23–24: *“But Y^ehowah your God will deliver them before you, and He will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed. And He will deliver their kings into your hand so that you will make their name perish from under heaven; no man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them.”* The Israelites were able to leave Egypt because God had taken them out of there. God will do the same for them when it comes to dispossessing these heathen in the land. As God spoke to Moses to say to the people: *“For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand and you will drive them out before you.”* (Ex. 23:31b). He will cross over the Jordan with them and they will, through God’s guidance and help, annihilate the indigenous populations.

Furthermore, what the Israelites want is God, their consuming fire, to pass before them. Moses has told the people of Israel that God is a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24) and this is what they saw with their own eyes (Ex. 24:17). What they do not want is this consuming fire to descend upon them in judgment, as occurred in Num. 11:1: *Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of Y^ehowah; and when Y^ehowah heard, His anger was kindled and the fire [or, lightning] of Y^ehowah burned among them and consumed the outskirts of the camp.* Also see Num. 16:1–35, where the fire of God consumes some of those who allied themselves with Korah in his rebellion against Moses.

When I study God’s Word, one of the authors I particularly enjoy referring to is J. Vernon McGee. I love to be able to slip in a quote from his messages on the radio. His comment on this verse: *God takes the responsibility of putting them out of the land. God is the Landlord. He is the Creator. He has a right to do this. When I hear a fellow who is liberal in his theology complain about this, I feel like saying, “You little pipsqueak, you keep quiet. You and I are just little creatures down here.” God is the sovereign Creator; we are the creatures*¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 64.

“You will not say in your heart, in Y^ehowah your God’s driving them away from before your face[s], saying, ‘Y^ehowah as brought me in to possess this land because of [lit., in] my righteousness,’ whereas because of [lit., and in] the corrupt nature [or, malevolence] of these nations is Y^ehowah driving them out from before your face [s]. [Deut. 9:4]

We have several Hebrew words and clauses to sort through here. We have the prefixed preposition bêyth used twice in apposition to each other, held together by the common wâw conjunction. B^e (ב) [pronounced b^e] seems to have both causal force with a disjunction implied here, as the first phrase is spoken from the standpoint of the Israelite (*my righteousness*) and in the second, the Israelite in the third person (*your face*). Other translators have dealt with it in the following ways:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	It is because...whereas it is because...	NASB	Because of...but <i>it is</i> because of
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	for....whereas it is for...	NIV	because of...no, it is on account of
<i>Young’s Translation</i>	for...seeing for...	KJV	for...but for...

We also have in this verse the word rîsh^e ‘âh (רִשְׁעָה) [pronounced *rish^e-ĠAWH*] and usually translated *wickedness*. However, that word has become Old English, and means less to us today. Therefore, let’s update this translation with *malevolence, corrupt nature, reprehensible*. There is a masculine and feminine side to this which I need to deal with eventually. Strong’s #7564 BDB #958.

One of the things that the Jews must learn immediately is God’s grace. God chose them knowing exactly what they would be like; all of their short comings and failures. God chose them out of grace. Moses will explain to them as carefully as he possibly can that the Canaanites are an extremely corrupt people, whereas the Jews did not overflow with righteousness. In fact, Moses will clearly point out to them how many times that they failed and this will be the first time that he will reveal to them that if it were not for his intercessory prayer, God might have destroyed them from the face of the earth. This is not Moses saying *see what a wonderful thing I did for you*; it is Moses pointing out the extent of their own personal corruption and how God viewed that corruption. It is only through God’s grace that these people are standing on one side of the Jordan, ready to enter and to take the land.

“You are not going in to possess the land because of your righteousness and because of the integrity of your motivation [lit., uprightness of your heart] for Y^ehowah your God is dispossessing them from before you [lit., your faces] because of the corrupt nature of these nations and [especially] [lit., for the sake of] to fulfill the promise [lit., word] which Y^ehowah had sworn to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. [Deut. 9:5]

Again, we must delve into the Hebrew. The purpose of this careful examination of the Hebrew is (1) the translation which I give might be somewhat different than your English version; (2) I tend to change the word order to give this a better English flow; and, (3) and there are nuances which are lost when moving into the English, particularly in the way of emphasis.

You will notice the word which I have inserted, *especially*. The Hebrew language emphasizes words in several ways: (1) by placement, (2) by doubling a verb, and (3) by inserting an unnecessary word. We have the phrase *and to carry out the word*. This could be stated simply with the wâw conjunction, the lâmed preposition and the infinitive of a verb. The lâmed plus the infinitive of a verb denotes purpose or cause. One of the reasons for God displacing the nations from before Israel and bringing Israel in is the fulfillment of promises which He made to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob. However, here we have the wâw conjunction and the preposition l^ema ‘an (לְמַעַן) [pronounced l^e-MAH-ġahn], which means *for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, in order that*. If we had just the lâmed preposition and the infinitive, this would be covered. However, the use of this preposition emphasizes the cause or purpose of the action. Strong’s #4616 BDB #775.

We have another pair of what would seem to be redundant prepositions. Kîy (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] means *that, for, when, because*. This is followed by the prefixed preposition bêyth, which has, in this context, tended to mean *because*. The word order of the Hebrew runs like this: *...to possess their land for because the corrupt nature of these nations Y^ehowah your God is driving them out from before your faces...* However, the emphasis is upon the corrupt nature of the indigenous nations, so that comes first in the sentence. The kîy goes with Y^ehowah and the action of the verb. When it is rearranged, it reads: *for Y^ehowah your God is dispossessing them from before you because of the corrupt nature of these nations*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. When we reorder the words of this verse so that we have a better flow in the English, the apparent redundancy disappears.

Finally, a verb we find here is the Hiphil infinitive construct of qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*]. In the Qal stem, it means *to stand, to rise up* (Gen. 37:7 Ex. 33:10 Prov. 28:12). It also means *to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow* (Num. 24:17 30:4 Jer. 44:29). In the Hiphil it means, among other things, *to establish, to fulfill, to cause to stand, to perform a vow, a commandment, a promise* (Gen. 6:18 17:7 26:3 Num. 30:14). Strong's #6965 BDB #877.

One of the many passages that the Israelites should have studied and repeated to their children was: *“You will not think [lit., say] in your heart, in Y^ehowah your God’s driving them away from before your face [s], saying, ‘Y^ehowah as brought me in to possess this land because of [lit., in] my righteousness.’ You are not going in to possess the land because of your righteousness and because of the integrity of your motivation [lit., uprightness of your heart]. And you will know that God is not giving you this land because of your righteousness. (Deut. 9:4a, 5a, 6a). But if it is by grace, it is no long on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” Quite correct—they were broken off for their unbelief and you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear (Rom. 11:6, 20–21). For who regard you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (1Cor. 4:7).*

The upshot of this is that God is bringing them into this land for two primary reasons (neither of which has anything to do with their personal righteousness): (1) The indigenous population is corrupt to the point where they must be removed from this earth; and, (2) God has made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob which God will keep. God is removing the indigenous population because of their heinous religion, which, as we have seen, involves child sacrifice and prostitution. Leviticus carries one of the many indictments of the Canaanites who were in the land: *“Neither will you give any of your offspring to cause them to pass over to Molech, nor will you profan the name of your God—I am Y^ehowah. You will not lie with a male as those who lie with a female; it is an abomination. Also, you will not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor will any woman stand before an animal to lie with it—it is a perversion. Do not defile yourselves by any of these things, for by all these, the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled, for the land has become defiled. Therefore, I have visited its iniquity upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. But, as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and you will not do any of these abominations—[nor] the native, nor the alien who temporarily resides among you; (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations and the land has become defiled); so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you. For whoever does any of these abominations, those person who do so will be cut off from among their people. Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, as as not to defile yourselves with them; I am Y^ehowah your God.” (Lev. 18:21–30; see Deut. 18:9–14 as well).*

“And you will know that Y^ehowah your God is not giving to you this good land to possess it because [of] your righteousness, for you [are] a stubborn people [lit., a people stiff of neck]. [Deut. 9:6]

This *stiff of neck* must be from donkeys, oxen, horses and/or mules. When guiding a quadraped, you turn the head and the neck with the reins and bridle—then they used a yoke¹¹⁶ for their oxen—and they will follow the direction of their head. The joint, so to speak, is in the neck—if that is turned, the animal turns. However, if the

¹¹⁶ I don’t think they had reins and bridles in those days.

animal refuses and holds its neck in place, then it cannot be moved to the left or right—it is obstinate and is going to go in one direction only. “But the nation which will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Bbylon and serve him, I will let remain on its land,” declares Y^ehowah, “And they will till it and dwell in it.” And I spoke words like all these to Zedekiah, king of Judah, saying, “Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live!” (Jer. 27:12–13). This approaches being stiff-necked from the stand point of not placing oneself under the authority of another. The Israelites are being called stubborn, obstinate and without authority.

Again in this verse we have the prepositions kîy and the bêyth together. The word order is: **And you will know that (kîy) not because (bêyth) your righteousness Y^ehowah your God is giving to you this good land to possess it for a people stiff of neck you.** Again, the kîy (*that, because that, because, for*) goes with Y^ehowah your God and the verb giving, and *because, for* goes with *righteousness*.

That the Jews were stubborn and stood in opposition to God’s plan is alluded to throughout Scripture: “**For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; look, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against Y^ehowah; how much more, then after my death?**” (Deut. 31:27). **And Y^ehowah said to Moses, “I have seen this people and, observe, they are an obstinate people.”** (Ex. 32:9). Prior to his martyrdom, Stephen spoke to the religious Jews who were about to kill him: “**You men who are obstinate and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?**” (Acts 7:51–52a). See also: Ex. 34:9 Deut. 9:13 10:16

V. 6 reiterates what vv. 4–5 already said: **it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this land.** Moses has said that three times in three verses. They are receiving this land on the basis of God’s character, which includes His fulfillment of promises—not on the basis of their own righteousness. Now you certainly do not want this to apply to you, but it does. You think that because you have been so good, that God has not choice but to just pour on the blessings. And you have a nice car, a nice house, a good salary and you think it is because you are righteous. You are just soo good. Three times Moses tells these Israelites: it is not because of your righteousness. Our salvation and our blessings come on the basis of grace. The Israelites, in their legalistic religion, read and re-read several verses. They need to haul out Deut. 9:4–6 and read and re-read this verse. When you begin to understand God’s grace, as an unbeliever, you are that much closer to eternal salvation. When you, as a believer, begin to understand God’s grace, you are that much closer to even greater blessings in your life and a much better walk with God. Moses is shouting, **it is not because of your righteousness**; are you listening? **He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit** (Titus 3:5). So, what about the 1% of saved people who now think that what we ought to do is to commit acts of unrighteousness so that God will have more opportunities to shed grace upon us? Paul had his 1% to deal with as well: **To what conclusion are we forced? Should we continue in sin so that grace might increase? Hell, no!**¹¹⁷ **How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts [the trends of your old sin nature]; and do not go on placing under orders the members of your body to sin—instruments of unrighteousness; but place yourselves under orders to god as though alive from the dead and your weapons [as] instruments of righteousness to God. For sin will not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace** (Rom. 6:1–2, 12b–14).

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¹¹⁷ *God forbid* is a translation which borders on profanity.

The Disobedience of the Jews at Horeb (the Idolatry of the Golden Calf)

Ex. 19:16–32:35

So, just maybe the Israelites don't quite get this gift of the land as being a grace gift; apart from their righteousness. For the remainder of this chapter, for the next 23 verses, Moses will now make it clear as to why they cannot rely on their righteousness—he will give them several examples of their rebellion against God:

“Remember—do not forget—that you provoked Y^ehowah your God to wrath [or, severely aggravated Y^ehowah your God] in the wilderness that from the day which you came out of the land of Egypt until your¹¹⁸ coming as far as this place out of rebelling you [all] are against [lit., with; as *in being contentious with*] Y^ehowah. [Deut. 9:7]

Moses will now list the greatest sins of these Israelites against God. V. 7 is the panoramic view: from the very day they left Egypt up until this moment, they have been in rebellion against God. What some of you need is for God to go back and replay the last twenty years of your life in order to get you to stop whining, *I deserve better than this!* You have spent much of that life in rebellion against God; in contention with God. I have dealt with friends day in and day out who have caused themselves to become severely unhappy—however, they have no intention of changing their ways, it does not occur to them to go back and re-evaluate their past mistakes; they do not even take responsibility for their own sadness—they just want it to stop hurting and they cannot understand why God or some person has done this to them. I am thinking particularly of two women who met two different men, slept with them, and then wondered why things did not work out as they thought they should. One married her man (after having children by two other men) and the other was dumped. Both were extremely unhappy with their present state of affairs. You cannot be in continual rebellion against God and think everything is going to be nice and rosy. You need a reality check.

By the time the Israelites first reached the land, they had already been in rebellion ten times. **“Surely, all the men who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice—they shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor will any of those who spurned Me see it.”** (Num. 14:22–23). Refer back to Num. 14:22 for a list of the ten times of rebellion. In this chapter, we will be covering five of them.

McGee: *At the very moment God was giving them the commandments, they were turning fro Him—yet they were saying they would obey Him. People can be more phony in religion than in anything else. It seems to be something that is characteristic of the human nature. Even people who are really sincere are as phony as can be...“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”* (2Corinthians 13:5). *Check whether you are in the faith or not. I believe, and I preach the security of the believer, my friend. I believe that the believer is secure. But I also believe and preach the insecurity of the make-believer. There are a lot of make-believers. We need to search our hearts, every one of us¹¹⁹.*

It is often charged that some romanticist of centuries later wrote Deuteronomy. So, now read these last two verses again: **“And you will know that Y^ehowah your God is not giving to you this good land to possess it because [of] your righteousness, for you [are] a stubborn people [lit., a people stiff of neck]. Remember—do not forget—that you provoked Y^ehowah your God to wrath [or, severely aggravated Y^ehowah your God] in the wilderness that from the day which you came out of the land of Egypt until your coming as far as this place out of rebelling you [all] are against [lit., with; as *in being contentious with*] Y^ehowah.”** No author, no romanticist, living several hundred years after this time period, wrote this. This reveals the great passion of the man who was there, who faced these people and faced his God and acted as an intermediary between them.

“Even in Horeb, you [all] aggravated Y^ehowah, so that Y^ehowah became angry because of you—[angry enough] to destroy you! [Deut. 9:8]

¹¹⁸ Singular in the Massoretic text; plural in western Samaritan, Septuagint, and the Syriac.

¹¹⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 67.

This is case history #1 (but not their first failure). Moses will trot out before this generation several of the failings of Israel. Even though the listeners were not the perpetrators in each case, these were the sons of those who were in rebellion against God and, in that way, had some natural sympathy and leanings in that direction. Had they been older, this generation would have been participating in all of the rebellions against God.

And note how this verse begins; *even in Horeb*. They go into idolatry almost immediately after receiving the Law from the mouth of God. They heard God's voice; they agreed to His terms of a treaty; and then they fall into idolatry. You can almost hear the exasperation in the voice of Moses—*Even in Horeb, you aggravated Y^ehowah!*" Today, Moses would have added: "Just what were you thinking?"

This use of Horeb refers to the golden calf incident at the foot of Mount Sinai, as Psalm 106:19 reads: *They made a calf in Horeb and worshiped a molten image* (see also Deut. 18:16). We have covered the **Doctrine of Horeb** at the beginning of Deuteronomy. Let's recall the historical incident: *Now when the people saw that Moses had delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt—we do not know what has become of him." And Aaron said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons and your daughters and bring [them] to me." Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears, and brought [them] to Aaron. And he took from their hand, and fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." Now, where Aaron saw [this], he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow, a feast to Y^ehowah." So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink and they rose up to mock [God]. Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. Now then, let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them, and that I may destroy them; and I will you of you a great nation." (Ex. 32:1–10).*

The fact of God's wrath is covered in: Num. 16:46 1Sam. 28:18 Job 20:28 Psalm 7:11 69:24 79:6 110:5 Isa. 9:19 Ezek. 20:8,13 21:31 Hosea 5:10 Zeph. 3:8 Rev. 6:17. Psalm 2:12: *Lay a hold of the instruction¹²⁰ of the Son, so that He does not become angry and you will perish in the way. For His wrath may soon be kindled—how blessed are all who take refuge in Him!* And God's wrath is by no means confined to the Old Testament: *But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God* (Rom. 2:5). This would be an ideal place to examine the **Doctrine of the Wrath of God—not finished yet!!**

"In my going up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stones—tables of the covenant which Y^ehowah had made with you)—and remained in the mountain forty days and forty nights; bread I had not eaten and water I did not drink; [Deut. 9:9]

Now Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there and I will give you the stone tablets and the Law and the decree which I have written for their instruction." Then Moses went up to the [foot of the] mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. And Moses entered the midst of the cloud and he went up to the mountain and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights (Ex. 24:12, 15, 18). The Israelites had heard the contents of the tablets of the Law read to them directly by God in Ex. 20 and Moses repeated these laws to them in Deut. 5.

Not until now did Moses mention that he had gone without food and water during this time period. This is obviously a supernatural physical feat. Even though the genetic structure of Moses was more sound than the genetic structure of man in general today, still we are speaking of a miracle. God preserved the life of Moses, although he went forty days and forty nights without any physical nourishment. Moses literally lived upon the Word of God. *So he was there with Y^ehowah forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments [lit., Words]* (Ex. 34:28; see also Deut. 9:18). Now might be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of Forty Days and Forty Nights—not finished yet!!**

¹²⁰ See the exegesis of Psalm 2:12 to explain this translation.

“And Y^ehowah gave to me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them, as all of the words which Y^ehowah had spoken with you in the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly. [Deut. 9:10]

God at first had spoken directly to Israel: **And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Then God spoke all these words** (Ex. 19:18–20:1a). Then the sons of Israel requested that Moses speak to God directly and they would listen to him (Ex. 20:1–20). This was perhaps the only act of greatness on the part of gen X; the people recognized that they could not come into direct contact with the holiness of God (they had become too afraid) and they requested a specifically that Moses, a shadow of our Lord, act as their mediator.

Moses has already covered the Law during this message (Deut. 5:24–27), so he does not have to repeat it. Reminding them of God’s voice coming out of the midst of the fire and speaking to everyone was enough. Moses went up to the mountain to speak to God, just as the people had requested. This involved forty days and forty nights of complete fasting. These Ten Commandments (or, words) were a basic freedom code. The Israelites received it once verbally from God, then in the form of these tablets. **“So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform—the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.”** (Deut. 4:13). This made up a covenant between God and man. As has been mentioned before, there were not five commandments on one tablet and the remaining five on the other, but each tablet had all Ten Commandments on it. This is how a treaty was handled; both parties had a copy of the treaty.

We have had *the finger of God* mentioned several times, so we ought to examine the **Doctrine of the Finger of God—not finished yet!**

“And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, Y^ehowah had given to me the two tablets of stone—tablets of the covenant. [Deut. 9:11]

Here, *tablets* is in the plural, not the dual—an interesting point of the Hebrew, indicating to me that some things are thought of naturally as being in pairs, and hence the dual is used. Other things which are not naturally seen in pairs is just in the plural, but it is a plural of two or more and not three or more.

Moses received a great deal of the law during that first visit. He wrote it down when he was up on the mountain (Deut. 24:4). However, this is not the information which is covered here; the idolatrous acts of Israel was the information which Moses was dealing with primarily.

Tablets of the covenant could be rendered *tablets of the contract*, *tablets of the agreement*, *tablets of the treaty*; these tablets represent the fully executed contract or agreement between God and man. Both parties had come to an agreement and now there will be two copies of this agreement, one to be kept in the ark of the covenant (this is Y^ehowah’s copy) and I do not recall where the other is kept (or if that is even mentioned?).

“And Y^ehowah said to me, ‘Arise, go down, quickly from here, for your people have become corrupt [or, have gone into ruination], [the people] whom you have brought out of Egypt; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I have commanded them—they have made for themselves a molten image!’ [Deut. 9:12]

Moses is quoting what God had said to him in Ex. 32:7b–8a (already quoted above). Falling into idolatry was a common mistake of the Israelites, as we read in Judges 2:17: **And yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of Y^ehowah; they did not do [as God had commanded them].**

Back in v. 5 we had the verb *qûwm* (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means *to stand, to rise up, to establish [a vow], to cause [a vow] to stand, to confirm or to fulfill [a vow], to establish, to fulfill, to cause to stand, to perform*

a vow, a commandment, a promise. In v. 5, this verb was in the Hiphil infinitive, indicating purpose. Here, it is in the Qal imperative; God is telling Moses to stand up, to rise up. Strong's #6965 BDB #877.

As we noted in Exodus, this is an interesting way to put it—the people you have brought out of Egypt. They are now a people belonging to Moses and not to God. If you are married and you have a son and he has done something horribly wrong at school, your wife will call you at the office to tell you what **your** son has done. However, this was a test of Moses at this juncture. Moses was in authority—these people were under his authority; and God is testing Moses as to his reaction. God knows what good choices Moses is capable of, while empowered by the Holy Spirit. However, the things Moses will say and do will stand forever as a testimony to doctrine in the soul and God's grace.

God directly commanded the sons of Israel so that every single one of them heard, not to become involved in idolatry. The people had promised Moses that all God said to him, they would do. Not much over a month has passed and gen X has already gone into idolatry. This forty days and forty nights went by as both a test to Moses and a test to generation X. It is no wonder that God several times throughout the Bible says, "I loathed that generation."

“And then Y^ehowah spoke to me, saying, ‘I have seen this people, and observe, they [are]¹²¹ a stubborn [lit., stiff necked] people. [Deut. 9:13]

This verse is a quotation of Ex. 32:9. We all have memories, some are clear and some are distance; some are even nonexistent. However, although these meeting took place forty years ago and Moses is about 120 years old, he recalls it as though it were yesterday. Through the power of the Holy Spirit and because of what he has written, he is able to communicate exactly what had occurred to this new generation of Israelites.

Notice that God does not continually refer to the Israelites as immoral, but as *stiff-necked, stubborn—self-willed*. You can be moral or immoral and still be self-willed. No matter what God has said to them, no matter what promises they have made to God, gen X has chosen again and again to follow their own path. When we study the book of the Judges, we will see the entire nation Israel behaving in that fashion. I recall a young lady telling me once that when she woke up in the morning, she tried to do what was right for the rest of the day. If you are moral and self-willed, which many of these Israelites were, that is no better than being immoral and self-willed. God has a standard and we are to meet that standard. **“Circumcise your heart, therefore, and stiffen your neck no more.”** (Deut. 10:16). Circumcise your heart is salvation, and stiffen your neck no more is to strive to follow God's will rather than your own. Today, we attain the former by believing in Jesus Christ and the latter by studying His Word and being filled with God the Holy Spirit through rebound.

People is in the masculine singular so the pronoun which refers to *people* is also a masculine singular. And now God will tempt Moses, and you will notice the parallel between the temptation of our Lord and the temptation here of Moses.

“‘Leave Me alone and I will destroy them and blot out their name from under the heavens and I will make you a nation mightier and greater than they.’ [Deut. 9:14]

Moses quotes Ex. 32:10. God has proposed that Moses just stand aside and God will level the nation Israel. Then God will start from scratch with Moses, just as He had with Abraham. This will be the first of at least two occasions when God will offer to begin anew with Moses (Num. 14:12).

One of the great tests which Moses faced was whether to dump the entire Exodus generation, the parents and sons alike, and to father the new nation, or to forge ahead with what he had. Moses did not want to be a leader in the first place and, at the point of this temptation, he had already seen some whining and complaining from this exodus generation (the no-water test). He knew about Jacob and this opened up the possibility that he might have several wives. So Moses had a lot of reasons to give into God's offer. God had not implied that there would have

¹²¹ Lit., it [is].

been anything wrong in taking Him up on it. However, Moses had two things to consider—his own love for this worthless people and God’s reputation as the God of these people. Moses, with doctrine in his soul, was able to resist this temptation—which was a test of God of the reliability and faithfulness of Moses.

Now, I am certain that several pastors and/or writers have compared Moses to Christ and have drawn parallels. However, our Lord, in the context of his testing by Satan, quoted from this passage (Deut. 8:3—recall, there were no chapter breaks in the original language). What we have is a test of Moses which closely parallels to test of our Lord. So I will present a table here which both examines Moses as a shadow of our Lord Jesus Christ and the testing of Moses, which he speaks of, as being a shadow of the testing our Lord would endure in Matt. 4 and in Luke 4.

The Testing of Moses Foreshadows the Testing of our Lord			
OT Passage	The Testing of Moses	NT Passage	The Testing of our Lord
Ex. 34:28	Moses fasts 40 days and nights	Matt. 4:2	Our Lord fasts forty days and nights
Ex. 20:18–20	Moses was the mediator between the people and God	1Tim. 2:5	Our Lord is the mediator between ourselves and God
Ex. 20:21	The people could not observe the testing of Moses	Matt. 4:1	No one observed the tempting of our Lord
Deut. 9:9–10	The testing of Moses took place on a high mountain	Matt. 4:8	The testing of our Lord took place on a high mountain
Ex. 32:1 Deut. 9:12	The testing of Moses involves idolatry—the idolatry of the Israelites	Matt. 4:9	The tempting of our Lord involved idolatry—He was instructed to fall down and worship Satan
Deut. 9:13	God identifies the obvious problem to Moses (the stubbornness of his people)	Matt. 4:3	Satan identifies the obvious problem to our Lord (His hunger)
Deut. 9:14	God offers a Moses a quick fix—to destroy the Jews right then and there	Matt. 4:3	Satan offers our Lord a quick fix—to turn the stones into bread
Ex. 32:11–13	Moses would have to disregard his responsibilities as the leader of Israel to allow their destruction; furthermore, this was not a part of God’s plan, as these were the Jews which God would bring into the land	Matt. 4:4	Jesus would have to disregard God’s plan if He turned the stones into bread (He would be satisfying his human needs with his deity, an option which we do not have)
Ex. 32:10	God offers Moses the easy solution; to make the nation from his descendants—which was a bona fide offer	Matt. 4:9 Luke 4:5–7	Satan offered out Lord the easy solution—bypass the cross and take the kingdoms from him—which was, incidentally, a bonafide offer
Ex. 31:18 32:11–13	Moses had the tablets of the Law in his hands, but he passed this test because doctrine was in his soul (Moses quotes Scripture to support his position)	Matt. 4:4, 7, 10	Our Lord passed this test because doctrine was in His soul (our Lord quotes Scripture to support His position)

The Testing of Moses Foreshadows the Testing of our Lord			
OT Passage	The Testing of Moses	NT Passage	The Testing of our Lord
Ex. 32:11–13	Moses interceded on the part of the people	Heb. 7:25 9:24	Our Lord intercede on our behalf
Num. 26	Moses’ decision to intercede for this people saved many alive who could have died.	John 6:27 10:28 Rom. 5:21 6:23 Heb. 2:10	Our Lord’s decision also delivered many sons into life.
Ex. 32:11–13	Moses is given a bona fide temptation, but it falls outside of God’s plan	Matt. 4:6	Our Lord was given a bona fide temptation, but it falls outside of God’s plan
Ex. 32:14	Moses passed the test!	Matt. 4:11	Our Lord passed the test!
Deut. 8:3	Moses tells the people that they cannot live on bread alone.	Matt. 4:4 Luke 4:4	So that we see there is a parallel, our Lord quotes this same passage in resisting the devil

- [Deuteronomy 6](#)
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Now recall the exchange between God and Moses before Moses came down from the mountain. [Moses speaking to God]: “Now therefore, I respectfully ask of You, if I have found grace in Your sight, let me know Your ways, that I may know You, so that I may find grace in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people.” And He [Y^ehowah] said, “My presence will go and I will give you rest.” Then he said to Him, ‘If Your presence does not go, do not lead us up from here.” (Ex. 33:13–15). Moses is no fool; he realizes that it would be worthless to go anywhere outside of God’s guidance. Whether into the land or on the outskirts—without God’s presence, Israel has no hope.

“And I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire, and the two tablets of the covenant [were] in [lit., upon] my two hands; [Deut. 9:15]

This was quite a dramatic scene, which even Cecil B. DeMille did not fully capture. Recall what the mountain was like at the ascension of Moses and Joshua: **Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because Y^ehowah descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder (Ex. 19:18–19).** There was lightning striking all over the mountain of God; the people are dancing and singing in a riotous orgy below, worshipping some golden calf. Moses steps out of the thick cloud about the mountain with the two tablets in his hands and sees the revelry below (not unlike stepping into a nightclub with music so loud, that it completely dominates the atmosphere).

Moses presents the events here in a slightly different order than he did in Exodus. Here this is covered topically. **Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both their sides; they were written on one and the other. And the tablets were God’s work and the writing was God’s writing engrave on the tablets (Ex. 32:15–16).**

“And I looked and I, and observe [lit., and behold], you [all] had sinned in regards to Y^ehowah your God; you [all] had made for yourselves a molten calf; you [all] had quickly turned aside out of the way which Y^ehowah had commanded you; [Deut. 9:16]

Moses was quite unprepared for all of this—he comes down the mountain, hearing all of this singing and revelry, which, at first, he does not even recognize—Joshua suggests that maybe Israel is at battle, that these are the sounds of victory or the crying of defeat from a battle. He was unprepared for the loudness as he descended from Mount Sinai. Then he observed what was occurring, and the golden calf is in a prominent place and then Moses realizes that these people are celebrating their devotion to the idol which had been made. **Now when Joshua heard the sound of the people in its shouting, he said, to Moses, “There is a sound of war in the camp.” But he [Moses] said, “It is not the sound of the cry of triumph, nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat; but the sound of singing I hear.” And it came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and dancing (Ex. 32:17–19a).**

“And so I took hold of the two tables and threw them out from upon my two hands and broke them before your eyes. [Deut. 9:17]

And the anger of Moses burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain (Ex. 32:19b). Moses was totally unprepared for what he saw. I realize that at least one commentator has said that Moses realized that Israel was not ready for the law yet, and so he broke the tablets of stone. These tablets of stone were a treaty, a covenant, between God and man. The Israelites had already heard these laws spoken by God’s voice—every single Israelite had heard that Y^ehowah was a jealous God and that there be no gods instead of Him; that idolatry was strictly forbidden. And the Israelites had already agreed to this and said, “All that Y^ehowah has said, we will do!” In the space of forty days, they broke the covenant between themselves and God, and Moses broke the tablets of stone, which were a symbol of that covenant. I had previously thought that this was dramatic license—however, in carefully examining this, the breaking of the tablets indicate that the covenant between God and the sons of Israel have been broken.

Before your eyes is an interesting phrase. The prefixed preposition *lâmed* (*to, for, in regard to, with respect to*) is followed by the dual of eyes but affixed to the masculine plural suffix. To be perhaps more literal, this would be **with respect to each pair of eyes of you all**. That is an addition of a few English words (it is one word in the Hebrew, with a prefix and a suffix).

“And then I prostrated myself before the face of Y^ehowah, as at first—forty days and forty nights, I had not eaten bread and I had not drunk water—because of all your sins which you [all] had sinned, and in doing [lit., and to do] the evil in the sight [lit., in the eyes of Y^ehowah] to cause Him to become angry. [Deut. 9:18]

Prostrated is in the Hithpael, which is the intensive reflexive; Moses has an incredible strength, still not having eaten or drunk—God had given him the strength to come down from the mountain, to carry the second tablets of the Law. Moses fully comprehended, at this moment, the anger and disappointment of God. **So he was there with Y^ehowah forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments [lit., words]. And it came to pass when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai, and the two tablets of the testimony [were] in Moses’ hand as he was coming down from the mount, that Moses did not know that the skin of his face sone because of his speaking with Him (Ex. 34:28–29).**

As at the first means that Moses was also prostrated before God when he received the tablets of the Law on his first ascension up Mount Sinai. *McGee: Moses knew that God hates sin. May I say to you that we today do not have the faintest conception of how God hates sin and how He intends to punish it. Moses went down on his face before god and fasted and cried out to God for forty days and forty nights! Why? Because Moses knew the ways of God. He knew how god hates sin. The average Christian today does not seem to realize how God hates sin in his life. My friend, God never ignores a sin we commit. God will deal with sin in your life and in my life. I have been a pastor for a long time and I have observed church people over the years. I want to say to you that I have watched people in the church play fast and loose with God. I have seen them cut corners and put up a front....[you] can’t play fast and loose with God. God hates sin. God punishes sin. Moses also knew the mercy of God. Moses come to God because he trusts in His mercy. God will punish sin, but, my friend, we do not*

*comprehend how wonderful He is. He is so gracious. He extends mercy to the sinner. He has extended His mercy to you, I am sure...and the Lord extended mercy to Israel*¹²².

At this point, it is the order in Exodus which is not chronological. We will look at the order in which these events occurred below, in both books and in chronological order. Moses has to deal with this rebellion against God and then he will return to Mount Sinai to pray on behalf of the rest of the camp. However, in Exodus, the Ex. 33:1–11 told the customary arrangement which went on for several years subsequent to the golden calf incident as a result of this incident. Moses will go into more detail about his second trip up on Mount Sinai in Deut. 10.

“Because I had been afraid out from a face [s] of anger and the fury with which Y^ehowah had been angered against you [or, was furious with]—to destroy you; however [lit., and] Y^ehowah had listened to me also at this time. [Deut. 9:19]

Face of anger is literally, *faces of the nose*—a phrase referring the anger, both human (Gen. 27:45 49:6–7) and divine (Ex. 32:12 2Kings 24:20). Chêmâh (חַמָּה) [pronounced *khay-MAW*] does mean *hot displeasure*; that is, there is a connotation of *heat* here; however, a more modern rendering would be *fury, rage, heated anger*. Strong’s #2534 BDB #404. The verb here is the Qal perfect of qâtsaph (קָצַף) [pronounced *kaw-TSAF*] which means *to be wrath, to be angry, to be in a rage*. Strong’s #7107 BDB #893. Finally, after three words which indicate great anger, Moses states the intention of God—to destroy, to annihilate, to wipe out the entire exodus generation (which was actually two generations, gen X and the Generation of Promise). Moses interceded on behalf of these degenerates; otherwise, he would have returned to practically an empty camp of nothing but dead bodies. Recall, God had said, “*Now then, let Me alone, that My anger might burn against them and that I might destroy them; and I will make from you a great nation. [However], Y^ehowah changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.*” (Ex. 34:10, 14). Throughout Israel’s history, there have been intercessory prayers made on her behalf by a mediator, by one who would stand in the gap between Israel and the just fury of God (Num. 11:2 1Sam. 7:5–9 Jer. 15:1).

“And Y^ehowah was angry with Aaron intensely enough to destroy him, so I prayed also on behalf of Aaron at that time; [Deut. 9:20]

Aaron had the responsibility of holding down the fort while Moses was up on Mount Sinai—a difficult task, given the loser believers whom he had to babysit; however, the route that Aaron chose was inexcusable. As was mentioned, rather than taking a stand of leadership, it is possible that he tried to trick the people into not constructing an idol by sending the men back to their tents to collect the jewelry from their wives and children, hoping that perhaps this would blow over as women and children do not typically like parting with their jewelry. Aaron had seen even more closely than his fellow Jews everything which God had done and he still, once the gold was brought to him, participated with the other Israelites in their idolatry. It would have been one thing for him to have looked away when they fell into idolatry, or better for him to have shown disapproval, but Aaron actually cast the golden calf for them. Aaron did not know when Moses was coming back. He knew that in Moses absence he was in charge. He, as their stand-in spiritual and political leader, actually encouraged this foolishness. He knew that if Moses did not return that he would have to deal with these people for the rest of his life, so if they want a golden calf, Aaron was willing to supply them with a golden calf. He was a weak, and easily influenced man of authority. This is why God chose Moses and not Aaron to lead the sons of Israel.

Even in the narrative from Exodus, Moses did not record his specific intercession for Aaron. In fact, neither in Exodus or Deuteronomy are we given the exact point at which that Moses prayed on Aaron’s behalf—whether it was in general prior to Moses coming down off the mountain, or quickly, as Moses observed the horror of the Israelites idolatry. However, this likely took place the second time Moses was on Mount Sinai. When Moses first prayed for the forgiveness of Israel, he had not seen what occurred below; it likely never occurred to Moses that Aaron was involved in any way.

¹²² J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 68.

“And your sin, which you [all] had made—the calf—I took [it] and then I burned it with fire, and then I crushed it, grinding [it] well until it [lit., which] was pulverized to dust, and I threw its dust into the brook descending out of the mountain. [Deut. 9:21]

You will recall the action of Moses, the meekest man on the earth. He grabs this statue of the golden calf and smashes and pulverizes it until it is all fine dust, and then he threw it into a brook that came out of Mount Sinai. And Moses did not stop there. **And he took the calf which they had made and burned with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered over the surface of the water, and made the sons of Israel drink** (Ex. 32:20). Then, in the narrative of Exodus, Moses personally chews out Aaron (Ex. 32:21–25).

What we need to look at now is the order in which these events are presented in both the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy and how they actually occurred chronologically:

The Chronology of Exodus and Deuteronomy		
Deuteronomy	Exodus	Chronological
<p>Moses goes up Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights to receive the tablets of the law, during which time he neither eats nor drinks. (Deut. 9:9–11).</p> <p>God tells Moses of the idolatry which Israel had fallen into and tells Moses to step aside so that He might destroy them (Deut. 9:12–14).</p> <p>Moses comes down the mountain with the tablets of the Law in his hands and observing the revelry below, throws the tablets of the covenant between God and man to the ground, crumbling them (Deut. 9:15–17).</p> <p>Moses returns to Mount Sinai and falls down before God, praying on behalf of the people and for Aaron as well (Deut. 9:18–20).</p> <p>Moses melts and</p>	<p>The Israelites receive the Ten Commandments verbally directly from God; they ask Moses to speak directly to God and that God not speak to them directly (Ex. 20:1–20).</p> <p>The people stand off in the distance as Moses approached the thick cloud where God was (Ex. 20:21)</p> <p>Moses is given several ordinances and laws—primarily civil laws (Ex. 20:22–23:19).</p> <p>God tells Moses about the angel which will be sent before them to conquer the Land of Promise (Ex. 23:20–33).</p> <p>God specifies who may come near to Him (Ex. 24:1–2).</p> <p>Moses tells the people what God said, they agree to it and Moses writes down what God said (Ex. 24:3–7).</p> <p>Moses is called by God to Mount Sinai; he leaves Joshua as a sentry as he ascends the mountain (Ex. 24:8–17).</p> <p>While on the mountain for forty days and forty nights, God speaks to him about the tabernacle and the ark (Ex. 24:18–31:18).</p> <p>Near the end of this forty day period, the people talk Aaron into casting a calf idol of gold (Ex. 32:1–6).</p> <p>God tells Moses that the Israelites had corrupted themselves and to stand aside so that He can destroy them (Ex. 32:7–10).</p> <p>Moses intercedes for the people and God acquiesces (Ex. 32:11–14).</p> <p>Moses comes down from the mountain with the tablets; he and Joshua then return to the camp together, hearing and speculating about the loud noises below (Ex. 32:15–18).</p> <p>They come into the camp, Moses observes what is happening, melts the idol then grinds it to dust, scatters over a brook and makes them drink out of the brook (Ex. 32:19–20)</p> <p>Moses chews out Aaron and Aaron tells him what happened (Ex. 32:21–24).</p> <p>Moses speaks to the Levites and then to God</p>	<p>Ex. 20:1–32:30 is essentially chronological. Notice that the civil laws were given at the foot of Mount Sinai (which Moses wrote down) and the instructions concerning the construction of the tabernacle and the holy furniture took place on Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments were given to the people at the foot of Mount Sinai, but the tablets of the covenant were given from the top of Mount Sinai.</p> <p>Ex. 32:31–34:35 is difficult to order. Moses has a conversation with God prior to going back up on the mountain (Ex. 34:1), which likely includes Ex. 32:31–35.</p> <p>Ex. 33 is an odd section. It described the customary relationship between God and Moses after this sin of the Israelites. Most or all of this chapter seems to occur after the second ascension of the mountain. Ex. 33:12–23 could have occurred before, during or after this second ascension.</p> <p>Ex. 34 is the second time</p>

The Chronology of Exodus and Deuteronomy		
Deuteronomy	Exodus	Chronological
then pulverizes the golden calf and scatters the dust into a brook (Deut. 9:21). Moses again intercedes for the people, having seen what actually occurred (Deut. 9:25–29).	(Ex. 32:25–33:6). The customary manner of Moses meeting with Y ^e howah outside the camp (Ex. 33:7–11). Another conversation between God and Moses (Ex. 33:12–22). Moses ascend Mount Sinai again with two tablets pre-cut for the engraving of the Law; God instructs him to write down the Law (Ex. 34:1–28). Moses returns; his face shines (Ex. 34:29–35). Moses teaches the people these laws and the tabernacle is built (Ex. 35–40)	Moses ascends Mount Sinai. He receives the Ten Commandments a second time, along with more laws and regulations. Moses then teaches additional laws and regulations to the congregation and the tabernacle is built (Ex. 35–40).

- [Deuteronomy 6](#) [Deuteronomy 7](#) [Deuteronomy 8](#) [Deuteronomy 9](#) [Deuteronomy 10](#)
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One of the things which has always interested me is the writing and piecing together of the Law. I thoroughly reject the theories which have it being written long after the time of Moses. Whereas, it is almost definite that someone other than Moses wrote Genesis and the very end of Deuteronomy, the rest of the Law was written by him. The fact that Ex. 33–35 is not strictly chronological indicates that it was actually written sometime after the fact. That is, not a month or so later, but perhaps a year later. I would place the writing of Ex. 34–Num. 19 during the thirty-eight years that Moses and the Israelites spend in Kadesh-Barnea.

- [Deuteronomy 6](#) [Deuteronomy 7](#) [Deuteronomy 8](#) [Deuteronomy 9](#) [Deuteronomy 10](#)
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Other Examples of the Failure of the Israelites

[“And in Taberah and in Massah, and in Kibroth-Hattaavah, you have made Y^ehowah angry.](#)
 [Deut. 9:22]

Let’s deal with a minor problem first, and then we will analyze the verse. Taberah was not mentioned in Num. 33:16 as one of the stopping places, yet we have it mentioned here and in Num. 11:3. Taberah is the name of a place either right at Kibroth-Hattaavah or very close by. Because they are so near (the Israelites probably overlapped both places at the same time), they are not both mentioned in Num. 33. However, because there was a separate failure in the vicinity of each and since each name records the type of failure which occurred, they are mentioned separately here.

Just so several from the tribes mentioned don’t jumped up and down and say, “That wasn’t me at the foot of Mount Sinai”; Moses quickly names three other places where the Israelites caused God to become angry with them:

Num. 11:1–3 records the first sin alluded to. [Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of Y^ehowah; and when Y^ehowah heard, His anger was kindled, and the fire of Y^ehowah burned among them and consumed the outskirts of the camp. The people therefore cried out to Moses and Moses prayed to](#)

Y^ehowah and the first sank down. So the name of that place was called Taberah [lit., Burning], because the fire of Y^ehowah burned among them.

Massah is one of the early sins of the Israelites. Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the mouth of Y^ehowah, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore, the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test Y^ehowah?” But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why now have you brought us up from Egypt? To kill me and my children and my livestock with thirst?” So Moses cried out to Y^ehowah, saying, “What will I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.” Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Observe, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you will strike the rock and water will gush out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested Y^ehowah, saying, “Is Y^ehowah among us or not?” (Num. 17:1–7). There were two *no-water* tests; the first was designated as occurring at Massah [lit., Test] and Meribah [lit., Quarrel] and the second was called Meribah at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 20:1–14a). It is interesting that, although Moses has alluded to the second *no-water* test and his own failure already, he does not allude to it here. He refers back to the first *no-water* test when the audience was under the age of twenty (and some of them had not even been born yet).

The last place mentioned, Kibroth-hattaavah, was where the people complained of the monotony of their diet. They were sick of manna and desired the variety of foods that they had come to know in Egypt (Num. 11:4–9). God could have provided them with a great variety of food in the wilderness, as God is capable of any simple miracle of provision such as that (Num. 11:23). However, these people were under discipline from God. Moses takes their desire to God and God sees that they suddenly find themselves in the midst of a great flock of quail (the size of which would be beyond our imagination), most of them flying about three feet off the ground (Num. 11:31). The quail were easy to capture and the sons of Israel ate until they were stuffed (Num. 11:32). God, in discipline, because of the rebellion in their souls and their surly attitudes, struck many of these people with a severe plague (Num. 11:33); and this place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, which means *Graves of Greed* (Num. 11:34).

So, again, for a fourth example, Moses points out an incident where their fathers were primarily the guilty ones and not those listening. Why is that? Anyone who is honest in his own heart recognizes that he is in rebellion against God. In case there is any question in your mind, I have spent much of my personal life in rebellion against God, doing things and thinking things which were in opposition to His Word—often fully cognizant of the wrong I was doing. That sentence falls under the mandate of James to: **Confess your faults, one to another** (James 5:16). **For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, led astray into bondage to sin. For that which I am doing, I do not understand because I am not practicing the thing I would like to, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish, I agree with the Law, that it is good. So, therefore, no longer am I the one doing it, but [my old] sin [nature] which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good [is] not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but [my old] sin [nature] which dwells in me. I find them the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do the honorable thing. For I joyfully concur with the Law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the Law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin** (Rom. 7:14–25). Moses was giving these Israelites case histories that they were partially involved in. However, it was not a personal attack upon them. When a pastor teaches before a congregation, he does not name Charlie Brown of the congregation and, by way of example, tell everyone what Charlie Brown has been doing that is wrong. This intrudes upon his privacy. So Moses alludes to incidents with which the Israelites were familiar, but incidents which does not intrude directly upon their own privacy.

“And in Y^ehowah’s sending you from Kadesh-Barnea, saying [lit., to say], ‘Go up and take possession of the land which I have given to you;’ then you rebelled against [or, disobeyed] the mouth of Y^ehowah your God, and you did not believe Him, nor did you listen to His voice. [Deut. 9:23]

I find the verb *go up* to be interesting, as it conforms with the compass points that we use today. That is, we tend to think of north as corresponding with going up and south with going down, even though this is purely convention. Yârash (אָרַשׁ) [pronounced *yaw-RAHSH*] means *to possess, to take possession of, to occupy [all] geographical area—by driving out the previous occupants, to inherit*. Strong’s #3423 BDB #439. There appears to be a disagreement on the final vowel, as it is given variously as *a, ê* and *ă*.

You certainly remember the verb *mârâh* (מָרָה) [pronounced *maw-RAWH*], which, in the Qal means *to be rebellious, to be contentious*; in the Hiphil it means *to disobey, to rebel* and it is usually against God or His commands [often, *mouth*]. Here the verb is in the Hiphil imperfect, meaning this was an ongoing process. Strong’s #4785 BDB #598.

Near the end of this verse, we have the Hiphil perfect of *’âman* (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*] and this means, in the Hiphil and with the *lâmed* preposition (as it is found here) *to trust to, to believe*. Strong’s #539 BDB #52.

At Kadesh-Barnea, the Israelite had only been two years in the desert, much of that time advancing toward the Land of Promise and receiving the Law. The game plan was to march right into the land and to take it. Twelve spies were sent into the land to get a feel for how they should move into the land and take it. When they returned, ten of them gave the majority report that the inhabitants of the land were far too big to oppose, and their cities were far too well-fortified to take down. The minority report of two, the only people of that generation who were still alive and at this lecture given by Moses, were ready to go into the land and take it. The ten began a campaign of slogans to dissuade their fellow Israelites from such an attack; causing all of the Israelites to whine and complain about entering into the land. God caused them to cool their heels for an additional thirty-eight years while He killed off by the sin unto death those who opposed Him (Num. 13–14). Moses, in his first message to this Generation of Promise, went into this in detail (Deut. 1:19–46).

Moses mentions Kadesh-Barnea as an illustration of the rebelliousness and sinfulness of Israel. Recall that Moses is speaking to the Generation of Promise and this again was primarily the failure of gen X. Why? (1) The implication is that, as children, their heart was in accord with that of their parents. When their parents feared going into the land, they also feared this. This is quite natural. I recall having political discussions with friends in the early portion of high school and they pretty much aped the opinions of their parents. Near the end of high school or early college is when they tended to take a stance in direct opposition to their parents. (2) This is a severe warning to the Generation of Promise not to repeat the failures of their parents. (3) Sometimes giving an illustration should deal with someone who is not there. In teaching school, the best psychology for managing behavior was to explain how the behavior is wrong, apart from personally attacking the student guilty of the behavior.

“You have been rebellious [or, contentious] with Y^ehowah from [the] day I knew you. [Deut. 9:24]

V. 24 is the conclusion drawn by Moses to vv. 6–23. Moses was no rank amateur at public speaking. Although when first faced with the ordeal of speaking in public, Moses asked God to appoint his older brother Aaron to speak for him; when Aaron was unable to communicate all the Pharaoh needed to hear, Moses jumped in and took over. Since then, he has honed his public speaking skills. Like any good speaker, Moses knew that there is an art to the content of public speaking. He could have expanded on the last four incidents as he had the first; but he chose not to. There was no need to beat a dead horse. The listeners knew what occurred at each geographical location listed and their inherent failures associated with each place. Moses stated the theme for this portion of his message in Deut. 9:7: **“Remember—do not forget—how you provoked Y^ehowah your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against Y^ehowah.”** And now, this was the proper point at which to draw a conclusion, which Moses does.

There was some kind of obedience which the Israelites showed for periods of time; such as when it came to building the tabernacle. They became involved with that and the workers entrusted with that did what was supposed to be done. However, at almost every major turning point and in just about every test which the Israelites were faced with, they failed.

Finally, another point of Rotherham: it is claimed that much of the history of Israel was romanticized and developed hundreds of years later. Israel was so marvelous and God was so great in His dealings with Israel. [“You have been rebellious with Y^ehowah from the day I \[first\] knew you.”](#) This is not how a romanticist would recall Israel’s history. This is cry of a man who has been continually frustrated with the constant rebellion of this people.

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Moses Intervenes, Citing God’s Own Essence as Reason to Deliver the Sons of Israel into the Land

[“And I prostrated myself before Y^ehowah for forty days and the forty nights—which prostration of myself, when Y^ehowah had said to destroy you— \[Deut. 9:25\]](#)

In this verse, we have the sign of a relation or a connecting link, often translated as a relative pronoun: 'āsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*]. It is generally translated *which, when* or *who*. It can also mean *so that, in that, since, for that, inasmuch as, forasmuch*. Although a fairly specific particle of relation in other Semitic languages, it has been weakened considerably in the Hebrew and it demands another word to define more precisely the relation. I believe the relationship meant here is a temporal one (primarily because of v. 24); that is, during one of the first meetings with God concerning the Israelites, God right then and there was ready to destroy them. Strong's #834 BDB #83. From the very beginning of the Exodus, the people were rebellious and from the very beginning, God was willing to destroy them and start over.

This is the second time Moses ascended Mount Sinai to speak with God. Moses spent that time in intercessory prayer on behalf of Israel and Aaron (Moses would have had no clue that Aaron was involved in the idolatry during his first ascension). Moses received the second tablets of the Law, again with each tablet containing all Ten Commandments. Furthermore, he was given more laws and statutes to convey to the Israelites.

One of the things which occurs to me—and probably not to many of you—is *what are the chances Moses is just a really good public speaker and this forty day trip up the mountain was a ruse to allow him enough time to write the Law in stone?* (1) Any trip up a mountain would require him to take food stuffs for supplies. However, there is never any mention of that; and Moses both times claimed to have fasted for forty days and forty nights. Had he taken food with him, someone would have noticed. Furthermore, there would have been no shame in taking food up the mountain—he just couldn’t claim to fast for the entire time. (2) Such a stance, that this was just a scam, would be incongruous with the continued miracles—the manna, the quail, the waters crushing the Egyptians, the water gushing from the rock. All of these miracles could not have been staged—particularly the manna, which was provided every day for forty years. Moses alludes to their complaints about the manna in his message to the Israelites. If such a thing did not occur, then his message would not make sense. Furthermore, the miraculous powers of the manna was beyond something Moses could have done, even with an army of helpers (the manna would spoil overnight except on Friday night). (3) Whereas, it may have been possible for Moses to carve the Ten Commandments into stone, it would be unlikely that, after forty days of work, that he would come down the mountain and shatter the rock with the commandments. If this was his idea of a ruse, then he screwed up by destroying them. (4) The miraculous nature of the meetings with God described in Ex. 33, and observed by all the people would have been incongruous with Moses being a hoax. (5) Moses, in full sight, carved out the second set of stone tablets. If this were all a ruse, why didn’t he just do that up on the mountain before he carved the commandments into the stone? (6) If Moses took forty days to carve out on two tablets of stone the words

of the Law—after this amount of work, he would want to display this in a prominent place. These tablets of the Law would be placed in an ark, which would not be seen.¹²³ (7) Finally, it is highly unlikely that almost a full two million people died while Moses, Caleb and Joshua did not. Moses was one generation older than those he led and Caleb and Joshua were from gen X. This would have been statistically impossible; or at least, it would be highly improbable that such a thing could take place.

“And so I prayed to Y^ehowah and said, ‘Lord Y^ehowah, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance, [those] whom You have ransomed in Your immutability [or, greatness]; [those] whom You have brought out of Egypt with a strong hand; [Deut. 9:26]

We have a word here which is consistently translated *greatness* in the KJV, but that seems to lack the true meaning of this particular word. Gôdel (גֹּדֵל) [pronounced *GO-del*] should possibly refer more to *strength, might, and immutability*. The key is that this word has both a good sense (Num. 14:19 Deut. 3:24) and a bad (Isa. 9:9 10:12). In the latter cases, *greatness* does not really correctly render the concept. In fact, it is difficult to come up with a negative connotation to the word *greatness, strength, or might*. On the other hand, when God’s ways and heart are *immutable*, this is a good thing. When our heart is *immutable*, this is not necessarily a good thing. Strong’s #1433 (& 1431) BDB #152. The corresponding adjective is gadôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced *gaw-DOLE*] and it is translated *great, mighty*; however, it would be reasonable to translate it as *vast, unyielding, immutable*. Perhaps that its size is related to getting its own way all of the time. Strong’s #1419 (& 1431) BDB #147 (& 152, 153, 175). God chose these people in His perfect immutable character—God has displayed His strength in bringing these people out of Egypt.

Moses shows sound reasoning. Here God has gone to a great deal of trouble to deliver this race of people. God has shown great miracles and has ruined the economy and the strength of Egypt in order to bring His People, the Israelites, out from slavery. One of the key words is ransom. You would not pay the price for a slave and then take that slave out and slaughter him in the desert. It makes no sense. In other words, Moses’ argument was that this would be incompatible with His character to destroy these people that He has brought out of Egypt; it would cast aspersions on God’s character. God originally told Moses, **“Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am Y^ehowah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then I will take you for My people and I will be your god; and you will know that I am Y^ehowah your God, Who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you—a possession; I am Y^ehowah.’”** (Ex. 6:6b–8). So Moses now says to God, **“O, Y^ehowah, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘In evil, He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth?’”** (Ex. 32:11b–12a).

What Moses is doing is revealing the doctrine in his should before God and all angelic creation. He knows God’s character and God’s promises and holds God to these promises as that is compatible with God’s character and essence. This is not some argument when God suddenly says to Himself, “Uh, I guess I didn’t think of it that way.” God is perfect and Moses is arguing for God to act according to His perfect character. Without somewhat of an understanding of the angelic conflict, this conversation either appears to be silly or it doesn’t make any sense. However, when you grasp the fact that there are probably millions of elect angels and fallen angels viewing this conversation and puny, weak Moses (by their standards) says to God: “This is what you have promised us. This is what your character is. This is how it will appear to the nations outside of Israel. I know that these people are about as worthless as tits on a boar” (a more literal rendering of his words as found in Ex. 34:9b reads: **“If I have now found grace in Your sight, O Y^ehowah, I pray let Y^ehowah go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession.”**). In case you do not grasp this, Moses is asking for God’s grace and he is able to ask for God’s grace here because it is within God’s

¹²³ A personal note: while teaching, if I would figure out something neat which I could do in Word Perfect, I would generally show it to a half dozen people. Whenever we have some sort of accomplishment or breakthrough, we generally like to share this with others or display it. Your children’s stupid drawings and scribbles get magnetized to your refrigerator door. This is human nature. Had Moses actually engraved himself the words of the Law on those tablets, it would go against human nature to hide them in an ark; he would prefer to display them.

character and essence. And all angelic creation is surrounding them to observe this great event. The greatness of Moses in all things is far beyond anything you have ever imagined.

“Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; do not turn toward the stubbornness of this people or [lit., and toward] their depravity or [lit., and toward] their sin; [Deut. 9:27]

I am a little confused as to the translation here. We have the common verb *zâkar* (זָכַר) [pronounced *zaw-KAHR*] which means *remember, recall, call to mind*; however, servants and the three proper nouns are all preceded by the *lâmed* preposition (*to, for, with respect to, in regards to*). This is not a matter of this verb always taking the *lâmed* preposition (as in Ex. 32:13 Neh. 6:14 Psalm 136:23), because it does not (Gen. 30:22 Deut. 8:18 1Sam. 1:11). Strong's #2142 BDB #269.

This is the second major argument of Moses. God had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them this land. Therefore, the granting of the land to the Israelites at this time is a fulfillment of this promise to them, and not a reflection upon the character (or, lack thereof) of the Israelites of that generation. Moses is saying, “I realize that these are a group of sorry losers; however, you have promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob these things.” Again, Moses gives a fine testimony before the angels. The self-will of this generation and their fathers is legend. **And Y^ehowah said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and take note, they are a self-willed [or, obstinate] people.”** (Deut. 32:9). As quoted by the writer of Hebrews: **“Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of testing in the wilderness where your fathers tried [Me] by testing [Me]. Therefore, I was disgusted with this generation and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways. As I swore in My wrath, they will not enter My rest.’”** (Heb. 3:7b–11 Psalm 95:8–11). Yet notice the eloquent reply of Moses: **“Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and you said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken, I will give to your descendants—and they will inherit [it] forever.’”** (Deut. 32:13).

“So that the land, from which You brought us out [lit., which You brought us out from there], will not say “Because of Y^ehowah’s did not have the ability to bring them into the land [of] which He had promised [lit., spoken] to them; and because of His hatred [of] them, He brought them out to put them to death in the wilderness;” [Deut. 9:28]

Obviously, the land does not speak, but the people in the land speak. There would be two charges leveled against Jesus Christ: (1) He did not have the ability to bring these people into the land, reducing God to a weak national god of no great consequence; and, (2) because He hated the Jews, he took them out to the desert and killed them. The latter would make little or no sense, as God chose these people. This also, in a more subtle way, reduces God’s power. This says that God has no omniscience. He chose a people, He brought them out of the land of Egypt; it is possible that He could have taken them into the Land of Promise, but He hated them so He killed them instead. People would obviously speculate as to why God took these Jews out of Egypt and then let them die in the desert. These would have been two of the conclusions to which they would be forced—both conclusions impugn the character of God. Moses knows that the God of Israel is the omnipotent, omniscient God of the Universe. Therefore, such treatment of them would be outside of God’s plan and God’s character.

Moses wrote a couple of songs, and in one of them, he expresses this sentiment again: **“I would have said, ‘I will cut them to pieces, I will remove them the memory of them from men,’ had I not fears the provocation by the enemy; so that their adversaries would not misjudge; so that they should not say, ‘Our hand is triumphant’ and ‘Y^ehowah has not done all this.’”** (Deut. 32:26–27). Moses reveals such a complete understanding of God’s plan in these two verses. Israel has enemies—all those who are guided by other false gods; gods who are best are figments of their imagination, or, at worst, are fronts for demons. The enemy nations with their false gods, if God destroys Israel in the wilderness, would have misjudged the situation. They would have thought themselves to have eventually triumphed over Israel—we’re talking about the Egyptians, the Midianites and whoever remained of Bashan; we’re talking about the Moabites and the Edomites, who barely tolerated the presence of Israel. Finally, we are talking about the Canaanites and all the other peoples presently in the land. They would all say, “We have eventually triumphed over Israel; God did not bring them out of Egypt.” Or, the sentiments expressed in Deut. 9: “God was just not able to bring Israel out of the wilderness.” In stating his reasons that God should give

Israel the land, despite Israel's unfaithfulness and lack of faith, Moses again and again goes to God's character, essence and reputation. The Israelites represent God to the world; God must deliver them into their land. After Israel's self defeat, Moses argued with God, saying, "Now if You slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say, 'Because Y^ehowah could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.' But now, I pray, let the power of Y^ehowah be great, just as You have declared. Y^ehowah is slow to anger and abundant in grace, forgiving the iniquity and transgression." (Num. 14:15–18a). Angels are brilliant—far more intelligent than we; however, they cannot read our thoughts. These verbal prayers to God from Moses express great understanding and doctrine in his soul and God would vindicate that doctrine.

Finally, recall what is occurring in this chapter 9—Moses is speaking to the children of Israel. He is explaining to them why God is bringing them into the land. He is imparting the doctrines of God's faithfulness and character to them so that they might call upon these things in their time of need. He speaks to us now. You arrogant fool—you think God is like a really good Santa Claus and when you want something from God, you behave well for a few days, and then make your request known to Him based upon your character. When you want something from God, demand it on the basis of His character. And expect those things, not that you deserve, but those things which vindicate His character and vindicate His Word in your soul. God answers prayer which springs forth from His Word, not from the lusts of your soul.

I had a lady friend who would periodically call me and ask me to pray to God for her to get this job or that job; to have this or that come through for her. She knew I was *religious* and it was like rubbing a lucky rabbit's foot. She had no clue as to God's character; she was just trying to cover all bases. Had she been close to a Buddhist, I am certain she would have asked them for a prayer; if she spoke to a Jehovah's Witness, I am certain that she would have requested their prayers. Do you think God will answer a prayer like that? His character is not involved; there is no issue with regards to the angelic conflict. There is no issue of doctrine invoked. At the very least, when you make your requests known to God, ask for it on the basis of His marvelous grace. At least in this way, you reveal some understanding of His Word and His Essence.

“ ‘And they [are] Your people and Your inheritance, [those] whom you have brought out by Your great power and by your outstretched arm.’ “ [Deut. 9:29]

God has called the Israel's Moses' people—Moses designates to God that the Jews are **Your people and Your inheritance**; he is calling God's attention to His omniscience, His immutability and His essence. God chose these people in eternity past. They are His people and His inheritance. God does not need to be reminded of these things, obviously, or God would not be God. This is a testimony which Moses is making before all of creation, both the fallen and the exalted angels—this is a testimony which will stand forever in the Word of God.

The last two phrases refer to God's omnipotence—God is able to do all that He chooses to do. Moses identified the two objections to God killing these Israelites out in the desert and points out the two characteristics of God's essence which would make such a choice untenable. This shows great spiritual maturity and stands as a testimony for all time.

Moses repeated refers to the Israelites as the inheritance of God. **For Y^ehowah's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance** (Deut. 32:9). **Solomon, in dedicating his temple, said, “For they are Your people and You inheritance which You have brought forth out from Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace.”** (1Kings 8:51). Inheritance is based upon the death of a loved one. Jesus Christ died on behalf of these Israelites and they are God's people because they believed in Him. They may have failed Him many times, but they are still His people, His inheritance and His representatives on earth. Moses conveys to these Israelites why God has spared them and why God has brought them to the Land of Promise. They are there not because of any good thing in them—not because Moses thought up some good arguments—but because of God's character, His Word, His grace and His essence.

Again, listen and understand just what happened: **Then Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, “Go down at once, for your people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have quickly turned**

aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, "This is your God, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!" And Y^ehowah said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and take note, they are an obstinate, [or, self-willed] people. Now then, let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them, and I will make from you a great nation." Then Moses entreated Y^ehowah, his God, and said, "O Y^ehowah, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'In evil He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about harming Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel—Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself and you said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens and all the land of which I have spoken, I will give to your descendants and they will inherit it forever.' " So Y^ehowah changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people (Ex. 32:7–14). And he [Moses] said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Y^ehowah, I pray, let Y^ehowah go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate [and, self-willed]; and You will pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as You own inheritance." (Ex. 34:9).

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Deuteronomy 10

Deuteronomy 10:1–22

Outline of Chapter 10:

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Topics:

- v. 6 **Coordinating Disparate Passages**

Introduction: Deut. 10 will concentrate upon the special relationship between God and Israel, citing twice that the reasonable service expected of Israel is obedience to Y^ehowah, their God. Y^ehowah will be distinguished from local deities as the God of gods, the Lord of lords. In this chapter, God's character will be seen through the examination of His actions. Moses will show what sort of character God possesses, because this is what the Israelites are to cling to as they go in to conquer the Land of Promise.

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The Proto-type Ark and the Second Tablets of the Law

Ex. 34:1–4, 28–29a

What might help in the understanding of what we find here in this chapter is that this is a continuation of Deut. 9. Moses had prayed to God to intercede on behalf of Israel and to deliver Israel from national destruction at the hands of their God. Vv. 1–11 are a result of Moses' prayer and would have been better placed as a continuation of Deut. 9. *The people are reminded that all their blessings and privileges, forfeited by apostasy as soon as bestowed, were only now their own by a new a most unmerited act of grace on the part of God, won from Him by the self-sacrificing mediation of Moses himself.*¹²⁴ The parallel is obvious. Moses, as a mediator between God and man, intercedes on behalf of Israel, totally undeserving, delivering them from the wrath of God. Jesus Christ, our mediator, intercedes on our behalf, even though we are totally undeserving, delivering us from God's wrath. **For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him** (1Thess. 5:13; see also Eph. 2:3 1Thess. 1:10 Rev. 6:16–17).

“At that time, Y^ehowah had said to me, ‘Cut out [or, hew] for yourself two tablets of stone, like the first, and come up to Me, into the mountain; and you will make for yourself an ark of wood; [Deut. 10:1]

An ark is essentially the same as what we think of as a chest. The NIV at first renders the word this way and then returned to *ark*. And this is the same word used for ask during Noah's great flood. When there are two parties to a treaty, each party has a copy of the treaty. Both tablets of the law would be placed in the ark where man and God meet; where they would both have a copy of the ratified treaty or covenant between God and Israel.

¹²⁴ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. !!, p. 290.

The fact that God wrote the Ten Commandments a second time is indicative of forgiveness. They were originally a ratified treaty or covenant between Himself and the Israelites. They whole heartedly accepted it and said they would do it. Almost immediately they broke the covenant, causing Moses to break the tablets on which the terms of the covenant had been written. Circumcision, by the way, was a sign of an agreement to the covenant between God and Israel.

What may not be clear is that there was apparently a prototype ark of the covenant. Moses was to personally build an ark, a temporary one, where Y^ehowah's copy of the covenant was to be kept. Having a temporary ark is not a completely original thought. We have a temporary tent of meeting mentioned in Ex. 33:7–10: **Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the cap, and he called it the tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that everyone who sought Y^ehowah would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. lit it came to pass, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the ten. And it came to pass, whenever Moses entered the ten, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and Y^ehowah jwould speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would areise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent.** Just as there was a temporary ark, there was a temporary tent of meeting, outside the camp, which Moses used after his first ascension. Because of the horrible sins of Israel, Moses could no longer pitch this tent of meeting in the camp—God's holiness would not allow their contact to be that close. These things were, for all intents and purposes, the shadows of the shadows. Moses and the Israelites got to see things which were shadows of what they would later build—and those were shadows of our Lord and what was still to come. Therefore, this helps to explain the time frame of Ex. 33, whether this was misplaced chronologically or no. The instructions for the proper ark were given in Ex. 25:10–22 and it would be constructed in Ex. 37:1–9.

“And then I will write on the tablets the words which were on the first tablets, which you have broken, and you will place them in the ark. [Deut. 10:2]

These first two verses of Deut. 10 correspond exactly with Ex. 34:1. The Israelites broke the ratified covenant between themselves and God, so Moses broke the tablets with the covenant on them. God will try this once again, due only to the great intercessory prayer of Moses, although, as we know, gen X will die the sin unto death. **“And you [Moses] will put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you will place the testimony which I will give to you.”** (Ex. 25:21).

Roughly five hundred years later, when Solomon brought the final ark into the temple, the tablets of the Law were still in it. **There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets which Moses pulaced [there] at Horeb, where Y^ehowah made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of Egypt** (2Chron. 5:10). That must have been an incredible sight.

“And so I made an ark of shittim [or acacia] wood, then I cut out [or, hewed] two tablets of stone like the first, and finally [or, and then] I went up the mountain, the two tablets in my hand. [Deut. 10:3]

There are two viewpoints here: that this portion of Deuteronomy is not in exactly chronological order—which is reasonable, because Moses is giving his people a message which will often cover topics rather than chronology. However, the second view, that there was an ark made previous to the final ark appears to be the best explanation. This prototype ark is made by Moses of acacia wood; the ark of the covenant proper was made by out of aracia wood overlaid with gold by Bezalel (Ex. 25:10–22 37:1–2). Moses did not go up to get the tablets of the Law, bring them back, set them down in a corner of the temporary tent, and then have an ark (or, chest) built for them. Before he went up the mountain the second time, he built an ark to house these tablets, as God had instructed him between his two ascensions. When he returns the second time from Mount Sinai, he places these tablets in the proto-type ark. He did not make an ark prior to the first ascension, as God knew that Moses would shatter the tablets of Law; therefore, an ark would not be required. However, an ark would be required for the second time.

This verse corresponds to Ex. 34:4: **So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as Y^ehowah had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand.** In both passages, Moses is said to carry the two tablets up in his hand, singular. This is because these tablets were smaller than our perception of them. Because of the dramatic license of the artist, most of us have the incorrect picture of these tombstone-sized tables of stone, with the five commandments written on each in three-inch tall letters. Moses carried both tablets up the mountain in one hand. These are not tombstone sized stones. That is a total misconception perpetrated by some artist and continued in the movie *The Ten Commandments*.¹²⁵ These are tablets, perhaps the size of a book, upon which God will engrave the words of the Law, all Ten Commandments written on each tablet. Perhaps the first four or five were written on one side and the balance of them on the back.

“And He wrote on the tablets, according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments [lit., words], which Y^ehowah had spoken to you at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly—and later [lit., and then] Y^ehowah gave them to me. [Deut. 10:4]

Moses has several times reminded these Israelites that they heard God speak the Ten Commandments. This was one of the greatest miracles which they had experienced. With Moses, God saw to it that he could speak to a significant number of people, as he was doing at this time. However, at best, we are speaking of a few thousand at any given time (come on, you know that there is a very small percentage of believers who have any real interest in God’s Word). But during the assembly of which Moses speaks, everyone heard the Ten Commandments and this frightened the Israelites terribly, as well it should have. **And all the people perceived the thunder and lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die.”** (Ex. 20:18–19). Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, **“Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the Law and the commandment [or, decree] which I have written for their instruction.”** (Ex. 24:12). **“And Y^ehowah gave me the two tablets of stone written by the finger of God; and on them [were] all the words which Y^ehowah had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.”** (Deut. 9:10—this was the first engraving of the commandments). **So he [Moses] was there with Y^ehowah forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And He [God] wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments** (Ex. 34:28—this was the second engraving done by God). **“So He declared to you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform—the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.”** (Deut. 4:13).

“And so I turned and came down from the mountain then [lit., and then] I placed the tablets in the ark which I had made, and now they are there, as Y^ehowah had commanded me.” [Deut. 10:5]

Moses spent much of the second forty days and nights praying on behalf of Israel. The first time, he did not realize how bad things had been below. When he returned, he had been quite angry with his fellow Israelites—and, in particular, with Aaron, to whom he entrusted leadership while he was gone. Moses completely realized how worthless these people were, how correct it would have been for God to destroy every single one of them, and how much he needed to pray on their behalf.

The Israelites arrived in the wilderness of Sinai in the third month after leaving Egypt (Ex. 19:1). **And Y^ehowah also said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and they will wash their garments; and they will become ready for the third day, for on the third day, Y^ehowah will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.”** (Ex. 19:10–11). We have two periods of forty days where Moses was on the mountain. We have some time prior to that wherein Moses received some ordinances from God. In between these to ascensions to the top of Mount Sinai, Moses customarily went out to a tent which he had pitched outside the camp (this perhaps was a period of 4–5 months). Between the ascensions, Moses was instructed to sculpt out two more tablets and to construct an ark. After the second ascension, Moses placed the tablets of the Law

¹²⁵ We have the same situation with the long hair of Jesus. There is nothing in Scripture which indicates our Lord had long hair. There are several passages, as well as the testimony of the history of the time, that He had short hair. However, some ascetic artist portrayed our Lord and all of the Apostles as having long flowing locks, so that is the incorrect physical picture that many of you have today.

into the prototype ark. Then the tabernacle and its furniture were built (this construction took, perhaps, 4–5 months). Now it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle [lit., tent] was erected...And he [Moses] took the testimony and placed [it] into the ark, and...he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up a veil for the screen, and screened off the ark of the testimony, just as Y^ehowah had commanded Moses (Ex. 40:17, 20a, 21).

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Parenthetical Historical Insert

The next few verses are somewhat difficult as they appear to be a segue, but not a very neat one. It is almost if Moses' mind wanders off of the subject somewhat. Through the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, this is allowed. But Moses here speaks of what happened next chronologically. The other possibility is that vv. 6–9 are not a part of the lesson that Moses was teaching. He recorded this, made mention in writing of these next couple verses, and then picked up with his lesson again. In any case, vv. 6–9 are uncharacteristic of what goes before and after, in thought and spirit, other than they fall into a chronological order. Furthermore, vv. 6–9 appear as though they could be eliminated entirely and the flow of this chapter would be uninterrupted, with the exception of v. 10, which chronologically occurs prior to v. 5. Hopefully, we will be comfortable with these odd digressions by the time we have finished with this chapter. This is such an odd insert, so different from what it is sandwiched between, that I wouldn't even be surprised if this were not a part of God's Word; however, I have no manuscript evidence of that. I would be quite interested if someone knows why these verses are here.

And the sons of Israel had journeyed from Beeroth Bene-Jaakan [lit., the wells of the sons of Jaakan], [to] Moserah. There Aaron died, and he is buried there, and Eleazar his son acts as priest in his stead. [Deut. 10:6]

And they journeyed from Moseroth, and camped in Bene-Jaakan. And they journeyed from Bene-Jaakan and camped at [lit., in] Hor-haggidgad (Num. 33:31–32). The prepositions in the Hebrew are important. Throughout Num. 33, we have the pattern of traveling *from* (mîn) area A and then making camp *in* (bêyth) in Area B. Here, in Deut. 10:6, we have mîn used once, only with the name Beeroth Bene-Jaakan and there is no preposition preceding Moserah. So this could read from Beeroth Bene-Jaakan to Moserah, or from Beeroth Bene-Jaakan, Moserah (the two places named together just names a general area, like *Jordan Jericho*). Since Moses is leaving Kadesh at this time rather than going to, it would make sense for these two areas to be transposed. Our next problem is the name Moseroth and Moserah. These are just slightly different endings for the same place (one verse might even be miswritten, as the *h* and the *th* in Hebrew are very similar letters). However, Moserah may be a larger territory in which is found the stops Beeroth Bene-Jaakan and Moseroth.

What we need to look at now is a full description of Aaron's death:

Coordinating Disparate Passages			
Num. 20:23–29	Num. 33:37–39	Deut. 10:6	Explanation
<p>The Y^ehowah spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying, “Aaron will be gathered to his people; for he will not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel because you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah. Take Aaron and his son, Eleazar, and bring them up to Mount Hor. And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar. So Aaron will be gathered to his people and he will die there.” So Moses did just as Y^ehowah had commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And after Moses had stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.</p>	<p>And they journeyed from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, at the edge of the land of Edom. Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the mouth of Y^ehowah and he died there in the fortieth year after the sons of Israel had come from the land of Egypt on the first of the fifth month. And Aaron was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor.</p>	<p>Now the sons of Israel set out from Beeroth Bene-Jaakan, Moserah. There Aaron died and there he was buried and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his place.</p>	<p>The explanation is fairly simple: There were four stops between Bene-Jaakan Kadesh when the Israelites traveled prior to Num. 13–14. This may have been a slightly more circuitous route or a different route than when they left Kadesh. When they left, they went straight for the border of Edom, which meant they traveled through an area known as Beeroth Bene-Jaakan, Moserah—which was close by or identical to the Bene-Jaakan of Num. 33:31–32. Deut. 10:6 does not list a stop but tells the direction which they traveled out from Kadesh Barnea.</p>
<p>Finally, it would have been a simple thing for an editor acting several hundreds of years later to make these accounts <i>sound</i> as though they did not contradict one another, as the passages of Num. 20 and Num. 33 are quite clear. However, this was Moses, either speaking to the people who made this trek and what he has said to them makes perfect sense, even though to us, millenniums later, an explanation is necessary. Or this is Moses adding this to the text of his speech later; and the reader of that day would clearly understand, even though we do not. They left Kadesh Barnea, traveled by way of Beeroth Bene-Jaakan, Moserah; and encamped at Mount Hor, where Aaron died and was buried.</p>			

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As Edersheim explains it: *A day’s eastward from Kadesh, through the wide and broad Wady Murreh, suddenly rises a remarkable mountain, quite isolated and prominent, which Canon Williams describes as “singularly formed,” and the late Professor Robinson likens to “a lofty citadel.” Its present name Moderah preserves the ancient Biblical Moserah, which, from a comparison of Numb. 20:22–29 with Deut. 10:6, we know to have been only another designation for Mount Hor. In fact, “Mount Hor” or Hor-ha-Hor (“mountain, the mountain”) just means “the remarkable mountain.” This was the natural route for Israel to take, if they hoped to pass through Edom by the king’s highway—the present Wady Ghuweir,—which would have led them by way of Moab, easily and straight, to the other side of Jordan. It was natural for them here to halt and await the reply of the king of Edom. For while Moderah lies at the very boundary, but still outside Edom, it is also at the entrance to the various wadies or roads, which thence open east, south, and south-west, so that the children of Israel might thence take any route which circumstances would indicate. Moreover, from the height of Moderah they would be able to observe any*

hostile movement that might be directed against them, whether from the east by Edom, or from the north and west by the Amalekites and Canaanites. From what has been said, it will be gathered that we regard this as the Mount Hor where Aaron died¹²⁶.

Notice that in this passage, Moses does not run down the character of Aaron. However, as an aside—a very kind aside—Moses tells these Israelites that God then removed Aaron from the scene. Aaron is not there before them because of his great failure. When he cast that golden calf as the leader of Israel, that was a pretty terrific mistake and Aaron paid for that mistake with his life. Aaron was allowed to remain alive and with the sons of Israel until they set out again to enter the land and then God removed him from the scene. Moses will not dwell on this, as Aaron is his brother and Moses has no intention of running his brother's name into the ground. But Aaron died due to not properly carrying out his duties as a leader of this people. This is why the High Priest is now Eleazar, his son.

From there, they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah [to] Jotbathah, a land of brooks of water. [Deut. 10:7]

You know that portion of world has changed drastically over the past several millennia. Can you imagine any area being referred to as a land of brooks of waters?

The movement to Kadesh and out of Kadesh covered some similar areas, but they were not in the reverse order: To Kadesh: Hashmonah → Moseroth → Bene-Jaakan → Hor-haggidgad → Jotbathah → Abronah → Ezion-Geber → the wilderness of Zin, that is, Kadesh (Num. 33:30–36). Out of Kadesh: through Beeroth Bene-Jaakan → through Moserah → Mount Hor → through Gudgodah → and through Jotbathah (Deut. 10:6–7). The Israelites seemed to stop more often when going toward the land at first than when they left Kadesh Barnea to approach the land from a different direction. This new generation did not drag its heels as often and was more focused. They covered more ground in a shorter amount of time. Furthermore, some of the areas that they transversed, they may have gone through the northern portion on the way there and the southern portion on their return trip (or vice versa). Being several millennia ago, we can only make reasonable guesses as to the general route and the particulars we will never fully grasp the particulars until we are taken up.

At that time, Y^ehowah had separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah, to minister to [lit., stand before] Y^ehowah to serve Him, and to bless in His name until this day. [Deut. 10:8]

This verse is also problematic. The Levites were called upon in Num. 3:6–9: “Bring the tribe of Levi near and set them before Aaron, the priest, that they may serve him. And they will perform the duties for him and the duties of the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle. They will keep all the furnishings of the tent of meeting along with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. You will thus give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the sons of Israel.” (see Num. 18:1–7 as well). Our problem is that these duties were assigned around the time of the writing of the two tablets of the Ten Commandments; which occurred thirty-eight years prior to the death of Aaron. The problem is that this fits chronologically with vv. 1–5 and 10–11, but not with vv. 6–7; and the reason for their insertion here is not completely clear. None of these verses causes us any sort of a serious problem other than the names of the places; there are no inherent theological problems in this context, as its theological significance is limited.

Now note that thus far in these books of the Law that the tribe of Levi has never been called to perform priestly duties. They are not called priests anywhere in the Pentateuch (at least, so far). And when someone tells you that the book of Leviticus is about the Levitical priesthood, you know that their knowledge of things theological is on the puny side. The tribe of Levi is not mentioned but maybe a half dozen times in the book of Leviticus and they are not associated with the priesthood. Note that here, during this time, which corresponds with Num. 3:6, that is when God assigns them to help the priests, which occurred long before the death of Aaron. They were

¹²⁶ Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*, pp. 260–261

assistants to the Aaronic priesthood. The duties described here are not the same as the duties of the priesthood, which are very specific (their duties may be found in Num. 4). In fact, note what Moses says to Korah during his rebellion: “Is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of Y^ehowah, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them? And that He has brought you near and all your brothers, the sons of Levi, with you? Then are you also seeking for the priesthood?” (Num. 16:9–10). The clear implication is the it would be preposterous for the sons of Korah to expect to serve as priests. These duties did not seem to change much until the time of David, according to God’s Word: *These were to sons of Levi according to their fathers’ households, the heads of the fathers’ households of those of them who were counted, in the number of the names by their census, doing the work for the service of the house of Y^ehowah, from twenty years and upward. For David said, “Y^ehowah God of Israel has given rest to His people, and He dwells in Jerusalem forever. And also, the Levites will no longer need to carry the tabernacle and all its utensil for service.”* For by the last words of David, the sons of Levi were numbered, from twenty years old and up. For their office is to assist the sons of Aaron with the service of the house of Y^ehowah, in the coursets and in the chambers and in the purifying of all holy things, even the work of the service of the house of God; and with the showbread, and the fine flour for a grain offering, and unleavened wafers, or what is baked in the pan, or what is well-mixed, and all measures of volume and size. And they are to stand every morning to thank and to praise Y^ehowah, and likewise at evening; and to offer all burnt offerings to Y^ehowah, on the Sabbaths, the new moons and the fixed festivals in the number set by the ordinance concerning them, continually before Y^ehowah. Thus, they are to keep charge of the tent of meeting, and charge of the holy place, and charge of the sons of Aaron their relatives, for the service of the house of Y^ehowah (1Chron. 23:24–32). Another passage where the priests (the line of Aaron) are separated from the Levites in the time of David is 1Chron. 27:17.

Therefore, there has not been to Levi a portion and inheritance with his brothers; Y^ehowah Himself [is] his inheritance, as Y^ehowah your God has spoken to him). [Deut. 10:9]

Now that you are getting used to the fact there the Hebrew people use various figures of speech, the one here becomes quite obvious. Even though Moses is speaking of an entire tribe and even though Levi has been dead for a long time prior to this sermon, if you will—Moses speaks of the tribe of Levi as one man, called it Levi and used the 3rd masculine singular suffix.

Then Y^ehowah said to Aaron, “You will have no inheritance in their land, nor own any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel. And to the sons of Levi, observe, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance in return for their service—which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.” (Num. 18:20–21). Now Y^ehowah spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, “Command the sons of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession, cities to live in; and you will give to the Levites pasture lands around the cities. And the cities will be theirs to live in; and find their pasture lands will be for their cattle and for their herds and for all their livestock.” (Num. 35:1–3).

The only source which has any sort of an explanation for the insertion of these three verses is Barnes’ Notes, which reads: *Throughout the passage the time of the important events at Sinai is kept in view; it is reverted to as each incident is brought forward by Moses, alluded to sufficiently for his purpose, and dismissed. Moses is evidently here speaking of the election by God of the tribe of Levi at large, priests and others also, for His own service.*¹²⁷ Although not a completely satisfying explanation, it is somewhat helpful. Barnes assumes that this portion is a part of the speech of Moses. The problem here is that Moses generally speaks of Israel in the second person during this talk (Deut. 9:21–25 10:12–13) and in vv. 6–9, Israel is spoken of in the third person. Again, this sounds more like an insertion that perhaps fell out of another portion of the Law (?) Or was added years later for who knows what reason?

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¹²⁷ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 290.

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God's Particular Relationship with Israel and What Is Expected of Israel

“And I, even I, have stood in the mountain, as the former days, forty days and forty nights, and then Y^ehowah listened to me; moreover,¹²⁸ Y^ehowah was not willing at that time to destroy you.

[Deut. 10:10]

Now we are definitely back to Moses speaking to the people, as he returns to referring to them in the second person. This verse is a revamping of Deut. 9:18 & 25–26, with less detail. In this portion of this message, Moses has said this three times—he may have been teaching this people grace, but it teaches us the importance of intercession. In case your prayer life wains, what do you think would have happened to the Generation of Promise had Moses not interceded? In case you do not fully grasp this: if Moses had not prayed on their behalf, God would have killed off both gen X and the Generation of Promise. **So Y^ehowah changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people** (Ex. 32:14). God told Moses: **“I will also do this thing of which you have spoken, for you have found grace in My sight, and I have known you by name.”** (Ex. 33:17b). This prayer delivered roughly a million people from the sin unto death. So if you are not certain whether you should pray on someone else's behalf—pray.

“And Y^ehowah said to me, ‘Rise, proceed [or, go] to break camp [or, to journey] before [lit., to a face of] the people, and they will go in and possess the land which I have sworn to their fathers to give to them.’ [Deut. 10:11]

God would destroy the people; however, since Moses intervened on their behalf, God would then lead them into the Land of Promise. **And it came about on the next day that Moses said to the people, “You yourselves have sinned a great sin; and now I am going up to Y^ehowah—perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”** Then Moses returned to Y^ehowah and said, **“Alas, this people have sinned a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and, if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!”** And Y^ehowah said to Moses, **“Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. But go now—lead the people where I told you. Observe, My angel will go before you; nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit them for their sin.”** (Ex. 32:31-34). Then Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, **“Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’”** (Ex. 33:1).

Since Deut. 7, Moses has been warning the Israelites against unwarranted arrogance. He has told them several times of his own prayers on their behalf and of God's grace and of their lack of merit. With v. 12, Moses will pick up where he was in Deut. 6, where the Israelites are enjoined to obey God's commandments. Now he can expect this of the Israelites because of their wretchedness and their deserving judgment. In our own lives, we should separate grace from works. God has delivered us from the bondage of sin by grace, completely apart from our own merit. We have never deserved this and no matter what we do in our own puny spiritual lives, we will never deserve this. It is because of what our Lord has done on our behalf upon the cross which should encourage us to be obedient to Him. We placed ourselves in a hopeless position through our own self-will. God has delivered us from that place through the death of His Son. We can only owe Him our obedience and our service. **How will we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with the likeness of His death, certainly, we will also [be united] to His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with [Him], that our body of sin might be rendered inoperative, that we may no longer be slaves to sin—for he who has died is released from sin. Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him** (Rom. 5:2b–9). Furthermore, we have been given His Spirit to deliver us from

¹²⁸ The western Samaritan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate codices read: **...and [or, therefore], Y^ehowah was not willing to destroy you.**

subsequent disobedience: **There is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God [did], sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and a sin [offering]. He condemned sin in the flesh in order that the legal requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, [set their minds upon] the things of the Spirit** (Rom. 6:1–6). So we are delivered from death by grace, we are delivered into life by grace and the ability to live our lives to God is by grace.

“And now, Israel, what is Y^ehowah your God asking from you, except to fear Y^ehowah your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul? [Deut. 10:12]

McGee’s commentary on this verse: *Now do not make the mistake of thinking this is the Gospel. It is not the Gospel. You and I ought to thank God for that, because if it depended on this, you and I wouldn’t be blessed very much*¹²⁹.

God could have destroyed all of Israel but He chose not to. They deserve being destroyed. So Moses points out that all they have to do is to fear and respect God; to conduct their daily life [i.e., to walk] as God has instructed them; to love God, Who is merciful beyond anything they could imagine; and to serve God—the God Who has pardoned them—with all their heart and soul. The only reason there will be an Israel at all in the land is that God will put them there. Certainly, they ought to serve God—they would not exist if it were not for Him.

“He has told you, O man, what is good and what does Y^ehowah require of you, but to do justice, to love loyalty, and to walk circumspectly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). Recall what Moses told these Israelites in his previous message: **“Hear, O Israel! Y^ehowah is our God, Y^ehowah is one [in unity]! And you will love Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”** (Deut. 6:4–5; identified by our Lord is the greatest commandment in Matt. 22:36–38). David gives his son Solomon the same responsibility in 1Kings 2:3: **“And keep the responsibility of Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn.”** See Deut. 5:32–33 6:13 11:1, 13–15 1Kings 9:4–7 Psalm 119:1–8, as well. Our reasonable service today? **I urge you therefore, members of the family [of God], by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, your spiritual service of worship** (Rom. 12:1)

“To take responsibility for [or, to keep] the commands of Y^ehowah, and His statutes which I am commanding you today, for your good? [Deut. 10:13]

McGee: *God for fifteen hundred years, demonstrated through Israel to the world and to you and me that He cannot save people by Law. These people under favorable circumstances, in a land geared to the Law, were unable to keep it. And if they were unable to keep it, then you and I are unable to keep it. Thank God, He saves by grace today. In face grace has always been His method. In the Old Testament, He never saved anyone by Law. They were saved by His mercy and grace to them, looking forward to the coming of Christ to die on the cross to take away their sins*¹³⁰.

This is a continuation of v. 12, which is why we have a question mark at the end. The implication of this verse is that God does not ask but what is fully reasonable of these people. He has delivered them from death, although they are truly deserving of same. Therefore, they owe God, and these two verses list what is God’s reasonable expectation of their service to Him. For the rest of this chapter, obedience to God will be taught because of Who God is.

¹²⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 72.

¹³⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 72.

The law of Y^ehowah is blameless, restoring the soul; the testimony of Y^ehowah is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of Y^ehowah are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment [or, decree] of Y^ehowah is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Y^ehowah is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of Y^ehowah are true; and are righteous altogether (Psalm 19:7–9).

And notice in this verse why the Israelites have been commanded to follow God's precepts—it is for their good. We are often confused by this or we obscure this. We are like children in this regard. The good parent has to discipline and properly raise his children and does so for their own good. The parent who disciplines the child because the child merely irritates him, he has had a bad day or just doesn't want to be bother is a monster. However, the parent who does not guide his son with discipline is just as much of a monster. The good parent instructs and guides his children for their good. God guides us through the filling of the Holy Spirit and through His Word for our good. God does not forbid us from these various lusts and pleasures because he just doesn't want us to have fun. When you forbid your son to go to a concert or your daughter to go out on a date when she is 15, it is not because you don't want them to have fun or to enjoy life—you do this for their good. God's precepts are for our good. God doesn't forbid pre-marital sex because it's fun and He doesn't want us to have fun. He forbids it for our own good. He doesn't forbid homosexuality because it's fun (for homosexuals)—it is for our good. He doesn't forbid indulgence in drugs and drunkenness because it's fun—it is for our own good. **“So Y^ehowah commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear Y^ehowah our God for our good always and for our survival, as today. Furthermore [lit., and] it will be righteousness for us if we take responsibility to observe the entirety of this decree before Y^ehowah our God, jsut as He commanded us.”** (Deut. 6:24).

“Look, to Y^ehowah your God [belongs] the heavens and the heavens of the heavens, the earth and all that is in it; [Deut. 10:14]

The entire universe belongs to God. They were created by God and just delivered from death by God. Seeing Who God is—not just some national made-up deity—indicates that what He expects of them is completely reasonable. Moses here emphasizes that Y^ehowah is not some local phenomenah, some local god like Baal or Molech. Solomon testified to His omnipresence when dedicating the temple: **“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Observe, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; how much less this house which I have built!”** (1Kings 8:27; see Acts 17:24 as well). When Ezra read the Law, the Levites then sang: **“You alone are Y^ehowah; You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their armies [or angels]; the earth and all that is on it; the seas and all that is in them. You have given life to all of them and the heavenly host [or army] [of angels] bows down before You. You are the Y^ehowah God Who chose Abram and brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees and gave him the name of Abraham.”** (Neh. 9:6–7). **The heavens are the heavens of Y^ehowah; but the earth He has given to the sons of men** (Psalm 115:16). See also Gen. 14:19 Ex. 19:5 Deut. 33:26–27a Psalm 24:1 89:11 104:3–5.

We can only agree with the Psalmist who wrote: **When I consider You heavens, the work of Your fingers—the moon and the stars, which You have decreed. What is man that You remember him? And the sons of many that You care for him? Yet You have made Him a little lower than God and you have crowned Him with glory and majesty! You make Him to rule over the works of Your hands and You have placed all things under His feet** (Psalm 8:3–6 Heb. 2:6–8). Note in this passage we have a double fulfillment; it is spoken of man as well as of the Son of Man Who is to come.

V. 15 is somewhat difficult, so I will show you what others have done with it:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Yet the Lord had a delight in loving your fathers, and He chose their descendants after them, you above all people, as this day.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Only unto thy fathers Yahweh became attached, so as to love them,—therefore made he choice of their seed after them—of you—out of all the peoples as at this day.
KJV	Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, <i>even</i> you above all people, as <i>it is</i> this day.
NASB	“Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, <i>even</i> you above all peoples, as <i>it is</i> this day.”

NIV	Yet the LORD set his affection on your forefathers and love them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today.
NRSV	Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today.
Young's Lit. Translation	„,only in thy fathers hath Jehovah delighted—to love them, and He doth fix on their seed after them—on you, out of all the peoples as at this day;

This verse begins with the adverb *raq* (רַק) [pronounced *rahk*] and it means *only, altogether, surely*. It has restrictive force, as BDB puts it. It is also a prefix to a sentence to add a limitation to something previously expressed, in which case it is rendered *only*. It is used to emphasize single words, especially adjectives, in which case it can be *only* but also *nought but, nothing but*. After a negative, it can be rendered *save, except*. Strong's 7534 & 7535 BDB 956. Here is the feel for this verse—Y^ehowah is God of the heavens and all that is in them; however, His concentration is upon this one race of people, beginning with Abraham. The preposition affixed to *your fathers* is the *bêyth* preposition, which indicates proximity—*in, at, with*.

The verb is the Qal perfect of *châshaq* (חָשַׁק) [pronounced *khaw-SHAHK*], a verb we studied back in Deut. 7:7. It is always used with the *bêyth* preposition and an object of the preposition. We find this same word used with respect to constructing the tabernacle in Ex. 27:17 38:17, 28.* *Attached* seems to basically covers the meaning of this word. I have gone with *placed his love in, set his love with* (taking into account the preposition and noun which follows). Literally, we are looking at *Y^ehowah has attached with your fathers—to love*. Strong's #2836 BDB #365*

This is followed by the *wâw* consecutive and the verb for *choose*, often associated with divine choice. It is often used with the *bêyth* prefixed preposition, as it is here. *Bêyth* can also place a limiting geographical limit upon something, being translated *within*. This is followed by the preposition *ʿachar* (אַחַר) [pronounced *ah-KHAHR*] and it means *after, following, behind*. Then Moses throws in the emphatic *in you*.

All of the peoples is preceded by the *mîn* preposition, meaning *out of*. This verse literally ends with *as a day the this*.¹³¹ This is elliptical, which is why many translations add *it is*.

“Only Y^ehowah has adhered to [lit., attached with] your fathers—to love them. So He chose in [or, within] their descendants after them—in [or, within] you—out of all of the peoples, as [it is] this day. [Deut. 10:15]

Here is where we move into an examination of God's character. God attached Himself to Abraham and chose in the Israelites—his seed (which, 95% of the time, can be reasonably rendered *descendants*). This is how things stand this day. Out of all the peoples on the earth, under the entire universe, which is all God's, God chose Israel. **“Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose his descendants after them. And He with His presence brought you from Egypt by His great power.”** (Deut. 4:37; see Deut. 7:6 14:2). Moses has listed their reasonable service to God, under the circumstances, and then points out that they are a chosen people—chosen through Abraham, and this choice stands this day, as God has not discarded His people. **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the virtues of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. For you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy** (1Peter 2:9–10 Deut. 10:13 Isa. 61:6 Ex. 19:6 Psalm 130:8 Hosea 1:10). **From the standpoint of the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but from the standpoint of God's choice, they are beloved for the sake of the patriarchs; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable!** (Rom. 11:28–29).

Now, note the parallel to us today: God chose the seed of Abraham because He chose Abraham. He chose Abraham's descendants because they were *in* Abraham. We are chosen because we are *in* Christ. **And a voice came out of the cloud saying, “This is My Son—the Chosen One—listen to Him!”** (Luke 9:35). **Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him, in love** (Eph. 1:4;

¹³¹ Owen's list's a definite article with *day*, but I don't see it.

see Rom. 16:13). **For he who was called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman; likewise, he who was called while free is Christ's slave** (1Cor. 7:22). God did not reveal all of the Old Testament shadows in the New Testament. He has allowed us to discover a few of them ourselves.

“And you will circumcise the foreskin of your heart and you will not stiffen your neck any more.
[Deut. 10:16]

Qâshâh (קָשָׁה) [pronounced *kaw-SHAWH*] means *harden, be severe, stiffen, to be fierce*. This verb is used both with the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (in Ex. 7:3 only—see Ex. 13:15 as well) and often with *stiffening* the neck (2Kings 17:14 Jer. 7:26). BDB #7185 BDB #904.

We have examined the ritual of circumcision, something which we have not discussed for some time. A verse like this clearly tells us that the circumcision of the phallus is representative. That is not to say that men were not circumcised in face—it just means that the actual circumcision was representative. Every time an Israelite male urinates, he sees that he is set apart, different from those out in the world. His very seed has been set apart by God. And God said to Abraham: **“And you will be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.”** (Gen. 17:11). But that is what this symbolically refers to. What the Israelite is actually instructed to do is when Moses says to circumcise the foreskin of their heart is to believe in Jesus Christ. **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is by a hidden circumcision, that of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter** (Rom. 2:28–29a). **For you see, they are not all Israel who are from Israel** (Rom. 9:6). **Circumcise yourselves to Y^ehowah and remove the foreskins of your heart, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that My wrath does not go forth like fire and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.”** (Jer. 4:4). And salvation is the work of God: **“Furthermore, Y^ehowah your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul in order that you may live.”** (Deut. 30:6). Rotherham points out: *Here [in Deut. 10:16] [it is] charged as a duty; later on [chap. xxx. 6] promised as a blessing.*¹³² **For in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by means of the removal of the body of the flesh by means of the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism, by mean of which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the operational power of God, Who raised Him from the dead ones** (Col. 2:11–12). The old, dead flesh must be removed which blinds man to God, just as our old sin nature, in intimate part of our person, must be removed at death.

The stiffening of the neck, as we have seen, refers to volition and self-will. As God's people, a people chosen from out of all the peoples of the earth, the Israelites should strive to do God's will, not to be self-willed. **“Do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out before you, ‘Because of my righteousness Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land.’ But [it is] because of the wickedness of these nations [that] Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before your face. It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah your God is driving them out before you face, in order to confirm the word which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Know then, [it is] not because of your righteousness Y^ehowah your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked [or, self-willed] people.”** (Deut. 4–6).

“For Y^ehowah your God—He [is] God of the gods and Lord of the lords; God, the great, the mighty, and the fearful; Who accepts not persons [lit., does not lift up faces], nor takes a bribe;
[Deut. 10:17]

Since the Hebrew language does not have superlative, a superlative concept is expressed by a noun repeated in the genitive plural. Literally, this reads *Gods of gods and Lords of lords*. The first is the common way to which the trinity is referred to in the Old Testament, but Adonai in the plural is found less often.

Moses again stresses that the Jews have not just been chosen by a mere local deity. Y^ehowah is their deity and Baal is the deity for the, say, Amorites—it isn't that way at all. The God of the Universe, the God Who is Lord over

¹³² *The Emphasized Bible*, Rotherham, p. 210.

all of the heavens and earth, over all authorities and supposed authorities is God. This is their God. “For what god has tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and by wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as Y^ehowah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown that you might know Y^ehowah, that He is God—there is no other besides Him.” (Deut. 4:34–35). Give thanks to the God of gods, for His grace is everlasting; give thanks to Y^ehowah of lords, for his grace is everlasting (Psalm 136:2–3). “Thus says Y^ehowah, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, Y^ehowah of the armies, ‘I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me.’ ” (Isa. 44:6). For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet, for us, there is one God, the Father, from Whom are all things, and we [are] for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and we [are] through Him (1Cor. 8:5–6). And the Lord of lords and the God of gods is God the Father: You will keep the mandate without stain or reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time—He Who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light—Whom no man has seen or can see. To Him: honor and eternal dominion! Amen! (1Tim. 6:14–16). And the King of kings and Lord of lords is Jesus Christ: “These will wage war against the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and Kings of kings, and those who are with Him [are the] called and chosen and faithful.” (Rev. 17:14). Also see Psalm 135:5–6 Isa. 44:8 45:5 Dan. 2:47 Rev. 19:11–16.

The latter portion of this verse refers to the complete, unwavering justice of God, which the Israelites were to emulate: “You will not show partiality in judgment; you will hear the small and the great alike. You will not fear because of man for the judgment is God’s.” (Deut. 1:17a). “You will not distort justice; you will not be partial and you will not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. Justice, even justice, you will pursue” (Deut. 16:19–20a). The Israelites were to emulate this justice, as God is perfect justice: Sing to God, sing praises to His name; cast up a highway for Him Who rides through the deserts, Whose name is Y^ehowah and is exalted before Him. A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows is God in His holy habitation (Psalm 68:4–5). Y^ehowah protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow; but He thwarts the way of the wicked (Psalm 146:9). God loves the helpless and looks out for them; and we are the helpless. See also Ex. 23:8 Lev. 19:15 Job 34:19 Psalm 94:1–11 Isa. 10:1–3 Mal. 2:9 Acts 10:34

“He executes justice [lit., does judgment] [on behalf of] fatherless and widows and He loves the temporary visitor [or, alien], giving him food and clothing. [Deut. 10:18]

Notice that even though God is specifically the God of the Israelites, having chosen them above all other peoples, He protects and looks out for those who are helpless; His love extends to the outsider whose path happens to cross the path of Israel. “And you will not wrong a temporary resident or oppress him, for you were temporary residents in the land of Egypt. You will not afflict any widow or orphan.” (Ex. 22:21–22). “You will not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow’s garment in pledge. But you will remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that Y^ehowah your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing. When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you will not go back to get it; it will be for the alien, for the orphan and for the widow, in order that Y^ehowah your God may bless you in the work of your hands. When you beat your olive tree, you will not go over the boughs again; it will be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you will not go over it again; it will be for the alien, for the orphan and for the widow.” (Deut. 24:17–21). “Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.” And all the people will say, “I affirm it.” (Deut. 27:19).¹³³ The point is that God protects the helpless and the powerless. The orphan and the widow are just two examples of several different categories of helpless peoples which could be given.

“And you [all] will love the alien, for you [all] were aliens in the land of Egypt. [Deut. 10:19]

The Israelites are encouraged again and again to recall their harsh treatment by the Egyptians while they were aliens in that land. The early Israelites had caused Egypt to prosper and to become a great nation and their

¹³³ An interesting side note: while the alien is mentioned in the millennium, the orphan and widow are not (Ezek. 47:22–23) because there are none.

reward was slavery and burdens almost beyond comprehension. They are not to treat the alien in the same way. Aliens are often afforded inferior treatment by the law as opposed to native citizens. Israel is mandated to love those aliens because God sends those aliens to her for evangelization. Mercy and grace is to be given to those who are temporary residents of their land. Nowhere else in ancient literature and ancient law do you ever see such a concern for the fair and just treatment of the outsider, the temporary visitor, for the immigrant. God would bring people from all over the world to Israel to evangelize them—how can one be evangelized if they are treated unfairly by those mandated to evangelize them? **“And you will not wrong a stranger or oppress him for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. If you afflict him at all—if he then does cry out to Me, I will certainly hear his cry and My anger will be kindled and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.”** (Ex. 22:21, 23–24). That is mighty steep punishment for unequal justice being afforded the immigrant. **“When a stranger resides in your land, you will do him no wrong. The immigrant who resides with you will be to you as the native among you and you will love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am Y^ehowah your God.”** (Lev. 19:33–34). See also Ex. 23:9

“You will fear [and, respect] Y^ehowah your God—you will serve Him¹³⁴ and you will cleave to Him, and you will swear by His name. [Deut. 10:20]

Again, this is their reasonable service. God has chosen them and their reasonable choice is to fear and respect God. As we have seen, God’s miracles should have invoked a healthy amount of fear and respect in those who observed them. That which is in my heart would cause me a great deal of fear if ever placed near a great manifestation of God.

Since God preserved these Israelites because of the intercessory prayer of Moses, they have few options but to serve Him. They are only alive through His mercy. He has cut out the most cancerous elements. Please understand when all of those who were twenty and older at the first census died the sin unto death prior to the second census, this does not mean the Generation of Promise was completely blameless. They were, on the whole, a superior generation, but not blameless. Guaranteed that they were involved in some of the insurrections and complaining and whining and moaning. Since God has suffered them to live, their reasonable response is service to Him.

Since it is Y^ehowah their God Who showed them this mercy, they are to cling to Him. Since He is bringing them into the land of promise and will give it to them, they should cling to Him. This is the word used of right man and right woman as taught in Gen. 2:24. **“But you are to cling to Y^ehowah your God, as you have done to this day.”** (Joshua 23:8). When we get to Ruth 1:14, we will have a better grasp of the use of *cling*. See 2Kings 18:6 Psalm 119:31 as well.

And, finally, when they were to take a vow or to swear to a statement, they could not do so by their own character as their own character is corrupt. They could swear only by God’s character, as His was perfect. However, this was not to be something said lightly. **“You will not take [lit., lifts up] the name of Y^ehowah your God in vain, for Y^ehowah will not hold him guiltless who takes [lit., lifts up] His name in emptiness.”** (Deut. 5:11). Also see Psalm 63:11.

Similar groups of admonitions are given in Deut. 6:13 11:22 13:4 Matt. 4:10 **“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving Y^ehowah your God and obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”** (Deut. 30:19–20).

“He [is] your [song of] praise and He [is] your God, Who has done with you these great and fearful things which your eyes have seen; [Deut. 10:21]

¹³⁴ Several codices, the western Samaria, the Onkelos of Jonathan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the vulgate, all read: ...and Him you will serve.

Most people, when they do well or achieve some great thing, praise themselves. They might be looking down at the ground, shuffling their feet, saying, "It just wasn't nuthin'," but they are praising themselves. Israel will go into the Land of Promise and take it because of Who and What God is, not because of Who and What they are. People of great athletic ability often take credit to themselves; very attractive people often take credit to themselves, those who have some sort of notoriety take great credit to themselves; people who are highly intelligent often look down upon others, as though they did something to achieve their intelligence. As Paul said to the arrogant Corinthians: **For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?** (1Cor. 4:7). As John the Baptizer said, **"A man can receive nothing, unless it has been given him from heaven."** (John 3:27b).

Other nations have no evidence of what their local god has done for them. They build some sort of a statue or idol, worship and pray to that idol and then they do whatever they do. Sometimes life is good to them, sometimes it is not. However, the Israelites have seen first-hand great and marvelous signs and wonders, miracles as had never been seen on this earth before. No other nation has a god who has done anything like this. The actions performed on their behalf against Egypt were the talk of nations throughout the ancient world. As Moses wrote: **Y^ehowah is my strength and song; and He has become my deliverance. This is my God, and I will praise Him; my father's God, and I will extol Him** (Ex. 15:2). As Samuel told the Israelites: **"Only fear Y^ehowah and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you."** (1Sam. 12:24). **When Y^ehowah brought back the captive ones of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with joyful shouting. Then they said among the nations, "Y^ehowah has done great things for them."** (Psalm 126:1–2).

"With seventy persons did your fathers go down to Egypt, and now Y^ehowah your God has made you as stars of the heavens with respect to multitude." [Deut. 10:22]

All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, sixty-six persons in all. And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob who came to Egypt, seventy (Gen. 46:26–27).¹³⁵ Egypt was a full-blown nation when Israel went into Egypt with all of seventy people. Today they were a nation, moving through the desert, of a size which was phenomenal for that time period. This is one of the many signs of God's particular favor toward them. As Moses told the people at the beginning of his first great recorded sermon: **"Y^ehowah your God has multiplied you, and, observe, you are this day as the stars of heavens for multitude."** (Deut. 1:10). This fulfilled the promise made to Abraham many years previous: **"And I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and I will make your name great. And so, you will be a blessing."** (Gen. 12:2). And He took him outside and said, **"Now look toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them."** And He said to him, **"So will your descendants be."** (Gen. 15:5).

[Deuteronomy 6](#)

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¹³⁵ There were five wives (Acts 7:14).

Deuteronomy 11

Deuteronomy 11:1–32

Outline of Chapter 11:

- vv. 1–7 **The Israelites are to obey God because of what they have seen with their own eyes**
- vv. 8–15 **The Israelites are to obey God because He will give them the Land of Promise**
- vv. 16–32 **Blessing and cursing; learning, teaching and obeying the Word of God**

Charts:

- v. 1 **Moses Re-Emphasizes Some Points**

Introduction: Deut. 11 sounds as though it is the final portion of the message of Moses to his people. He describes the land wherein they are about to go and contrasts it with Egypt. Deut. 11, however, is a transitional chapter. He has been speaking primarily of what the Israelites had experienced up until that time and these experiences as the reason for their obedience to God. Moses will enjoin them several times alone to obey the laws and ordinances of God. However, he will use this as a starting point from which he will, in subsequent chapters, name these laws and ordinances for which they will be responsible.

Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10
Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

The Israelites Are to Obey God Because of What They Have Seen with Their Own Eyes

“And you will love Y^howah your God and keep His investiture [or, delegated responsibilities and commission] and His statutes and His judgments, and His commands, always [lit., all the days];
[Deut. 11:1]

Recall that the word often rendered *charge* is *mish^emereth* (מִשְׁמֶרֶת) [pronounced *mish^e-MEH-reth*] and it refers to something which someone has been given charge of or responsibility for. It may be something simple which someone is simply responsible to take care of or to maintain or simply something to keep (Ex. 16:23). Sometimes it is something more ethereal, such as a responsibility (Hab. 2:1 Zech. 3:7). In the feminine, it is a reference to that which is watched or taken care of (*a charge, a responsibility, a commission*); however, since *charge* is so old-English, we will use the rendering *supervision, direction, management* would be relatively good renders, except for the fact that *mish^emereth* is often preceded by the possessive pronoun *his*. Better would be *delegated responsibilities and commission, holy orders, appointment, conferment, investiture* [pronounced *in-VES-ti-chur*]. Strong's #4931 BDB #1038

Throughout this second message, Moses Continues to repeat several things, many of which we will see in this chapter:

Moses Re-Emphasizes Some Points			
#	Repeated Points	Previously Found	Deut. 11
1.	The Israelites were undeserving of God's grace	Deut. 7:7–8 8:16b–17 9:4–8, 13–14, 21–24	
2.	Moses intervened on their behalf	Deut. 9:18–19, 25–26	
3.	This generation has seen the incredible works of God	Deut. 7:18–19 10:21	Vv. 3–5
4.	The sons of Israel were to obey God	Deut. 7:11 8:1–2, 6 10:12–13 11:1	Vv. 1, 8, 13, 22, 32
5.	They were not to become involved in false religions	Deut. 7:25–26 8:19	Vv. 16, 28
6.	God can be trusted because of what the Israelites have seen Him do in the past	Deut. 7:18–19 8:2–5, 15–16a	Vv. 2–4
7.	Obedience to God would increase their days in the land	Deut. 4:40 5:33 6:2	Vv. 9, 21
8.	The Israelites would be cursed if they disobeyed God	Deut. 6:15 7:10	V. 28
9.	And, finally, God will bring them into the Land of Promise and remove the indigenous nations from before Israel	Deut. 7:20–24 8:7–9 9:1–3 10:11	Vv. 23–25, 29–31
10.	The Israelites must learn and teach God's Word	Deut. 6:6–9	Vv. 18–20

Moses, one of the greatest public speakers in the history of man, did not mind repeating himself when the doctrine was important.

V. 2 is rather difficult; other translators have done the following:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And know this day (for I am not speaking to your children who have not [personally] known and seen it); the instruction <i>and</i> discipline of the Lord your God, His greatness, His mighty hand, and His outstretched arm,
<i>Barnes' Notes</i>	And own ¹³⁶ ye this day (for I have not to do with your children which have not known and which have not seen) the chastisement of the Lord, his greatness, his mighty hand, his stretched out arm,
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And ye must know to-day, (for not with your sons {do I speak} who know not, neither have the seen] the discipline of Yahweh your god,—his greatness, his firm hand, and his stretched-out arm;
KJV	And know ye this day: for <i>I speak</i> not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm,
NASB	And know this day that <i>I am</i> not speaking with your sons who have not known and who have not seen the discipline of the LORD your God—His greatness, His mighty hand, and His outstretched arm.
NIV	Remember today that you children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your god; his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm;
NRSV	Remember today that it was not your children (who have not known or seen the discipline of the LORD your God), but it is you who must acknowledge his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm,

¹³⁶ No, I do not have a clue where *Barnes' Notes* came up with *own*.

Owen's Translation And consider this day since not to your children who have not known or seen it—the discipline of Yahweh your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm,
 Young's Lit. Translation ...and Ye have known to-day—for it is not your sons who have not known and who have not seen the chastisement of Jehovah your God, His greatness, His strong hand, and his stretched-out arm,

We have about 50% accuracy here—notice the italics in the KJV and the NASB; *I speak* is not to be found in the Hebrew. What Moses is saying pertains directly to the Generation of Promise; not to their sons. The difficult thing for us to grasp is the double negative of this verse which we want to transform into a positive. **It is not your sons—they have not known and they have not seen the discipline of Y^ehowah your God.** I have added a couple of words to that, but they convey the idea of the double negative just meaning the same as a single negative in the English—except twice.

“And you [all] will know today because—not with your sons, who have not known, and who have not seen the discipline of Y^ehowah your God, His greatness, His strong hand, and His outstretched arm; [Deut. 11:2]

This is a rather complex sentence here. It begins in this verse and concludes in v. 7, with the intervening verses being parenthetical. Essentially, we are being told what the Generation of Promise knows and is acquainted with and what their sons do not know. At the first attempt to enter the land, the Generation of Promise was all under twenty. Since then, as they have grown up, they have seen tremendous things done by the hand of God. Their sons and daughters may not have been as observant as children seem to be caught inside their own little worlds anyway. However, the Generation of Promise—they are now without excuse. They have seen God's greatness, His strong hand and His outstretched arm (to help). **“And you said, ‘See, Y^ehowah our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives.’ “ (Deut. 5:24). The great trials which your eyes saw and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which Y^ehowah your God brought you out. So will Y^ehowah your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.” (Deut. 7:19).**

“And His signs, and His doings, which He has done in the midst of Egypt, to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to all his land; [Deut. 11:3]

Several of the Psalms celebrate God's victory over Egypt. **He worked wonders before their fathers in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan (Psalm 78:12). He struck down the first-born of Egypt, both man and beast. He sent signs and wonders into your midst, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh and all his servants (Psalm 135:9).** See Ex. 7:8–21 Psalm 136:10–15.

The Generation of Promise was young at this stage, but several of them were teenagers during their slavery in Egypt and they do recall what God did to free them. These miracles were amazing beyond belief—however, the adult generation who witnessed these miracles went nowhere with that knowledge. It is doctrine in the soul, not some miracle that you see, that gets you anywhere spiritually.

“And that which He has done to the force of Egypt, to its horses, and to its chariot, when He had caused the waters of the Reed Sea to flow against their faces in their pursuing after them,¹³⁷ and Y^ehowah destroyed them, unto this day; [Deut. 11:4]

This is probably one of the most phenomenal sights in all of human history—the crashing down of the Sea of Reeds upon the army of the Egyptians. This had to be a huge area that God lured them into. All of Egypt's forces were brought into this sea (recall that they had been disoriented by God inasmuch as they were camped almost right next to Israel, but they could not see them) until they were trapped by the water which God brought down

¹³⁷ The other Massoretic text reading is *after you*.

upon them. To remind you: And the angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Y^ehowah swept the sea [back] by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided. And the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters *were like* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea. And it came about at the morning watch that Y^ehowah looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. And He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty, so the Egyptians said, "Let us retreat from Israel, for Y^ehowah is fighting for them against the Egyptians." Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing directly into it; then Y^ehowah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained. But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters [were] a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Thus Y^ehowah delivered Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. And when Israel saw the great power which Y^ehowah had used against the Egyptians, the people fears Y^ehowah and they believed in Y^ehowah and in His servant Moses (Ex. 14:19–29).

“And that which He has done to you in the wilderness, till your coming in to this place; [Deut. 11:5]

Every day the Israelites received manna; for discipline, God had brought them quail which flew in huge numbers at a height of 3 feet. God has brought water to them out of a rock twice. Moses has, already in talking to them, listed most of these miracles. The last half of Exodus and the first half of Numbers chronicles their desert journey. As an aside, I don't like to use the term *wanderings* because this implies that the Lord of the Universe was confused when it comes to leading His people. As though God led them here, changed His mind, and led them in another direction instead, then changed His mind about that; maybe then He looked at a map and rethought this journey. God knew exactly where He was taking Israel and it was not on a tour of the desert. Several times we are told about how God led Israel. Now, they certainly stopped and camped; and incidents occurred and God had to deal with those incidents. However, they did not *wander*. That implies that either they had no guidance from God or that God did not know just exactly where He wanted them to go.

“And that which He has done to Dathan, and to Abiram, sons of Eliab, sons of Reuben, when the earth had opened her mouth and swallowed them, and their houses, and their tents, and all that lived which was at their feet, in the midst of all Israel: [Deut. 11:6]

The expression *was at their feet* refers not to their personal possessions but to those people under their authority or influence. Moses has not spent as much time with as particular incidents of discipline and the sin unto death as he has with God's power over Egypt and His miracles in the desert. This is because the sin unto death is a subject with which he had to be tactful, as he is speaking of the parents of his audience. Furthermore, their parents had all died relatively young in the sin unto death—terrible deaths. This particular instance was quite memorable as it was so visual. These men stood and opposed Moses and God and an earthquake was quite site-specific in that it swallowed up just those who were in opposition to God. We recalled the incident from Num. 16:25–33: Then Moses...went to Dathan and Abiram, with the elders of Israel following him, and he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, so that you are not swept away in all their sin." So they moved away from the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out to the doorway of their tents, along with their wives and their sons and their little ones. And Moses said, "By this you will know that Y^ehowah has sent me to do all these deeds; for [this] is not from my heart. If these men die the death of all men, or if they suffer the fate of all men, Y^ehowah [then] has not sent me. But if Y^ehowah brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and

swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol then you will understand that these men have spurned Y^ehowah.” Then it came about as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground that was under them split open; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah, with possessions. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. This judgment is also celebrated by Psalm 106:16–18.

I should remind you that the innocent did not die in this judgment. There are no accidents in God’s plan. Anyone at any time could have stepped back from the households of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. **And the earth had opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, so that they became a warning. The sons of Korah, however, did not die** (Num. 26:10–11). God punishes only the guilty for their rebellion against Him.

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The Israelites Are to Obey God Because He Will Give Them the Land of Promise

“But [it is] your eyes which have seen all the great work of Y^ehowah which He has done;
[Deut. 11:7]

This is the sentence which ends the thought begun in v. 2. It was not their children who witnessed all of these incidents, but they themselves. We are dealing with two million people. It appears as though the men dealt with things spiritual. This generally left out the women and children. Therefore, a lot of the things which they saw and heard occurred after they reached the age of accountability, which was apparently during their teens. When they became more involved in the *religious* aspects of their lives, they began to see and experience what was actually occurring. How do I explain this? In the Great Depression, children raised during it did not quite begin to grasp the full impact of what was occurring until they reached the age of, say, 7 or 10 or 14. At some point in time, although they had no other experience with which to compare it to, they began to grasp the impact of the depression. Here, kids just go along with whatever—they have heard the stories what the patriarchs and they remember some things of Egypt, but they do not begin to pull everything together until they reach perhaps their late teens or early twenties. This generation, the Generation of Promise, is now between the ages of twenty and forty and they have a full perspective of what has occurred. Their children, although they have witnessed a few things, are still too young to really put it all together.

Unbelievers make a big deal out of believing only what they see. The Exodus generation—gen X—saw incredible sights, the likes of which we will never see during our own time on earth, yet they were a generation which God loathed. They saw quite the impact of God’s power yet were unable to follow God fully. Our dedication to God comes from the inside not from the outside. They did not believe His Word; they did not learn His Word—this was their downfall. **“He is your praise and He is your God, Who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen.”** (Deut. 10:21; see also 29:2). Two generations saw God’s miracles; one died the sin unto death and the other went into the land. It was not the miracles that they saw but the doctrine in their souls. The first generation did not listen to Moses but rebelled against him. The second generation listened and obeyed the words of Moses, knowing they were the Words of God.

“And you [all] will keep [the] entirety [or, all] of the decree which I am commanding you this day, so that you [all] will be strong [or, firm] and you [all] will go in and you [all] will possess the land, which [land] you are going over there to possess it. [Deut. 11:8]

This verse could have also been translated more smoothly as: **“And you will keep The entirety of the decree which I am commanding you this day, so that you will be strong and go in and possess the land, which you are going**

over to possess.” One of the things which I would love to see is a very literal translation done in modern English which is side-by-side a more readable English version put out by the same group. I personally do not have the expertise to do an adequate job here; plus my personal gift, once I have hammered out a good rendering of the Hebrew, is to explain what is there. Again, the Israelites are told to obey God’s decree. It would make sense for Moses to eventually give them a rehash of some of the laws and ordinances that they are to obey, which he will. Just like I will urge you to learn God’s Word, but at some point in time I have to teach you God’s Word.

Moses continually encouraged the Israelites in their advance on the land: **“It is Y^ehowah your God Who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before your face and you will dispossess them. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as Y^ehowah has spoken...Be strong and courageous—do not tremble at them, for Y^ehowah your God is the One Who goes with you—He will not fail you or forsake you.”** (Deut. 31:3, 6).

“And in this way [lit., so] you you [all] will prolong [your] days on the land which Y^ehowah has sworn to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants—a land flowing with milk and honey. [Deut. 11:9]

One of the things which Christians give very little thought to and where they are generally wrong is in the area of obedience. They think that if they are obedient for a few days, then God can give them that special thing, whatever it was that they wanted. You bribe God with your measly 10% and maybe you kick in another 5% if you want something really bad. Or you really work on your obnoxious behavior for a few days, to bribe God with good behavior. We are mandated to obey God and we are blessed tremendously. We will never reach a point where we deserve even an idota of God’s blessing. Our power to obey Him is in the Holy Spirit, Whom we are given by grace and with Whom we are filled by grace (when we name our sins to God.) In other words, in this dispensation, all of our good works are given to us by God and the ability to do them is given to us by God.

Now the Israelites were given particular promises stating that if they obeyed God, then their time in the land would be long. **“So you will keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you for all time.”** (Deut. 4:40; see 5:33 and 6:2 as well). By obeying the decrees of God, these Israelites would extend their time in the land—a theme which has been repeated several times throughout the Pentateuch.

“For the land where you are going in to possess it is not as the land of Egypt from where you [all] have come out, where you sowed your seed and you watered with your foot, as a vegetable garden [lit., garden of the green herb]; [Deut. 11:10]

Egypt receives very little rain to speak of, under 5 inches of rain per year and less than an inch in many portions of it); there is a rainy season which results in the annual overflowing of the Nile. This overflowing lasts about 100 days. Rather than allow this to flood their properties, the Egyptians have built a complex of reservoirs, tanks and channels into which the water is diverted during this *rainy* season, and this water is used to irrigate the land throughout the year. There are actually two irrigating methods still used in Egypt today which involve the use of the feet. There are tread-wheels which work sets of pumps to move water. Freeman gives a description of something like this on p. 106 in his *Manners and Customs of the Bible*. Also, in Egypt, there are reservoirs which are diverted to many man-made channels which, can be opened, closed, and diverted by the feet, thus dispersing the water to wherever it is needed.¹³⁸ Part of the contrast here is that the Land of Promise is naturally-watered. However, it goes deeper than that. Keep reading.

“But the land where you [all] are passing over to possess it [is] a land of hills and valleys; it drinks water from the rain of the heavens [lit., with respect to the rain of the heavens, it drinks water]; [Deut. 11:11]

¹³⁸ *Barnes’ Notes*, Vol. II, p. 292 and *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 106.

Often, when we translate a verse, we change the word order of the Hebrew in order to give the thought a more natural flow in the English. However, the change of the word order cause the prepositions to behave differently. The literal rendering of v. 11 is really just a change of word order and the correct rendering of the prefixed preposition lâmed.

However, note the picture painted of the Land of Promise. I don't know what crossed my mind when I heard in my spiritual youth over and over again *a land flowing with milk and honey* but to visualize Israel today—it is a much different country. The key is rain and being in the neighborhood of so much water, you would expect them to receive rain, but that is no longer the case. It is a land under discipline today because the people there are under discipline¹³⁹.

A land which is flat can be easily irrigated from reservoirs, as in the case of Egypt. The older ones in the audience recall this. However, a land of rolling hills and valleys cannot be irrigated. Israel's prosperity could not be based upon human works and skills, as Egypt's was. They were entirely dependant upon God for the rains to come at the proper times. The parallel drawn here between human works as versus divine provision by grace is obvious. Because of their different topologies, Israel was a land wholly dependent upon God for its prosperity, whereas Egypt's prosperity is the result of human works and effort.

**“[It is] a land which Y^ehowah your God is searching [or, examining]; continually [are] the eyes of Y^ehowah your God upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the latter end of the year.
[Deut. 11:12]**

The picture drawn here for us is one of time and care. Rotherham writes: *A natural and beautiful figure of speech, expressive of the constant activities of God's benign care of Palestine.*¹⁴⁰ In this verse we have the Qal active participle of *dârash* (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *dah-RAWSH*], which does not mean *to care*. As it is erroneously rendered by Owen's and the KJV (and others, I am sure). This word means *to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to inquire*. This word is used often for man *seeking or making inquiry* of God (Gen. 25:22 2Kings 8:8 Psalm 105:4). It appears to be used less often when God is the subject. We find God as the subject in Gen. 9:5 (three times) Job 3:4 10:6 39:8). The difference between the two uses is a difference in the intelligence of the subject. Man is limited in his cognizance, so this verb is used to me *seek, inquire* to fill in some of the gaps of his intelligence. However, since God is omniscient, He does not need to seek after knowledge. Here, God has *carefully examined* the land. God looking into things is an anthropopathism. He knows this in His omniscience already. This verb seems to give God's examination of the land a feeling of recent action. Strong's #1875 BDB #205.

Now I hope you can see the relationship between these last three verses. **“For the land where you are going in to possess it is not as the land of Egypt from where you have come out, where you sowed your seed and you watered with your foot, as a vegetable garden, but the land that you are passing over to possess [is] a land of hills and valleys; it drinks water from the rain of the heavens. [It is] a land which Y^ehowah your God is watching over—continually the eyes of Y^ehowah your God upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the latter end of the year.”** (Deut. 11:10–12). It is God Who takes care of the land. The Israelites are completely dependant upon God in their land. While they are in the land, He watches over the land, to provide the rain which in turn makes the land of Canaan an area of prosperity, flowing with milk and honey. **“For Y^ehowah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills.”** (Deut. 8:7).

The alternative to blessing is discipline and God withheld rain to discipline Israel. **And it will come to pass that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Y^ehowah of the armies, there will be no rain upon them. And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then [there will be no rain] on**

¹³⁹ To head off the 1%—even though the Jews are under God's discipline, this gives us no right to be anti-Semitic.

¹⁴⁰ Rotherham, *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 210.

them; it will be the plague with which Y^ehowah strikes down the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths (Zech. 14:17–18).

“ And it will come to pass, if you listen carefully to my commands which I am commanding you this day, to love Y^ehowah your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul— [Deut. 11:13]

This verse can be looked at in two slightly different ways: Moses could be, using dramatic license, assuming the identity of God for just a moment by saying *my commandments which I am commanding you this day*; or Moses could be simply referring to the commandments of God as his commandments, since Moses is, after all the mediator between God and man, a shadow of our Lord. The two subsequent verses are also in the first person, indicating the Moses is taking dramatic license by speaking in the place of God (or else, he is quoting what God had said to him). Moses' use of the title *Y^ehowah God* in the third person is consistent with God's own use of His name in the third person. Therefore, Moses is not speaking of these commands as from *his* position as mediator.

Allow me this tangent if you would: as you have no doubt noticed, the full import of many Old Testament verses was not known until they were fulfilled in the New. In fact, there are many verses whose import will not be known until the Tribulation and Millennium. However—and pay careful attention to this—when we speak, we do not necessarily reveal our entire essence, but often just an attribute or a personality trait. When Jesus Christ spoke, He did not always reveal His entire essence. In fact, there were times when He spoke only from His humanity; there were times He spoke from His deity; and there were times that He spoke from His hypostatic union. Certain cults and some deviations from correct Christian doctrine are a direct result of not making these careful distinctions. Here, Moses speaks from his position as mediator, just as our Lord later would speak from His position as the one true Mediator between God and man.

“ That I will give the rain of your land in its season—the autumn rain and the spring rain—and you will harvest [lit., gather] your grain and your new wine and your oil; [Deut. 11:14]

Originally, the Land of Promise was well-watered naturally. The phrase *the early rain and the latter rain* is somewhat of a misnomer, insofar as we are concerned. The early rain is the rain from early October through early December. The latter rain is the spring rain, the showers of March through April. Therefore, we would think of the rain as being the other way around. Furthermore, the Hebrew calendar has March and April as the beginning of the year, which would reverse what we would consider the early and the latter rain by their calendar. Rather than obsess about this, we will merely change the translation slightly to better reflect what is occurring. However, the designation *early rain and late rain* comes from the fact that the Hebrews planted their seed in the autumn and harvested after the spring.¹⁴¹ Other than these two times of the year, there is very little rain which falls on Palestine. And now there is very little rain which falls on Palestine at all. However, this will all change in the Millennium.

Without the ability to initiate the complex irrigation system of Egypt, the Israelites would be dependant upon God for the rain to occur at the proper times so that their agriculture efforts would be prospered. The Land of Promise can only prosper when God blesses it and it will be obvious when the land is under discipline because the sky will close up like brass and there will be no water on the land. **“Y^ehowah will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow...But it will come to pass, if you do not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes, then...the heaven which is over your head will become bronze and the earth which is under you, iron. Y^ehowah will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven, it will come down on you until you are destroyed.”** (Deut. 28:12, 15a, 23–24). **“But they no longer say in their heart, ‘Let us fear Y^ehowah our God, Who gives rain in its season—both the autumn rain and the spring rain—Who keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest.’ “** (Jer. 5:24). **“So rejoice O sons of Zion, and be glad in Y^ehowah your God, for He has given you the autumn rain—vindication; and He has poured down for you the**

¹⁴¹ Barnes' Notes, Vol. li, p. 293.

rain, the autumn and the spring rain as before.” (Joel 2:23). Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it receives the early and late rains (James 5:7). See also Lev. 26:4 Psalm 147:8 Jer. 3:3 Acts. 15:17.

“ ‘And I will give [you] produce in your field for you cattle, and you will eat and become satisfied.’
[Deut. 11:15]

Several translators render *‘eseb* (עֵשֶׂב) [pronounced *ĠEH-seb*] *herbs, herbage*. However, this is not parsley or oregano—cattle do not feed upon herbs. This is the produce of the ground which the cattle would eat. *Grass* is okay, but *produce* in this context is better. Strong’s #6212 BDB #793. This verse and previous verses describe great agricultural prosperity.

God promised the Israelites on several occasions that He would give them great agricultural blessing. “If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I will give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. Furthermore, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land.” (Lev. 26:3–5). See Deut. 6:11 and Joel 2:19 as well.

With this verse, Moses concludes his use of dramatic license, where he speaks from the standpoint of God, using the first person in vv. 13–15. Again, the figure of speech is simple to comprehend, as most of them are in the Bible. Moses obviously has no personal control over the rain and the prosperity of the people.

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Blessing and Cursing; Learning, Teaching and Obeying the Word of God

“Take personal responsibility so that you heart is not enticed and you are turned aside [from the truth], and you serve other gods and you prostrate yourselves to them; [Deut. 11:16]

This was a continual warning to the Israelites: “Furthermore, beware, lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the armies of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which Y^ehowah your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.” (Deut. 4:19). “And it will come to pass if you ever forget Y^ehowah your God, and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish—[just] like the nations that Y^ehowah has made to perish before you, in that way, you will perish, because you would not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God.” (Deut. 8:19). The application today is to pursue Jesus Christ and His righteousness, but not the cults and the prevailing trends in Christianity. Their great temptation in the field of religion was idolatry—our is religion. Test yourselves—if you are in the faith; test yourselves for approval; or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless, indeed, you fail the test! (2Cor. 13:5).

“And the anger of Y^ehowah will burn against you, and He will restrain the heavens so that there is no rain [lit., and rain is not] and the ground will not yield [lit., give] her produce, and you [all] will perish prematurely [lit., quickly] from off the good land which Y^ehowah is giving to you.
[Deut. 11:17]

This continues the thought from the previous verse. The Israelites are not to be turned away from their God, Jesus Christ, or God’s anger will burn against them and they will die prematurely in the land. This is more the sin unto death rather than their removal from the land. “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish prematurely from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You will not live long on it, but you will be completely destroyed.” (Deut. 4:26). In context, they are dying the sin unto death through

privation due to their idolatry. “For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil; and [it was I who] lavished on her silver and gold, which they made into the Baal...I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth so that they will be remembered by their names no more.” (Hosea 2:8, 17). The rain from God was His provision which He could remove at will: “And I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit.” (Lev. 26:19–20). We will study an example of God sending drought to the land of Israel in 1Kings 17.

“And you [all] will place these my words upon your heart, and upon your soul, and you [all] will bind them for a sign on your hand, and they will be as frontlets between your eyes; [Deut. 11:18]

As has been mentioned, it is sometimes difficult to understand when the Bible is being literal and when it is not. The Israelites actually had items which they attached to their wrists and foreheads in which was placed material with Scripture written upon it. The key is that God’s Word should be upon their hearts and soul—placing God’s Word in your heart guarantees that your actions will be a sign of your relationship to Him; placing God’s Word upon your soul guarantees that your thinking will be in accordance with His will. The hand represents what we do and the forehead represents what we think. When God’s Word is in our hearts and souls, this is revealed by what we do and think. **Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck—write them on the tablet of your heart** (Prov. 3:3). We do not have to carry around a wrist band with John 3:16 written on a scrap of paper and kept in there. God would rather that this verse be written on our heart and on our soul. The Israelites were very demonstrative and further, they wanted to earn their standing with God; therefore, if they could interpret God’s Word as demanding works for their approval, then they worked.

We first see this sign on the hand and a reminder on the forehead in Ex. 13:9. Reading in the context, we have the feast of the Unleavened Bread: “For seven days you will eat unleavened bread and on the seventh day there will be a feast to Y^ehowah. Unleavened bread will be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened will be seen among you, nor will any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. And then you will tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what Y^ehowah did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ And it will be to you for a sign on your hand and for a memorial on your forehead [lit., between your eyes], that the law of Y^ehowah may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand, Y^ehowah brought you out of Egypt.” (Ex. 13:6–9). There are a couple of key words here. The is the 3rd masculine singular form of the verb to be—*it will be to you*. This *it* refers back to a specific item in context—the feast. The feast, which the father tells the son about—*it* act as or *it* will be for a sign on their hand to them. They are not being told to make wrist bands here and hand bands and carry around verses. This feast accomplishes that purpose. The father explains the meaning of the feast to his son: “And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go that Y^ehowah killed every first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of beast. Therefore, I sacrifice to Y^ehowah the males of the first opening of every womb, but every first-born of my sons I redeem.” [And God adds]: So it [the feast] will be to you for a sign on your hand and as phylacteries on your forehead, for with a strength of hand, Y^ehowah brought us out of Egypt.” (Ex. 13:15–16). My guess is that the Egyptians who the Jews were under had themselves wrist bands and phylacteries. That is, in some way, the Israelites were familiar with a practice like this. However, they are clearly not being told to engage in this practice, as the feast accomplishes the purpose of such a practice.

Our application today: we have the entire Bible. Anyone who desires God’s Word can have it and carry it around and this is great. However, you can be seen by everyone around as a person who carries the Bible, but if it is not in your soul, then it is useless. We are not enjoined by God to be religious or to appear religious; we are to carry God’s Word on our hearts and on our souls. This is done by learning God’s Word. Carrying several verses or several doctrines around in your head is incomparably better than hauling around a shopping cart filled with Bibles.

“And you [all] will teach these to your sons by speaking of them in your sitting in your house and in your going in the way, and in your lying down and in your rising up; [Deut. 11:19]

During the time of Israel it was quite clear who had the responsibility of raising each successive generation—the parents. The first thing that they were to teach their children, and it was to be daily, several times a day, is Bible doctrine. This does not mean a long hour lecture in which the child takes notes and there is a quiz at the end of

it. This is a short lesson here, and a short lesson there, several times daily. The Israelite parent was to have Y^ehowah on his mind and he was to share this with his child.

A good relationship between a parent and child cannot be overemphasized. Studies of Romanian babies who were raised by the state as opposed to being raised by their parents often show irreversible personality disorders and permanent damage to the function of the brain. The responsibility growth of a child from age zero on up is always placed squarely in the laps of that child's parents. This takes dedication and almost a lifetime of work. No amount of material gifts and provision can take the place of love and affection given to a child in infancy and careful training from age three or so on up until they leave the nest. Don't place the infancy of your child in the hands of the state and don't depend upon your church to teach God's Word to your children. Over and over again, the Bible tells you that this is your job.

“And you will write them on the side-posts of your house and on your gates; [Deut. 11:20]

As with the things mentioned in v. 18, this is not necessarily to be taken literally. However, it is a good training aide for a child. In a teacher's room, there will be things posted along the wall which, in some ways, will stay with the child as long as the actual teaching of the child. The key here is that you have taught all of your children doctrine and your house should be, from the instant someone walks in the door, dedicated to God to a point that one can tell. Each individual home throughout the Land of Promise was to be dedicated to God. If God's Word was written upon their door frames and gates, so much the better. However, what was most important is that God's Word be on the souls of those living in the house. Okay, so you are wondering, do I write placards with God's Word on them and hang them up around the house or not? Whatever methods you choose to teach your children is up to you. You are to use good judgment in training them spiritually. Teachers have used flash cards for decades to teach their students. The key is the placing of doctrine into the soul of the child. This is just one of many methods.

For the 1%—although you are the one in authority and that authority must be taught to the child from the point at which they can make moral decisions, you are not a drill sergeant. You don't beat Scripture into them; and your life should reflect the knowledge of God's Word imprinted on your souls. You don't turn them away from God by teaching them they cannot have fun on Sundays. You don't turn them away from Scripture through legalism. Your training to them must reflect love, wisdom and discipline.

“So that your days are multiplied, and the days of your sons upon the ground [or, land] which Y^ehowah had sworn to your forefathers to give to them, as the days of the heavens above the earth. [Deut. 11:21]

There are two things which Moses promises to these people—place God's Word in their own hearts and teach the same to their children, and their days would be multiplied in the land. However, the latter phrase is more difficult. This is what others have done with it:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...upon the soil which Yahweh swore unto your fathers to give unto them,—like the days of the heavens upon the earth.
KJV	...in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.
NASB	...on the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens [lit., the days of the heavens] <i>remain</i> above the earth.
NIV	...in the land that the Lord swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.
NRSV	...in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...on the ground which Jehovah hath sworn to your fathers to give to them, as the days of the heavens on the earth.

The preposition 'al is found first; this means *upon*. That is followed by the word 'ādāmâh (הַמָּדְבָר) [pronounced *uh-daw-MAWH*] and it means *ground, soil, tillable earth, land, surface of the earth*. Strong's #127 BDB #9. This is followed by the relative pronoun *which, that* and the Niphal perfect of the verb for *swear*. Y^ehowah is the subject of that verb. This is followed by *to your fathers*, which could be rendered *to your forefathers, to your ancestors*, as this is the meaning of the word *father* in the Hebrew. This is followed by the Qal infinitive construct of *give* and the lamed prefixed preposition and the lamed preposition with the masculine plural suffix. This gives us **...upon [or, on] the ground which Y^ehowah had sworn to your forefathers to give to them...**

It is the last portion which is difficult. It begins with the preposition *like, as* and the plural construct of *days*. Then we have the definite article and the dual of *heavens*. Then we have the preposition 'al again, which means *upon, above, over, by on*, followed by the definite article and the word *ground, land*. Literally, we have **...as days of the heavens above the earth**. The idea is that the time that they would spend in the land, when obedient to God, would be multiplied like *number of days* of the heavens above the earth. Obviously, the amount of time the heavens have been above the earth has been long—since the restoration of the earth. The implication is giving them the land forever. A similar phrasing is used elsewhere in God's Word: **Let them fear You while the sun endures and as long as the moon throughout all generations** (Psalm 72:5). **"So I will establish his descendants forever and his throne as the days of heaven."** (Psalm 89:29).

And as we have seen several times, it is God's Word in our soul which prolongs our time upon this earth. **Hear, my son, and accept my sayings, and the years of your life will be many** (Prov. 4:10). **My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart guard my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace [and prosperity] they will add to you** (Prov. 3:1–2). **The fear [and respect] of Y^ehowah is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me [doctrine] your days will be multiplied and years of life will be added to you** (Prov. 9:10–11).

"For, if you [all] diligently keep all this command which I am commanding you—to do it, to love Y^ehowah your God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave to Him; [Deut. 11:22]

This is the protasis of the conditional statement, unfortunately split right here. God's covenant to Abraham would be fulfilled. However, his contract with this generation and future generations would be perpetual and conditional. For all of these people, individually and collectively, they all must face this *if*.

"The Y^ehowah will [cause to] dispossess all these nations from before your face, and you [all] will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you; [Deut. 11:23]

This was God's promise to the Israelites. The verb *dispossess* is first in the Hiphil (causative) stem and then in the Qal stem. God will cause the dispossession of these other nations and Israel will do the actual dispossessing. **"And I will send hornet ahead of you, that they may drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites and the Hittites from before your face."** (Ex. 23:28).

"[In fact] every place on which the sole of your foot treads is yours, from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the River, the river Euphrates, even to the sea—the hinder [or, western]—is your border; [Deut. 11:24]

This is a greater area than what the Israelites ever possessed. It goes from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates River, from Lebanon to the desert through which they just walked—approximately 300,000 square miles. Up until now, the most Israel has ever occupied has been 30,000 square miles. This is just about the entirety of the middle east. God reiterates this promise to Joshua in Joshua 1:3: **"Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses."** When this is occupied by Israel in the Millennium, it will bloom as God will provide the entire area with the much needed rain. We have already discussed the land covenant between God and Israel; however related passages are: Gen. 15:8 Ex. 23:31 Num. 34:2–12 Deut., 1:7–8 34:1–4.

“No man will cause [himself] to stand against [lit., in] your face; Y^ehowah your God will place upon the face of the land where you tread the fear of you and the dread of you [lit., your fear and your dread], as He has promised you [lit., had spoken to you]. [Deut. 11:25]

Even though the Israelites would have to go to war against all of the peoples, God would first give them a psychological advantage, which is possibly the most important advantage in war. Their enemies would fear and dread them. Fear occurs right prior to and during battle. Dread is the continual concern of their moving closer, a hatred, a fear. It is acute anxiety and distress. “I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies retreat [lit., turn backs to you]. And I will send hornet ahead of you, that they may drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you.” (Ex. 23:27–28). As we recently read: “But Y^ehowah your God will deliver them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed. And He will deliver their kings into your hand so that you will make their name perish from under heaven. No man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them.” (Deut. 7:23–24). See also Deut. 2:25 and a fulfillment in Joshua 2:8–14.

“Observe, I am setting before your face this day a blessing and a curse: [Deut. 11:26]

This black or white choice is set before Israel on several occasions. One of the very last things Moses said to his people: “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity in that I command you today to love Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, so that you may live and multiply, and that Y^ehowah your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you will certainly perish. You will not prolong days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter to possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants.” (Deut. 30:15–19).

The Israelites will have a choice, as do we. Before every human being, God has placed a blessing and a curse. That is Jesus Christ. He is our Savior or He is the One Who will condemn us to the Lake of Fire for all eternity. **And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from Whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books according to their deeds. And the bottomless pit gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one according to his deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death, the Lake of Fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11–15). “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36).** The unbeliever has a choice in this life. He can spend his entire life holding God away at arm’s length or he can embrace God one time for a few seconds. It takes just one positive decision to spend eternity with God. It takes a lifetime of bad decisions to spend eternity under judgment in the lake of fire.

“The blessing: when you [all] listen to the commands of Y^ehowah your God—which [commands] I am commanding you today; [Deut. 11:27]

Much of the second message of Moses was a set of generalizations which were covered at the beginning of this chapter. However, Moses will launch into the specifics of these commands shortly in his message. In Deut. 28, Moses will specifically cover some of the blessings God designed for Israel, as well as some of the cursings. As David wrote: **You have prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you have anointed my head with oil—my cup overflows [with blessings] (Psalm 24:5).**

“The cursing: if you [all] do not listen to the commands of Y^ehowah your God, and you [all] turn aside out of the way which I command you this day—to go after other gods which you [all] have not known. [Deut. 11:28]

God's cursing of Israel occurs throughout the Old Testament, along with her dispersion from the land. It is prophesied by Moses: "So it shall come to pass when all these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you cause them to return to your heart in all nations where Y^ehowah your God has banished you." (Deut. 30:1; see our study of Lev. 26 as well). In Lamentations, Jeremiah speaks of a fulfillment of the curse: Her adversaries have become her masters; her enemies proper; for Y^ehowah has caused her grief because of the multitude of her transgressions. Her little ones have gone away as captives before the adversary, and all her majesty has departed from the daughter of Zion. Her princes have become like bucks that have found no pasture; and they have fled without strength before the pursuer....Jerusalem sinned greatly, therefore she has become unclean. All who honored her despise her because they have seen her nakedness. Even she herself groans and turns away...Y^ehowah has done what He purposed; He has accomplished His word which He commanded from days of old. He has thrown down without sparing and He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you. He has exalted the horn of your adversaires (Lam. 1:5–6, 8 2:17). Notice the response which Jeremiah received to his messages: "As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of Y^ehowah, we are not going to listen to you! But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to the queen¹⁴² of heaven and pouring our libations to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem—for we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no evil" (Jer. 44:16–17). In fact, most of the Old Testament prophets lamented Israel's dispersment of Israel, either prophetically or historically: Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah ben Jehoaida the priest, and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of Y^ehowah and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken Y^ehowah, He has also forsaken you.' " (2Chron. 24:20). "If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name," says Y^ehowah of the armies, "Then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; furthermore, I have cursed them, because you are not taking it to heart. Observe, I will rebuke your offspring and I will spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it." (Malachi 2:2–3). "Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him." (Dan. 9:11). "You have sown much, but you harvest little; you eat, but not [enough] to be satiated; you drink, but not [enough] to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm; and he who earns, earns wages in a purse with holes." (Haggai 1:6).

Just like us, the Israelites are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. However, they have lives to lead after their salvation. They were God's representative nation here on earth. When they failed, they made God seem like any one of a hundred national gods—impotent, weak, immoral. When their representation of God got to a point that they were an embarrassment and a detriment to Him, God had no choice but to discipline them. Often, we also leave God no such choice ourselves.

“And it will come to pass, when Y^ehowah your God has brought you into the land which [land] you are going in to possess it, that you will give the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the cursing on Mount Ebal; [Deut. 11:29]

This will be an act which will be literally fulfilled. The blessing from one mountain and the cursing from the other will give a visual as to how far apart and separate these are. Mount Gerizim is found in central Samaria, not but ten miles southeast of the city of Samaria. Mount Ebal is three miles northeast of Mount Gerizim. Both mountains have a long and rich history which we will examine in Joshua 8:30–35. The cursing that will be read is found in Deut. 27; the blessing from Mount Gerizim is found in Deut. 28. Interestingly enough, the blessings will turn into curses from Deut. 28:14 to v. 15.

This does introduce a slight problem. What about the chronological order of this and Deut. 28? Did Moses already say what was in Deut. 28–29 to the people and this referred back to it? I personally feel that the Moses already had in the back of his mind the calling out of the blessings and the cursings between the two mountains between the set tribes, but he had just not taught it yet. Now and again, a public speaker will throw in a teaser,

¹⁴² Notice that the concept of God being a *she* rather than a *he* is not recent.

something which seems to allude to what has already happened, but that no one in the audience knows what that is. However, it sticks in their heads until they find out what it is all about. Movies often do this, and although I can think of specific examples in *Swimming to Cambodia* and in *Pulp Fiction*, neither example would be appropriate to mention herein.

“Are they not beyond the Jordan after the way of the going in of the sun in the land of the Canaanites, the ones living in the Arabah opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? [Deut. 11:30]

Now here is how we know that v. 18b (about the stuff on the wrists and the phylacteries on the foreheads) is symbolic and this is real. Moses gives the Israelites specific directions to find these two mountains. He knows about them and his spies know about them and now those who are listening to his message know about them. When the actual ark of the covenant was built, there were very specific directions given for its construction. However, when it came to these wrist bands and head sets of v. 18, there are no explicit directions. The learning of God’s Word is what is important, not the act of carrying these additional fashion statements around.

The road spoken of here in v. 30 is probably a road which runs north and south, parallel to the Jordan, running from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, which must be crossed over to reach the two mountains. Abraham is said to have passed through this very spot whereof Moses speaks: **And Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite [was] then in the land** (Gen. 12:6). The Arabah generally referred to the valley which extended from the Sea of Galilee down to the Gulf of Aqaba. The Canaanites live in this land as well as on the other side of Gilgal, which appears to be what is being said here. Moses is giving the location of these two mountains and he is telling Israel that these are two mountains on the other side of the Jordan, to the west, where the Canaanites now dwell, which is the Arabah and beyond, opposite Gilgal. The latter description noted describes where the Canaanites live. Then when we add the final phrase *beside the oaks of Moreh*, we are again speaking of the location of the mountains, which are near the oaks of Moreh, also mentioned in Gen. 12:6. We will examine Gilgal later in Joshua 4:19 and 5:9–10. It is unclear whether this refers to the campsite which will be called Gilgal or whether this is a reference to a city, the Gentile Gilgal (if such a place exists).

“For you [all] are passing over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you; and you [all] will possess it and dwell in it. [Deut. 11:31]

The only way these Israelites will be able to fulfill this commandment of Moses is to actually go into the land and to possess it, which Moses is fully confident that they will do. This will be begun soon: **Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, “Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, ‘Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you, to possess it.’ “** (Joshua 1:11). And this will be finally fulfilled seven years later in Joshua 11:23 & 21:43: **So Joshua took the whole land according to all that Y^ehowah had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war...So Y^ehowah gave to Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it.**

“And you [all] will take the responsibility to do all the statutes and the judgments which I am setting before your face today. [Deut. 11:32]

Moses will tell the people what they must do upon taking the land: **“When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around so that you live in security, then it will come to pass that the place in which Y^ehowah your God will choose for his name to dwell, there you will bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to Y^ehowah. And you will rejoice before Y^ehowah your God—you and your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, and the Levites who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.”** (Deut. 12:10–12).

At this point, Moses will launch into almost twenty chapters of more specific commands which the Israelites were to obey. They had been given before in previous books of the Bible, but Moses is giving them to a new generation.

[Deuteronomy 6](#)

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Deuteronomy 12

Deuteronomy 12:1–32

Outline of Chapter 12:

- vv. 1–8 **The Israelites will remove the indigenous religion as instructed by Moses**
- vv. 9–14 **Offerings will be made in the land where God chooses**
- vv. 15–27 **The eating of meat is distinguished from the offering of animal sacrifices**
- vv. 28–31 **Obey the words of Moses and do not follow the customs of the heathen**

Charts:

- v. 5a **Reconciling the Practices of Scripture**
- v. 22 **Why Does the Bible Prohibit the Drinking of Blood?**

Introduction: Deut. 12 begins an entire new section of the address of Moses to his people. Through to Deut. 26, Moses will deal in very specific laws and regulations which will cover the civil, domestic and ecclesiastical lives of his listeners. Moses does not organize this message in accordance with the Ten Commandments but he will free associate, he will explore tangents, and yet he will cover in great detail the Laws that the Generation of Promise and their descendants must obey upon entering into the land. On the other hand, these are not the ramblings of an old man who leads of life of partial confusion. Moses is lucid, cogent and organized, revealing that his genius had not diminished with age.

Deut. 12 deals with more specifics than the previous few chapters. As discussed in the previous chapter, Moses had several themes running throughout his message, all given in a chart in Deut. 11. He has approached those themes from several standpoints, but, by the time we got to Deut. 11, Moses had been repeating the same things over and over again. From this point on, Moses will start dealing with specific situations, issues, clarifications and special cases. The Law is in written form, but they have no printing presses and it is difficult to distribute God's Word to two million people. Their fathers had heard God's Word, but it did them no good as they did not mix it with faith. So Moses is now teaching their sons, teaching the Generation of Promise, face to face. We are never told how much of a pivot attended these sermons or lectures. We have two million people, very few of whom are filled with the Spirit. Therefore, there will not be 100% attendance to Moses' speaking engagement. If I had to put a number on it, I would personally guess that less than 10,000 attended these meetings.

With this chapter, Deut. 12, Moses will begin to deal with the proper way to worship God, ceremonially speaking, concentrating upon the eating of the meat of the sacrifices, eating meat in general, and where this was to take place. You perhaps didn't realize that the Israelites did eat the meat of the animals which were sacrificed to God. Eating illustrates faith, as it is something that everyone can do, moral, immoral, religious, irreligious. It is taking something on the outside and putting it on the inside so that our body assimilates it fully and it becomes a part of us. When we believe in Jesus Christ, He indwells us. Ideally, He occupies our entire being and becomes a part of every aspect of our lives. **Jesus therefore said to them, "Point of doctrine [lit., truly truly, I say to you] unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves."** (John 6:53). This chapter will also deal with certain other generalities when it comes to animal sacrifices to God.

Furthermore, the second emphasis of this chapter will be where these sacrifices would be offered. It would be reasonable for man to worship God from several different places throughout the Land of Promise. However, this is not God's plan. There would be one place only where animal sacrifices would be offered—Jerusalem; although that name had not yet been given.

[Deuteronomy 6](#) [Deuteronomy 7](#) [Deuteronomy 8](#) [Deuteronomy 9](#) [Deuteronomy 10](#)
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The Israelites Will Remove the Indigenous Religion as Instructed by Moses

“These are the statutes and the judgments which you [all] will observe to do in the land which Y^ehowah, God of your fathers, has given to you to possess it, all the days that you [all] are living on the ground; [Deut. 12:1]

This is the introduction to what Moses is about to launch into. This is them—these are the statutes and the judgments which you will observe in the land. Moses had already told them, “The day you stood before the face of Y^ehowah your God at Horeb, when Y^ehowah said to me, ‘Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days that they live on the earth and that they may teach their children.’ “ (Deut. 4:10). Furthermore, only in the land could the Israelites keep the entire Law.

Moses has a soul filled with doctrine. He has been receiving God’s Word for the past eighty years, particularly during the past forty—and now he is giving the Israelites, the Generation of Promise, God’s Word from his mouth. He does not have to continually repeat: *thus saith the Lord*. He has already pointed out that he is speaking with authority; he is speaking God’s Word. “Now this is the decree, the statutes and the judgments which Y^ehowah your God has commanded [me] to teach you, that you might do [them] in the land where you are going over to possess.” (Deut. 6:1). And the final verse of this chapter will indicate that Moses recognizes that.

“In destroying, you [all] will destroy all the places where the nations which you [all] are dispossessing served their gods—on the high mountains and on the heights and under every green tree; [Deut. 12:2]

The heathen of the land were very religious. They chose *high places*, mountains and hills, because that made them feel closer to God and to heaven. Their groves were likely beautiful gardens of trees, laid out in a symmetrical fashion. I was in a chapel once which was surrounded by trees and gardens and the walls were huge panes of glass and it was perhaps the most beautiful chapel that I have even seen. However, that much beauty was a distraction. There are churches throughout our land which are monuments to marvelous and ingenious architecture; and there is nothing wrong with that. However, what is important is if God’s Word is being presented accurately and carefully. If God’s Word prevails, than a church service held in an old barn in a field is a thing of exquisite beauty.

The Canaanites had churches everywhere you went. All of their churches were dedicated to Satan. One of the first orders of business for the Israelites was to destroy completely every single religious site on the land. For the 1%—we don’t go out and burn down Catholic cathedrals, Jehovah Witness halls or Mormon temples. This was a commandment delivered at a particular time (the Dispensation of Israel) to a specific people. In the millennium, there will be no freedom of religion. However, until the Lord returns, it is freedom of religion which allows us to teach the Word of God. There was a certain amount of freedom of religion which allowed the early church to go into the temple or the various synagogues and teach the Word (although, they had to eventually distance themselves from the synagogues). Our Lord first taught in these places because they spoke of Him. However, when the early church began to do that, there came to be a problem. Just like I originally thought that once a believer was exposed to the careful teaching of God’s Word, he would never go back to the pablam to which he had been previously exposed. I was entirely wrong—most believers have not interest in God’s Word. The early Apostles certainly thought that with the power vested in them by God the Holy Spirit, plus the fact that they were filled with the Truth of God and had the fulfillment of the promise on their tongue that the natural response of the Israelite would be to believe in Jesus Christ. This turned out not to be the case. In fact, they were met with unbelievable hostility (unbelievable, except for the fact that Satan leads the rebellion against the gospel).

“And you [all] will break down their altars and you [all] will dash into pieces their pillars and you [all] will burn their shrines with fire, and you [all] will cut down their engraved images of their gods and you [all] will destroy their name from that place. [Deut. 12:3]

Upon entering the land, one of the most solemn assignments of the Israelites was to destroy all vestiges of idolatry. **“But you will do thus to them: you will tear down their altars and smash their pillars and cut down their Asherim, and burn their engraved images with fire.”** (Deut. 7:5). See Ex. 32:13, 20 Num. 33:52 Judges 2:2–3.

When Israel began to construct such things was a sign of great degeneracy. **And Judah did evil in the sight of Y^ehowah and they provoked Him to jealousy more than all that their fathers had done, with the sins which they committed. For they also built for themselves high places and pillars and Asherim on every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree. And there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which Y^ehowah dispossessed before the sons of Israel (1Kings 14:22–24). And they served idols, concerning which Y^ehowah had said to them, “You will not do this thing.” Yet Y^ehowah warned Israel and Judah, through all His prophets [and through] every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the Law which I sent to you through My servants the prophets.”** However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in Y^ehowah their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers, and His warnings with which He warned them. And they followed emptiness and became empty and [followed] after the nations which surrounded them, concerning which Y^ehowah had commanded them not to do like them. And they forsook all the commandments of Y^ehowah their God and made for themselves molten images, two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the armies of heaven and served Baal. Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire and practiced divination and enchantments and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of Y^ehowah provoking Him. So Y^ehowah was very angry with Israel and removed them from His face—none was left except the tribe of Judah (2Kings 17:12–18). See 2Kings 16:2–4 Jer. 3:6–15.

Without a proper foundation in the New Testament, something like this verse can cause a great many problems to the new believer. It is absolutely necessary to study God’s Word, both Old and New Testaments; however, most people get so lost and caught up in the Old Testament, that they become entirely disoriented to grace and to the dispensation in which they live. There are no corresponding mandates in the New Testament for the believers to travel through various towns and to burn down Jewish synagogues, Buddhist temples, etc. Point in fact, the Israelites were not sent out to destroy outside countries, and, in the process, remove all their religious artifacts. However, the Land of Promise was a place unlike any other. This was a land of people that God would rule over directly. Under those circumstances, God could demand that there be no religious tolerance. When our Lord went into the temple and overturned the table of the moneychangers—the temple spoke of Him and it was He Who was worshiped there in the sacrifices and offerings; therefore, God the Son could do that. However, we have no similar mandate except in our own souls—that is, we are not to practice idolatry in our own souls. Today, the form of idolatry which is most prevalent is making God in our own image and worshiping that creation. Most people have not even a clue as to how unbelievably arrogant they are when they determine how they think God is. They think or they proclaim that if God were loving, then He would do this thing or that thing. I have seen people write letters to editors claiming that our if our Lord were on earth today (some of them are silly enough to say if He were alive today) then he would be marching for animal rights, for acceptance of homosexuality as a legitimate alternative lifestyle; He would be petitioning for cleaner air, world peace and gun legislation. They are making God in their own image and worshiping that image, or rejecting God, claiming that He doesn’t exist if He doesn’t do what they expect of Him.

God uses the mistakes and the misimpressions of man to His glory. Many of the people who came to this country came under religious persecution. Unlike some of the immigrants which we get here who come because they are actually criminals in the land from whence they came, a large number of the people who settled America came to escape the persecution of Catholicism and the Church of England. One source which I read gave the figure of 97% as the percentage of Protestants who originally settled this land. Certainly, not all of them were believers; however, this is a huge number. This is one of the reasons why God has blessed our country far beyond what we have ever deserved.

“You [all] will not do so with respect to Y^ehowah your God; [Deut. 12:4]

This is quite the interesting verse. What God had commanded to be done toward the places of idolatry are a direct attack upon the demons behind them. This verse has a near application and a far application. The Israelites are

admonished not to worship God in this way—in the groves, on the high hills, with carved images and idols. This near application is easily borne out by the repeat of this verse at the end of this chapter in the context of the idolatry of the indigenous nations.

However, there is another interpretation which I believe is warranted: I think this verse also has a view to the far future. For anyone who has ever used v. 3 to persecute other religions, v. 4 makes it clear that this is not to be done to Jesus Christ, the God of Israel. This applied to the Sanhedrin and to the Pharisees of our Lord's time and it applies throughout all of history to the Catholic Church and to the Church of England, both of whom persecuted our Lord.

As an aside, the grammatical construction of this verse is slightly different from 2Kings 17:12b (where it reads: "You will not do this thing [lit., You (all) will not do the word the this]."). As far as I can find, this is the closest quotation match, however. Therefore, it is not a direct word-for word quote but falls in the realm of thought-for-thought.

V. 5 is a little difficult to follow, so let me give you a sample of the translations found elsewhere, including v. 4:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	You shall not behave so toward the Lord your God. But you will seek the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name and make His dwelling place, and there shall you come;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Ye must not do thus unto Yahweh your God; but unto the place which Yahweh your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, as his habitation shall ye ask your way and come in thither;
KJV	Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God. But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, <i>even</i> unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shall come:
A literal translation: ¹⁴³	Not you [all] will be doing [or, making, constructing] to [or, with regards to] Y ^e howah your God because if into [or, unto, regarding] the place which [he] is choosing Y ^e howah your God out from all of your tribes to place his name there to his tent [or, habitation] you [all] will be seeking and you will go [or, enter] there.
NASB	"You shall not act like this toward the LORD ¹⁴⁴ your God, But you shall seek <i>the LORD</i> at the place which the LORD your God shall choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come."
NEB	You shall not follow such practices in the worship of the LORD your God, but you shall resort to the place which the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to receive his Name that it may dwell there.
NIV	You must not worship the LORD your God in their way. But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go;
NRSV	You shall not worship the LORD your God in such ways. But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all the tribes as his habitation to put his name there. You shall go there,...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	'Ye do not do so to Jehovah your God; but unto the place which Jehovah your God doth choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, to His tabernacle ye seek, and thou hast entered thither, ¹⁴⁵ ...

There are several things that we need to deal with in these verses. For one thing, we need to know how many English sentences are here. V. 5 begins with *kîy ʾîm* (כִּי אִם) [pronounced *kee-eem*]¹⁴⁶ which literally is *because*

¹⁴³ I have just decided to add this to the translations; word order, prepositions, tense, etc. will all be preserved.

¹⁴⁴ I think that this first use of italics here is a typo in my Bible—the italics mean that this word is not actually found in the original languages, but in all actuality, it is.

¹⁴⁵ I have no clue as to why Young translates the same word in the same sentence *there* and *thither*.

¹⁴⁶ I think.

if; however, together they act as a limitation on the preceding thought, and therefore should be rendered *but, only, except*. Strong's #3588 & 518 BDB #474. At first, it sounds like the Israelites are not to tear down the places of worship of Y^ehowah their God. However, that is about ignorant. That would be found in the book of the Bible *Duh! The New English Bible and the New International Version* have the correct concept when they insert the word *worship*, which is not found in this context. The heathen of the land worshiped their national gods through pillars, engraved images and through immoral practices on the hills. The Israelites were not to construct these things or to do these things with regards to Y^ehowah. To worship God, they were to go to the tabernacle. The first sentence is vv. 4–5a; a new sentence begins at the end of v. 5 (the beginning prepositions of v. 5 link vv. 4 and 5 into one compound sentence).

“But you [all] will seek¹⁴⁷ the place which Y^ehowah your God chooses out from all your tribes to put His name there, to His tent [or, habitation]. [Deut. 12:5a]

We have a metonymy here. *Tribe* stands here for the territory which the tribe occupies. God would choose one place from within the borders of one tribe for a place to worship. This is where the tabernacle would go. There would be no other altars throughout the land. The tabernacle was representative of our Lord living here on earth temporarily as a person. However, it would be most inconvenient for the inhabitants of Israel to have to go to the tabernacle every time that they were to worship God. There would actually be three times a year set aside for that. However, I am not entirely certain of what the Israelites would do for worship during the other days of feasting a worshipping. It is possible that they were to worship God somewhere in their tribal area or possibly at their homes; but animal sacrifices would not occur anywhere else but in Jerusalem. Joshua 22 will make that clear when the sons of Reuben and Gad built an altar on the *other* side of the Jordan. Also, when King Saul built an altar to God and called to Him, God did not answer him (1Sam. 14:35–37).

There is a contrast here between seeking demons in the groves and upon the high hills and seeking the Lord Jesus Christ in the place set apart to Him within the territory of each tribe. “You will make an altar of earth for Me; and you will sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your oxen in every place where I cause My name to be remembered. I will come to you and bless you.” (Ex. 20:24). There is a continual mention of this place throughout the Torah (Deut. 14:23 15:20 16:2 18:6 26:2). God would set apart Shiloh and later Jerusalem to function as their center of worship.

Here, there is an exclusivity concerning where offerings may be made. That is, the Israelite cannot step outside his door, and offer to God. There is not a local church where he can go to offer to God. He must go to one place and one place only—to Jerusalem, the place God would name. At first, this bothered me, as did the fact that God chose to work through one nation exclusively. That is, other nations had to come to Israel to approach the Savior. However, the Old Testament shadows that which is to come. This exclusivity speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we go for salvation, we cannot go to Buddha, to Joseph Smith, to Moses; we can only go to one person, and that is Jesus Christ.

The exact location of Jerusalem was not given until the Israelites occupied the land, as they went into the land as a nation. Telling which tribe would have the privilege of this exclusive place of worship would have possibly caused some lack of teamwork. Recall that even when the land east of the Jordan River had been assigned to Reuben and Gad, those tribes still had to participate in the conquering of the land. This way, it does not appear as though any tribe is favored prior to the taking of the land.

Now, we have a problem. We have the tribes of Israel gathering only three times a year; we have 11 feasts or celebrations (12, if the weekly Sabbath is included); and we certainly have sacrifices which occur more than three times a year. Here's the problem: how do we reconcile that the people gather only three times a year and yet there are sacrifices offered at least 8 times a year? And, as this passage points out, sacrifices were not to be simply offered anywhere, but only in the place which God chose, which was before the Tent of Meeting in whatever city it resided.

¹⁴⁷ There is a *to* here; but moving the verb eliminates its need.

Reconciling the Sacrificial Practices of Scripture

1. Back in Lev. 23, we examined the various feasts celebrated by Israel and there were eight of them (see the **Doctrine of the Feast Days of Israel**). We have a slight problem—the men of Israel were to assemble three times a year (Ex. 23:14–17 34:22–24 Deut. 16:16) and sacrifices were only to be offered from one designated place. So, how do we manage that? There are actually several answers to this:
2. First of all, it is not until the book of Deuteronomy that it is clear that sacrifices are to be offered only from one place. However, this is confirmed in Joshua 22; the reaction of the tribes west of the Jordan indicates that this exclusive altar was well-indoctrinated into the people as a whole.
3. Secondly, we should cover those times that the males of Israel had to gather themselves before God:
 - a. The Feast of the Unleavened Bread, held on Abib 15–21 (Ex. 23:15).
 - b. The Feast of the Harvest, also known as the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, held in the 3rd month, Sivan, on the 6th day (Ex. 23:16a).
 - c. Finally, we have the Feast of the Ingathering, also known as the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths (Ex. 23:16b). This was held in the 7th month, Tishri, 15–21.
4. Also, some sacred days had nothing to do with animal sacrifices. The Sabbath, the Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee did not involve animal sacrifices. Apparently, Israel only obeyed the Sabbath (in fact they went overboard on the Sabbath) but they blew off the Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee.
5. Some feasts were combined.
 - a. Passover was held on the 14th day of Abib; First Fruits was the 16th day of Abib; and Unleavened Bread was held during the week of the 15–21 of Abib. Therefore, when you attended one feast, you essentially came for all three.
 - b. The Feast of the Tabernacles (Tishri 15–21) was followed immediately by the Sacred Assembly (Tishri 22).
6. This leaves us with three feasts unaccounted for. As we cover these, realize that the Israelites could attend any feast or celebration that they chose. God *required* them to attend those three times previously enumerated. However, they could attend other feasts, and they did.
 - a. The first is the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23–25 Num. 29:1–6).
 - b. The second is the great Day of Atonement (Lev. 16 23:26–32 Num. 29:7–11). The priest offered the sacrifices in front of the Tent of God and then sprinkled blood on the Ark of God in the recesses of the Holy of Holies. The most important part of this ritual could not be seen. People could attend this ritual, but it was not required.
 - c. The final feast is the Feast of Purim, which involved no animal sacrifices. This was more or less tacked on later and not a part of the Law of Moses. There were no requisite animal sacrifices. Esther 9:18–32

Now, you may wonder why do I both to go into detail about these things. There is a theory out there that various portions of Scripture were written at different times. Deuteronomy is considered to be written much later by the priests in order to justify various practices that they had going and wanted codified. The various feasts are enumerated in several places throughout Scripture, including the book of Deuteronomy. That the males were to be gathered three times is found twice in Exodus and once in Deuteronomy. Now, the idea that these sacrifices can only be offered in one place is found only in Deuteronomy (as far as I can recall). This is further emphasized in the book of Joshua (chapter 22—which, by the way, is thought by these same scholars to be written prior to the book of Deuteronomy). My purpose is to show you that all of these references work together. They are not in conflict with one another.

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[“And you will enter there; \[Deut. 12:5b\]](#)

We know this begins a new sentence because the verbs in vv. 4–5a are in the masculine plural imperfect, thus linking them grammatically; and the verbs in vv. 5b–6 are in the masculine perfect tense (the first verb is in the singular and the second is in the plural). *You will enter there* refers not to entering into the tabernacle, as there were strict regulations concerning the entering of the tabernacle, but entering into the city where the tabernacle was to be and entering into the gates which surrounded the tabernacle.

“And you [all] will bring there your burnt-offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the contributions of your hand and your vows [or, votive offerings] and your free-will offerings and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock. [Deut. 12:6]

The tithes mentioned here were 10% of the produce of their fields and 10% of their cattle, as described in Lev. 27:30–33 and Num. 18:21–24. There will be a great many sacrifices and a great many things brought before the God of heaven. The Israelites were mandated to bring these sacrifices before God at the tabernacle. **“Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox, or a lamb, or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present [it] as an offering to Y^ehowah before the tabernacle of Y^ehowah—bloodguilt will be imputed to that man. He has shed blood and that man will be cut off from among his people. The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to Y^ehowah, at the doorway or the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to Y^ehowah.”** (Lev. 17:3–5). Moses mentions this again in Deut. 14:23: **“And you will eat in the presence of Y^ehowah your God at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithes of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear [and respect] Y^ehowah your God always.”**

We covered the **Doctrine of Vows** in the book of Numbers. Recall the a vow is simply a promise made to God; in fact, it is a deal made with God. **Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take and will give me food to eat and clothing to wear, and I return to my father’s house in safety, then Y^ehowah will be my God.”** (Gen. 28:20–21). Man is not required to vow anything to God in the Old Testament but it is a natural human response to pressure. **“God, if You get me out of this jam, I will go to church for the next six months.”** Today, vows are usually made once you screwed up your life to a point where you don’t see a way out. In return, you generally vow to do something religious which you don’t want to do. Or you bargain with God to trade His deliverance for some worthless human good of yours (you will give money to the church, to the poor; you will promise to be nice to people you can’t stand). Vows in the New Testament are made by religious people who want to kill Paul (Acts 21:23–26) and by Paul when he was out of God’s operational and geographical will (Acts 18:18).

There was only one tabernacle. The tabernacle represented Jesus Christ come in the flesh to dwell among us—as the Presence of God indwelt the tabernacle and the tabernacle has always been a shadow of the human body. Therefore, there was only one tabernacle in the land, later to be replaced by one temple.

“And you [all] will eat there before the face of Y^ehowah your God and you [all] will rejoice in all the undertakings [or, possessions] [lit., in all the outstretching of your hand] [of] you and your households wherein Y^ehowah your God has blessed you. [Deut. 12:7]

We have a phrase here which should be examined—particularly because it occurs several times in this chapter. See the **Doctrine of the Stretching Forth of the Hand**.

So the Israelites are about ready to enter the land. Up until this time, they were not certain how their own personal offerings to God should be handled, so each person did what he thought was right when it came to making their offerings to Y^ehowah. Here they are enjoined by Moses to rejoice in all that they reach out and take from God’s hand and in all that they do (see Deut. 14:26). **For I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one’s lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God** (Ecc. 3:12–13). In fact, the Israelite was to rejoice with the Levite: **“And you and the Levite and the alien who is among you will rejoice in all the good which Y^ehowah your God has given you in your household.”** (Deut. 26:11). And finally, Moses tells them that there will be a specific place in the near future that God will

choose for them (Deut. 12:4–7). It is in this chapter where the importance of the specific place has become important. V. 4 distinguishes the practice of the religious heathen from worshiping God in several different areas from what Y^ehowah would require of them—worship in a particular geographical place. The importance here is that Jesus Christ is God Who would come in the flesh, not metaphorically insofar as indwelling all mankind and nature, but He would become a man and He would come to a specific geographical location and salvation could be obtained only by coming to one place—to the person of Jesus Christ.

The blood sacrifices which would occur during a feast day would represent our Lord's sacrifice for our sins. This would bring reconciliation between the God and the Israelite. The sitting down to a meal after this is a meal of peace between the two parties.

“You [all] will not do all that we are doing here [up until] this day, each [doing] all that is right in his own eyes; [Deut. 12:8]

This verse has a very narrow interpretation and then a much wider application. We are speaking in this context of vows and offerings and where they were being performed. Even though God had given Moses a great many regulations in the Law, not everyone had access to the Law and not everyone listened when Moses expounded upon the Law. We have been studying this Torah in a logical, almost chronological fashion and we know that in the desert, they were supposed to make their offerings at the tent of meeting. However, this does not mean that everyone knew that. So some of them just made offerings and sacrifices whenever they felt religious or wanted to do some sort of a trade-out with God. This is what is meant here by *doing what is right in his own eyes*.

However, there is a wider application of that phrase. At this point in time, some of the congregation is listening to Moses. Just as it is with all Christian populations, only a small portion is interested in God's Word; others are playing golf, couldn't get a sitter, woke up too late, had some work to catch up with, etc. Moses has given them a list of shortcomings and rebellions in this message and these are the things to which he refers when he says *this day* [lit., the day]. That is, *this day* can refer to the recent past as well as to the near future as well as to the very literal day in which they live. The final phrase will be the theme of the book of Judges: *every man doing what is right in his own eyes*. (Judges 17:6 21:25). I recall a conversation which I had with a young lady who told me that every morning that she woke up, she endeavored to go out and do that which was right that day. God has not called upon us to go out and do that which we think is moral and that which we think is good. God has an absolute standard. People have two ways of dealing with their own standards: (1) they try to do what is right, and when they find that they are unable to do that, they try again. In any case, they find out that when they set their own standards, they cannot even match those standards. (2) People will also, when they find out that they cannot do that which they believe to be right, then they lower their own standards. They don't want to be a hypocrite so, whereas at one time they may have thought that adultery was wrong; they now excuse it and understand it, as well as participate in it; because that has become right in their own eyes. They wouldn't want to be a hypocrite and disparage adulterous activities and then go out and do the same. However, our problem with both of these approaches is that they do not even come close to God's standards; the person's standards are continually lowered to a point where morality is meaningless—it basically means that is whatever we do; and one continually comes short of their own standards which are no where near close to God's standards. In other words, this phrase *every man doing what is right in his own eyes* is a synonym for apostasy, immorality, human values and human viewpoint. It is the cornerstone of human philosophy and human viewpoint; the goal of evolutionary delusion. And it is filthy rags (menstruous cloths) in God's sight (Isa. 64:6).

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Offerings Will Be Made in the Land Where God Chooses

“For you [all] have not come as yet [lit., until *this* time] into the rest and into the inheritance which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you; [Deut. 12:9]

Moses is about to die; they Reubenites and the Gadites have chosen the area where they had already conquered—Moses is making it clear that the Israelites had not yet come into their inheritance nor have they come into their rest as of yet (Deut. 3:20 4:21). This rest is a rest from the constant movement, the nomadic life and a rest from war. “Therefore, it will come to pass when Y^ehowah your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies in the land which Y^ehowah your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you will not forget.” (Deut. 25:19). This was the rest denied their parents: “For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who have gone astray in their heart and they do not know My ways. Therefore, I solemnly promised in My anger that they will not enter into My fest.” (Psalm 95:11).

“But [lit., and] you [all] will pass over the Jordan, and you [all] will dwell in the land which Y^ehowah your God is causing you to inherit—then [lit., and] He will give you rest [or, cause you to be rested] from all your enemies round about, and you [all] will dwell [in] security [lit., securely]. [Deut. 12:10]

Nûwach (נָוַח) [pronounced *NOO-ahk*] and it means *rest, cause to rest, set down, lay down, deposit, leave*. Strong's #5117 (and 3240) BDB #628 Here it is found in the Hiphil (causative) perfect—it will be a completed action which God causes. “For you are about to cross the Jordan to go in to possess the land which Y^ehowah your God has given you and you will possess it and live in it.” (Deut. 11:31). In following the plan that God has for their lives, they will not only conquer the land as He has promised them, but they will live in the land in security, as God had promised them: And He [God] said, “My presence will go [with you] and I will give you rest.” (Ex. 33:14). So Joshua took the whole land according to all that Y^ehowah had spoken to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war (Joshua 11:23).

What could be worse than to go into a land like Palestine, conquer it, and yet continually face enemies on all sides—that sounds a little like today, does it not? The few Jews who are in Israel today is not a fulfillment of God's promises. Their life in that land is anything but secure. They do not have victory over their enemies. This is a daily struggle today of violence. They will not have rest in that land anytime in the near future until seven years after the rapture. It is God's plan for the Israelite to be scattered throughout the world in every nation of the world. There are some places where the Israelites are not yet. God wants them everywhere, because they will be the evangelists to the world immediately after the rapture of the church—or the *exit resurrection*, as Thieme calls it.

“And it will come to pass, the place on which Y^ehowah your God is choosing in Himself [to cause] His name to tabernacle there—there, you [all] will bring in all that I am commanding you: your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and your contributions of your hand, and all the best of your vows which you [all] vow to Y^ehowah; [Deut. 12:11]

There is a lot which cannot be seen in the English. In the midst of this sentence we have the very poetic *his name there—there*; however, we don't catch the poetry. It is sh^emô shâm shâmmâh [pronounced *sh^emoe shawm shawm-mawh*]. Moses is emphasizing the importance of crossing over the Jordan after his death and entering into the land. It is there the Israelites will establish the tabernacle and offer their sacrifices in tribute to God. **Then the whole congregation of the sons of Israel assembled themselves at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them** (Joshua 18:1).

You will note that Scripture is not specific here as to *where* they would meet. This is because the place or worshipped changed from time to time. It was in Shiloh to begin with and eventually was moved to Jerusalem. In between, the Tent of Jehovah was in a number of different places (which we will cover in the book of 1 Samuel).

“And you [all] will rejoice before the face of Y^ehowah your God, you [all] and your sons and your daughters, and your male slaves and your female slaves, and the Levites who [is] within your cities [lit., gates], as [lit., for] he has no part and inheritance with you. [Deut. 12:12]

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God never makes an issue out of slavery. Satan has made an issue of slavery, particularly to the Black Americans of the late 20th century, and continues to do so even unto this day. Satan wants Black Americans to focus with disdain on their slavery of over one hundred years ago. However, God chose each and every slave brought to America individually—God chose them to come to America in chains, to provide them with some measure of hardship and suffering, so that He could give them and their ancestors salvation. After the initial settling of America, no one pursued God’s salvation as did the Black slave and his freed ancestors. It is no accident that our native American population is much smaller than our present day Black population—both came out of highly heathen cultures, but the Black man chose Jesus Christ as his Savior and God has prospered his seed. The chains and the shackles placed upon the Black man to bring him over here—these were God’s chains to bring him and his progeny to Jesus Christ. **Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God [is something]. Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Don’t obsess about it—however, if you are able also to become free, rather use that [freedom]. For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord’s freedman; likewise, he who was called while free, is Christ’s slave. You were bought with a price—do not become the slaves of men. Family of God, let each man remain with God in that [condition] in which he was called (1Cor. 7:19–24). Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worth of all honor so that the name of God and doctrine may not be maligned. And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are royal family of God, but let them serve them all the more, because those who are participants of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and proclaim this. If any one advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound doctrine, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, even the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited, understanding nothing (1Tim. 6:1).** Every Black man in America should fall on his knees and thank God for bringing him here to America, for presenting him with the gospel of Jesus Christ and saving so many of his race. This does not mean that the slave traders, both Black and Caucasian, had any clue as to what they were doing. They certainly did not sell the Black man into slavery for his salvation. **But we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to a pre-determined plan (Rom. 8:28).** Remember the Israelite brother to the Black slave, Joseph—his own brothers sold him into slavery. It was because of this that He became a great ruler in Egypt and was able to preserve his family. As he explained to his brothers, without bitterness, **“Do not be afraid, for aren’t I in the geographical will of God [lit., God’s place]?” And, as for you, you thought evil against me, [but] God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” (Gen. 50:19b–20).**

John was banished to the Isle of Patmos—it is from this banishment that we know what will happen in the last days. Paul was unjustly placed in chains, but he recognized that he was the prisoner of Jesus Christ, and from these chains came some of the greatest epistles written. God’s Word is not bound. Man thought he could imprison Paul, but man could not imprison the Word of God. We should all say with Paul, **“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice...I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (Philippians 4:4, 11b–13).**

In this context, the slaves of the Israelites were to rejoice in the land just as the Israelites did. They were all be in God’s geographical will. Those which God enslaved and brought to Israel—it was so that they could hear the gospel and become free. Often, God must resort to adversity and tragedy to gain our attention. How many people do you know who play the lottery, who think that if they could just win a few million dollars, their problems and troubles would be all over? God can’t reach some lottery winners; God can’t reach some people who are rich and successful. They’re too busy making, counting and spending money. **Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he will not often remember the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart (Eccl. 5:19–20).** Some of them will have a very short thirty or forty years with a great deal of money, and then spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, in eternal torment, because they

did not take even five seconds out of their busy schedule to believe in Jesus Christ. One of the reasons you are poor or have faced tremendous heart ache and personal tragedy is that God cannot reach you any other way. He can't pour money into your bank account because you would be, "Goodbye, God, I will see you in eternity—as soon as I spend all this."

In this verse, all those who were in the land were to rejoice. This was God's geographical will and they were in it. This was the center of blessing, the land of milk and honey—the place of the Presence of God on earth. Is Palestine a place of rejoicing now? Absolutely not. Will the Jews remain in the land? Certainly—God wants them to be scattered throughout the world, and Palestine is part of the world.

Finally, we have the Levite who lives in their town, but without a geographical inheritance. **Then Y^ehowah said to Aaron, "You will have no inheritance in their land, nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel. And to the sons of Levi, observe, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting" (Num. 18:20–21).** The Israelites were to see that their basic physical needs were being met as well. **"Also, you will not neglect the Levite who is in your town [lit., gates], for he has no portion or inheritance among you. At the end of every third year, you will bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year and you will deposit [it] in your gate. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town—they will come and eat and be satisfied in order that Y^ehowah your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do." (Deut. 10:8–9 14:27–29; see 26:11–13 as well).**

"Take [personal] responsibility so that you do not cause your burnt offerings to ascend in any place which you see; [Deut. 12:13]

Under the economy of Israel, the burnt offerings were a very sacred act—one which spoke of the death of God's Son on their behalf. This was not to be done just anywhere, in their back yard, on the front porch or side-by-side some heathen religious area. It must be done in a ceremonially clean area, the one designated by God. **"Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox, or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present [it] as an offering to Y^ehowah before the dwelling place of Y^ehowah, bloodguilt is to be imputed to that man. He has shed blood and that man will be cut off from among his people. The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them inn to Y^ehowah at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to Y^ehowah." (Lev. 17:3–5).** It must be done according to the decree of God as the person of Christ was clean, pure of all personal sin, free of the stain of the old sin nature—and His sacrifice, more painful and devastating than we could ever imagine, more difficult than a million lifetimes of harsh slavery, fell completely into the plan and decree of God.

"Only in the place which Y^ehowah has chosen in one of your tribes—there you will cause your burnt offerings to ascend, and there you will do all that which I am commanding you. [Deut. 12:14]

This verse begins with *kîy 'îm* (כִּי יִמָּוֶה) [pronounced *kee-eeem*] which again act as a limitation on the preceding thought, and are together rendered *but, only, except*. Strong's #3588 & 518 BDB #474. As was true in v. 5a, *tribe* does not stand for the people of that particular family, but rather for the land upon which that tribe dwells. God will determine only certain area to be proper for worship.

I must admit that when I first examined this chapter, I was unsure at to whether the Israelites were only to offer their burnt sacrifices at the tabernacle or whether there would be places set up closer by for some religious ceremonies. V. 14 seems to indicate that burnt offerings would be offered only at the tabernacle. Vv. 13–14 read: **"Take personal responsibility that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place you see, except in the place which Y^ehowah will choose in **one** of your tribes—there you will offer your burn offerings, and there you will do all that I command you."** Psalm 78:67–68: **He also rejected the tent of Joseph and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which He loved. And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He has founded forever.** This verse clearly speaks only of the tabernacle and not of several different sacrificial areas. The context is also one of exclusivity of sacrificial area or areas.

On the one hand, I was uncertain whether Israel was able to sacrifice animals at a local altar or not. I mention that here in case anyone ran into the same initial confusion. For instance, there were so many different feast days, only three of which require the gathering of the males to Jerusalem, where the tabernacle would be (Ex. 34:24). The Israelites were to take part in the celebration of all of the feasts, which would include animal sacrifices. Given that the Levites were intentionally spread out throughout the land and that the Aaronic priesthood would become significant, it seems to make sense that there would be alternative places where the Israelites might offer their sacrifices. Obviously, they were not to be offered indiscriminately without regard to location whatsoever.

However, once we reach Joshua 22, this will become clear that the sacrifice of animals would occur only at the altar of the tabernacle. Now, in our dispensation, this is no longer an issue. **The [Samaritan] woman said to Him, "Lord, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and you [Jews] say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem, will you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."** (John 4:20–24).

McGee's comment: *Believers do not meet in one place to worship God today; we meet around One Person and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the important thing to keep in mind today. The name of your church doesn't make the difference. The denomination or lack of denomination of your church doesn't make the difference. The all-important question is this: do you meet around the person of Jesus Christ? Now, friends, if you don't, that is idolatry, because then your are meeting to socialize or [to] be entertained, that is idolatry. The thing that is to draw us together into a oneness is th person of Jesus Christ.*¹⁴⁸

Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10
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The Eating of Meat Is Distinguished from the Offering of Animal Sacrifices

"However, you may [continue to] slaughter and you may eat the flesh within all of your cities [lit., gates] as per [lit., in] all the desire of your soul according to [lit., as] [the] blessing of Y^howah your God which He has given to you, the unclean and the clean he may eat it, like the gazelle [or, roe], and like the deer. [Deut. 12:15]

Up until this time, as the Israelites traveled through the wilderness, all animals slaughtered as a sacrifice were to be done so at the entrance of the tabernacle (Lev. 17:3–6). The particular law was the requirement of the wilderness travel, but it would be abrogated upon their entrance into the land. Certain animals slaughtered only as food would not be subject to the ceremonial requirements of the sacrifices.

I don't know if Moses realized how legalistic the Israelites would become; however, he cut them off at the pass here. For those who oppose eating meat, Moses has given specific permission here to slaughter animals for the purpose of eating them. The slaughtering of animals and the eating of meat were not to be confined to the religious rite of animal sacrifice. The two animals mentioned here are animals not used for sacrifices. We will examine in more detail what the Israelites were allowed to eat and when in Deut. 14 and 15.

"Only the blood you [all] will not eat—you will pour it on the earth like water; [Deut. 12:16]

¹⁴⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 79.

God allows for the eating of meat, but not for the eating of the blood of the meat. This has sanitary implications—the blood will cause the meat to rot faster and is often a carrier of disease and germs; and it is considered ceremonially unclean to drink the blood of an animal. Moses repeats this directive in Deut. 15:23. When God gave Noah permission to eat meat, He added, “Only you will not eat flesh with its life—its blood.” (Gen. 9:4; see Lev. 7:26). When the church began to receive Gentile converts, James said, “Therefore, it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.” (Acts 15:19–20).

“You are not able to eat within your cities [lit., gates] the tithe of your corn, and of your new wine and you oil and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock and any of your vows which you vow, and you free-will offerings, and contributions of your hand;”¹⁴⁹ [Deut. 12:17]

These are things which are reserved for worship and dedication to God. Some of these items are given to the Levites. “All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh win and of the grain, the first fruits of those which they give to Y^ehowah, I give them to you. The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to Y^ehowah will be yours—everyone of your household who is clean may eat it. Every devoted thing in Israel is yours....and their meat will be yours; it will be your like the breast of a contribution and like the right thigh. All of the offerings of the holy [sacrifices] which the sons of Israel offer to Y^ehowah, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before Y^ehowah to you and your descendants with you.” (Num. 18:12–14, 18–19). Some of these things will be eaten, but only in the areas designated by God. “And you will eat in the presence of Y^ehowah your God at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear Y^ehowah your God always.” (Deut. 14:23).

“But before the face of Y^ehowah your God you will eat it in the place which Y^ehowah your God has chosen—you and your son and your daughter and your male slave and your female slave and the Levite who [is] within your cities [lit., gates]—and you will rejoiced before Y^ehowah your God in your every undertaking [and everything you reach out and take [lit., in every stretching forth of your hand]]. [Deut. 12:18]

The worship of the Israelites was not confined only to them, but was to be a part of the lives of their children and their slaves and the Levites, who were to assist the sons of Aaron in the worship of God.

“Take personal responsibility [lit., take heed to yourself] that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land. [Deut. 12:19]

The Levites had no claim on any particular plot of ground; they were scattered among the tribes of Israel then, much like the Israelites are scattered among the nations today. They served the priests and therefore had no other means of support. God expected the other Israelites to support them. The Levite was supported by the tithes of the land every third year: “And you will not neglect the Levites who is in your gates, for he has no portion or inheritance among you. At the end of every third year, you will bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year and you will deposit [it] within your gates and the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are within your gates will come and eat and be satisfied—[this must be done] in order that Y^ehowah your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.” (Deut. 14:27–29). Christians often make a big thing out of tithing, but it is an Old Testament taxing system unique to Israel during the time of the law. During that period of time, the tithes and contributions were imperative: “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the entire nation! Bring all of [your] tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house and test Me now in this,” says Y^ehowah of the armies, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need.” (Mal. 3:8–10).

¹⁴⁹ Several codices (w. Samaritan, the Onkelos of Jonathan, the Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate) have *hands* instead of hand; I wonder if that is just a difference in idiom or whether is was plural.

“When Y^ehowah your God enlarges your border, as He has promised you [lit., spoken to you], and you have said, ‘I will eat meat [lit., flesh],’ (for your soul desires to eat flesh)—in all the desires of your soul, you will eat flesh. [Deut. 12:20]

The Israelites had eaten manna for the bulk of their forty years of traveling in the wilderness; some of them had known nothing else. Moses is promising them that God will provide flesh for them to eat—and, in this case, they will not be penalized as were they and their fathers were for the quail.

During the seven years of the book of Joshua, the Israelites would establish themselves in the land. Under the rulership of King David, they would enlarge their borders. During his reign, Israel will occupy more territory than at any other time until the Millennium, when God will give them all of the land which He promised them. The blessing in the Land of Promise is always tied to obedience. **“And if Y^ehowah your God enlarges your territory, just as He has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land which He had promised [lit., spoken] to your fathers, if you keep all of this decree to do it, which I command you today, to love Y^ehowah your God, and to walk in His ways always.” (Deut. 19:8–9a).**

“When the place is far from you which Y^ehowah your God has chosen to put His name there, then you will slaughter of your herd and of your flock which Y^ehowah has given to you, as I have commanded you, and you will eat within your cities [lit., gates], to all the desire of your soul; [Deut. 12:21]

I am leaning toward the view that there will be situations where even in a given area where a tribe dwells that the place which God chooses for His sacrifices is too far for some to travel to, then He will allow them to slaughter their sacrifices within the gates of their own city. Deut. 14:22–26 covers the situation where the tithe must be brought and the distance is too far to travel with all of these items: **“You will definitely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. And you will eat in the presence of Y^ehowah your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear [and respect] Y^ehowah your God always. And if the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring [these tithes], since the place where Y^ehowah your god chooses to set His name is too far away from you when Y^ehowah your God blesses you, then you will exchange [it] for money in your hand and go to the place wick Y^ehowah your God chooses . Then you may spend the money for whatever your soul desires, for oxen, or sheep or wine or strong drink, or whatever your soul asks of you; and there you will eat in the presence of Y^ehowah your God and rejoice—you and your household.”**

“Just as the gazelle or a deer is eaten, so you will eat it—the unclean and the clean alike will eat it. [Deut. 12:22]

There is no religious connotation to eating meat. Whether one is a believer or not, ceremonially clean or not, they are still allowed to eat venison and any other kind of meat which is not a sacrifice to God.

“Only, be certain not to eat the blood, for the blood, it [is] the life, and you will not eat the life with the flesh. [Deut. 12:23]

Again the Jews were told not to partake of the blood as part of their meal. This particular mandate goes back to the first time when God allowed man to eat meat. **“Every moving thing that is alive will be food for you; I give all to you as I the green plant. Only you will not eat flesh with its soul—its blood. And certainly I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it, and from man, from every man’s brother I will require the soul the soul of man.” (Gen. 9:3–4).** This may sound gruesome to us to eat the blood of an animal, but that is because that prohibition is a part of our Christian heritage, much of which comes from God’s Word. However, there are other cultures where blood drinking is part of their meal (I recall a math teach from the University of Houston describing drinking the blood of a turtle while on vacation—grossed me out). God originally told Moses, **“For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the soul that makes atonement. Therefore, I say to the sons of Israel, ‘No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who temporarily lives among you eat blood.’ So when any man from the sons of Israel,**

or from the aliens who temporarily live among you in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he will pour out its blood and cover it with earth. For [the] soul of all flesh, its blood with its soul. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it will be cut off.' " (Lev. 17:11–14). There are several reasons for this:

Why Does the Bible Prohibit the Drinking of Blood?

1. Blood carries diseases more readily than does the flesh of an animal; so an animal which is diseased can often be cooked and eaten without any harm coming to the ones partaking of the meal. **And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of Y^ehowah your God and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, Y^ehowah, am your healer."** (Ex. 15:26).
2. The blood of the animal is tied directly to its soul, just as our life is tied directly to our soul and spirit; the animal's life in the blood and our life is in our soul and spirit (Lev. 11:11–14).
3. Blood represents our Lord's spiritual death in His sacrifice on the cross—particularly, blood which is poured out on the ground. We partake of His blood one time in salvation, and in the Church Age, we drink grape juice as a memorial to the sacrifice of His blood. **Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission** (Heb. 9:22). Our Lord, at the Last Supper, said, **"This is the blood of the new covenant—[the blood] which is shed for many for the remission of sins."** (Matt. 26:28). We are saved on the basis of the blood of our Lord being poured out on our behalf. **And in the same way, [He took] the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant of My blood."** (Luke 22:20).
4. The eating and drinking of blood was also closely associated with some idolatrous practices. The Zábians gathered blood and ate this blood before their idols as a type of communion with them. Some of the ancient sacred Hindu literature contains prescriptions for the offering of blood, forbidding of pouring said blood onto the ground. Hindu's were also known to drink the blood from recently slaughtered buffalo and fowl. The Zábians pre-dated the Israelites; whether they had any knowledge of the Hindu practices is unknown to me. However, King David was aware during his time of idolatrous blood offerings (Psalm 16:4). Zech. 9:7 is possibly a reference to the drinking of blood by the Philistines. When Saul and his army had defeated the Philistines, they slaughtered and ate some of the spoil with its blood (1Sam. 14:32–34). Some sources indicate that some heathen nations ate raw flesh with blood and that the Israelites in that passage were following their practices.¹ One of the mistakes of the Catholic church is that, as it has spread, it has incorporated portions of the local culture in order to *sell* its own doctrines. When we evangelize other countries, we are not to incorporate any of their heathen religious practices into Christian doctrine. We are not to weave that which is false into that which is true in order to make God's truth more palatable. See also Lev. 17:1

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One of the interesting things of the Bible is its occasional reference to things scientific. The Bible is not a science textbook, nor does it speak always in scientific terms (that is, it may speak of the sun rising and setting just as an astronomer does, although the sun does not actually rise and set). However, when the Bible deals with matters scientific, it is accurate. This was written circa 1400 BC; the discovery of the circulation of the blood was discovered by William Harvey in 1616 AD. We now know that the circulation blood brings a continual supply of food, water and oxygen to our cells throughout our entire body, as it does for animals. Furthermore, the blood often combats various diseases by producing antibodies; it repairs tissue damage—and the use of blood transfusions today has saved millions of lives. The analogy is easy to see: (1) Our body is corrupt—every cell of our body is corrupted with the old sin nature. (2) We find salvation for our souls and for our bodies through the blood of Jesus Christ. (3) In fact, due to the absolute depravity of our bodies and souls, our salvation must come

from the outside—it is almost like a blood transfusion. (4) It is His blood which brings us nourishment to our souls and through His blood that we have our spiritual sustenance¹⁵⁰.

“You will not eat it; you will pour it on the earth as water; [Deut. 12:24]

No doubt that you have heard of books which list all of the *contradictions* in the Bible, and quite possibly you have even read one or two of them. Some contrast this verse with Lev. 17:13, which tells the hunter to cover the blood with dust. There is no contradiction whatsoever, as the entirety of the verse reads: **“So when any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens who live with them in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he will pour out its blood and cover it with earth.”**

“You will not eat it, in order that it may be well with you, and with your sons after you, and when you do that which [is] right in the eyes of Y^ehowah. [Deut. 12:25]

God has chosen for the Israelite not to eat the blood of an animal. The reasoning given here is that it will be well with the Israelite and his progeny. Because of the propensity for disease being carried in the blood, it is well for a person and his progeny not to drink the blood, and Israel, as a race, automatically avoid a great many sicknesses that way, as has been covered previously.

Doing that which is right in eyes of God is contrasted with doing that which is right in your own eyes as found in Deut. 12:8. **“And you will do what is right and good in the sight of Y^ehowah, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which Y^ehowah swore to give to your fathers.”** (Deut. 6:18; see also 13:18). This is expanded in 1Kings 11:38, when God, through Ahijah the prophet, said to Jeroboam: **“Then it will come to pass that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.”**

“Only, your holy things which you have [lit., which are to you], and your votive offerings [lit., vows] will you take up and you will go into the place which Y^ehowah has chosen. [Deut. 12:26]

God separates the concept of eating meat from the sacrifices and offerings which the Israelites will make. Those things mentioned here would go to the tent of meeting in the holy city, Jerusalem.

“And you will make [or do] your burnt offerings—the flesh and the blood—on the altar of Y^ehowah your God; and the blood of your sacrifices is poured out by the altar of Y^ehowah your God and the flesh you will eat. [Deut. 12:27]

All of the sacrifices will be done according to the Law, upon the altar which God has provided for them (they do not construct their own altars); and the blood will be poured out at the foot of the altar. Most of the specifics are found in the book of Leviticus (in particular, Lev. 1:1–13 3:1–17).

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Obey the Words of Moses and Do Not Follow the Customs of the Heathen

“Take responsibility and hear all these words which I am commanding you, in order that it may be well with respect to you and with respect to your sons after you forever [lit., as far as antiquity] when you do that which is good and right in the eyes of Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 12:28]

¹⁵⁰ My thanks here to Henry Morris's *Science and the Bible*; ©1986, pp. 15–17.

God will bless the Israelites for their obedience, because the proper handling of sacrifices speaks of Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit revealed the gospel in the use of these animal sacrifices, as the gospel was hid from Satan until sometime after the resurrection of our Lord. There are a handful of movies where there is a twist at the end; however, the clues which reveal that twist are given continually throughout—the big picture as well as the details point to the ending—however, you do not catch it until the end and that is when you are able to put everything together. This is what human history up until the cross was to Satan. He is the greatest genius of all, yet God was able to reveal to mankind, the clearly inferior intellects to Satan, the gospel of Jesus Christ right under Satan's nose—and Satan never fully grasped what was going on.

“When Y^ehowah your God cuts off the nations—where you are going into disposes them—from your face; and you have dispossessed them, and you dwell in the land; [Deut. 12:29]

“For My angel will go before you and bring you in to a land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them.” (Ex. 23:23). Verse 29 is the protosis which will be finished in the next verse. Deut. 19:1–2 are split up in the same way; they both carry the same protosis (i.e., the same *if* clause); and a different apodosis (*then* clause). Joshua, in his swan song address to the people, brings back to their minds this oral contract: “See I have apportioned to you these nations which remain as an inheritance for your tribes, with all the nations which I have cut off from the Jordan even to the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun. And Y^ehowah your God, He will thrust them out from before you and drive them from before you; and you will possess their land, just as Y^ehowah your God has said to you. Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left.” (Joshua 23:4–6).

“Take personal responsibility so that you do not become ensnared [and brought down] after them, after their being destroyed out of your presence [lit., out from your face], and so that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods, that [lit., and] I may do as they do [lit., as I do so]—even I?’ [Deut. 12:30]

Nâqash (נָקַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KAHSH*] is only found a handful of times in God's Word (1Sam. 29:9 Psalm 9:16 38:12 109:11) and in a different stem and tense in almost every case. It means *to ensnare an animal, like a bird, and bring it down*. Strong's #5367 BDB #669.

These other nations are being dispossessed and removed from before the Israelites due to their heathen practices—here the Israelites are warned not to follow after the heathen practices of these other nations. “And you will consume all the peoples whom Y^ehowah your God will deliver to you; your eye will not pity them, neither will you serve their gods, for that would be] a snare to you.” (Deut. 7:16). It is human viewpoint to say it is okay to worship God in whatever way your culture has proscribed or in whatever fashion you sincerely feel is right and true; however, in God's viewpoint there has always been one way—His—and all the sincerity in the world did not make wrong right.

“You will not do so with respect to Y^ehowah your God; for every abomination of Y^ehowah which He hates they have done with respect to their gods. For even their sons and their daughters they burn in the fire with respect to their gods. [Deut. 12:31]

One of the greater of the abominations of the heathen is given here—they practice child sacrifice, an abomination to God. At this point in history, the degeneracy of the Amorites *had become full*. God was ready to remove them from the land. They had been given their chance and likely, some of them had been saved. However, now they were at a point of no return in terms of personal degeneracy. One of their practices is that they would heat up an idol until it was red hot; then they would drop their babies into the arms of this idol. God required the Israelites to destroy this people entirely. With a degenerate practice such as this, certainly you can understand why.

Moses told the Generation of Promise: “Do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out before your face, ‘Because of my righteousness Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land,’ but because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before you. It is not because of your

righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah your God is driving them out from before your face, in order to confirm the oath which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” (Deut. 9:4–5). “You will not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor will you do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you will not walk in their statutes...You will not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor will you profane the name of your God—I am Y^ehowah...you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and you will not do any of these abominations—the native nor the foreigner who lives temporarily among you...any man from the sons of Israel or from the foreigners temporarily living in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, will definitely be put to death; the people of the land will stone him with stones.” (Lev. 18:3, 21, 26 18:2b). “There will not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, [or] one who uses divination, one who practices astrology, or one who interprets omens, or [is] a sorcerer.” (Deut. 18:10).

Unfortunately, the Israelites eventually succumbed to the pressure of heathen religion. Yet Y^ehowah warned Israel an dJudah, through all His prophets and ever seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My commandments according to all the Law which I commanded your athers, and which I sent to you throught My servants the prophets. However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in Y^ehowah their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers, and His warnigs with which He warned them; and they followed vanity and became vain and [then went] after the nations which surrounded them, concerning which Y^ehowah had commanded them no to do like them. And dthey forsook all the commandments of Y^ehowah their God and made for themselves molten images, two calves, and made an Ahserah and whorshiped all the host of heaven and serve Baal. Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire and practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do eveil in the sight of Y^ehowah, provoking Him. So Y^ehowah was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight, none was left except the tjribe of Judah (2Kings 17:13–18). But they [the Israelites] did not destroy the people [the heathen of the land of Canaan], as Y^ehowah commanded them, but they mingled with the nations, and learned their practices, and served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons and shed innocent blood—the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with this blood (Psalm 106:34–38). See also Jer. 32:31–36 Ezek. 23:37.

“The entirety of the word which I command you, you will take personal responsibility to do it. You will not add to it or take from it.” [Deut. 12:32 (13:1 in the Hebrew)]

Moses recognized that he was communicating divine viewpoint. Recall that the Israelites were involved in a treaty or contract or covenant between God and themselves. Once a contract has been written and ratified by both parties, neither party can go back and change any of the particulars. The Israelites were not to add to his words or to take from them, as they represented God’s will. “You will not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from [it]; that you may keep the commandments of Y^ehowah your God which I command you.” (Deut. 4:2). Do not add to His words, so that He will not reprove you and you be shown a liar (Prov. 30:6). We find these sentiments expressed in almost the very last words of God’s Word: **I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are writtten in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book** (Rev. 22:18–19). See also Joshua 1:7. This was one of the repeated commands which the Israelites went against. The Talmud and the Mishna are commentaries which add a great many laws and regulations to those given by Moses, carefully and intricately describing, for instance, what it means to work on a Sabbath (Saturday).

The reason that this verse is thought to be the last verse of chapter 12 by some and the first verse of chapter 13 is that it is a transitional verse. It is a bridge between what has gone before, which was Moses making several major doctrinal points and repeating same, and Deut. 13, where he begins to deal with specific laws. Whereas, it is very likely that God’s Word was circulated in scroll form, it was not found on the bookshelf of every tent. Therefore, Moses would give the particulars of the Law to this new generation verbally.

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Deuteronomy 13

Deuteronomy 13:1–18

Outline of Chapter 13:

- Vv. 1–5 **Dealing with a false prophet or a false dreamer of a dream**
- Vv. 6–11 **What if a close relative becomes apostate?**
- Vv. 12–18 **What should be done when an entire city goes astray?**

Introduction: Deut. 13 generally continues the message of Moses to the Generation of Promise and specifically continues Deut. 12. In Deut. 12, Israel has been given specific commands with regard to the destruction of the remnants of the heathen religion of the indigenous population. Some of the rites of the worship of Y^ehowah are carefully distinguished from those of the Canaanites so that there is no confusion or mixture of religious practices.

Deut. 13 is a very cohesive chapter deals with the execution of those who suggest that the Israelites follow gods other than Y^ehowah. This chapter also neatly breaks down into three parts. God will allow Israel to have both true and false prophets. The false prophets will prophesy against God's Word and try to pull Israel away from the God of their fathers. The nation Israel is to execute any prophet who attempts to lead Israel into idolatry. Individuals will also be faced with family members who will try to draw them away from God into idolatry. Even those family members are to be executed. Finally, some cities will fall into idolatry as a whole—there will arise a charismatic leader who will lead them astray, away from God and toward some idol. Once this matter is thoroughly investigated (which is the routine for the other two situations), the entire town is to be dedicated to God. That is, the entire town is to be totally destroyed—all the people executed and all of their personal belongings burned.

As I will point out from time to time, there is always that 1% out there who cannot distinguish this time and place from our life today. Today, we are able to worship the One True God because of freedom of religion. We do not persecute those today who worship false gods. However, Israel **was** a unique nation—one directly ruled by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the armies. A nation ruled directly by Him will not be allowed idolatry. Jesus Christ is not a religious liberal (that is, He does not tolerate idolatrous religions). However, we must—our own religious freedom depends upon it.

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Dealing with a False Prophet or a False Dreamer of a Dream

“When a prophet or a dreamer of a dream arises in your midst, and he has given to you a sign or a wonder; [Deut. 13:1 (13:2 in the Hebrew)]

As has been mentioned before, what sounds perfectly reasonable in one language sounds stilted in another, which would account for some of the differences between the Hebrew and its early codices. Most of our English translations read *a dreamer of dreams* even though *dream* is singular here. A prophet received his information either through direct revelation from God or through a vision (Num. 14:16 2Sam. 7:4 2Cor. 12:2) and a dream of a dream (obviously) received his information through dreams (Gen. 37:5–7 1Kings 3:5 Matt. 2:13). This can certainly be one and the same person (Gen. 28:11–15 35:9).

Moses, speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recognizes that prophets would arise, both real and phoney. In this context, Moses will deal with the false prophet. We will also find false prophets in our dispensation **and during the time of the Great Tribulation. “For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and will show signs**

and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray.” (Mark 13:22). God, through His permissive will, allows demons to hook up with mankind as deceiving spirits (1Kings 22:22–23). It is Satan’s mission to lead believers in Jesus Christ astray. He will often attempt to duplicate that which is divine, which includes prophets and other religious types, some of whom even have the ability to perform lying wonders. **“For the teraphim speak iniquity [or, futility] and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain. Therefore, they [the people of Israel] wander like sheep—they are afflicted because there is no shepherd.”** (Zech. 10:2). **And then that lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming—the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be delivered** (2Thess. 2:8–10; see Rev. 13:11–15 as well). The time of Jeremiah was particularly filled with false prophets as we read in Jer. 23:25–32 27:9–11 29:8–11, 31–32. God fervently stands in opposition to false prophets: **Therefore, thus says Y^ehowah God, “Because you have spoken emptiness and have seen a lie; therefore, look, I am against you,” declares Y^ehowah God. “So My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will have no place in the council of My people, nor will they be written down in the register of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel, that you may know that I am Y^ehowah god. It is definitely because they have misled My people, by saying, ‘Peace!’ when there is no peace** (Ezek. 13:8–10a).

“And the sign and the wonder comes to pass [lit., arrives] which he had spoken of to you—to say, ‘Let us pursue [lit., go after] other gods (which you have not known) and serve them’; [Deut. 13:2 (13:3 in the Hebrew)]

Moses recognizes that prophets will arise who will prophesy something that comes to pass. The way to determine whether these prophets should be listened to is through their doctrine. Since this chapter is separated into three situations, for each situation, the test of a true prophet is whether or not that prophet leads the people Israel astray, away from their God (Deut. 13:6, 13). If the prophet suggests that the Israelites pursue another god other than Y^ehowah, then he is unquestionably a false prophet. The very first commandment is **“You will have no other gods before Me.”** (Deut. 5:7). Therefore, it is obvious that a prophet encouraging Israel to pursue a god other than Y^ehowah was a false prophet, no matter how impressive his signs and wonders were.

Since this was spoken, there have arisen thousands upon thousands of false prophets, some of whose prophecies have come to pass. I recall learning about Edgar Cayce and Jeane Dixon as a young boy; but there have been many others, such as Joseph Smith. The Pope, although never referred to as such (at least to my knowledge), would be considered a prophet since he claims to speak *ex Cathedra*.¹⁵¹ Moses separates them from prophets **sent by God by their doctrine. In the New Testament, we read: But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master Who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves** (1Peter 2:1).

We also have people today who heal—right off the bat, you know that their doctrine is going to be somewhat askew of reformationist Christianity. We find great signs and wonders in any period of history dealing with a major change in God’s program. When Moses led Israel out of Egypt to become a new nation, signs and wonders accompanied him in order to cause the pharaoh to let the Israelites go and to provide the Israelites reason to have faith in him. Throughout the walk toward the land, God gave Israel signs and wonders in order to give them reason to understand the importance of the Law they were receiving and the land they were about to take. We find signs and wonders when Israel has fallen into great apostasy at the hand of Elijah and then we find signs and wonders when our Lord walks upon this earth. These signs and wonders confirmed Him as Messiah, the One Who is to come. Finally, there was an entire new program, hidden from Satan and hidden from Israel, called the church. This was not revealed in Scripture prophetically. When something that revolutionary takes place, then it is accompanied by great signs and wonders. These were not occasional miracles and disputable miracles, but things that were remarkable and unquestionable. Furthermore, these signs and wonders began to fade. Paul’s

¹⁵¹ *Ex cathedra*, incidentally, means *from the seat [of authority]*. This is the Pope making authoritative mandates concerning morality and other matters. This is not unlike the additional commandments added by the Israelites in the Mishna and the Talmud. Ironically, *ex cathedra* comes from the verb *excathedrate*, which means *to condemn authoritatively*.

gift to heal left him once he had been established as the Apostle of grace, the replacement for Judas Iscariot. His writings form the basis for Church Age doctrine. However, the ability to heal and the signs and wonders which he and the other Apostles could perform were merely credit cards to establish their authority. Once their authority was established, the need for signs and wonders disappeared. Today, the authority is in God's completed Holy Word. God's Word is established and it is authoritative and powerful. No pastor needs to lean upon anything else. At some time in the future, we will cover this as a doctrine, accompanied by double handfuls of documenting Scripture.

The second test of a true prophet is that 100% of what they say will come to pass. The prophets to Israel spoke of things, some of which would come to pass in the very near future, and other things which would be fulfilled in the far future. There were even some prophecies which had a double fulfillment—a near and a far fulfillment. The test would be if their *near* prophecies came to pass. **“When a prophet speaks in the name of Y^ehowah, if the thing does not come to pass or come true, then Y^ehowah has not spoken that word. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously¹⁵² and you will not be afraid of him.”** (Deut. 18:22; see also 1Sam. 10:7–12 2Kings 19:29 20:8–11 Jer. 28:9). A false prophet need not be an intentional charlatan. Even if a prophet is self-deluded and thinks he (or she) speaks on behalf of God (like Muriel), this does not make them any more believable. That is sincerity of **the prophet is never presented as a test. Our Lord said, “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”** (Matt. 7:22–23 Psalm 6:8). God even gave signs to prophets to tell them that He was really God (1Sam. 2:34–36).

Now, a simple question—which is most important: an undisputed miracle or the truth of God's Word? Back as **far as Deuteronomy 13, God's Word is the deciding factor. But if though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed** (Gal. 1:8).

“You will not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of a dream, for Y^ehowah your God is testing you [or possibly, allowing you to be tested], to know whether you [all] are loving Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. [Deut. 13:3 (13:4 in the Hebrew)]

God allows certain testings of different types to pervade our world. A continued test is one of our volition with regards to Him. Some recent believers tend to move from condemnation into salvation and yet never change their mind about a thing. All the values and religious teachings and the viewpoints that they had as unbelievers, they carry on into their believing life. Our most basic essence is interwoven with the old sin nature and by very definition, there will be aspects of our former life which are in strict opposition to God. Throughout our lives after salvation, we will be faced with choosing that which is correct over that which is false. Too many believers choose a church because it provides convenient times, is at a convenient location, there is child care or we like the pastor. After listening to a great many teachers and going to several churches, I chose a church 2000 miles away from where I lived and I did not particularly like the pastor at the time. I eventually came to genuinely like the pastor and God eventually moved me a lot closer. The key was the doctrine which this pastor, R.B. Thieme, Jr., taught. He taught God's Word verse by verse, line by line, and often word by word. He said a lot of things that I didn't like, a few things that made sense, but he seemed to be true to God's Word, and that what was important. When you choose a church, the first and foremost consideration is God's Word—is it taught carefully and accurately. If all the pastor does in your church is jump from verse to verse, making points here and there, this can be very misleading. I can *prove* almost any theological stance by going to the Bible and lifting a few verses out of context. I recall listening to Gardner Ted Armstrong, one of the greatest public speakers of our time, but one of the most **doctrinally misguided men, going to Heb. 4:9, reading “There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God”**; and informing his viewers that we are to keep the Sabbath, which is Saturday. I have read Jehovah Witness literature where they portray Jesus Christ as a man, an angelic being come to this earth, and they quote various passages where He speaks from His humanity, e.g., “I thirst.” (John 19:28b). I have spent many of my youthful hours arguing with those who did not believe in eternal security, who used Heb. 6 to support this view, having not

¹⁵² One of the very best examples of speaking presumptuously was Muriel, the sister of Moses, in Num. 12:1–2b: **Then Miriam and Aaron maligned Moses because of the Egyptian woman whom he had married (for he had married an Egyptian woman); and they said, “Has Y^ehowah indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?”**

even a clue as to what Heb. 6 was about. Every pastor should teach primarily verse by verse. There are times when one must examine several verses. In my teaching, I will clarify and emphasize a particular verse in context by quoting related verses. Furthermore, a pastor needs a cohesive view of Scripture. The church did not begin in Abraham's tent; the church and Israel are not synonymous bodies; God has different programs for different times and His representatives on earth change somewhat from dispensation to dispensation. A pastor who does not have a dispensational understand of God's Word will mislead you. If you have attended a church for two years and have never heard the term dispensation in reference to an epoch of time and the running of an household, then your pastor is eventually going to mislead you, if he has not already (unless he never teaches out of the Old Testament, which is equally a crime). God's entire Word should be taught and taught by one who respects it as God's Word to man who does not have some individual program that he is trying to sell you on but is simply trying to convey to you the truth that is there. I would rather come to you and tell you that I was mistaken about this idea or that than to ever intentionally cover up misinformation which I have personally conveyed. If it comes between personal pride and accurately teaching God's Word, I would rather that I taught God's Word. If I have a particular weakness in my character (and I have many) and that weakness is clearly delineated in God's Word as a sin or a shortcoming, then I am going to teach you what is in God's Word, even though it castigates me personally.

According to the Oxford Gesenius, testing here is *permissive* rather than required. We have several instances in the Bible where God allows Satan to test a believer (Job in Job 1–2) and where He does not (Jesus told Peter that Satan desired to *sift him like wheat*).

We are tested for several reasons. (1) We are tested as a part of growth. That is, we are able to, on several occasions, stand against the charge of the butterfly, which gives us the strength to withstand the charge of the elephant (Ex. 20:20 Deut. 8:16). (2) We are tested for approval—God tests us, we pass the test, and we are approved by Him (1Cor. 11:19). This testing is often rewarded (James 1:12). (3) We are tested for our own personal confidence; that we might have more faith in God's leading (Deut. 8:2). (4) We are tested also as a witness to all of the angels. This is most often overlooked, yet one of the most important reasons for our testing (Job 1–2). (5) God has tested some believers so that their testimony stands forever in one form or another. For instance, Abraham foretold of the cross when he offered Isaac up on the altar (Gen. 22). This was a unique sacrifice, unlike any other required by God, a perfect shadow of the cross and the substitutionary atonement of our Lord. (6) And, finally, this is not the same as being tempted, which God does not do (James 1:12–14).

“You will walk after Y^ehowah your God and you [all] will fear Him, and you [all] will keep His commands, and you [all] will listen to His voice, and you [all] will serve Him and you [all] will cling to Him.” [Deut. 13:4 (13:5 in Hebrew)]

The figure of speech found in this verse, and in several like it, is called *synonymia* [pronounced *sin-o-NIM-ee-a*] and it is a repetition of different words in terms of origin and sound, but all have very similar meanings. Generally speaking, when one *walks after* God, they will also *fear* Him, and, therefore, they will *keep His commands and listen to His voice*; which means they will *serve Him and cling to Him*.

This verse is in direct contrast to believing the prophet who attempts to lure them away from Y^ehowah, their God. We can believe God or we can believe the lie. The Israelites, after seeing an incredible number of signs and wonders at the hand of Moses, ratified this contract between God and themselves. They have already promised to do this. However, as we know, they did not stick to their agreement. This covenant was renewed under Josiah in 2Kings 23:1–3. **Obeying God is not something which was for the Old Testament. 2John 6 reads: And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.**

This was the simple test for the Israelites—would they believe their God and His revelation to them or some prophet. The contrast is between the truth and that which is false. A majority of the people on this earth are not interested in truth; they are not interested in a relationship with Jesus Christ, their Savior. One female of my past acquaintance, who appears to have an interest in things spiritual, was raised Catholic. I gave her about a four or five page list of Scriptures saying that a person is saved by faith alone in Christ alone. To me, this would be the most important thing to know—am I saved? Can I be saved? What does it take to have an eternal relationship

with God? It would seem incongruous for a person to verbally acknowledge the importance of a relationship with God, but have relatively no interest in what God's Word says about it. Now this is a person who recognizes the Bible as being God's Word (at least, probably) and someone who believes in the trinity and that Jesus Christ is her Savior. However, she is not interested enough to read four or five pages of Scripture which explain salvation clearly—you would think that this would be an important issue to someone who had an interest in things spiritual. However, this person has never read past the first page. She believes that a person is saved by faith in Jesus Christ but believes that somehow, someday, there must be some works attached. If this is the attitude of someone who attends church occasionally, was brought up *Christian*, and has a professed interest in things spiritual, imagine the person who does not want to go near a church, who has no need of God? Man is an extremely corrupt creature. However, if we desire to know God's Word—if we desire to know the truth, God will make it available to us.

This partially explains suffering to us. Man, particularly when things are going well, often has absolutely no interest in God. If he is successful in business, with the opposite sex, with money, he personally attributes this all to his own abilities, which he acts as though he has earned and deserved. Sometimes, the only thing that will draw us to God is pain and heartache. It is the only way God can gain our attention.

“And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, will be put to death because he spoke rebellion against Y^ehowah your God (Who has brought you out of the land of Egypt and [Who has] ransomed you out of a house of slavery; to drive you out of the way in which Y^ehowah your God has commanded you to walk; and you will put away the evil thing from your midst. [Deut. 13:5 (13:6 in Hebrew)]

We have the noun *çârâh* (הַסָּוֵה) [pronounced *saw-RAWH*] and it means *turning aside, defection, rebellion*. This word is only found in Deut. 13:5 19:16 Isa. 1:5 14:6 31:6 59:13 Jer. 28:16 29:32. Strong's #5697 BDB #694 It probably comes from the much more common verb *sûr* (סוּר) [pronounced *soor*], which means *to turn aside, to turn away, to depart*. Strong's #5493 BDB #693. Notice one test for a false prophet—it is not can they perform some great sign or wonder which is visually impressive—the test is do they teach that which is doctrinal?

The penalty for leading others astray is capital punishment. We find a similar command in Deut. 17:2–5: **“If there is found in your midst, in any of your towns [lit., gates], which Y^ehowah your God is giving you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the sight of Y^ehowah your God, by transgressing His covenant, and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, which I have not commanded, and if it is told you and you have heard of it, then you will inquire thoroughly. And, if you see it is true and the word certain that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, then you will bring out that man or that woman who has done this evil deed, the man or the woman to your gates, and you will stone them with stones.”** Deut. 18:5: **“But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he will speak in the name of others gods, that prophet will die.”** Ex. 21:20: **“He who sacrifices to the gods other than to Y^ehowah alone will be devoted [to death].”** This is a law which is peculiar to Israel, but not one where the penalty is overly severe. If the people of Israel did not enforce the law, God often did directly. **Then Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet, “Listen now, Hananiah: Y^ehowah has not sent you and you have made this people trust in a lie. Therefore, thus says Y^ehowah, ‘Observe, I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This year you are going to die because you have spoken rebellion against Y^ehowah.’ “ So Hananiah the prophet died in the same year in the seventh month (Jer. 28:15–17; see 14:14–15 And Zech. 13:2–3 as well).** When a person does not trust in Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, whether he is from the lineage of Abraham or not, he will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. This is why God's penalty is so severe. However, as we have seen with capital cases, and through what is said in this chapter, capital punishment was always preceded by a gathering of accurate evidence and a trial. There is no support here whatsoever for mob action.

Satan has several ways of leading us away from Jesus Christ, today as well as then. One is religion. He cultivates in us an interest in other gods. Today we have hundreds of religions which teach that salvation can be acquired through works and self-improvement, some of which do professed obeisance to our Lord, although His work on the cross is modified by their doctrine and God's character and essence is been radically changed. The chief difference today is that we are not mandated by God to execute Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses or

Buddhists. We must allow them their freedom because we are not in a nation ruled directly by God with a system of laws designed by God (although the original constitution and our early system of law was pattern after God's Word). **What does the New Testament tell us to do in the case of idolatry? I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; not the immoral people of this world or with the covetuous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within [the church]? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves (1Cor. 5:9–13).** Those who are idolatrous inside the church should be put outside the church and we should not fellowship with them. Those who are unbelievers who are idolatrous and those who are outside the church and idolatrous, we leave them for God to judge and deal with. The Bible is clear as to what must be done. The persecution which churches have participated in is totally unfounded in God's Word.

God does use the wrath of man to praise Him and He works all things together for good. There was a great deal of persecution by the Roman Catholic church and by the Church of England in the 17th and 18th centuries which was severe enough to drive a huge number of believers to other lands, chiefly the United States. Soon thereafter, a sizeable slave trade developed, which shipped thousands of slaves from Africa to the United States. The result was a great client nation to God which was both founded by a strong majority of believers in Jesus Christ who, almost inadvertently, evangelized a segment of the population of Africans brought here who were positive toward the gospel. Only God could prevail in such consummate acts of evil.

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What If a Close Relative Becomes Apostate?

“When your brother, son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who [is] as your own soul moves you, in secret, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods;’ (which you and your fathers have not known); [Deut. 13:6 (13:7 in Hebrew)]

It doesn't matter who the perpetrator¹⁵³ is—whether as close to you as your wife or your brother or your children—whoever convinces you to follow after someone other than our Lord Jesus Christ. The phrase [wife of your bosom](#) presents a close relationship between husband and wife here, one known to most people today only through the romantic truth in their souls. The way to find and cultivate such a relationship is completely obscured by advertising, television and movies, and, to a less influential degree, books. Notice that there are three notable omissions in this verse: husband, mother and father. This was not an oversight on the part of Moses—not relationships as important as those. Even in a matter as grave as this, a wife is not called upon to testify against her husband or children against their parents (we have a similar tradition in our judicial system where a person cannot be compelled to testify against their spouse). If the apostasy of the parent or husband is certain, then it will be discovered outside the family and dealt with in that way. This also protected the parent from an unjust accusation on the part of a bitter son or daughter and the husband from the false accusation from a bitter wife.

The phrase [your brother, son of your mother](#) is not a reference to a step-brother. Although such existed at that time, far fewer than today, God did not design this directive for them. This phrase stresses the closeness of the [relationship](#). [Our relationship with God supercedes all other relationships](#). [Our Lord said: “Do not presume that I have come to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worth](#)

¹⁵³ My coined word!

of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matt. 10:34–37 Micah 7:6). We are in a spiritual war, a spiritual battle. The carnage and viciousness of it are beyond our imagination. The mass suffering of this world is a clue as to how violent and terrible this war is. This does not mean that becoming a Christian will automatically place you at odds with the emembers of your family nor does this mean that if you are ill-mannered, arrogant and/or inconsiderate that strife between yourself and members of your family is related to their spiritual shortcomings. However, there will be a considerable number of cases where we will have to make choices of a spiritual nature which place us at odds with our families. I grimace slightly when I say this. To the 1%—this is not justification for joining a cult with a very persuasive, charasmatic leader who cuts you off socially and emotionally from your family. There are times when some believers are separated from their families on the basis of a solid spiritual ground—however, cultic leaders who cite this verse in order to remove you from your family are taking it out of context of the times in which it was spoken. This applied to a very brief, three-year ministry which our Lord conducted prior to going to the cross. During that time, He presented His credentials as Messiah, He evangelized the nation Israel, giving them their final chance to remain as a client nation to God prior to the fifth cycle, and He trained the disciples, possibly the eleven least-trainable people in the world. The period of time helps to better explain our Lord’s words, such as: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:26).

“Out of the gods of the peoples who [are] round about you, who are near to you, or who are far off from you, from the end of the earth even unto the end of the earth; [Deut. 13:7 (13:8 in Hebrew)]

This is an interesting statement. It is hard to imagine the Israelites being influenced by heathen gods from half-way around the world—however, it is quite easy to see this activity occuring today. Our country, a client nation to God, is filled with people who pursue other religions, many from the far east. Satan has seen fit to try to influence them in that way. Conversely, the gospel of our Lord has gone unto all the ends of the earth. God has always been able to reach those who are His, regardless of isolated geographical location.

“You will not yield to him nor will you listen to him nor will your eye have pity on him, nor will you spare [him] nor will you conceal him; [Deut. 13:8 (13:9 in the Hebrew)]

To not loose the context, vv. 6–8 read: “When your brother, son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who [is] as your own soul moves you, in secret, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods;’ (which you and your fathers have not known) out of the gods of the peoples who [are] round about you, who are near to you, or who are far off from you, from the end of the earth even unto the end of the earth; you will not yield to him nor will you listen to him nor will your eye have pity on him, nor will you spare [him] nor will you conceal him.” What we have here is a very close relative who has attempted to entice you to pursue another god other than Y^ehowah. This means they are suggesting that you worship a demon. The first verb is ’ā^bvâh (אָבַח) [pronounced aw-^BVAWH] is a verb always found with a negative (except in JJob 1:19 39:9). In the Qal perfect, it means *would*; in the Qal imperfect it means *consent, yield*. Strong’s #14 BDB #2. The second verb is the common one for *listen*; often well-translated as *hearken* in the KJV.

The third verb is chûç (חָוַץ) [pronounced *khoos*] and it means *to pity, to look upon with compassion*. Strong’s #2347 BDB #299. When used with the subject *eye* it is a *personification*; that is, ascribing to abstract ideas, thoughts or emotions to either an inanimate object or to an object which lacks these things. It simply means *to pity*. “And you will consume all the peoples whom Y^ehowah your God will deliver to you; your eye will not pity them, neither will you serve their gods, for that [is] a snare to you.” (Deut. 7:16). It is almost easy to understand not showing pity to the degenerate peoples who occupied the land, however Deut. 7:13 deals with a close family member. That indicates how serious this spiritual battle is.

Châmal (חָמַל) [pronounced *khaw-MAHL*] means *to spare*. Strong’s #2550 BDB #328. Finally, the last verb is kâcâh (כָּבַח) [pronounced *khaw-SAWH*] and it means *to cover, to clothe, to conceal*. Strong’s #3680 BDB #491. This is your own close blood relative; under the dispensation of Israel, this person might as well have been a murderer.

J. Vernon McGee: *This is extreme. This is radical. This sounds like a foreign language to the soft and affluent society in which we live. It is a serious matter for a man to be the first one to throw a stone in the execution that would stone his own brother to death. That seems very severe, but ultimately it would save many lives. When the Northern Kingdom went into idolatry, what happened? Literally thousands of them were slain, and most of the survivors were taken as slaves to the brutal nation of Assyria. Wouldn't it have been better if they had stoned the false prophets who led them into idolatry instead of a whole multitude being slain?*¹⁵⁴

“But in killing, you will kill him—your hand will be against him at the first [to cause] to be put him to death; and the hand of all the people afterwards. [Deut. 13:9 (13:10 in the Hebrew)]

When this close relative of yours, even your wife, attempts to lead you away from Y^ehowah (remember, thi is the dispensation of Israel when Israel was a nation under God), then you are to lay your hand against them. This does not mean that you carry out the sentence of capital punishment. Your hand against them means that you turn them in and, if he is convicted, you cast the first stone. The result is that you will cause them to be executed. The hand of the people against him afterwards is the execution itself. **“On the evidence of two witnessess or three witnesses, he who is to die will be executed; he will not be executed on the word [lit., mouth] of one witness. The hand of the witnesses will be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward, the hand of all the people. So you will prge the evil from your midst.”** (Deut. 17:6–7). If there was a chance that the witnesses had lied as a group, this would make them murderers.

Back in Lev. 24, while the Israelites were camped out in front of Mount Sinai and Moses was recording the Law, there was a case of blasphemy. At that time, a person was put to death for that sin. **Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the sons of Israel; and the Isrelite woman's son and a man of Israel struggled with each other in the camp. And the son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed. So they brought him to Moses (Now the mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan). And they placed him in custody [or, prison] so that the command of Y^ehowah might be made clear o them. Then Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, saying, “Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him. And you will speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘If anyone curses his god, then he will bear his sin. Furthermore, the one who blashemes the name of Y^ehowah will certainly be put to death; all the congregation will certainly stone him, the alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, he will be put to death.’”** (Num. 24:10–16). you imagine how many actors, acrtresses and screenwriters today would have to be put to death for the same sin?

God exacts the death penalty. Today we feel that the death penalty is uncivilized. I guess the crowd who feels that way would call God uncivilized. I would like to ask that crowd where they got the little civilization and the little culture which they do have. All of it came from the Word of God, friends. Now we are moving away from the Word of God and folk think that is being more civilized. It is more dangerous to walk on the streets of the cities in the United States than it is to walk on the jungle trails of Africa. Why? Because we think the death penalty is uncivilized and so we have abolished it.¹⁵⁵ Some time ago as I was walking by night on a jungle trail in the mountain regions of Venezuela, I felt safer than I do in Los Angeles, although they said there might be a few boa constrictors around. And I noticed that nobody locked their doors. I wondered if they should send missionaries to us instead of our sending missionaries to them¹⁵⁶.

“And you will stone him with stones and he will die, for he has sought to drive you away from Y^ehowah your God, who is bringing you out of the land of Egypt, out of a house of slaves; [Deut. 13:10(11)]

¹⁵⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 87.

¹⁵⁵ This was spoken at a time when the Supreme Court had declared the death penalty to be unusual and unjust punishment.

¹⁵⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 88.

Like most of the commands of Deuteronomy (this is in the Qal imperfect, which often is a command in the right context), this is personalized to the 2nd person singular. The listener is being addressed. This is not necessarily the person they came to to lead Israel astray, but each individual listener to Moses. The justification for this procedure is the fact that God brought Israel out of Egypt—this is a unique relationship between God and any other nation. God and Israel have been married since this time and there will always be this union between them. Under these circumstances, Israel is not to play the whore with any other god—that is, not with any other idol which represents a demon (or demon corps).

For the 1%, this is during the economy of Israel—we do not go out a murder people of other faiths today. Even though we are a client nation, we are not ruled by God but by the three branches of our government and all of their appointed agencies. God's providence or God's hand in our lives and the fact that we are a client nation to Him is still quite different from the position that Israel held—God ruled directly over Israel during the early portion of Israel's history (until they required a king).

“And all Israel will hear and fear and they will not add to do like this evil thing in your midst.

[Deut. 13:11(12)]

Yâçaph (יָצַף) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*] means *to add, to augment*; and as an adverb it means *to continue to do a thing, again*. Strong's #3254 BDB #414. The Israelites would hear of one being stoned to death for an attempt to lead others away from Y^ehowah their God, and they would not make the mistake of committing the same spiritual crime (which indicates that capital punishment was used as a deterrent). The Word of God states this case again in Deut. 17:12–13: **“And the man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve Y^ehowah your God, not to the judge—that man will die. Thus you will purge the evil from Israel. Then all the people will hear and be afraid and will not act presumptuously again.”** See also Deut. 19:14–21 21:18–23. Although Israel was in the business of capital punishment as a part of its duties, such duties are not given to the church. We are allowed to rebuke those who continue in sin, but not to call for their execution (1Tim. 5:20).

Now, I realize that many studies have been done and some claim that there is not a positive correlation between capital punishment and a reduction of capital crime. However, there are a number of factors which bear heavily on this incorrect assessment. Also, if a state has, for instance, 2000 murders and only 3-15 people are put to death during that year, and those executions are of men who have spent a decade or two on death row, then that is lip service being paid to capital punishment. That is political expediency. Furthermore, our justice system is corrupt when it is easier to appeal a capital murder sentence on a legal flaw which took place during the trial than it is for suppressed evidence or new evidence which exonerates the accused. That is the pure arrogance of our court and justice system when they place themselves and their petty regulations legally above justice.

From Keil and Delitzsch's Old Testament commentary: *The fear of punishment, which is given here as the ultimate end of the punishment itself, is not to be regarded as the principle lying at the foundation of the law, but simply, as Calvin expresses it, as “the utility and fruit of severity,” one reason for carrying out the law, which is not to be confounded with the so-called deterrent threat, i.e., the attempt to deter from crime by the mode of punishing.*¹⁵⁷ In other words, the fear of punishment and the resultant bonus of its deterrent to crime is not the primary reason for capital punishment, but it is icing on the cake.

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¹⁵⁷ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 914.

What Should Be Done When an Entire City Goes Astray?

“When you hear, in one of your cities which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you to dwell there, one says, [Deut. 13:12(13)]

Now we are no longer dealing with a close relative but one who hears a public speaker or an individual, who may or may not be a close associate. Furthermore, this person who is heard is not the perpetrator of the crime. This is a person who has observed an entire city go into idolatry. Cities were to watch over other cities. The land was given to the Israelites by God—they were tenants and He was the owner of the land. Therefore, if a city misused the land—i.e., fell into idolatry—it was the responsibility of the other tenants, the other cities, to deal with the problem.

“Men, sons of Belial [or, worthlessness and wickedness], have gone out of your midst, and they force away the inhabitants of their city, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods,” which you [all] have not known;’ [Deut. 13:13(14)]

The men herein are described by the noun *b^elīyyaʿal* (בִּלְיָאֵל) [pronounced *b^eleey-YAH-ǵahl*] and this is a word translated by the KJV as *Belial, naughty, ungodly, wicked*; BDB gives its meanings as *worthlessness, ruin, destruction, good-for-nothing*. I prefer *without any value*, as it has a more degrading connotation, even though it means the same as *worthless* and *good-for-nothing*. The NIV renders this word with *wicked, troublemaker(s), scoundrel(s)*. This is the first time that we find this word in God’s Word. The key is that this noun is transliterated into the Greek and used as a name for Satan (2Cor. 6:15), who is the embodiment of lawlessness and evil. The original rendering is actually good, as it identifies the parent of the person found here—Satan is the father of those who lead others away from God. **Now the sons of Eli were men of Belial; they did not know Y^ehowah** (1Sam. 2:12). These men are more than lost—they are leading others astray as well. In the majority, this word is found in conjunction with *sons, man (men)* as in *sons of Belial*. (Judges 19:22¹⁵⁸ 20:13 1Sam. 1:16 2:12 10:27 2Sam. 16:7 20:1 Psalm 18:4 Prov. 16:27). When the Hebrew word *sons* is qualified by another noun, the other noun denotes the *nature and the character* of those spoken of.¹⁵⁹ *B^elīyyaʿal* is occasionally found apart from this phrase (Deut. 15:9 Job 34:18 Psalm 41:8 101:3 Prov. 6:12 19:28 Nahum 1:15*). Strong’s #1100 BDB #116.

This verse is an interesting linguistic construction. You hear from one person that another has advocated idolatry. So, in fact, someone may be telling you about their relative. Furthermore, an entire city has been led astray by this person. King Jeroboam was this kind of a man. **When He had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam ben Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel away from following Y^ehowah and made them sin a great sin** (2Kings 17:21).

John wrote: Children, it is the last hour and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not [from us]; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but [they went out] in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us (1John 2:18–19).

“And you will inquire and search and ask diligently, and, observe, the word being true, the abominable thing has been done among you; [Deut. 13:14(15)]

I have had to change the word order somewhat to make this verse sound smoother. Primarily, the subject of an Hebrew sentence often follows the verb, which is clumsy in our language. Notice that this is not a lynch mob. One person does not get you all riled up and you and some friends all go out and stone a third party. This is a very serious matter and it has to be examined thoroughly. What is described is a courtroom matter where evidence is examined and statements are taken. We will find a related situation to this in Judges 19–21. One cannot be

¹⁵⁸ You just about cannot find men of *less value* than what is found in this passage.

¹⁵⁹ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E.W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 503.

put to death merely on the statement of another. In the mouths of two or three witnesses will a thing be established.

On a side note, most of us realize that anything can be proven by jumping from Scripture to Scripture. God's doctrine, the full system of theology as presented in the Bible, never contradicts itself. The important points of doctrine can be confirmed by dozens of verses taken in context. The less important points can be confirmed with two or three witnesses. Beware of any teacher who has an agenda to sell you and cites one or two verses for each point. Beware especially if no thought is given to the context from which the verse is taken or to the dispensation which embodies that verse of Scripture. If such a policy would have been followed in Salem, there would have been no drownings or burnings of *witches*.

“You will certainly strike down the inhabitants of that city by the mouth of the sword; devoting it and all that [is] in it, even its cattle, by the mouth of the sword; [Deut. 13:15(16)]

If one person has led astray an entire city, then God's people are to go into the city and destroy it entirely. Recall that *devoting* means that they will all be executed. That which is *devoted* to God is destroyed entirely. It is never allowed again for common use (recall our study in Lev. 27:28; see also Joshua 6:17). **“For my sword is satisfied in heaven. Observe, it will descend upon for judgement upon Edom, and upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction.”** (Isa. 34:5). This was the Mosaic Law: **“He who sacrifices to the gods other than to Y^ehowah alone will be devoted to destruction.”** (Ex. 22:20).

In this dispensation, we do not descend upon an idolatrous Austrian village in the outback and destroy all of those who are there. We reach out to them with the gospel. In this verse, we are speaking of Israel, where all of those present observed the incredible acts of God—even heard His voice. We are speaking of a nation where God would regularly send His prophets to. God is requiring them to be faithful. When Israel pursues other gods, this is an act of unfaithfulness—an act of spiritual adultery, which is punishable by death.

Speaking of which, imagine the reduction of the broken homes and broken hearts if adulterers were executed. Furthermore, one might think twice, not only prior to committing an adulterous act, but prior to marriage, considering that an adulterous act would result in their execution. However, since this is highly unlikely, let's move on:

“And all its spoil you will gather into the midst of the broad place [or, public square¹⁶⁰], and you will burn the city and all its spoil with fire completely, before the face of Y^ehowah your God; and it will be in a heap forever—it will not be built upon any more. [Deut. 13:16(17)]

Notice what has taken place is that an entire city has devoted itself to a demon-god. This is just not a movement within a city, but the entire village was carried away by a persuasive speaker. The entire village, being under God, is destroyed. When idols are made, they are often made out of gold, silver and precious stones. These things are not to be melted down for use. **“The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you will not desire the silver or the gold that is on them, nor will you take it for yourselves, so that you are not ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to Y^ehowah your God. And you will not bring an abomination into your house, and become a devoted [to destruction] thing like it; you will utterly detest it and you will utterly abhor it, for it is a devoted [to destruction] thing.”** (Deut. 7:25–26). You may wonder about this—you may wonder why is it so important that all the spoil from the destruction of the errant tribe be burned. After all, even if they are in apostasy, perhaps this has only been for a short time—a few years; just how polluted could these things become? The key was to prevent one tribe from claiming that another tribe was apostate for the purpose of taking their things. This would be a very common scenario; a tribe is jealous of what another tribe has—they proclaim them apostate, attack and steal their things in the act of war. However, God would not allow that. Telling the Israelites that the spoil had to be burned removed the false motivation and greed which could have distorted this teaching.

¹⁶⁰ A rather loose translation—see also 2Sam. 21:12.

Israel as a whole would be likewise judged by God. “And they will burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. Then I will stop you from playing the harlot and you will also not longer pay your lovers.” (Ezek. 16:41). *Playing the harlot* is the imagery used for Israel pursuing other gods. And he [Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon] burned the house of Y^ehowah, the king’s house and all the houses of Jerusalem; even every great house he burned with fire. So all the army of the Chaldeans who [were with] the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem (2Kings. 25:9–10).

“And no devoted thing will cling to your hand, so that Y^ehowah will turn back from the fierceness of His anger; and He will give you mercies, and He will love you and He will multiply you, as He has sworn to your fathers; [Deut. 13:17(18)]

When such a mass execution was held, this could not be done in the name of greed. That is, a large band of men could not choose to invade another village, destroy them, claiming that they were idolatrous, and then enjoy the spoils of their victory. When a city was destroyed for idolatry, it was destroyed in its entirety. There were no spoils taken during such an event.

One of the most remarkable things in the Bible are the prophecies concerning Israel herself. We have seen how God has warned Israel that her peoples would be scattered throughout the nations for her disobedience. However, God is a God of forgiveness and mercy (which is the only reason you and I are alive today). “So it will come to pass when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call [them] to mind in all the nations where Y^ehowah your God has banished you and you return to Y^ehowah your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then Y^ehowah your God will restore you from captivity and gather you against from all the peoples where Y^ehowah your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there Y^ehowah your God will gather you and back from there He will bring you back.” (Deut. 30:1–4).

“When you listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to keep all His commands which I am commanding you this day, to do right thing in the eyes of Y^ehowah your God.” [Deut. 13:18(19)]

A small linguistic matter to deal with first, lest you think I am only attempting to be hip. This is the literal translation of this verse; it reads *to do the right*; since the adjective *right* is used as a substantive, *right thing* is appropriate and accurate.

This verse is a continuation of v. 17 and does not stand alone. Together they read: “And no devoted thing will cling to your hand, so that Y^ehowah will turn back from the fierceness of His anger; and He will give you mercies, and He will love you and He will multiply you (as He has sworn to your fathers) when when you listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to keep all His commands which I am commanding you this day, to do the right thing in the eyes of Y^ehowah your God.” (Deut. 13:17–18). Moses would often use a verse like this to indicate a shift in subject matter.

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Deuteronomy 14

Deuteronomy 14:1–29

Outline of Chapter 14:

- Vv. 1–2 **The Israelites are to be separated to God**
- Vv. 3–8 **Dietary restrictions: land animals**
- Vv. 9–10 **Dietary restrictions: animals of the water**
- Vv. 11–20 **Dietary restrictions: animals of the air**
- V. 21 **Dietary restrictions: miscellaneous**
- Vv. 22–27 **The yearly tithe**
- Vv. 28–29 **The tithe for the helpless**

Introduction: Deut. 14 parallels Lev. 11. Lev. 11 has already been written down; however, it has not yet been distributed. At this point in time, there has been no recorded directive as to what will be done with God's Word other than written down. The Ten Commandments will be kept in the ark of the covenant; however, as of yet, the populace does not know Lev. 11 except through, perhaps, the previous teaching of Moses. This is a list of the animals which the Israelites may and may not eat. The specific animals to which most of these words pertain have been lost to linguistic history. There are several reasons for this: (1) we are not under the law and what has occurred in medical history has precluded us from restrictions upon food; (2) some of the animals found in this passage are likely extinct; and, (3) this is a message to the modern-day Israelite: "If, indeed, this is God's Word, and you are to obey it and to keep the Law—how can you if God chose not to preserve the meaning of the names of all of the animals? In other words, how can God expect you to keep the obey the Torah when He has not kept consistent the names of the animals? Obviously, we are not to do each of us what is right in our own eyes." The answer to this objection is simple—the Old Testament has been fulfilled in the New Testament. We can scour the Old Testament for truth and we find an abundance of it; however, it is the revelation of the New Testament that all animals can be eaten. In other words, if the Israelites believe that the Old Testament is the end of God's revelation to them, then God has done them a disservice—He has given them commands which they cannot keep. However, if they believe that this is God's Word, then there must be both a reason that the dietary laws have been abrogated and divine revelation pertaining to this subject, which there is. **And on the next day, as they were on their way, and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry, and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; and he saw the sky open up and a certain object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all four-footed animals and crawling creatures [perhaps reptiles?] of the earth and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat!" But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." And again a voice to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, [do] not consider unholy." And this happened three times; and immediately the object was taken up into the heaven (Acts 10:9–16).** There is more concerning what we may and may not eat in the New Testament, and we will cover the remainder of it in this chapter.

Zodhiates gives three general reasons for the dietary laws presented here as well as in Leviticus.¹⁶¹ (1) These laws were given for hygienic purposes. That is, many or all of the unclean animals, no matter how prepared, were more likely to carry disease in those days; or they tended to have a shorter safe storage time. Therefore, adherence to these laws tended to cap the spread of disease through diet. (2) The heathen of the land had certain religious rites which were tied directly to such practices as drinking blood, boiling an animal in its mother's milk, the sacrifice of certain animals, etc. These laws served to separate Israel from the heathen population of Palestine. (3) The last reason I find to be the least satisfying: these are a set of arbitrary laws set up by God to test the obedience of His people. I do not believe there is anything in God's Word to indicate that God ever acts in an arbitrary way.

¹⁶¹ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; p 513.

The second portion of this chapter deals with the title of the Israelite which God expects.

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The Israelites Are to Be Separated to God

Lev. 19:28 21:1–5

“You [are] sons to Y^ehowah your God; do not cut yourselves or shave your forehead [lit., make a baldness between your eyes] for the dead. [Deut. 14:1]

Like the believer in Jesus Christ of the Church Age, the believer in Israel had a relationship with God. **For you are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus** (Gal. 3:26). **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God—to those who believe in His name** (John 1:12). **For all being led by the Spirit of God—these are the sons of God** (Rom. 8:14). The casting off of Israel is only a temporary thing; God will restore Israel to the land as He has promised. However, His promises extend to the spiritual seed of Abraham, those who followed Abraham in faith: **But [it is] not as though the Word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are from Israel; neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s [physical] descendants, but “Through Isaac your descendants will be named.”** That is, **it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants** (Rom. 9:6–8 Gen. 21:12).

Cutting oneself was obviously a heathen practice of the land. Much of Deuteronomy is a repeat of what we have seen in the previous three books of Moses: **“No one will defile himself for a dead person [lit., soul] among his people. They will not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh.”** (Lev. 21:1b, 5). **You will not make any cuts in your flesh for the dead [lit., soul] nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves; I am Y^ehowah.”** (Lev. 19:28). We find this custom in 1Kings 18:28 when some religious types were trying to get the attention of their god Baal: **So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them.** Jeremiah alludes to the same custom: **“Both great men and small with die in this land; they will not be buried, they will not be lamented, nor will anyone gash himself or shave his head for them.”** (Jer. 16:6). See also Jer. 41:5 47:5.

When an unbeliever dies, it is so tragic that his or her loved ones of that day would cut themselves and cut out patches of hair in sadness and despair. This is logical for an unbeliever to behave this way. He has no real hope for eternity. If his body and soul are a chance evolution of some murky nonliving swamp, from some primordial ooze which just happened to become a life form and just happened to, after five million positive cell and DNA mutations, turn into an upright human being, then when a loved one dies, there is nothing more tragic, because that is all there is. If our lives on this earth are here totally by chance, by some incredible act of nature, then what could be worse than death? So, unbelievers certainly would consider death of their loved ones a great tragedy and they would go through these various behavior patterns to indicate their great unhappiness and loss. The actual truth is even more tragic: if a person dies as an unbeliever, they are retain in torments until the last judgment, and then they are raised from the dead, their works are examined, and then they are thrown into the Lake of Fire, where their worm does not die. What could be more tragic than this? And all it takes to spend eternity in the presence of Jesus Christ, our Savior, is a few seconds of our lives where we, contrary to the choice of Adam, make a positive choice toward the one tree—the cross—which gives us hope. We need spend but a few seconds believing that Jesus Christ has died for our sins on the cross, and we are given the privilege of eternal life in eternal bliss. But it takes a conscious choice on our part. If we are not willing to take a few seconds from our lives and believe in Jesus Christ now—if our interest in relationship with God is so non-existent, if we are so negative toward Him that we will not spend even a moment of our time believing in His Son, then certainly we will have no interest in spending eternity with Him. Let me give you an analogy: if you don’t want to go out a second time with a particular member of the opposite sex, then it wouldn’t make much sense to marry them, would it? If you do not want to do the former, then you certainly do not want to do the latter. If your interest in God is

such an insignificant part of your life that you are not even willing to take a chance and spend just a few seconds of of your life to believe in Jesus Christ, then you will not want to spend eternity with our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I recall someone saying that when she died, she did not want to have this terribly sad, mourning funeral as the Christian fundamentalists have. Our personal mourning is that we will miss the person who has left us to be face to face with the Lord, just as if they had gone on a long trip. **However, we do not want you to be uninformed, members of the family of God, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope (1Thess. 4:13). For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up because of victory. “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, **Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1Cor. 15:53–57 Isa. 25:8 Hosea 13:14).**

“For you are a set-apart people to Y^ehowah your God, and in you Y^ehowah has chosen to be to Him for a people, a peculiar treasure [lit., a people for His own possession], out of all the peoples who [are] on the face of the ground. [Deut. 14:2]

Every aspect of the life of the Israelite’s life should be a testimony to their separation from the heathen who has no divine revelation. God has not come to the heathen and given him His Word, except through His Own people, the Jews. The Israelites are unique of all the peoples in the world—they were chosen specifically by God the Father, in eternity past, to be His people and to have a great purpose upon this earth as well as an eternal destiny. **“For you are a holy people to Y^ehowah your God; Y^ehowah your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the land.”** (Deut. 7:6). Therefore, the Jew is not to imitate the heathen, who are lost, because he is to be a light to them. Similarly, because of our family standing, we are instructed by God: **Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil does not understand God (12John 11).** Therefore, become imitators of God, as beloved children (Eph. 5:1). **If we are the sons of God and have the truth and if we are to walk in the light, how foolish it is for us to follow and imitate those who are in darkness. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1Peter 2:9 Deut. 10:13 Isa. 61:6 Ex. 19:6 Deut. 14:2).** Now would be the time to examine **The Doctrine of the Election of Israel—not finished!**

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Dietary Restrictions: Land Animals

Lev. 11:1–7

“You will not eat any abominable thing; [Deut. 14:3]

As a part of their separation to God, the Israelites had a particular diet which helped to preserve and propagate them as a people. This made them less likely to become diseased through the foods that they ate. McGee comments on this: *When the plague broke out in Europe years ago, the Jewish population was hardly touched by the plague at all, while a large percentage of the entire population died. So the people began to blame the Jews for the plague. Of course, they had nothing in the world to do with it, but their dietary habits and living habits had protected them from the plague*¹⁶².

¹⁶² J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 91.

“This [is] the animal which you [all] may eat: ox, lamb of the sheep, or kid of the goats; [Deut. 14:4]

These are the farm animals which God allowed the Israelites to eat. This is an expanded explanation of what God allowed the Israelites to eat. The list of clean animals in vv. 4–5 which Israel was allowed to eat was not mentioned in Lev. 11. These animals had already been mentioned several times in connection with sacrifices and eating of same, however.

“The deer, the gazelle, the roe-buck, the wild goat, the ibex [or, pygarg], the antelope [or, wild ox] and chamois [or, the mountain sheep]; [Deut. 14:5]

The ibex is associated with the mountain goat in Job 39:1 and its occurrence in 1Sam. 24:1–2 is at En-Gedi (lit., *Fountain of the Kid*) where there is now a wildlife sanctuary designed especially to preserve the Nubian ibex who live in the hills. It is a wild goat and the identification here is likely correct.¹⁶³ Barnes' Notes lists the pygarg as a species of gazelle, indicating that we are making educated guesses at the identities of many of these animals. Rotherham suggests that perhaps it is a wild goat. Barnes identifies the chamois as a type of antelope. The eating of gazelle and deer, apart from religious sacrifice and connotation has already been mentioned in Deut. 15.

“And every animal dividing the hoof, and cleaving the cleft into two hoofs, bringing up the cud, among the animals—you may eat it [lit., her]. [Deut. 14:6]

Animal here is in the feminine, as is the pronominal direct object, *her*, referring back to animal. Animals with a split hoof or who chew the cud (this means they have two stomachs, right?) are acceptable fare. Here Moses is quoting Lev. 11:3: “Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, and chew the cud, among the animals, that you may eat.”

J. Vernon McGee draws an analogy at this time. *Cleaving* has two meanings as does separation; you can cleave to something to be away from something else, just as you can be separated from something to be separated to something. An animal with the separated hoof symbolically speaks of our life of separation from this world and to God in our daily walk. The chewing of the cud speaks of ruminating and meditating in God's Word—the cow who chews her cud takes partially digested grass and the like and re-chews it to deposit in a different stomach. This is similar to our studying and restudying God's Word. The amount which I got out of the Law when I read it once or twice in the past is nothing compared to what I get from it now. This is because I have chewed and re-chewed this material. I have had it taught to me and now I am bringing it up and chewing on it again¹⁶⁴.

“Only this [animal] you will not eat: from those bringing up the cud, and from those dividing the cloven hoof; the camel, and the hare, and the rabbit, for they are bringing up the cut, but the hoof is not divided; unclean they [are] to you. [Deut. 14:7]

V. 7 is a paraphrasing and summary of Lev. 11:4–6: “Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these, among those which chew the cud, or among those which divide the hoof; the camel, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof—it is unclean to you; the rabbit [correct translation?] also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof—it is unclean to you.”

The actual identity of the second two animals found in this verse are unknown to us. They are identified by various translations as:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...the camel, the hare, and the coney...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...the camel and the hare and the rabbit...
KJV	...the camel and the hare and the coney...
NASB	...the camel and the rabbit and the rock-badger...

¹⁶³ All of this is courtesy of *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. III, p. 238.

¹⁶⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 92–93.

As we have seen in the past, majority does not rule when it comes to translations. Probably the only animal that we are certain of it the camel.

“And the pig, for it is dividing the hoof and [does] not [chew] the cud—it [is] unclean to you.
[Deut. 14:8]

The pig is probably the most famous of the unclean animals. However, in the dispensation of grace, we can eat bacon (just not too much). This verse appears to be a direct quote from Lev. 11:7, which adds an additional concluding verse: **“You will not eat of their flesh or touch their carcasses—they are unclean to you.”** (Lev. 11:8).

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Dietary Restrictions: Animals of the Water

Lev. 11:9–12

“This you [all] may eat from all that [are] in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales;
[Deut. 14:9]

This means that fish a kosher game for dinner. There are two visible signs required for a fish to be clean: fins and scales. It would be a theological debate whether or not fish sticks fall into this acceptable category.

“And you may not eat anything which does not have fins and scales—[they are] unclean to you.
[Deut. 14:10]

This lets out scallops, oysters, clams and mussels, not a major loss to yours personally. The parallel passage is a bit more expansive: **“These you may eat: whatever is in the water—all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers, that do not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you, and they will be abhorrent to you. You may not eat of their flesh, and you will detest their carcasses. Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you.”** (Lev. 11:9–12). Whereas we have more words in the parallel passage, the content is essentially the same.

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Dietary Restrictions: Animals of the Air

“You may eat any clean bird; [Deut. 14:11]

This diet would set these Israelites apart from the heathen and preserve them as a nation. Notice that there is no call here for vegetarianism, even though the original man and woman were vegetarians. After the flood, man was given permission to eat animals.

“And these [are] they from which you may not eat: the eagle [or, vulture], and the ossifrage [possibly black vulture], and the osprey [or, bearded buzzard]; [Deut. 14:12]

The scavenger birds, the garbage men of the wilderness, were not considered clean. The ossifrage is called a glier eagle in the ASV her and in Lev. 11:13. The root word here means *breaker of bones*, indicating a very large bird which possibly feeds upon the marrow of the bone. Two types of black vultures and the lammergeier (or, bearded vulture) are known to do this. The word for *osprey* is found only here and in Lev. 11:13 and it is thought to stand for the bearded vulture, as the word possibly is derived from the word for goat. They are said to drop bones, tortoises and other animal carcasses from great heights in order to break them open to eat the contents¹⁶⁵.

McGee tells of a personal story: *A few years ago I had a doctor friend, who was a legalist, tell me repeatedly that I should not eat pork. One day while we were playing tennis, I asked him, "Did you ever eat an ossifrage or an osprey?" He looked at me with a puzzled expression and said that he didn't even know what they were. I said, "Well, you sure better find out. I might invite you over someday for dinner and have roast ossifrage." That would be as bad as eating pork!" He said, "I didn't know that" So I told him he had better look it up, and I sent him to this verse and to Leviticus 11¹⁶⁶.*

“And the red kite, and the [black] kite and the falcon after its kind; [Deut. 14:13]

The KJV has the transliteration *glede* rather than *red kite*. *Glede* is a typo, where the Hebrew *d* is mistaken for the Hebrew *r*. With the *r*, the word means *to fly swiftly*. It is likely a reference to some kind of hawk or to a kite, two kinds are known to have lived in the Palestinian area. Kites eat both live meat and carrion. This parallels Lev. 11:14, except that it adds in the black kite.

“And every raven after its kind; [Deut. 14:14]

This parallels Lev. 11:15. I am not certain exactly what is meant by *after its kind*, whether it implies several varieties or just a particular group of ravens. The NIV renders this **any kind of raven**. According to ZPEB, there are four resident members of the crow family in Palestine: the raven, the hooded crow, the fan-tailed raven and the jay; and there are two winter visitors: the rook and the jackdaw. The raven will eat mean which is dead, dying or weak, which places it on the unclean list of foods.¹⁶⁷ The raven is what Noah sent out. It did not return, probably because it found some dead meat to feed upon.

“And the ostrich [owl?], and the night-hawk [owl?], and the cuckoo [or, sea gull], and the hawk after its kind; [Deut. 14:15]

The KJV begins with *owl* but Scofield and the NASB have ostrich instead. The NIV goes with *horned owl*. The KJV is one of the few translations with *cuckoo*. The NIV, *The Emphasized Bible* and the NASB all have *sea gull*. ZPEB indicates that there were so few cuckoos in the land that this was probably an incorrect rendering.

“The [little] owl, and the [great] owl, and the white owl [swan?]; [Deut. 14:16]

The NIV and NASB both have *white owl* rather than swan (KJV and *Young's Translation*).

“And the pelican [possibly desert owl], and the gier-eagle [or, carrion vulture or osprey], and the cormorant; [Deut. 14:17]

The rendering *desert owl* seems to go with Isa. 13:21. Cormorant is suggested to be incorrect, even though this is the way most English versions render it. The root meaning of the word means *to dart out after prey*.¹⁶⁸ Driver suggests this is a Scops owl. As you no doubt noticed, there ar very different ideas by various translators as to what these birds are. Since we are not under the Law, we are not subject to these eating restrictions.

¹⁶⁵ All of this paragraph is courtesy of *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. IV, p. 549.

¹⁶⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 93–94.

¹⁶⁷ *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. V, pp. 40–41.

¹⁶⁸ *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. I, p. 976.

“And the stork, and the heron¹⁶⁹ after its kind, and the lapwing [possibly hoopoe], and the bat; [Deut. 14:18]

It is interesting to mention the bat here, but this is a list of unclean animals of the air, and not necessarily just birds.

“And every teeming thing which is flying, unclean it [is] to you; they are not eaten; [Deut. 14:19]

This is a reference to insects, removing them from our dinner table, which is a law I try to live by. There were exceptions to this given in Lev. 11:20–22, in case you are interested, allowing the Israelite to partake in locust, grasshoppers and crickets.

“You may eat any clean bird [or, flying creatures]. [Deut. 14:20]

In general, the carrion and meat eating birds were excluded and the others were not. The heathen had no reason to exclude one animal or another from their diet. This set Israel apart from the other nations. **“You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you will not make your souls detestable by animal or by bird or by anything which creeps upon the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. Thus, you are to be holy to Me, for I Y^ehowah am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.”** (Lev. 20:26).

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Dietary Restrictions: Miscellaneous

“You will not eat from anything which dies of itself; to the visitor who [is] within your gates you will give it and he will eat it; or sell [it] to a stranger; for a holy people you [are] to Y^ehowah your God; you will not boil a kid in its mother’s milk. [Deut. 14:21]

The Israelites themselves were not to eat meat whose end was unknown or a matter of disease. We certainly know now that animals who die on their own from a disease can spread this disease to us. Furthermore, an animal which had died on its own would not have had its blood drained properly, as has been required by Deut. 12:16, 24. Finally, this meat was considered unclean to eat (Lev. 17:15)—therefore, there was a ceremony which cleansed the Israelite who eats of this flesh, which implies that in the wilderness they could eat of such an animal. The difference between Leviticus and Deuteronomy is that animal flesh would be quite scarce in the desert whereas meat would be much more plentiful in the Land of Promise. However, the meat which was not killed by an Israelite still could be sold to non-Israelites, if they so desired to purchase such meat. An animal which was not utilized in any way would have involved the loss of property, which would have caused the Israelites to be tempted to eat the meat surreptitiously. Giving them this permission in the wilderness would have been worthless, as their contact with Gentiles and travelers would have been minimal (in fact, it is likely that God shielded them from many caravans in order to preserve the Israelites). All of this indicates that these dietary prohibitions were primarily ones which insured good health, were symbolic, or simply served to separate the Israelites from the heathen. However, there is no inherent sin in the act of eating meat which has died of itself.

The prohibition against boiling a kid in its mother’s milk is also found in Ex. 23:19 34:26. I don’t know the reason for this, other than the NIV Study Bible suggests that it is a pagan ritual.

Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
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¹⁶⁹ Rotherham points out that this bird’s identity is quite uncertain.

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The Yearly Tithe

“You will in tithing tithe all the increase of your seed which the field brings forth year by year; [Deut. 14:22]

We have moved to a new topic altogether—tithing. When whatever is planted produces a yield, ten percent of this was set aside. This was the Festival tithe of Num. 18:26, which was exclusively a vegetable tithe.

“And you will eat before Y^{ehowah} your God, in the place where He has chosen to cause His name to tabernacle, the tithe of your corn, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the firstlings of your herd, and of your flock, so that you will learn to fear Y^{ehowah} your God all the days. [Deut. 14:23]

A tenth is brought before God to the tabernacle. However, the people ate from this tithe before God, the remainder of which went to the tabernacle. This had to be eaten before God at the tabernacle because it would have been too easy to begin eating the tenth at home and end up eating the entirety of it. This tenth gave them some provisions when they went to the tabernacle. Now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of Tithing—not finished yet!!**

“Yand when the way is too much for you, that you are not able to carry it—when the place is too far off from you which Y^{ehowah} your God has chosen to place His name there, when Y^{ehowah} your God blesses you; [Deut. 14:24]

Since there was going to be but one tabernacle, it would be some distance from many of the tribes of Israel. A tenth of their produce could be a lot to transport that distance. The blessing here has to do with the produce from the land of the Israelite, not with the expansion of the borders as one person has written.

“Then you will given in money [or, silver] and you will bind up the money [or, silver] in your hand, and you will go to the place on which Y^{ehowah} your God has chosen; [Deut. 14:25]

So they have the option of converting this ten percent yield into cash and transport the cash. Coins apparently were not in use at that time; however, pieces of silver in various weights could be purchased or traded for as a medium of exchange. Whereas this practice had been allowed as a matter of reasonable convenience, it became big business and the items available at the temple in the time of our Lord were sold at an inordinate profit by businessmen. It is possible that there was more commerce transacted there than the mere provision of items to be exchanged for the money from the selling of the tithe. **And Jesus entered the temple and cast out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer;’ but you are making it a den of thieves.”** (Matt. 21:12–13). Our Lord also cleansed the temple at the beginning of His ministry (John 2:14–16).

This does not contradict Num. 18:17 where the Israelites are instructed not to redeem their firstborn. That is, they could not go out and purchase someone else’s firstborn or purchase another animal to take the place of their firstborn. What had to be offered was their firstborn. However, since travel was now going to be more difficult for some, they were allowed to sell their firstborn and take this money and purchase with it a suitable replacement. In Num. 18:17, this would be keeping the firstborn and at the same time purchasing a replacement. Here, the firstborn is sold.

“And you will give the money for anything which your soul desires—for oxen and for sheep and for wine and for strong drink, and for anything which your soul asks, and you will eat before Y^ehowah your God; and you will rejoice, you and your house. [Deut. 14:26]

Once they arrive in Jerusalem (where the tabernacle is to be), they can spend this money on whatever they choose. Then their meal before God is to be one of celebration. This is a feast, not a fast. Lev. 10:9 reads: **“Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die—it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations.** My guess here is that the alcohol was prohibited inside the walls of the courtyard of the tabernacle, except as a drink offering (Ex. 29:40), although the allowance for the purchase of alcohol with the tithe money surprises me. However, whereas drunkenness is not permitted the people of Israel, the consumption of alcohol in general is. Furthermore, the consumption of alcohol has been with mankind for millenniums. There are many families today where wine makes up a common portion of their meal and alcohol is not abused. On the other hand, we have somewhat of a crisis in the United States with the youth hedonistically partaking in large quantities of alcohol, with the intention of getting drunk or getting a member of the opposite sex drunk. In fact, we ought to cover the **Doctrine of Drinking [Alcohol]—not finished yet!**

I feel obligated to point out as well that there are times when it is out of God’s will to drink if it causes a fellow Christian to stumble. You might be the most controlled drinker in the world, partaking in a small glass of wine once a month; however, there are circumstances where you would not partake in any wine. Simple examples would be if you married an alcoholic or were spending time with an alcoholic, either socially, on a team or at work. Then partaking in even small amounts of alcohol is not recommended. We will cover this in more detail in Rom. 14.

“And the Levite who [is] within your gates, you will not forsake him, for he does not have a portion and inheritance with you. [Deut. 14:27]

They are to feast on this ten percent and not to forget the Levite in their gates—this seems to indicate that they would feast with the Levites, as the Levite did not have a permanent plot of ground. **“And you will rejoice before Y^ehowah your God—you and your sons and daughters, your male and females slaves, and the Levite who is within your gates, wince he has no portion or inheritance with you.”** (Deut. 12:12). A portion of their gifts were to go directly to the Levites (Num. 18:28–30).

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The Tithe for the Helpless

“At the end of three years, you will bring out all the tithe of your increase in that year and you will place [it] within your gates; [Deut. 14:28]

So every three years there was a tithe, or ten percent, set aside for the poor of the land. It was not transported to Jerusalem but kept inside their city gates. It does not appear to be an additional tithe but substituted for the regular tithe (this is the teaching of Barnes and of Keil and Delitzsch). On the third and sixth years, the tithe is not carried to the tabernacle but it is distributed in their local community. However, I have seen this taught both ways—McGee and Thieme both teach that this is an additional tithe; McGee, in fact, teaches that the Israelite was on the hook for 30% of his income to God¹⁷⁰). I feel like some Rabbi teaching that this school of thought has this opinion, but in the opinions of Rabbi’s Charlie Brown and John Smith, we have the contrary opinion. When we examine this in detail, I will have to give you the correct version. Since we are not under the Law, it is reasonable to suppose that even some of the greatest Bible teachers of all time did not put in a great deal of time to come

¹⁷⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 95.

to their position. In fact, every Bible teacher depends somewhat upon what they had learned from another for some of their interpretations. Someone might pastor a church for fifty years, but that is not long enough to plumb the entire depths of God's Word. Some Rabbis call this the third tithe, but appears to be just a different way of applying the second tithe¹⁷¹.

In any case, this particular tithe was brought to the poor and helpless and to the Levite of their general vicinity on the third and sixth years. The seventh year was a Sabbatical Year where there would be no tithe and no celebration of the Feasts at the tabernacle¹⁷².

“And the Levite will come in, for he has no part or inheritance with you, and the visitor, and the orphan and the widow, who are within your gates, and they will eat and be satisfied, so that Y^ehowah your God will bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.” [Deut. 14:29]

This is a ten percent tithe for those who do not have a steady means or a sufficient means of support. Note that this is specific—not for anyone who doesn't work, but for the new visitor to the land, for those without parents and for widows, who may have children, but they are without a husband. Moses continually mentions the Levite, the fatherless and the widows as objects of compassion and with whom the Israelites were to share in rejoicing (Deut. 16:11, 14 24:19–22 26:12). No people are to forget the helpless of their land: **How blessed is he who considers the poor; Y^ehowah will deliver him in a day of evil** (Psalm 41:1). **He who is generous will be blessed for he gives some of his food to the poor** (Prov. 22:9). **“Learn to do good, seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.”** (Isa. 1:17).

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¹⁷¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 917.

¹⁷² *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, pp. 299–300.

Deuteronomy 15

Deuteronomy 15:1–23

Outline of Chapter 15:

- Vv. 1–11 **The Sabbath Year and the loaning of money**
- Vv. 12–18 **The keeping of fellow Hebrews as slaves**
- Vv. 19–23 **First-born animals and the eating of meat**

Introduction: Deut. 15 deals with the very peculiar Sabbath Year. This was unlike anything ever required of a nation. Along the way through the Law of Moses, a casual reader could surmise that Moses was this extremely devious genius to engineered this entire Law on his own. However, such a position would be problematic for several reasons. (1) The prophecy found in God’s Word, such as Lev. 26, could not simply be the product of a genius imagination. (2) It would be incongruous for Moses to know that he could not enter the land and allow his own people to do so. A power-hungry megalomaniac, upon his people entering the land, could not bear to allow his rulership to fall into the hands of another. Moses could have at least left himself sitting pretty on that side of the Jordan, but he did not even do that. (3) Moses could have exacted very high taxes to be paid to him directly or to his successor directly; however, the emphasis upon tithing was to the tabernacle and to the Levite. (4) Finally, there are laws and regulations, such as the ones found in this chapter, which would have no real function from the standpoint of human viewpoint. God has a purpose in the Sabbath year; God has a purpose in the forgiveness of debt—and these things transcend human motives and human viewpoint.

This chapter focuses in on a particular aspect of the Sabbath Year—the loaning of money. This logically leads to dealing with the poor, which leads to some Hebrews who will become slaves. There is a change of topic at the very end where Moses suddenly begins to talk about the first-born of the Israelite’s animals.

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The Sabbath Year and the Loaning of Money

“At the end of seven years, you will make a release; [Deut. 15:1]

In this chapter, we have the introduction of two new related words. *Sh^emīṭṭâh* (שָׁמִיטָה) [pronounced *sh^emit-TAWH*], which means *release, a letting drop of exaction*; and it is found only in this chapter (vv. 1, 2, 9) and in Deut. 31:10.* V. 2 will explain what it means, meaning that this is possibly a coined word. It is taken from a verb which will be found twice in this chapter, and a handful of times throughout the rest of the the Old Testament. Strong’s #8059 BDB #1030 *Shâmâṭ* (שָׁמַט) [pronounced *shaw-MAWT*] means *granting this release; letting something drop*. Strong’s #8058 BDB #1030.

We need a proper understanding of *at the end of seven years*. Just as we saw in Deut. 14:28, this does not mean that there are seven years and then the *Sabbath* Year. The Sabbath Year is the seventh year. This verse refers simply to the end of the seven year cycle. Although this passage deals with a particular aspect of the Sabbath Year, now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the Sabbath Year—not finished yet!!**

“And this is the manner [lit., word] of the release: everyone holding a loan [lit., every owner of a loan of his hand] [is] to release that which he has lent against his neighbor; he will not require [or, exact] [it] of his neighbor or of his brother because it [i.e., the manner or word of the release] stands proclaimed: the release with reference to Y^howah. [Deut. 15:2]

We have a very unusual verb here: *nâshâh*, which has two very different, antithetical meanings. It means *to lend, to become a creditor*; (Ex. 22:25 Deut. 15:2 24:10–11 2Kings 4:1 Neh. 5:7, 10–11 Psalm 109:11 Isa. 24:2 50:1 Jer. 15:10*) Strong's #5383 BDB #647; and it means *to forget*. (Gen. 41:51 Job 11:6 39:17 Isa. 44:21 Jer. 23:39 Lam. 3:17*); Strong's #5382 BDB #674.

Nâgas (נָגַס) [pronounced *naw-GAS*] means *to exact, require, demand*; the participle of this verb was used for the *taskmasters* of Exodus, referring to the Egyptian slave drivers. Strong's #5065 BDB #620.

The end of this verse is rendered in several different ways:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...for the Lord's release is proclaimed.
<i>Barnes' Notes</i>	...because proclamation has been made of the Lord's release.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...because there hath been proclaimed a release unto Yahweh.
<i>KJV</i>	...because it is called the LORD's release.
<i>NASB</i>	...because the LORD's remission has been proclaimed.
<i>NIV</i>	...because the LORD's time for cancelling debts has been proclaimed.
<i>Owen's Translation</i>	...because one has proclaimed the release of Yahweh.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...but hath proclaimed a release to Jevhovah.

This verse would certainly sound smoother if it ended with *the release of Y^ehowah has been proclaimed*; but that is incorrect. The word *release* is a feminine singular noun and the verb is masculine singular; furthermore, the verb is an active, not passive, stem. And lastly, *release* is not in the construct (from whence would come the *of*) but *Y^ehowah* is preceded by the *lâmed* preposition, which means *to, for, with reference to*. The verb is impersonal, but the subject is *word* or *manner* at the beginning of the verse—that is, what is expected has been just delivered to them. It *stands delivered* or it *stands proclaimed* to them—perfect tense. The point here is that Moses has just given these people the Word of God, which stands forever. They have no excuse for doing otherwise because what is expected of them, that is, the *manner* or the *word* of the release stands proclaimed.

Where else would you find a command such as this? Once seven years are past, then a debt is forgiven. In fact, the debt is not forgiven after seven years, but it is forgiven at the Sabbath Year, which could be just a couple years later. The Israelite was to forgive their debtors just as our Lord has **forgiven us all our transgressions, giving cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross** (Col. 2:13b–14). **Therefore, let us be diligent to enter into that [Sabbath] rest** (Heb. 4:11a). Barnes indicates that he thinks that this release from debt was only for that Sabbath year; Keil and Delitzsch concur. K & D mention the concurrence of Philo and the Talmud. However, let me clearly point out, whereas the Israelites themselves may have distorted this passage to give it a limited interpretation, that does not mean that this debt was simply put on hold for a year. It would not be that big a deal to lend money to a poor person and have one particular year that you didn't get paid, since you would receive the money after that year. The rest of this passage deals with lending to the poor even when it is near the Sabbath Year, and, if the lender objects to this, then Moses begins using the word *give* and not *lend*. The release from debt is more reasonably thought of to be complete and total. Furthermore, concerning the debt that we owe God, the unpayable debt: we have also been released from that debt in its entirety. Our Lord paid that debt. However, this was one of the many laws ignored and/or distorted by Israel (as was most everything to do with the Sabbath Year). As our Lord said to the Pharisees and scribes: **"And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? You have invalidated the Word of God for the sake of your tradition."** (Matt. 15:3b, 6b).¹⁷³

What I am attempting to do is to bring to you an understanding of God's Law as the Israelites were to understand it. Going to the Talmud and the Mishnah will occasionally provide some insight, but often these were commentaries designed to take the edge of God's Word—to soften it somewhat, to make it more palatable, as it were. Whenever possible, we allow God's Word to interpret itself. So, a quick summing up, there are several simple reasons why we know that this debt release is complete and total: (1) in the context of this passage, when a potential lender of money does not want to lend near the Sabbath (v. 9), then Moses uses the word *give* rather

¹⁷³ Mark 7 goes into greater detail on this particular passage. Apparently, this incident really stuck in the mind of Peter.

than *lend*, as that would be the essential outcome. By the way, in one verse, Moses will use the word *give* four times—you can't be too much more emphatic than that. "Did I say that you should lend to a poor person even while close to the Sabbath Year? Dear me, brother, I meant to say *give!* You did understand what I said, right: you will *give* to your brother?" (2) And the analogy of our Lord paying off our debt against God the Father in its entirety is not just a loan. We are not now obligated to be good in order to retain our salvation. (3) The traditions of man, which include the Talmud and the Mishnah, are often in direct opposition to God's Word. **See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form (Col. 2:8–9). For you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your vain way of life [received] by the tradition of your fathers, but with the precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless—[the blood] of Christ (1Peter 1:18–19).** And finally, (4) when a slave was manumitted, was it only for the seventh year? Certainly not.

“You may exact [or, demand] [it] of a nonresident but that which is yours with your brother your hand will release. [Deut. 15:3]

On the proper interpretation of this verse, during the seventh year, all Israelites would be allowing their fields to lie fallow, so that they would have no source of income and therefore could not pay their debts. A nonresident or a foreigner would not be under the Sabbath Year and would have the money to pay off his debt. However, the application goes much deeper than this.

The relationship between two believers transcends all other relationships. Perhaps you could understand this better if you examine this in the context of a relationship between parents and children. For a great deal of time in our youth, our parents will often indulge us with interest-free loans. At that point in time, we often do not appreciate it. There are times when a parent will forgive the debt of their child and not hold it against them, still giving them love and support. That is a family relationship. That is what we should expect of a parent. On the flip side, at some point in time, a child should repay their parents and repay them with interest, regardless of what their parents say. That is a matter of personal character.

What this verse teaches is particularly difficult because Israelites just did not want to follow it. Furthermore, its application is great and far-reaching. Paul will later tell Christians not to haul other Christians into court. After all, if we are the citizens of a heavenly country and if all of our possessions are a result of the grace of God, then what are we doing trying to take possessions from another believer? I recall two believers whom I knew who went to court over a dispute of around \$1000. Both knew that they were not to go to court and the most spiritually mature one of the two should have called it off, even if it involved paying money that was not owed. The case resulted in the dissolution of a ten year friendship and the person who was in the wrong received the money. However, the person who paid the money was the more spiritually mature and should have done whatever it took to stay out of court, even if he had to pay money outside of court. The full amount was exacted against him, I believe, because God disciplined him for not keeping this case out of court. As our Lord said, **“If any one wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your overcoat as well.” (Matt. 5:40).** No doubt that both of them suffered some discipline from God for going to court against one another. In Deut. 23:20, we will see that interest is different between Israelites than it is between an Israelite and a Gentile.

Now, what this verse does not require is for us to release other believers from indebtedness to us. That was for Israel during that period of time. However, case can be made for the release of a debt owed us by another Christian under certain circumstances. I have had certain tenants who I recognized as being believers who have moved out of a rental property, leaving it in shambles, owing me money. When I knew for a fact that person was a believer, I did not pursue it legally. I have had others who have moved out owing me money and I did not pursue it, putting it in God's hands, because they were believers. I would place it in God's hands to deal with their finances and mine (this is on a good day, mind you).

“Except when there is no needy one with you, for Y^howah will greatly bless you in the land which Y^howah your God is giving to you—an inheritance to possess it. [Deut. 15:4]

Now here we begin the verse with two Hebrew words which qualify or limit a previous statement. It is one thing to be in debt because you are poor and it is an entirely different matter to be in debt when you are wealthy. In the United States, some of the most wealthy men are greatly in financial debt to individuals and to institutions. These are the exceptions. When someone is very poor and owes you money, under the economy (or dispensation) of Israel, then their debt is to be forgiven. If someone is well-off and owes you money, then the debt remains. It is obvious to any of us which depraved minds that this would open the door to those without character to run up a huge debt to other people and then expect it to be cancelled every seventh year (some present-day bankruptcies are essentially that; in fact, there are some people, knowing that they will go bankrupt, immediately max out their credit cards). Therefore, those who have money and are in debt must pay it off, Sabbath Year or no Sabbath Year. This verse indicates that there would be times of prosperity when essentially all of Israel will be in good financial shape. *“And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.”* (Deut. 7:13). *“Y^ehowah will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which Y^ehowah your God gives you.”* (Deut. 28:8).

Now for some interpretation and application. The Bible supports capitalism and free enterprise; however, it also requires that we feed and support the poor. Passages like this which require the forgiveness of debt under certain circumstances helps to equalize the distribution of wealth. Whereas, there is nothing wrong with the accumulation of wealth, there is a line after which *what is the point?* If you are a Christian who is exceptionally wealthy, God does not require that you just give all of that money away. You don't cash in your assets and place tubs of hundred dollar bills in front of your house for the poor. However, when you are given a great deal of the world's resources, then you are under obligation to God to properly deal with your wealth. That in itself is almost a full-time profession. I have never entered the lottery because I am not certain that I want the responsibility of that much money. When God blesses you with wealth, then you have responsibilities and obligations to God that most of us never know. And when everyone you know stands in front of you with their hand out, it makes meeting these responsibilities and obligations even more difficult. Furthermore, you face a whole different type of temptation. When someone or some organization expresses undying gratitude to you for a handout and/or a crowd of people stands to applaud you, then you are in danger of falling into approbation lust and your money becomes a tool with which to obtain the approbation of others.

When it comes to applying a verse like this to our political system, it becomes difficult. The political system in context is Israel, which was ruled directly by God and they were God's people in a different dispensation. We do have some laws which find their origin here. I have mentioned the bankruptcy laws, which, for some people, are absolutely necessary. They attempt to start a business, they have a great many employees and obligations, they work 20 hours a day feeding this business, and suddenly the bottom falls out. Or a member of the family suffers a catastrophic illness and they either do not have health care or their health care will not cover them. Whereas, this in no way implies that doctors should not be remunerated, sometimes a serious illness can financially ruin a family. It is for situations like these that bankruptcy exists. And then there are some people who simply run up all of their debts as high as they possibly can and then go bankrupt to get out of paying them back. I hesitate to deal with the problem of those who become inordinantly rich in this life—whereas the graduated tax is reasonable in concept, our government wastes an immoral amount of money, often on itself in terms of benefits and retirement. Unfortunately, the more money which is collected from the richest of the rich will be simply squandered by those who have no financial conscience.

Allow me one more tangent, if you will. What occurred in Israel several thousand years ago is unique in the history of man. God has not since chosen a nation to personally rule over. Today, our solutions are spiritual and doctrinal, not political. We live in a democracy and it is fine to have political views and opinions and to take part in elections—however, our salvation as a nation will never be found in some politician or some program. Our salvation as a nation depends upon each and every believer to reach spiritual maturity. That will deliver our nation and cause great blessing to be given to us.

Finally, let me quote J. Vernon McGee: *Wherever one goes today, whatever nation one visits, one is impressed by the extremes of poverty and wealth. This is true in Europe, Asia, South America, the United States, wherever*

one goes. One one sidde o town there is extreme poverty, and don the other side of town there is extreme wealth. This is the result of the sin of man. If man had obeyed God in this respect, there would have been no poor among them; there would have been a balance of wealth. Until the heart of man is changed, socialism as it is practiced in the communist countries becomes the most frightful dictatorship that is imaginiable. Capitalism is still so much better than socialism; but whether a nation has socialism or capitalism, the basdic problem is the human heart. God called Israel to obedience. Had they obeyed Him, poverty would have been eliminated. We think that we can eliminate pooverty by funding poverty programs. And what happens? We see the worst corruption we have ever seen in this nation. It has become a disgrace. Why? Because of the kind of men we are dealing with. It is not the system that is wrong; it is the man that is wrong. There is not use runnning down one system and promoting another, because until you change man, no system will work. God is dealing with the nitty-gritty here, friends. The basic problem is with the heart of man. Whatg would happen if the wealth of this nation were all divided equally? Well, in ten years, the other fellow would have it and I'd be poor again. That is is way it would be becauseof what is in the heart of man¹⁷⁴.

“Only if you, in listening, listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to observe to do all this decree which I am commanding you today; [Deut. 15:5]

Their wealth and blessing in the land is tied directly to their listening to God’s Word and obeying same. And equally as important, Moses recognized that he was communicating to them divine viewpoint. That is, what he was saying was God’s Word. When various books of the Bible were written, I do not necessarily think that the author realized that what he was writing was God’s Word—however, Moses, when he tells Israel to **listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to observe to do all this decree which I am commanding you today**, he knows that he is communicating God’s Word to them. From the very beginning, blessing has been tied to obedience for Israel: **And He [God] said, “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, [then] I will place none of the deseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians for I, Y^ehowah, am your healer.” (Ex. 15:26).**

“For Y^ehowah your God has blessed you as He has spoken to you; and you will lend [money to] many nations and you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations and they will not rule over you. [Deut. 15:6]

God has promised Israel, if obedient, for a tremendous number of blessings. Does this sound anything like the Israel of today? Israel today has a phenomenal debt; a great deal of money is given them from other nations—chiefly the United States. This is not the Israel of God’s blessing but this is an Israel under great discipline because they refuse to recognize their Savior and their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. **“And Y^ehowah will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your animals and in the produce of your ground, in the land which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers to give you. Y^ehowah will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in th its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow...if you will listen to the commandments of Y^ehowah your God, with which I charge you today, to do carefully. And do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. For it will come to pass if you do not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you an dovertake you. Cursed you [will be] in the city, and cursed you [will be] in the country...Y^ehowah will send upon you curse, confusion and rebuk, in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroy and until you perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me...Y^ehowah will strike you down with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they will pursue you until you perish...The alien who is among you will rise above you higher and higher, but you will go down lower and lower. He will lend to you, but you will not lend to him; he will be the head, and you will be the tail. So all these curses will come upon you an dpursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey Y^ehowah your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. And they will**

¹⁷⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 98–99.

become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever.” (Deut. 28:11–12, 13b–16, 20, 22, 43–46). To gauge Israel spiritually, one only need look at the blessing or the cursing that Israel is under. However, do not ever make the mistake of cursing Israel, God’s beloved. We are never called upon to personally deliver the judgment of Israel. Look at the great nations who attacked and ruled over Israel: Babylon, Assyria, Greece and the Roman empire. Only the last had an extended time on this earth due to the large number of believers in the Roman empire.

One last note—although this verse has not been fulfilled and will not be until the millennium, there have been periods of partial fulfillment. Under Solomon and David, Israel enjoyed its largest empire and although banking had not been recorded, it is likely there was some lending to other nations. However, many Jewish people today have become international bankers. McGee mentions that the house of Rothschild has financed quite a number of nations.¹⁷⁵ So we have seen some fulfillment of this verse.

“When there is among you one who is indigent from one of your brothers in one of your cities in your land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you—you will not harden your heart nor will you close your hand from your brother in need [lit., your brother, the indigent (one)]; [Deut. 15:7]

Occasionally I catch myself watching a medical show and making value judgments over some of the street people that they treat and what a drain it is on the resources of the hospital—but that is my old sin nature prompting me. Every person has value in God’s sight. This does not mean that there is some divine spark within us all or that we are all inherently worthy of God’s love. The key here is that Jesus Christ died for all mankind. Some people are poor and indigent because this is God’s only way to reach them. This indigent person may have a tremendous future in God’s plan but is under discipline or under training for what God has designed for him. Each and every person has value because God died for that person, from the most despicable to the poorest of the poor to the least educated. This in no way removes human responsibility for one’s action, nor does it preclude law and Paul’s edict, if one will not work, he will not eat. There is a balance and charity toward those who are having financial problems is a part of that balance. **For whoever has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of god abide in him?** (1John 3:17).

However, in Mat. 26, the disciples, particularly Judas, were concerned about expensive perfume being used upon our Lord, when the money could have been spent upon the poor. On at least two similar occasions while our Lord was having his feet anointed with expensive perfume, He said, **“The poor you will have with you always.”** (Matt. 26:11a¹⁷⁶ John 12:8). Therefore this might be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the Poor—not finished yet!!**

“For you will in opening open your hand to them and in lending you will lend him enough for his need which is lacking to him. [Deut. 15:8]

The responsibility for the poor was required under God and required of all persons. The word used here is *lend* however and not *give*. A pledge of debt is exchanged for a loan. Although that will be dealt with in a moment, note what our Lord said in this regard: **“Give to him who asks of you and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”** (Matt. 5:42). **“And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is [that] to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same.”** (Luke 6:34). God had already said in Leviticus: **“And if a brother of yours becomes poor and his hand with regards to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a temporary resident, that he may live with you.”** (Lev. 25:35). Moses knows exactly what his listeners are thinking—*sure, I will lend money in year one or two, but not in year six when the debtr will be forgiven the year after. I may not get my investment back.*

¹⁷⁵ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 99.

¹⁷⁶ This is a marvelous narrative, where Luke covers this event from an entirely different perspective (and John covers a similar, but different event). Previews of coming attractions.

“Take personal responsibility to yourself so that there is not this worthless thought in your mind [lit., a word in your heart of Belial], saying, *Near is the seventh year, the year of release; and you do not give to him and he has called concerning you to Y^ehowah and it has been in you sin;* [Deut. 15:9]

As was mentioned, the operative word in v. 8 is *lend*. However, the seventh year might be just around the corner and you may not want to lend to your brother in need because then you will just have to forgive him the debt. Moses certainly understood human nature. The *heart of Belial* speaks of thinking inspired by the old sin nature. The person who thinks this way has sinned against God. So there is no misunderstanding, you do not have what you have due to great intelligence, personal ability, craftiness with finances, etc.—everything that you have is given to you directly from God. Your intelligence, the breaks, the proper timing, and the prosperity have all come from God. You are responsible for what God has given you. And now, the operative word in this verse and the next is *give*. If it is so close to the seventh year that the believer questions lending money to one down on his luck, then he is to give them from his own prosperity. There are people whom God has made very prosperous and part of their ministry on this earth is to quietly give money to churches, missions, radio programs which give out God’s Word, soup kitchens, and personal gifts to individuals. It is a difficult task because you do not want to give all of your things either to one who will drink it, put it in their arm or up their nose. You don’t want to give it to an organization the bulk of whose costs are strictly administrative having nothing to do with charity or getting God’s Word out.

Jews today, in attempts to follow the Scriptures, give great financial gifts to their nation Israel, a nation which receives perhaps more financial support from outside their borders than any other country in the world. These gifts certainly come from various nations, including the United States, but a great many of them come from other Jewish people living in other countries who have been taught to take care of their own. Christians should operate the same way. We should support our own and their should be a minimum of believers on welfare. There should also be a minimum of believers looking for a free handout.

“You will in giving give to him and your heart is not to be sad in giving your giving to him for because of this thing will Y^ehowah your God bless you in all your works and in every stretching forth of your hand; [Deut. 15:10]

Now God the Holy Spirit does not use the word *lend* but the word *give* is found four times in this verse. When the Israelite was close to the Sabbath Year, then one might object to lending a destitute person money. Moses makes it absolutely clear that when one is in need, we are to give generously from our own substance. What we have now is a gift of God and God will bless us greatly in all that we do and in all of our undertakings when we do give. If the Israelite is worried that his lending substance might not be repaid, then think of this charity toward another might as a gift. Moses makes it abundantly clear that it is God’s will to give to the destitute person. It is God Who blesses, not man and it is God who provides for us our own substance and God’s blessing is tied to obedience in this matter. **“At the end of every third year you will bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year and you will deposit [it] within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your gates will come and eat and be satisfied in order that Y^ehowah your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.”** (Deut. 14:28–29). This was not just for every third year, as v. 10 tells us to give when these people are in need. Furthermore, when harvesting occurs: **“When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you will not go back to get it; it will be for the alien, for the orphan and for the widow, in order that Y^ehowah your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive tree, you will not go over the boughs again; it will be for the alien, for the orphan and for the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you will not go over it again—it will be for the alien, for the orphan and for the widow.”** (Deut. 24:19–22). God’s order for today: **Let each one [give] just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver** (2Cor. 9:7).

“Because the indigent one will not cease out of the land; therefore, I am commanding you, saying, *You will, in opening, open your hand to your brother, to your poor, and to your indigent in your land.* [Deut. 15:11]

Notice that in speaking to the Israelites, those in the land are **their** brothers, **their** poor, and **their** indigent. They are connected to the poor of their land. The poor in their land are their responsibility. The poor in our own country are our responsibility. [How blessed is he who considers the poor; Y^ehowah will deliver him in a day of evil \(Psalm 41:1\).](#) [He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor \(Prov. 22:9\).](#)

This obligation will never cease because there will always be the poor of the land. Our Lord said, **“For the poor you always will have with you.”** (Mark 14:7a; see also John 12:8). There are politicians and human do-gooders who think that they can remove poverty from the world—or, at least from the United States. Whereas, it is not wrong to carefully give to these organizations, this will never remove the poor from our land. *Even in the best of societies under the most enlightened laws, the uncertainties of life and the variations among citizens result in some people becoming poor. In such cases the Lord commands that generosity and kindness be extended to them*¹⁷⁷.

Occasionally one asserts that there is a contradiction between this verse and v. 4: **“Except there shall be no poor among you, since Y^ehowah will certainly bless you in the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess.”** This is cleared up by continuing into v. 5: **“Only if you listen obediently to the voice of Y^ehowah your god, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today.”** As long as the Israelites are completely obedient, then God will bless them beyond anything they can imagine. In the situation where they are all prospering, then their in no need to release a debt. Paying back a debt is a sign of character. If Israel failed to fully obey God, then they would be under discipline and some would be in poverty. As I have mentioned many times before, God has a difficult time reaching those who are in prosperity. Those who are suffering heartaches and are in poverty, they are often responsive to God. So if God cannot reach us in prosperity and if we are not prospered due to disobedience, then He will contact us in discipline. A similar set of verses are found in 1John 2:1: **I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin...**

[Deuteronomy 11](#)

[Deuteronomy 12](#)

[Deuteronomy 13](#)

[Deuteronomy 14](#)

[Deuteronomy 15](#)

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The Keeping of Fellow Hebrews as Slaves

Ex. 21:2–6 Lev. 25:39–43

“When your brother [or your sister] is sold to you, a Hebrew or a Hebrewess, and he has served you six years—then in the seventh year, you will send him away free from you. [Deut. 15:12]

There is an ellipsis in this verse. *Or your sister* is supplied, due to the use of *Hebrew* and *Hebrewess*. This figure of speech sometimes indicates great emotion; however, here it is simply just shorthand, something which is fully understandable to the listeners of Moses.

I need to first point out that this is not releasing a slave during the Sabbath Year, but just at the beginning of the seventh year of servitude. A person was so in debt that they sold themselves into slavery and that owner sold the slave to you. In some way or another, a fellow Israelite has become enslaved. The owner is not cursed for having a slave and told to free the slave immediately. However, after six years of service, the slave was to be released.

Let me insert McGee's comments: *Today we hear a great deal about poverty programs. Man has devised many programs, but they do not work. God has a poverty program that works.*¹⁷⁸ This is an indentured servant program. We have covered the doctrine of slavery and it is quite an emotional issue for some. However, whereas slavery was not necessarily encouraged, there is nothing in the Bible to indicate that it is any sort of a great evil, as we

¹⁷⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 260.

¹⁷⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 97.

have studied in the **Doctrine of Slavery** back in Deut. 21. We have recently studied how huge numbers of Black slaves came to Jesus Christ, as well as a large number of their ancestors, as a result of being brought to the United States. A survey which I read indicated that a larger percentage of Blacks consider themselves *Christian* than do Caucasians in the United States, indicating that there is probably a larger percentage of believers among the Black people here. And the only indication that slavery is not ideal is the letter from Paul to Philemon, which was delivered to Philemon by his runaway slave. The runaway slave, Onesimus, was instructed by Paul to return to his master, even though he had believed in Jesus Christ. Paul requested that Philemon free Onesimus, but did not require it.

We have three different passages on the ownership of Hebrew slaves. “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he will serve for six years; but on the seventh, he will go out as a free man without payment.” (Ex. 21:2). “And if a brother of yours become so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you will not subject him to a slave’s service. He will be with you as a hired man, as if he were a temporary visitor with you, until the Year of Jubilee. He will then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers.” (Lev. 25:39–41). “When your brother is sold to you, a Hebrew or a Hebrewess, and he has served you six years, then, in the seventh year, you will send him away free from you.” (Deut. 15:12). So you may be wondering to yourself, *which is it? Do we set them free after six years or at the Year of Jubilee, which occurs every 49 years?* There are actually three different scenarios here: (1) The Hebrew slave is sold to you; someone else owns the slave and sells him to you. Under those circumstances, you are to release the slave after six years service. (2) However, if the person comes to you and sells himself to you personally, then he may be kept until the Year of Jubilee as the maximum time limit—which time limit is shortened if this slave is sold or given to someone else. (3) If the Year of Jubilee occurs one or two years after the purchase of an Hebrew slave, then that slave is to be manumitted at the Year of Jubilee. This Year of Jubilee took precedence. In any case, this directive was generally ignored: “At the end of seven years each of you will set free his Hebrew brother who has been sold to you¹⁷⁹ and has served you six years. You will send him out free from you; but your forefathers did not obey Me or incline their ear to Me.” (Jer. 34:14). What the Israelites did, is that they would go through God’s Laws and pick and choose between the ones they wanted to obey and the ones that they did not. Their theologians would write long commentaries, giving in depth explanations as to what could or could not be done on the Sabbath, adding to the Law of Moses; and then passages such as this would be ignored, taking away from the Law of Moses. This should sound familiar. How many commands of God do you know that you totally ignore? In fact, you might even try to be really good at obeying commandment #5 in order to get away with taking liberties with commandment #6. One Sunday school teacher, when he did not like any particular verse in the Bible, he would either say it was symbolic or it belonged to the Old Testament and therefore was not pertinent to us today. This is what the Israelites did. In fact, the context of Jer. 34:8–16 is that the Israelites freed their Hebrew slaves during the siege of Jerusalem by Babylon and then re-enslaved them when the danger had passed. People tend to object to God’s commandments when they either (1) go against their lust trend in their old sin nature or (2) when they go against their pocketbook.

“And when you let him go free from you, you will not send him away empty-handed.” [Deut. 15:13]

Furthermore, when a slave is released, they are not to be released with a *thanks and its been good to have you as our slave; good luck to you now*. For the six years of service, the slave is to be amply and generously reimbursed. Obviously, a Hebrew is a slave in his or her own land due to poverty. Selling oneself into slavery is a way of dealing with high debt or poverty. Therefore, it would do a slave no good to be manumitted without any means of support. Furthermore, when the Israelites left Egypt, God required that the Egyptians give them a great deal of their personal wealth as gratitude for four hundred years of servitude. This is apropos not just on a national level, but on an individual level. Prior to even buying a Hebrew slave, the owner is to be aware that when he sets his slave free, he must provide for him.

¹⁷⁹ The NASB gives the alternative reading *has sold himself [to you]*. Here’s the deal: in the latter three of these passages, the Niphal stem is used, which is primarily the passive of the Qal but has a secondary function as a reflexive (the Piel stem has its own reflexive stem). In Lev. 25:39, the context clearly dictates the reflexive voice. However, in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, there is no driving contextual force requiring the Niphal to be reflexive, so we take it as passive, its primary meaning.

“You will in encircling encircle [his neck] with regards to him out from your flock and out of your threshing-floor, and out of your wine-vat—that which Y^ehowah your God has blessed you, you will give to him. [Deut. 15:14]

We have a rare verb here: *ʿânaq* (אָנַק) [pronounced *ǵaw-NAHK*] and it means to encircle the neck with a necklace. It is found only here (twice) and in Psalm 73:6.* Barnes writes, you will *adorn his neck with thy gifts*.¹⁸⁰ Strong’s #6059 BDB #778.

The key, as always, is that God has blessed us and we should give of this overflow. The six years of slavery is not a bad idea. There are some who would need this as a start. There are poor and there are people from other countries who arrive here with nothing for which this would be a wonderful program. They serve as someone’s servant for six years, having their basic needs provided for, and then, at the end of their agreement, they are released with seed money or start-up capital, so to speak. This allows them a place from which to start. As most of us are aware, it takes a great deal of money to get an address, a phone and utilities, along with enough groceries to last until we can find a job and that first paycheck arrives. In an agricultural society, they would have to wait for that first crop. That could be a couple of years for any kind of reasonable production.

“And when you remember that you have been a slave in the land of Egypt and Y^ehowah your God ransomed you—therefore, I am commanding you this thing today. [Deut. 15:15]

The Israelite and their parents had all been under slavery—under a vicious, cruel slavery. They are to recall this history and to keep it in mind when dealing with their own slaves—particularly when their slaves are fellow Hebrews. They know what is right and fair and they are to behave in that manner.

God often required the Israelites to remember this slavery, as it pertained to their actions and motivations for their daily lives: And Moses said to the people: “Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slaves; for by a powerful hand Y^ehowah brought you out from this place.” (Ex. 13:3a). “But you will remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that Y^ehowah your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.” (Deut. 24:17; see also Ex. 20:2 Deut. 16:12 Jer. 16:14–15 23:7–8¹⁸¹ 34:13).

“And it will come to pass when he says to you, I will not go out from you—because he has loved you and your house, because [it was] good for him with you; [Deut. 15:16]

Now here is the key for a good household. A person is to be treated fairly as a slave, with love from all. In this scenario, some would remain as loyal servants. If this is beyond your comprehension, then you should not have authority over other people. In many cases, your leadership should inspire loyalty and love. Moses understands that this is a real possibility. After all, Moses was in slavery to God, as was Paul. God took care of all their basic needs, and they performed God’s will. Neither one would have traded this arrangement for any amount of money. Another reason is given in the context of the Exodus passage: “If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will belong to her master, and he will go out by himself. But if the slave plainly says, *I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man...then he will serve him [his master] permanently.*” (Ex. 21:4–5, 6b).

“Then you will take the awl and you will put [it] through his ear, and through the door, and he will be to you a servant indefinitely [or, forever]; and also to your female servant, you will do so. [Deut. 15:17]

One of the words found here is *ʿôwlâm* (עוֹלָם) [pronounced *ǵo-LAWM*], a word which means *long duration, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity*. Strong’s #5769 (& #5865) BDB #761. Here, it does not mean *forever* per se, but

¹⁸⁰ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 301.

¹⁸¹ These two passages from Jeremiah open up an entirely new topic.

for the entirety of the slave's life. Whereas there is no provision which would allow the slave to change his mind, the owner of the slave could change his.

Like it or not, this is sort of a brand which is done to the slave, completely of the slave's own volition. In many situations, the slave will live better and eat better with this family than he would on his own. It requires some wealth to own a slave because additional room, bed and food are required.

The piercing of the ear indicates a lifetime of servitude, as we find in the Psalms: [Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have pierced; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required.](#) Then I said, "Behold, I come. In the scroll of the book it is written of Me. I delight to do Your will, O My God. Your Law is within My heart." (Psalm 40:6–8).

The translation of the next verse seems to differ depending upon the translation you use:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	It shall not seem hard to you when you let him go free from you; for at half the cost of a hired servant he has served you six years,...
<i>Barnes's Notes:</i>	...he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	It shall not be hard in thine eyes when thou lettest him go out free from thee; for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee, six years,...
KJV	It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years;...
NIV	Do not consider it a hardship to set your servant free, because his service to you these six years has been worth twice as much as that of a hired hand. The NIV mentions that some legal texts may support the phrase <i>equivalent to</i> as a possible translation ¹⁸² .
NRSV	Do not consider it a hardship when you send them out from you free person, because for six years they have given you service worth the wages of hired laborers;...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	'It is not hard in thine eyes, in they sending him away free from thee; for the double of the hire of an hireling he hath served thee six years,...

So we have double, half and equivalent to to be concerned with. The first portion of the verse is fairly consistent: literally, it reads: [It is not difficult in your eye in your sending him \[away\] free out from you.](#) The next phrase begins with the preposition *kîy*, which can be rendered *for, when, because, that*. This is followed by the construct of the noun *mish^eneh* (מִשְׁנֵה) [pronounced *mish^e-NEH*], which means *double, copy, second*. We found the same noun back in Ex. 16:22 when describing the amount of manna which was to be gathered on Friday in preparation for the Sabbath (Ex. 16:5, 22). This same word is used in Deut. 17:18 for writing a copy of the Mosaic Law. Strong's #4932 BDB #1041. This is followed by the construct of *sâkâr* (שָׂכָר) [pronounced *saw-KAWR*] and it means *wages, hire, reward, remuneration*. Strong's #7939 BDB #1007. This is followed by *hired servant*, which is the word *sâkiyr* (שָׂכִיר) [pronounced *saw-KEER*]. This is actually an adjective which functions as a substantive (see Lev. 22:10 25:40). Strong's #7916 BDB #969.

[“It is not difficult in your eye in your sending him \[away\] free out from you, because twice the remuneration \[or, hire or reward\] of a hired servant. He has served you six years, and Y^ehowah your God has blessed you in all that you do. \[Deut. 15:18\]](#)

This is an interesting statement. The Hebrew slave worked twice as many years as the Code of Hammurabi required in order to repay a debt. However, this is now the meaning here. Since the slave is with them night and day, his service often amounts to double what a normal hired person would do. However, this is not the meaning here. Does he work twice as hard as the hired servant? No. Does he cost twice as much and therefore, the owner can hardly wait to get rid of him. That is also incorrect (why pay a new hireling twice as much to get the same service?). This verse explains the double reward which the owner receives: he received the service of this man for six years and God blesses him in all that he does. That is the double reward which is received—this is why the word *service* was not used; he does not receive double the service—the owner received double the

¹⁸² *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 261.

reward. In their integrity, God will also bless them. Now, we spent so long on this verse, perhaps some application. God provides for us our basic needs and often more. However, when we obey God, when we grow and mature in His Word, then he provides us over and above our basic needs. In fact, we hold out our cup and God pours until it is overfull. Furthermore, for every reward of God which we receive in this lifetime on earth, God provides us with even more in heaven—a corresponding reward. Our walk with God results in super-abundant blessing, beyond anything we can think or imagine.

Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
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First-born Animals and the Eating of Meat

“Every firstling that is born in your herd and in your flock—you will set apart the male to Y^ehowah your God; you will not work with the firstborn of your ox nor shear the firstborn of your flock; [Deut. 15:19]

The firstborn of all the animals of the herd and flocks are set apart to God—they are not used for work nor are they used for their hair (I don't believe that had been mentioned prior to this in the Law). They stand as a memorial to God's gracious provisions. This follows one of the earliest commandments to the Israelites: Then Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, saying, **“Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.”** (Ex. 13:1–2). **“You will not delay your harvest and your vintage. The firstborn of yours sons you will give to Me. You will do the same with your oxen, with your sheep. It will be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day, you will give it to Me.”** (Ex. 22:29–30; also see Ex. 13:12–15 34:19 Lev. 27:26 Num. 3:13). In fact, an animal sacrifice from the first of the flock had been a commandment to man since time immemorial: **And Abel, on his part, also brought from the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And Y^ehowah had regard for Abel and for his offering** (Gen. 4:4). The firstborn, with regards to Israel, look back upon God redeeming them with the firstborn of Egypt and it looks forward to our eternal redemption by the offering of God's firstborn, Jesus Christ.

“You will eat it before Y^ehowah your God year by year, in the place which Y^ehowah will choose—you and your house. [Deut. 15:20]

“But you will seek Y^ehowah at the place which Y^ehowah your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you will come. And there you will bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your voice offerings, your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. There also you and your householdds will eat before the face of Y^ehowah your god and rejoice in all your undderstakings in which Y^ehowah your god has blessed you.” (Deut. 12:5–7; see also Deut. 12:17–18 14:23 Lev. 7:15–18). This firstborn will be sacrificed, as Jesus Christ, the only-born Son of God was, and then eaten. Eating is often used as a metaphore for faith in the New Testament. **“I am the living bread which came down out of heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”** (John 6:51).

“And when there is in it a blemish, lame or blind, any evil blemish, you will not sacrifice it to Y^ehowah your God; [Deut. 15:21]

No animal with a defect was to be offered to God. **“You lamb will be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. And you will keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it between the evenings.”** (Ex. 12:5–6). Obviously, in order for God to accept the sacrifice of an animal, it must be unblemished and perfect, just as our Lord had to be completely without sin when He offered up Himself in our stead. In the case of the firstborn being defective in some way, the Israelites could eat it for meat—it just had no spiritual significance. Lev. 22:19–25 goes into great

detail as to what would be considered a defect. Lev. 1:3 and Deut. 17:1 repeat this command. One of the last books of the Old Testament covers this: “But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Should I receive that from your hand?” says Y^ehowah (Malachi 1:8a). Obviously, this was of some importance to be found in so many places in Scripture.

“You will eat it within your gates, the unclean and the clean alike, as the roe, and as the hart.”
[Deut. 15:22]

As mentioned in Deut. 12:15, 18, 22, the eating of meat with no ceremonial implications can be done within the gates of the city. The key was not the eating of meat, the key was the sacrifice of the firstborn.

“Only, its blood you¹⁸³ will not eat; you will pour it as water on the earth.” [Deut. 15:23]

As before, the blood is the life of the animal and we are not to partake of its blood. We have covered this in great detail in Deut. 12.:23.

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¹⁸³ A minor point: several codices, the a western onkolos, the onkolos of Jonathan, the Septuagint and the Syriac have *you* in the plural here.

Deuteronomy 16

Deuteronomy 16:1–22

Outline of Chapter 16:

- vv. 1–2 **The Passover**
- vv. 3–8 **The Feast of Unleavened Bread**
- vv. 9–12 **The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)**
- vv. 13–17 **The Feast of Tents and Summary**
- vv. 18–20 **The Justice System of Israel**
- vv. 21–22 **Prohibited Forms of Worship**

Charts:

- v. 1 **Ex. 10–12 in Chronological order**
- v. 13 **The Regathering Feasts**

Introduction: Deut. 16 begins by dealing with the three feasts where the males will come to Jerusalem, a city not yet named. The Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles (or of Booths) mark the beginning and end of Israel's feasts to God. The Passover speaks of God's redemption of mankind and the Feast of Tabernacles is the regathering of Israel. In between is Pentecost, which speaks of the great blessings of God to Israel and the giving of the Holy Spirit to the church, a blessing beyond measure. These three feasts (the Passover proper and the Feast of Unleavened Bread should be taken as one feast¹⁸⁴) in particular are chosen because the primary emphasis here is the exclusivity of place. The Israelites were not to celebrate these three feasts at home. God did not make any provision for that. No fewer than six times are the Israelites mandated to celebrate these festivals where God would determine (vv. 2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16).

Now the end of the chapter is somewhat disjoint. It finishes with some miscellaneous, unrelated laws and mandates.

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The Passover

Ex. 12:1–14 Lev. 23:5 Num. 28:16

“Keep the month of Abib and celebrate [lit., do] the Passover to Y^ehowah your God, for in the month of Abib, Y^ehowah your God brought you out of Egypt by night. [Deut. 16:1]

The Pharaoh of Egypt, during the time of the exodus, had hardened his heart several times, refusing to allow the sons of Israel, slaves of Egypt, to leave. God brought t plague ater plague upon Egypt, each one more dramatic and harmful than the previous one. The final plague was the death of all of the firstborn of Egypt. This occurred in the middle of the night. The only way a household could keep their firstborn from being killed by God was to

¹⁸⁴ **And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover [lamb] was sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, “Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?” (Mark 14:12).**

sacrifice a lamb and slap some of the lamb's blood on the door posts and on the door header (which would drip to the ground below), which symbolized the bleeding from the hands, feet and head of our Lord as He hung from the cross. Now it came about at midnight that Y^ehowah struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who ws in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his serfvants and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead. Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel, and go serve Y^ehowah, as you have said." (Ex. 12:29–31).

Now would be an outstanding time to cover **the Doctrine of the Passover—not finished yet!**

The leaving of Egypt by Israel was the date from which their calendar would begin. It is clear that the first day of that month does not coincide with the actual leaving but with the fourteenth day (actually night) of the month. On the tenth of Abib, the first Passover lamb, one per household, was selected (Ex. 12:3). "And you will keep it [the lamb] until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight." (Ex. 12:6). Ex. 12 describes what would take place at the first Passover when the firstborn in Egypt died and Pharaoh demanded that Israel leave Egypt. "Moreover, they will take some of the blood [of the lamb] and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it" (Ex. 12:7). I don't know if the first day of Abib corresponds to the darkness over the land of Egypt (Ex. 10:21–27) or the final meeting between Moses and Pharaoh (Ex. 10:27–29). It is possible that the first day of Abib corresponds to neither of those events, but is intentionally vague, corresponding to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the birth of our Lord. Abib, by the way, means *sprouting, green ear or ears* [of corn]. In later years, this would be called Nisan (after the car company) (Neh. 2:1 Esther 3:7). This is probably due to the dispersion and the Persian influence.

This portion of Exodus is written in a logical but not chronological order.

Ex. 10–12 in Chronological order

- (1) Moses stretches his hand over the land of Egypt and it is covered by a thick darkness; but not in the dwellings of the Israelites (Ex. 10:21–23).
- (2) God speaks to Moses concerning the plague of the death of the firstborn in Egypt and concerning the Passover (Ex. 11:4–8a 12:1–14).
- (3) Moses gives the Passover instructions to the people of Israel to take a Passover lamb (Ex. 12:3–5).
- (4) Pharaoh calls Moses in to send Israel out because of the darkness (Ex. 10:24a).
- (5) Moses and Pharaoh cannot come to an agreement concerning Israel leaving Egypt; Pharaoh's heart is hardened (Ex. 10:24b–27).
- (6) Their negotiations break down completely (Ex. 10:28).
- (7) Moses tells Pharaoh of the final plague of the death of the firstborn and leaves the presence of Pharaoh (Ex. 10:28 11:8b¹⁸⁵). It is obvious that Moses already knew, at this last meeting, what was to follow (Ex. 10:29).
- (8) Moses instructs the people to take their Passover lamb and slay it and to follow the rest of the Passover instructions (Ex. 12:21–28).
- (9) The Israelites do as Moses and Aaron instructed them (Ex. 12:28).
- (10) God strikes down the firstborn of all of Egypt, from among men and beasts, from the least to the greatest (Ex. 12:29).
- (11) Pharaoh sends a delegation to Moses to tell them to leave (Pharaoh does not get on a horse and ride out the camp of Israel and deliver this message himself) (Ex. 12:30–33).

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¹⁸⁵ Ex. 11:9–10 are a general summary of the previous few chapters of Exodus.

“And you will sacrifice a Passover to Y^ehowah your God, of the flock and of the herd in the place where Y^ehowah will choose to cause His name to temporarily dwell [lit., to tabernacle there]. [Deut. 16:2]

During the four decades of wandering in the desert, it is likely that the Passover was kept intermitantly, if at all. Considering the degeneracy of the people and the fact that God the Father had to remove gen X from this life, it is possible that the first Passover since Num. 9, which was the second Passover. However, the silence of Scripture concerning Passover celebrations which may have occurred in between does not mean that none took place.

Prior to my in depth study of the Torah, I had always thought there were various places of worship set up all over Israel where animals were sacrificed. However, for the three festivals named herein, the animals will be sacrificed only in the place that God would approve, which will be Jerusalem. The shadow of the death of our Lord will be tied to a specific place (see also Deut. 12:5, 26). Num. 9 presented an interim celebration of Passover, as the Israelites had not yet entered the land and therefore could not gather in Jerusalem. However, they were gathered together at the foot of Mount Sinai at that time.

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The Feast of Unleavened Bread

Ex. 12:15–20 23:15 34:18–20 Lev. 23:6–8 Num. 28:17–25

“You will not eat it with any fermented thing—seven days you will eat unleavened things with it, bread of affliction, for in haste [or, trepidation or hurried flight] you came out of the land of Egypt. [You will do this] so that you will remember the day of your going out of the land of Egypt all [the] days of your life. [Deut. 16:3]

Leaven is the Hebrew word *matstsâh* (מַצֶּה) [pronounced *mahts-TSAWH*] from whence we derive mazzah. Strong’s #4682 BDB #595. As we have studied previously, leaven represents the infiltration evil (because the leaven also will cause the bread to putrify much quicker) and here we are told that bread without leaven represents affliction (the Israelites were not to forget the affliction which they endured under Egyptian rule—which also accounts for the eating of the bitter herbs during the Passover). **Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth** (1Cor. 5:8). Therefore, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be celebrated without leaven (Ex. 12:8); in fact, leaven was to be completely removed from the household (Ex. 12:15). Also, as we have studied previously, the Passover proper is the first day of this eight day feast also called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These eight days are often grouped as just one feast.

The Passover must be tied to sacrifice, affliction and the absence of evil; furthermore, the animal to be sacrificed is to be without blemish. All of this points forward in shadow form to the death of our Lord on our behalf, His affliction because of our sins, in order that we might be delivered from the death and punishment which we so richly deserve.

“And there will not be seen with you leaven in all your border seven days and there will not remain of the flesh which you sacrifice at evening on the first day till morning. [Deut. 16:4]

So that we have the details straight—the night of the Passover, the paschal lamb was slain and it was eaten in its entirety—none was to remain the next morning. Passover had a narrow and a broad sense—it could refer to just the first night of this festival or to the entire eight days. For the remainder of the feast, they would slay sheep

and oxen from the flock or from the herd. The word Passover is used in a broad sense back in v. 2, confirmed by v. 3 where the Israelites were not for seven days to eat unleavened bread with *it*—*it* referring to Passover of v. 2. Obviously that cannot be the Passover lamb which is sacrificed on the first day and which is not to remain until morning—otherwise, how can you eat unleavened bread with something which is not there?¹⁸⁶

“They will leave none of it [the lamb] until morning, nor will they break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they will observe it.” (Num. 9:12). Once our Lord has paid for our sins, there are no more sins to pay for. We cannot think of some sins which escaped God’s omniscience and commit them. Jesus Christ paid for each and every sin and when we believed in Him, so we are delivered wholly and entirely forever from sin. The eating of all of the flesh speaks of the finality of it all. Once our Lord has died and once we believe, our salvation is 100% complete, nothing more to do, nothing more to add.

“You will not be able to sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you; [Deut. 16:5]

In this verse, we have an apparent contradiction to Ex. 12:7, which seems to indicate that the Passover lamb would be killed at home. “And you will keep it [the paschal lamb] until the fourteenth day of the same month; then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. Moreover, they will take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.” (Ex. 12:6–7). It would be rather inconvenient to kill the animal at the tabernacle and then drag it back home and sacrifice it there. However, the context of Exodus is the Israelites are still living in Egypt—there is no tabernacle, they are about to leave Egypt, and this is a ceremony to mark their leaving. They had no centralized place of worship. The passage before us speaks of the Passover which will be celebrated in the land once the Israelites are scattered throughout the land. So, certainly, these two passages contradict one another because they are ceremonial instructions for different times and places.

Our Lord died one time in one place for all mankind. That cannot be improved upon. There is no other savior and there is no other sacrifice. The Israelites were not allowed to offer any sacrifices apart from those to be offered in Jerusalem. This was a tradition which remained with the Israelites throughout the next century and a half. **And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem** (John 2:13).

“Except at the place which Y^ehowah your God will choose to cause His name to temporarily dwell [lit., tabernacle]—there, you will sacrifice the Passover in the evening at the going down [lit., going in] of the sun, the anniversary [lit., predetermined time] of your coming out of Egypt. [Deut. 16:6]

Môw’êd (מוֹעֵד) [pronounced *moh-GADE*] means *a specific time, a pre-determined time, an appointed time*, as we find in Gen. 1:4 17:21 18:14 21:2. It is incorrectly rendered *feast* in Lev. 23:2, where we studied this word. This was an *appointed time* which the Jews would set aside to worship God by the Passover. The NIV renders this word *anniversary*. In this context, the predetermined time refers both to the time of the day and to the yearly celebration of the Passover. Strong’s #4150 BDB #417.

For those who give these things some thought, the sun does not *rise* nor does it *set*—although scientists of all disciplines will use those expressions. It is a figure of speech; similarly, the sun does not *go in*—that is simply an ancient figure of speech replaced by our figure of speech, the *setting* of the sun. My point here is that this is not an intended scientific inaccuracy but a common idiom to communicate information which does not pertain to science.

The Bible, on occasion, does divulge scientific information which should surprise the layman. For instance, Isaiah wrote: **He sits upon the sphere of the earth** in Isa. 40:22. Prov. 8:27 reads: **He set a sphere upon the face of the depth** (a reference to the oceans). Whereas the earth being round is not recent knowledge—the Greeks had

¹⁸⁶ This reasoning is all courtesy of Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 1, p. 921.

determined the circumference of the earth either during or immediately prior to the third century BC—these two passages, one where the earth is seen as a sphere, dates back to 700 BC; and Proverbs, which reveals that the oceans are spherical, was written even earlier—during the tenth century BC. And, while we are on the subject of such things, the second oldest book of the Bible, Job, who wrote prior to the formation of the nation Israel and was likely a contemporary of Abraham (give or take a couple hundred years) wrote: **He [God] hangs the earth upon nothing** (Job 26:7b). Jesus Christ created the heavens and the earth and God the Holy Spirit is the Divine author of the Bible. These members of the Godhead fully understand even the most abstruse and complex facet of science, as scientific laws were invented by God (the phrase, *scientific laws*, is a misnomer, as science did not originate these laws nor does science enforce these laws). Therefore, now and again, a scientific fact will be entered into Scripture. These scientific allusions which we find, which number several dozen, are sprinkled throughout Scripture as evidence of divine authorship. All these various laws of physics and astronomy have been invented by God and will be superceded almost in their entirety when God creates a new heavens and a new earth¹⁸⁷.

The Passover was also a memorial to God's deliverance from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. And, the slavery of the Israelite in Egypt, speaks to our slavery to the old sin nature here on this earth. It is the Passover of Jesus Christ, His death upon the cross, which frees us from our old sin natures, both temporarily and ultimately, and frees us from the curse of this earth. Thieme refers to us as being in a slave market of sin. We have an indwelling old sin nature, we have committed personal sins and Adam's sin has been imputed to us. That is, we are born with two strikes against us and after a very short time on this earth, we commit personal sins. We are trapped in this slave market of sin. Just as a slave cannot purchase himself from the slave market, we have no means whatsoever to remove ourselves from this threefold stain of sin. In fact, no other person who is also in this slave market, can purchase us. It requires someone from outside the slave market of sin, to purchase us. This is what Moses did in shadow form. His dual personage as Egyptian royalty and Jewish ancestry, speaks of the dual nature of our Lord—**for in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form** (Col. 2:9). Egypt is a shadow, or a symbol, of the earth wherein we are trapped and the sons of Israel are those whom God has known in eternity past. God, through a savior, a man from outside the slave market of sin, but one who is fully human (an Israelite), a man who has a dual nature, Egyptian royalty and Jewish heritage, delivers all of Israel from the house of slavery. The Bible, throughout both the Old and New Testaments, continually uses the symbols of purchasing slaves from a slave market. **"I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed [or, purchased] you."** (Isa. 44:22). **For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man—the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom [or, payment] for all, the testimony at his proper time** (1Tim. 2:5–6). **Christ purchased us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it stands written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree** (Gal. 3:13 Deut. 21:23). **Knowing that you were not purchased with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers but with precious blood, as of an unblemished lamb and spotless, [the blood of] Christ** (1Peter 1:18–19). **For He [God] received us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son by means of Whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins. And He [Jesus Christ] is the exact image of the invisible God, firstborn with reference to all creation. For by Him all things were created, [both] in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or constituted authorities or rulers or powers—all things have been created by Him and for Him [i.e., for His purpose]. And He is before all things in by means of Him all things exist. He is also the head of the body, the church, and He is the first cause, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself become the holder—first place in everything. For it was [God's] good pleasure for all the fullness to [permanently] dwell in Him. And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind by means of evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you by means of His fleshly body through death in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach** (Col. 1:13–22)¹⁸⁸.

"And you will seethe and eat in the place in which Y^ehowah your God has chosen; and in the morning you will return to your tents. [Deut. 16:7]

¹⁸⁷ For those who are interested, *Science and the Bible*, by Henry Morris, ©1986, Moody Press, is one of the many books which deal with the various scientific truths found in Scripture.

¹⁸⁸ Let me refer you to R.B. Thieme's booklet, *The Slave Market of Sin*, ©1994 available through R.B. Thieme, Jr. Ministries, in Houston Texas.

The Passover was the first day of a week-long (actually, an eight-day) Feast—the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was to be celebrated with sacrifices only where God chose (Jerusalem) so they would have to have some place to dwell. Much of the celebration and sacrificing would take place within the walls of the courtyard of the tabernacle so that the Israelites would have to set up their tents nearby. Here we have some sort of a night vigil, in memory of leaving Egypt in the middle of the night and due to the large number of sacrifices which would be offered. **“And that night they will eat the flesh, roasted with fire, furthermore, they will eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.”** (Ex. 12:8). The burning of the flesh of the lamb speaks of the judgment of our Lord for our sins. The unleavened bread speaks of salvation undiluted by false doctrine and human viewpoint; and the bitter herbs speaks of the bitter judgment of our Lord, Who, in His humanity, cried out to God the Father the night in which He was betrayed, **“Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet, not My will, but Yours be done.”** (Luke 22:42).

One of the apparent contradictions which I found is not mentioned in my study materials. The word usually translated *cook* is actually *bâshal* (בָּשַׁל) [pronounced *baw-SHAHL*] and it is translated *boil* in Ex. 12:9—and Ex. 12:9 says **not** to boil the lamb. And, the difference between the two words is not the stem, although in Deut. 16:7 it is in the Piel stem and in Ex. 12:8 it is found in the Pual stem. The only difference here is Pual is the passive of the Piel. However, there are ways of causing meat to seethe. It can seethe in liquid—that is, in its mother’s milk or in water, which is forbidden by Ex. 12:8; or it can *seethe* in fire, which is required. A consistent translation, using neither *cook* nor *boil* would have solved this problem. Strong’s #1310 BDB #143

“You will eat unleavened bread for six days and on the seventh day, a solemn assembly¹⁸⁹ to Y^ehowah your God—you will do no work. [Deut. 16:8]

In case you read along in *Young’s Translation*, you will notice that instead of the word *solemn assembly* there is the word *restraint*; the verb for *restrain* is very similar to the noun for *solemn assembly*. **“For seven days you will present an offering by fire to Y^ehowah. On the eighth day you will have a holy convocation and present an offering by first to Y^ehowah; it is an assembly. You will do no laborious work.”** (Lev. 23:36).

The reason that they did not use leaven, historically, apart from the symbol of corruption, is that the Israelites left Egypt in such a hurry (Ex. 12:11) that they had no time to leaven their bread (Ex. 12:39). Therefore, in looking back at their leaving Egypt, they ate unleavened bread for seven days.

This not only pointed forward to the sacrifice of our Lord on the cross, but was the historical backdrop to the final week prior to the cross. **Now, on the first [day] of the [Feast of] Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?”** (Matt. 26:18). This particular feast day is also the backdrop for one of the only incidents known of our Lord’s childhood. **And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every years at the Feast of the Passover. And when He become twelve, they went up according to the custom of the Feast; and, as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy, Jesus, stayed behind in Jerusalem.** And His parents were unaware of it, but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day’s journey; and they [began] looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him. And it came to pass about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. And when they saw Him, they were astonished, and His mother said to Him, “Child, why have You treated us this way? Look, Your father and I are looking for You.” And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in the sphere of My Father?” And they did not understand the statement which He had spoken to them (Luke 2:41–50). And, finally, this is the historical background for the first cleansing of the temple. **And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money-changers seated, and He made a scourge of cords, and drove [them] all out of the temple, with their sheep and oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves, He said, “Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise.”** (John 2:13–16).

¹⁸⁹ The NIV calls this a *closing assembly*.

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The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)

Ex. 23:16 34:22 Lev. 23:15–21 Num. 28:26–31

“You will number seven weeks to yourself; you will begin to number seven weeks from the beginning of the harvest [lit., from the beginning of the sickle among the standing corn]. [Deut. 16:9]

Seven weeks is forty-nine days; the next day would be a Sabbath, which occurred fifty days after second Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread Sabbath. The Greek word for *fifty* is *pentêcostê* (πεντηκοστή) [pronounced *pen-tay-kahs-TAY*]. So this is from whence we got our word *Pentecost*. This is the time of Pentecost; it was during this time that our Lord walked upon the earth in a resurrection body. He arose from the dead three days after the cross. **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and He was buried and He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures. Furthermore, He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the Apostles; and last of all, as it were, to one untimely born, He appeared to me also** (1Cor. 15:3b–8). All except for the final appearance to the Apostle Paul, our Lord appeared to the others during this period of the first six of these seven weeks. **To these [Apostles] he also** presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which, you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:3–5, 9). The Apostles had about a week of time, during which, instead of waiting on God, tried to help God by holding a bogus election for the replacement for Judas. **And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place** (Acts 2:1).

Our Lord trained the Apostles to be fishers of men, to go out and harvest those which are His during His earthly ministry. These are those who were harvesting during the seven weeks. Also analogous to this are the Israelites, who are the first harvest.

“And you will make the Feast of Weeks to Y^ehowah your God, a tribute of a free-will offering of your hand, which you will give, as Y^ehowah your God blesses you. [Deut. 16:10]

The Feast of Weeks is Pentecost. They celebrate this feast as God blesses them. Although mentioned several times in the Torah, we rarely hear about it after that (in fact, I believe the only other specific mentions of this feast are in Acts 2:1 20:16 1Cor. 16:8). It is no coincidence that most of the references in the Bible, after this feast is set up by the Torah, are found in the New Testament, post-gospels. This is because this particular feast is prophetically tied to the Church Age more than it is tied to Israel. Similarly, as we have seen, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is found most often in the gospels, as that feast is tied directly to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It appears as though nothing in this passage really adds to our knowledge of this ceremony, except those things which Moses has already emphasized throughout this chapter: (1) this is to be celebrated by the entire family and by their servants; (2) the enjoyment of this festival should be extended to the poor and to the Levites; and, (3) this is to take place only where God chooses for the tabernacle to stay.

Notice how strongly this verse emphasizes the freewill offering—where the believer gives as God has blessed him. Therefore, this most closely parallels New Testament giving. **Now this: he who sows sparingly will also reap**

sparingly and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Let each one just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed. Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything because of your generosity, which, through us, is producing thanksgiving to God (2Cor. 9:6–8, 10–11).

“And you will rejoice before Y^ehowah your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male slave and your female slave and the Levite who [is] in your gates, and the temorary resident and the orphans and the widow, who [are] in your midst in the place which Y^ehowah your God has chosen to cause His name to dwell [lit., tabernacle] there. [Deut. 16:11]

Salvation and the spiritual life is designed for all of mankind. No one was to be left out. Gender, social status, nationality, clergy or laymen were all a part of the festivities. This is a continuing theme in this portion of Deuteronomy (Deut. 12:7, 12 14:29). The entire family and all those whom God has brought to Israel will celebrate this feast of Pentecost together. One of God’s purposes in slavery is evangelization and those who were slaves in Israel were brought there to be evenagelized, even if that was not the human viewpoint purpose of making them indentured servants in the first place.

Although there will be a particular geographical area where God will cause His name to tabernacle, Jerusalem, it would tabernacle in a tent to begin with and later in a temple. **“He will build a house for My name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”** (2Sam. 7:13).

“And you will remember that you were a servant in Egypt and you will observe and do these statutes. [Deut. 16:12]

In case there is any sort of a social problem with an Israelite celebrating God’s blessing along with their servants, Moses reminds them that they were all recent slaves in Egypt. Therefore, they are not on any sort of a higher level than their own slaves over whom they have ownership. We, in the United States, send out a great many missionaries, a few of whom are doctrinally accurate. However, this was not Israel’s mission, so to speak. God brought people to Israel to be evangelized and often that was through slavery. It is not by chance that some are killed in war and others are enslaved. This same rationale is used when a Hebrew slave was freed; the owner was to give him or her a great many gifts. **“And when you set him free, you will not send him away empty-handed. You will furnish him liberally from your flocks and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you will give to him as Y^ehowah your god has blessed you. And you will remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Y^ehowah your God redeemed you; therefore, I command you this word today.”** (Deut. 15:15).

Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
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The Feast of Tents and Summary *Ex. 23:16b Lev. 23:33–43 Num. 29:12–39*

“You will make the Feast of Tents for seven days, in your gathering in from your threshing floor and of your wine vat; [Deut. 16:13]

This is the third and last feast mentioned in this chapter. There are three feasts mentioned in this chapter—the three where Israel is mandated to gather in Jerusalem to worship their Lord. **“Three times a year you will celebrate a feast to Me. You will observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And one one will appear before Me empty-handed. Also, the Feast of the Harvest of Firstfruits of your labors—what you sow in the**

field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in your labors from the field. Three times a year all your males will appear before Y^ehowah Lord.” (Ex. 23:14–17). These feasts occurred in the month of Abib, the first month; the month of Sivan, the third month; and the month of Tishri, the seventh month. Note that there are three important gatherings of Israel. Israel was gathered as a nation and brought to the land of Canaan, as illustrated and commemorated by the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Israel was then gathered again on the Day of Pentecost, when God gave them the Holy Spirit, all who had believed in Jesus Christ, and became the seed of the living church today. Finally, God will regather Israel at the Tribulation. They have temporarily been dwelling in every nation of the earth, as God had scattered them, living in tents, as it were, the symbol of temporary living quarters. A chart might be helpful here:

The Regathering Feasts			
The Feast Days	A Memorial to...	Looks Forward to:..	Spiritual Meaning
Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread	The death of the firstborn of Egypt and the deliverance of the house of Israel out from Egypt.	The death of God’s firstborn, Jesus Christ, for our deliverance from our house of bondage, our bodies which house our old sin natures.	This is where all believers begin—salvation at the cross of our Lord; then a life of uncorrupted doctrine.
The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)	Celebrates the first harvest of the Land of Promise which God gave to the Israelites.	The gathering of Israel, which has been scattered to several neighboring countries, for the giving of the Holy Spirit to the seed of the church.	This speaks of the great blessing afforded us by the giving of the Holy Spirit.
The Feast of Tents, also called the Feast of Ingathering	Looks back to the temporary dwelling of Israel in Egypt and in the desert. It also celebrates the many harvests given the Israelite in the Land of Promise.	Looks forward to the gathering of Israel to the Land of Promise for the tribulation. Israel has been temporarily living throughout the world, scattered to all of the countries in order to evangelize the world.	This refers to our temporary lives in these tents called our bodies, until God gathers us to Him.

In the book of Nehemiah, the Israelites had been removed from the land for seventy years and now they had returned. Nehemiah read to them from the Book of the Law and, because this festival is tied to the temporary living of Israel throughout the world and to God’s regathering of Israel in the end times, this is the first feast which these people celebrated. Then, on the second day, the heads of fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the Law. And they found written in the Law how Y^ehowah had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month. So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, “Go out to the hills and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written.” So the people went out and brought and made temporary shelters for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, an in the square at the Water Gate, and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. And the entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made temporary shelters and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua ben Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing. And he read from the Book of the Law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day, a solemn assembly according to the ordinance (Neh. 8:13–18). See Ezra 3:4, which is a similar passage dealing with the return to Israel after the captivity.

As I study God’s Word, it becomes more and more apparent how carefully structured it all is. You would think with over three dozen authors over a period of as much as three thousand years that there would be little or no organization. However, the feasts look forward and they look backward. They have their meanings as designed

by God in eternity past; therefore, references to these feasts will occur just exactly where you would expect them to. All of the feasts are found in the Law of Moses; however, after the Law of Moses, we don't find these feasts mentioned haphazardly or randomly. Whereas not one pastor in one hundred has ever thought carefully enough about God's Word to even put together a chart like the one above, summarizing God's intention in these feasts, still we find these feasts mentioned just exactly where they should be. I mention this, not for the purpose of ragging on other pastors, but to show you that the Bible was not created by a group of theologians who all sat together in a room and organized it. Not only is that historically inaccurate, it does not square with human nature or human ability. If most men cannot put these things together after the fact, particularly the subtleties of God's Word and its organization, then it would make even less sense for some religious council of some sort to have organized His Word. Not only would their be little or no theological agreement (witness the huge number of Christian denominations and *Christian* cults found today), but the great dissension found within them as well. Man could not do this; not as a group, not as an individual. And if it would be historically inaccurate and logically inaccurate for men to come together and organize the Holy Scriptures, how even less likely it would be for men who have never known each other, to be separated by time, background, vocabulary, race, to accidentally write a set of books which, together, form a perfect unity and a perfect whole.

Four different men of differing vocabularies, backgrounds and ages wrote the gospels; however, since the Passover speaks of the death of Jesus Christ for our sins, it is found in the gospels almost more often than we find it in the Old Testament books which follow the Torah. And when the Passover is mentioned in the epistles, it always looks backward to our Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ. The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost: found only in Acts and the gospels, where it is not explained or exegeted, but simply mentioned. Our God is a God of subtlety at times. He does not always take the meaning of this symbol or that and beat us over the head with it. The Church Age was hidden from the Age of Israel. No one could have examined the Old Testament verse by verse and have predicted that God would replace the Jew and Israel entirely with a different custodian and disseminator of His Word. Therefore, the mention of Pentecost is equally subtle and found only in the book of Acts and in Paul's epistles, the Apostle to the Gentiles, the Apostle with the greatest understanding of Church Age doctrine. Finally, the Feast of Tents or the Feast of Temporary Shelters; this speaks of the regathering of Israel in the last times, and where else would you expect to find it? Right in the book of Nehemiah where the Israelites had been regathered from their temporary dispersion. Not only that, but this was the first time since the days of Joshua when this particular feast was observed. These things do not occur in specific books of the Bible by coincidence. The entire Bible is God's Word and it has a grand, overall design. The Holy Spirit did not just lead and guide the individual authors in their individual efforts and then slap these books together; God's Word is a unified whole, designed to give us the big picture as well as the divinely-inspired individual pieces.

“And you will rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male slave and your female slave and the Levites and the temporary visitor and the orphan and the widow, who [are] in your gates. [Deut. 16:14]

As before, the celebration includes all who are in Israel. No one was excluded. The pastor of a church that practices closed communion has obviously never exegeted this passage. You do not exclude another believer from partaking of the Lord's Supper regardless of their usual church affiliation.

“You will feast seven days before Y^ehowah your God in the place which Y^ehowah will choose, for Y^ehowah your God will bless you in all your increase and in every work of your hands and you will be altogether joyful. [Deut. 16:15]

“On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you will celebrate the feast of Y^ehowah for seven days, with a Sabbath on the first day and a Sabbath on the eighth day. Now on the first day, you will take for yourselves the foliage [lit., produce] of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you will rejoice before the face of Y^ehowah your God for seven days.” (Lev. 23:39–40). God's original purpose for Israel involved feasting and celebrating, not fasting, sackcloth and ashes. You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound (Psalm 4:7). You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosened by sackcloth and girded me with gladness (Psalm 30:11). **“These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and your joy may be made full.”**

(John 15:11). **And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete** (1John 1:4). God is not an ascetic, nor is He an hedonist.

“Three times a year will every one of your males appear before Y^ehowah your God in the place which He will choose—during the Feast of Unleavened Bread and during the Feast of Weeks and during the Feast of Booths; and they will not appear before Y^ehowah empty[-handed].
[Deut. 16:16]

Throughout this verse, I translated the bēyth prefixed preposition as *during* rather than *in*. It is *in* the time frame of these feasts, therefore the word *during* is apropos.

These are the three feasts where Israel will gather in Jerusalem to celebrate God’s great blessing which has been conferred upon them. These are also mentioned in conjunction with one another in Ex. 23:14–17 and these three times in general are mentioned in Ex. 34:23–24. These feasts are not confined to males, but are actually for the entire family (as was obvious back in v. 14).

“[Every] man [will appear before Y^ehowah] according to the gift of his hand, according to the blessing of Y^ehowah your God, which He has given to you. [Deut. 16:17]

Since God has blessed them, they were to bring according to this blessing. The order here is important. The unbeliever and the unblessed do not bring anything before our Lord. Giving is a result, not a means. This verse parallels New Testament giving exactly. **For if the willingness is present, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have** (2Cor. 8:12). **On the first day of every week, each one of you will set aside and save, as he is prospered, that no collections be made when I come** (1Cor. 16:2). We give as God has prospered.

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The Justice System of Israel

Had the chapters of the Bible been divinely inspired, this next portion of Deuteronomy would have been moved to Deut. 17, which deals specifically with the justice system and the modus operandi of those in authority.

“Judges and [judicial] assistants [or, authorities] you will make to yourselves within all your gates which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you, for your tribes; and they will judge the people—a righteous judgment. [Deut. 16:18]

At this point in time, Moses had already appointed judges himself and for matters which were too difficult for them, he was available to render his judgment. Moses chose the first judges, likely some of them based upon the recommendations of others. As Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, counseled him: **“You will select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you will place [these men] over them—leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, or tens. And let them judge the people at all times.”** (Ex. 18:21–22a). However, the Israelites would not always have the judges he appointed and there was no provision for this to be perpetuated through birth as was the Levitical helpers to the priesthood and the priesthood itself. Furthermore, Israel would not have a righteous leader like Moses who was a prophet in direct communication with God. And finally, Israel was about to be scattered into several cities throughout the Land of Promise, making the reliance on a particular person for final judgment to be untenable. Therefore, provision must be made for their future judicial system.

We already know what a judge is. The general translation: *judges and officers* (*The Amplified Bible, The Emphasized Bible, KJV, NASB*), *judges and officials* (NIV and NRSV); *judges and authorities* (*Young's Literal Translation*); both words are Qal active participles; participle verbs are often used to describe an office by the activity a person is involved in. The second word is *shâṭar* (שָׁטַר) [pronounced *shaw-TAR*] and it is a verb, but it is used throughout the Old Testament as a noun, first in Ex. 3:6, 10, 14–15, 19 and through to 2Chron. 19:11 26:11 34:13 Prov. 5:7. These would be officers or officials, in this context, associated with the judicial court system. These would be messengers, servants, advisors, secretaries and scribes to the courts. Strong's #7860 BDB #1008.

The method of choosing these men is not given here. What is implied to me is likely the choice of either the elders of the tribes or the property-owning males. Samuel, a prophet over Israel prior to the institution of kings, appointed his two sons as judges. However, his personal greatness ended with him. **And it came to pass when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice** (1Sam. 8:1, 3). When Solomon took office, he appointed the Levites as judges (1Chron. 23:4 26:29). King Jehoshaphat of Judah appointed judges: **And he appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city. And he said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for Y^ehowah Who is with you when you render judgment. Now then let the fear of Y^ehowah be upon you; be very careful in what you do, for Y^ehowah our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe."** And in Jerusalem, also Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests and some of the heads of the fathers of Israel for the judgment of Y^ehowah and to judge disputes among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. **Then he charged them, saying, "Thus you will do in the fear of Y^ehowah, faithfully and wholeheartedly."** (2Chron. 19:5–9). Because there is not a particular government under which Christianity can thrive, God the Holy Spirit is careful not to authorize a particular type, although appointment by either a king or a prophet seemed to be standard operating procedure for Israel. However, what is required is a judicial system of some sort, to deal with criminal activity and to deal with civil disputes. **"Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear [the disputes] between your brothers and judge righteously between a man and his brother, or the nonresident who is with him. You will not show partiality in judgment; you will hear the small and the great alike. You will not fear man, for the judgment is God's.'"** (Deut. 1:16–17a). **"Do not judge according to appearance but judge with righteous judgment."** (John 7:24).

We almost have a precedence for a jury trial. When Jacob and Laban were having a disagreement, Jacob suggested that they bring this matter before the men of Jacob and the men of Laban and let them decide (Gen. 31:22–42). However, this was not something directed or authorized by God.

"You will not turn aside judgment; you will not discern faces nor take a bribe, for the bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. [Deut. 16:19]

God was very concerned about the criminal and civil justice system over Israel being fair and impartial. We should have that in our system. And this is mentioned many times in Scripture. **"You will not pervert the justice to your needy one in his dispute. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty. And you will not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just."** (Ex. 23:6–8). **"You will do not injustice in judgment; you will not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly."** (Lev. 19:15). The same sentiment is reiterated in the book of Proverbs (Prov. 17:8, 23 18:5 24:23 28:21)

IN the United States, there are more Blacks in prison, there are also more Blacks committing crimes. However, given two men who commit essentially the same crime, a Black and a Caucasian, the Black will take a stiffer penalty. This is unjust. The same inequities exist between rich and poor. The saying goes that there are no rich men on death row. That sort of justice is wrong. It does not matter what social position, what race or what creed a man is, if he is convicted of a crime, then his sentence should be relative standard in comparison to anyone else convicted of committing the same crime. Note the warning of Solomon: **Oppression makes a wise man mad** (Ecc. 7:7a).

“Righteousness! Righteousness you will pursue so that you will live and you will possess the land which Y^ehowah your God has given to you. [Deut. 16:20]

It is of utmost importance for the justice system to reflect God’s perfect righteousness insofar as is humanly possible. Every judge each and every hour should remind himself that he is executing justice on behalf of Jesus Christ and his every decision should reflect that.

There are two reasons that the pursuit of righteousness result in blessing. An unbeliever, if he follows God’s Laws and the righteousness presented in the Bible to the best of his ability, apart from salvation, he will prosper due to the simple fact that he is operating within the laws of divine establishment. When you operate in accordance with the laws of nature, things are easier. When a satellite is sent into space, it is sent at an angle and at a speed such that its momentum to leave the earth’s orbit and the gravity of the earth are equal. In this way, it remains in a state of free-fall, simultaneously falling away from and toward the earth, as it were. This can only be done by carefully examining and obeying the laws of gravity. Anything less and we have a one in a thousand chance that the satellite will remain in orbit. God’s laws of life are no different than His laws of nature and science; it is much easier to obey them than it is to go against them. However, it is even greater when a believer, responding to God’s Word, acts in accordance with His Word. Not only does this place him within the divine laws of establishment, which sets the believer up for natural blessing as the natural course of events, but God vindicates His Word wherever it is found and further blesses the believer in his endeavors. The criminal system is a simple illustration of this. It is righteous to take a person guilty of first or second degree murder and to execute them in a timely manner. It is righteous for the prosecution to be concerned with the accuracy of their case and to reveal all evidence which is to the contrary. There should never be a personal agenda of a DA or an assistant DA to convict for his own personal record. That is not an issue in justice. If we saw swift and accurate justice administered to murderers, regardless of their social standing or their race, apart from a reduction or removal of judgment due to some technicality of the law, including improper search and seizure, then we would see a lot less criminal activity in our land. At the very least, those convicted would never commit a crime again. Furthermore, this is the merciful thing to do. Such a criminal is hardened against God and against God’s laws—with the speedy execution of justice, he has time to solemnly reflect on his life and on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for his sins. The more death is certain for those on death row, the more likely they will give the claims of Jesus Christ sober consideration and the less likely they are to claim conversion to Jesus Christ as a ploy. My point in this digression is this: if we properly follow God’s laws in this one area, it is better for society and better for the criminal. And these are only natural consequences. The good that results is multiplied when the same laws are followed by a believer.

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Prohibited Forms of Worship

“You will not establish an Asherah—any tree for yourself near the altar of Y^ehowah your God, which you make for yourself. [Deut. 16:21]

The verb here is nâṭaʿ (נָטַע) [pronounced *naw-TAHG*] and it generally means *to plant*. However, it also means, figuratively, *to establish*. (See Ex. 15:17 Deut. 11:15 Ezra 36:36 Psalm 44:3) We use it in a similar fashion today. “Young man, let’s just plant yourself right there in that chair until I determine what to do with you.” Strong’s #5193 BDB #642.

The Authorized Version translates Asherah as *grove* or *groves*. However, throughout the Old Testament, where this word is found, it is associated with verbs which are not reasonably acts of *groves*. In 2Kings 17:10, it is *set up*; in 1Kings 14:23 the Asherah *is built*; and it is *made* in 1Kings 14:15 16:33. Therefore, this can either stand

for a wooden idol or for that which the wooden idol represents, which is rendered by a proper noun as we will do throughout.

This is related to pagan worship. An Asherah is a wooden image of a female deity. The directions to Israel by God are: **“You will tear down their altars and smash their pillars and hew down their Asherim [the plural of Asherah] and burn their graven images with fire.”** (Deut. 7:5b). Asherah was the equivalent of the Babylonia goddess Ishtar (the similarity to the word *Easter* is not coincidental), of Aphrodite of the Greeks and of Venus of the Romans. The ascetic version of this is the worship of Mary, the mother of the humanity of our Lord, in the Catholic church; and the push for calling God a *she* in recent note is a sign of degeneracy of our times. We saw this creeping into our way of thinking as nature was personalized and referred to as a *she* (mother nature) and then revered as an entity. This is not much different from the pagan worship of millenniums ago.

We know that the book of the Judges will contain an historical record of degeneracy, as one of the early verses reads: **And they forsook Y^ehowah and served Baal and Ashtaroth** (Judges 2:13). We will go into more detail concerning this pagan worship at that time.

“And you will not raise up to yourself any standing image [or an obelisk] which Y^ehowah your God hates.” [Deut. 16:22]

Again, this is idolatry. And again, **“You will not worship their gods nor serve them nor do according to their deeds, but you will in overthrowing overthrow them and break their pillars into pieces. But you will serve Y^ehowah your God and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will removed sickness from your midst.”** (Ex. 23:24–25). **“You will not make for yourselves idols, nor will you set up for yourselves an image or a pillar, nor will you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am Y^ehowah your God.”** (Lev. 26:1). The God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament are both very exclusive Gods. In speaking to a Jewish friend of mine, he told me that it was ridiculous for religion to be so exclusive, for someone to claim they have the truth and no one else does. A letter I read in a newspaper said that each holy book is a roadmap and we all have are different road maps, but we are all going to the same heaven. This is not the God of the Old Testament. One of the primary reasons for the discouraging of marriages between Israelites and Gentiles was the influence of other religions. **“But you are to tear down their altars and smash their pillars and cut down their Asherim, for you will not worship any other god, for Y^ehowah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. So you will not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods and someone invite you to eat of his sacrifice; so that you will not [lit., and] you take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters prostitute themselves with their gods, and cause your sons to prostitute themselves with their gods.”** (Ex. 34:13–17). There is none of this road map crap found in the Old Testament; the exclusive guide to truth is found continually. And Jesus Christ is just as exclusive, because He is the same God, Y^ehowah God of the Old Testament. **“I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”** (John 14:6b). **“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”** (Acts 4:12).

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Deuteronomy 17

Deuteronomy 17:1–20

Outline of Chapter 17:

- v. 1 **Acceptable sacrifices**
- vv. 2–5 **Idolatry and judicial procedures**
- vv. 6–9 **General judicial procedures**
- vv. 10–13 **The importance of obeying the judgments of the priest and the judge**
- vv. 14–20 **The future function of a king over Israel**

Charts:

Introduction: Deut. 17 is a continuation of the end of Deut. 16; Deut. 16 ended with the choosing of judges and a prohibition against idolatry. This chapter continues with what animals would be acceptable for sacrifice and some specific prohibitions against idolatry. Then Moses covers some specifics concerning the judicial system of Israel and suddenly, out of the blue, mentions a behavior code for a king, even though there is no provision up until this time for the choosing of a king. This is not a mistake nor was this added years later. Moses prefaces this by informing the Israelites that they would require a king in the future (and, to be precise, God would not require them to have a king—they would require this of themselves).

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Acceptable Sacrifices

“You will not sacrifice to Y^ehowah your God ox or sheep in which there is a blemish—any defect [lit., any evil word (or, thing)]; for that [lit., it] [is] an abomination of Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 17:1]

Deut. 16:21–22 and 17:1 should be grouped together under “Unacceptable Religious Practices.”

The reference to the lack of defect is interesting. There is a phrase translated NASB as *any defect*; Owen reads: *any defect whatsoever*; NIV: *any flaw*. The first word is the construct of *kôl* (כֹּל) [pronounced *kole*] and this word means *the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every or any*. Strong's #3605 BDB #481. It is followed by the construct of *dâ^bvâr* (דְּבַר) [pronounced *daw^b-VAWR*], which means *word, saying, doctrine, command*. It is something which proceeds from the mouth and the context determines its exact parameters. Strong's #1697(6) BDB #182. The adjective which describes *dâbâr* is *ra^c* (רַע) [pronounced *rahg^c*] and it means *evil, bad*. This is the masculine adjective; the feminine seems to put a softer spin on the meaning. Strong's #7451 BDB #948. This therefore literally reads *any evil word*. We could render this *any evil thing*. However, during the time of Moses, this was possibly an unusual phrase to apply to an animal. At best, we can translate this *any evil thing*; a reference to all of the defects found in Lev. 22:22–24. However, today, we know that the sacrificed animals all point forward to Jesus Christ, and in Him was no evil word or deed. The call for virtual perfection of the animal sacrifice has occurred often in the Torah: “Your kid will be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.” (Ex. 12:5). “Whatever has a defect, you will not offer, for it will not be acceptable with respect to you.” (Lev. 22:20). “But if it has any blemish, lameness, or blindness, any or all evil, you will not

sacrifice it to Y^ehowah your God.” (Deut. 15:21). The sacrifice of same is one of the man signs of spiritual adultery in the nation Israel. “But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it to Y^ehowah, for I am a great King,” says Y^ehowah of the armies; “And My name is feared and revered among the Gentiles.” (Malachi 1:14).

Note in this verse that God does not want our leftovers, our castoffs, our excess. God required from Israel their firstborn and He required it to be perfect. If a farmer in Israel had anything at all, they had a firstborn—so all Israel was able to give to God. Many of us have savings accounts—the money which we give to God is a divine savings account. Have you ever had the dream where you amass wealth or certain possessions and when you wake up, they are all gone. There are many who will gather wealth here on earth, but will not give to the poor or to evangelists or missionaries or to their church. When they die, they will wake up to see that they no longer have all of these possessions which they collected here on earth. However, for those who have given to support God’s work, they will have amassed riches which will remain with them after they have died.

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Idolatry and Judicial Procedures

“When there is found in your midst, in one of your cities which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you, a man or a woman who does evil in the eyes of Y^ehowah your God by transgressing His covenant; [Deut. 17:2]

The specific evil deed which is referred to in this passage is to go against the Law of God. Like many of the verse in the Bible, the protasis and the apodosis are split up.

“And he goes and serves other gods and he bows himself down to them and to the sun, or to the moon or to any of the host of the heaven, which I have not commanded; [Deut. 17:3]

This particular sentence was broken down into four different verses. Vv. 2–4 are the protasis and v. 5 is the apodosis. The person named in this verse bows himself down to other gods or worships nature. God created the sun and the moon—they are not even living creatures. **And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night; the stars as well** (Gen. 1:16). As far back as the time of Job, this type of idolatry was understood to be wrong. **“If I have looked at the sun when it shone or the moon going in splendor, and my heart became secretly enticed and my hand a kiss of homage from my mouth—that too would have been an iniquity [requiring] judgment.”** (Job 31:27–28). In our time, this is the evolutionist. He may not go through any sort of a religious practice concerning *mother nature*, but he ascribes essentially supernatural powers as the forces of nature and worships, so to speak, at the gates of natural selection, the favorable mutation and the hopeful monster.

At its very worst, idolatry involved child sacrifice: **“And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.”** (Jer. 7:31). In any case, it was a clear departure from the God of Israel (see 2Kings 17:14–18 21:3–9 23:4–10).

“It is declared to you and you have heard [about this] and you have conducted a thorough investigation of the matter [lit., you will inquire diligently], and if [it is] true—this abomination has been done in Israel; [Deut. 17:4]

V. 4 is extremely important. The activity is not just told to you by someone that you generally trust so now the suspect is remanded into custody and dealt with. V. 4 indicates that a careful and thorough investigation of the

matter takes place. In any capital crime—and, in the dispensation of Israel in the land of Israel, idolatry was a capital crime—all investigations were to be thorough (see Deut. 13:14). There must be more than simple alleged idolatry.

Since vv. 2–5 are the same sentence, let me break it up for you: vv. 2–3, the idolatry crime is stated; v. 4 it is investigated carefully and it turns out to be true; and, finally, v. 5 gives the resultant penalty.

“Then you will bring out that man, or that woman, who has done this evil thing, to your gates, and you will stone the man or the woman with stones and they will die. [Deut. 17:5]

An execution was more than just public in the times of Israel—it involved public participation. In order for this to take place, a large area was required, so first the accused was tried. Although one source claimed that he would be taken to a large open area near the gates (substantiating this with Neh. 8:1 Job 29:7), where his trial was held, these passages are not enough reason to assume this was always done this way nor was this recommended by the Law. However, then the criminal would be taken outside the gates of the city to be stoned (we find this in Acts 7:58 when Stephen was stoned). It became customary for all executions to be held outside the city gates (Deut. 22:24 Heb. 13:12).

“He who sacrifices to the gods other than to Y^ehowah alone will be placed under the ban (i.e., utterly destroyed).” (Ex. 22:20). As we have seen, the preferred method of execution was stoning, as we have seen in Lev. 24:14, 16 Deut. 13:10 Joshua 7:25.

In a land ruled directly by Y^ehowah God, the God of the Universe, idolatry is absolutely forbidden. In our time, when no nation is under the direct rulership of God, this type of crime and punishment are not to take place. It does not matter if you can prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that someone is a nature worshiper—we do not, under our economy, have the right or the duty to execute idolaters. When you have large groups of people who are loyal to *the church*, as it were, but who have little or no correct training in God’s Word, they inevitably persecute the innocent with the guilty. We have hundreds of years where Bible believing Christians were persecuted by unbelievers in the name of Christianity. This is not God’s plan for our life nor it is God’s plan for our nation, no matter what percentage of Christians our nation has. This is not a matter of the changing influence of the world, this is a matter of clear Bible doctrine and the change of dispensations from Israel, a nation ruled directly by God, and the church, a body of believers who may or may not have any political power.

A similar passage, also found in this discourse by Moses, reads: **“If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife of your heart, or your friend who is in your soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end). But you will certainly kill him; you hand will be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of the people. So you will stone him with stones because he has sought to seduce you from Y^ehowah your God Who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves.”** (Deut. 13:6–11). This first passage in Deuteronomy emphasizes that even when this is the closest of relative or friend, that if they try to seduce you away from Jesus Christ, the God of Israel, they are to be stoned. This latter passage deals with anyone who is purported to steal the heart of Israel from God.

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General Judicial Procedures

“By the mouth of two or three witnesses is he who is condemned [lit., who is to die] will be put to death; he is not to be put to death by the mouth [or, based upon the testimony] of one witness. [Deut. 17:6]

At this point, we move to more general judicial procedures. Vv. 2–5 dealt specifically with the crime of idolatry; however, although this is still in the context of the punishment of the crime of idolatry, the requirement of two or three witnesses, as found in this verse, is a general requirement for all criminal cases. The verses to follow will also have more general application.

By the mouth could be rendered more accurately as *upon the mouth*; it means, *upon the testimony or based upon the testimony*. It is essential to a just system to require corroborating evidence. “If anyone kills a person, the murdered will be put to death at the mouth of witness; but no person will be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” (Num. 35:30; see also Deut. 19:15). This does not mean that when a murder takes place, if only one person witnesses the murder, the killer goes free. *Witness* does not mean that they are necessarily eyewitnesses to the actual crime, although that is, of course, the best of all worlds. If, for instance, stealing was the motivation, a witness that the defendant was selling the victim’s property would be a witness against the defendant.

Almost all of you have enemies and there are some who would lie in order to see you executed. However, such a false charge would be difficult to corroborate independently. Important details would be obscure or contradictory. A good newspaper person looks to have independent corroboration for a story to avoid printing that which is false or simply heresy. A criminal trial looks to have the evidence stack up incontrovertibly against the defendant in order to convict him; without this, without a preponderance of evidence crying out that the defendant is guilty, he is proclaimed innocent. The best part of our justice system has its origins in God’s Word.

This particular verse has a world of applications, one of which is found in Matt. 18:16. Here, a fellow believer has sinned and you confront him with it. This does not mean that you follow believers around looking for them to screw up, but this is a pretty obvious sin. If he does not believe you, you bring the witness of two or three others; then the witness of the local church. If he persists in whatever sin this is, then he is to be ostracized. Our Lord applied this same verse in another way, claiming that He bore witness of Himself and His Father, God the Father, bore witness of Him as well—confirming that he is the Son of God, the light of the world (John 8:17). Paul also applied this verse to his several visits to the Corinthians, claiming that his three visits—two prior and one to come—were equivalent to the testimony of two or three witnesses (2Cor. 13:1). This indicates that we can get a lot of mileage out of this verse. That is, there are several applications (1Tim. 5:19 Heb. 10:28).

For instance, when it comes to Bible verses and certain doctrines, the major doctrines can be confirmed in a dozen to several dozen passages. However, when it comes down to the nitty gritty, then any doctrine of secondary importance should be confirmed with two or three other passages. If this cannot be so confirmed, then I would not personally put a lot of weight in it. A passage which comes to mind immediately is: **There remains a Sabbath for the people of God** (Heb. 4:9). I recall one leader of a cult quoting that passage, reading it with great vigor and imploring his listeners to read it for themselves in their own Bibles. His point was that we should be keeping the Sabbath today as the Jews kept it two thousand years ago. Whereas, he was right that the Sabbath is Saturday and not Sunday—he was completely off-base with his application. Not only do we not have a supporting passage in the New Testament epistles, but a careful reading of the context reveals that this does not mean what it is taken to mean by the superficial.

This particular verse and its multifarious applications helps us understand the reason for Deuteronomy. There is a fair amount of repetition found in Deuteronomy, as we have noticed. However, this helps us to (1) recognize the importance of repetition in teaching and, (2) this allows certain doctrines of the Law to find their confirmation by a second and third witness.

“The hand of witnesses is on him, in the first place, to put him to death, and the hand of all the people last; and you will put away [this] evil out of your midst. [Deut. 17:7]

Not only do those who witness against the idolater have to have corroborating testimony, but they must be the ones who begin the execution process—this is after a fair trial the rendering of an impartial verdict. In a capital murder trial, the witnesses against the defendant must be so convinced of what they have seen that they will execute the criminal themselves. A witness who came forward in a capital trial must either have the greatest

certainty or the greatest depravity.¹⁹⁰ Therefore, it was commanded for those who witnessed a serious transgression of the Law to also participate in the execution of the convicted person (Lev. 24:14 Deut. 13:9).

One of the important aspects of this verse is the purging evil from your midst. Whereas there is no separating from the world, per se, as every person sins and we are witnesses to them. There is a true **Doctrine of Separation**, which we will cover now. **Not finished yet!!** In the same vein, we must cover the **Doctrine of Purging—not finished yet!** The Catholic Church does something which is called excommunication. This does have a Biblical basis. Certain sins when practiced regularly by those in your periphery can have a detrimental effect upon you. A simple example which we have seen in our lifetimes is the effect which gangs have had upon their members. A person may enter a gang for a lot of various psychological reasons, but not necessarily because he is a criminal. However, criminal activity and immoral behavior soon become a way of life for a new gang member because they are constantly in his environment.

“When anything [lit., a word] is too difficult for you for judgment, between one kind of homicide and another [lit., between blood and blood], between one kind of legal right and another [lit., between plea and plea],¹⁹¹ and between one kind of assault and another [lit., between stroke and stroke]—matters of strife within your gate, then [lit., and] you will arise and go up to the place which Y^howah your God has chosen—in it; [Deut. 17:8]

Pâlâ' (אָ לָאָה) [pronounced *paw-LAW*] is a verb which means *to do that which is extraordinary, to do that which is unusually difficult*. This is often used to describe God's most unusual works (Ex. 3:20 34:10 Joshua 3:5). Strong's #6381 BDB #810. There are several reasons which would cause a case to be taken to a higher court. The judge may not feel qualified to render a verdict so that it is in keeping with the Law of Moses. That is, there is a point of law in God's Word which the judge does not feel entirely comfortable with—he does not fully understand it. Therefore, this case would go to a priest to interpret God's Word. A second reason is that the judge, having heard all of the facts of the case, may not feel qualified to render a verdict. When there is a strong disagreement between two parties and the testimony of the witnesses is contradictory, a local judge may not feel competent to determine who is lying or mistaken in their testimony. A third reason to send a case to a higher court would be local prejudice. We have seen situations like this a great deal in our country—some people form an opinion of the guilt or innocence of a person based upon his race. If they look like you, they're innocent; if they don't, they're guilty. Certain people are well-known and popular in a local area; they are often given preferential treatment in the court system over a stranger. If the local judge feels he cannot render an impartial verdict, again he make excuse himself and allow a higher court to make the decision.

There will be court cases which are difficult to determine. We have already covered in several passages what is to be done in the case of involuntary manslaughter. God would set apart several cities of refuge throughout the kingdom of Israel and the person who has accidentally killed another is to flee to one of these cities (Num. 35:11–28). We have three matters mentioned here, which are not necessarily exhaustive, but the bulk of the reasons to go to a higher court. Whether an assault is completely attributable to one person or another (**between stroke and stroke**), whether a homicide is the result of premeditation (**between blood and blood**) or whether it was accidental, whether one person's legal right supercedes another's (**between plea and plea**). These are all difficult matters and there will always be cases which are not clear-cut. A precedent had already been set for going to a higher court. Jethro suggested to Moses to set up a court system which he, Moses, would oversee and be the final word of appeal. The lower judges took the bulk of the cases and the difficult ones would be brought to Moses (Ex. 18:17–23). Moses, when a case or a question was beyond his ability to render a decision, he would take the case to the supreme court of heaven (Lev. 27:5).

Note that this is quite different from our appellant court system. If a convicted criminal wants another shot, he can often take his case to an appellant court. Unfortunately, often new evidence is not the criterion, but some legal mistake is often the reason a case is allowed to be appealed. In God's system designed for Israel, the local court

¹⁹⁰ Paraphrased from Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 925. They were quoting a source (I think), *Schnell, das isr. Recht*.

¹⁹¹ The western Samaritan, the Onkelos of Jonathan, the Septuagint and the Syriac codices have **or between plea and plea**.

itself could opt out of the proceedings if they did not feel as though they could render a correct verdict. Therefore, strictly speaking, these were not appellant courts.

Sometimes the problem is simply the fact that a crime or event has taken place within a city's gates. If such an altercation takes place between one who is well-known and a stranger, it is difficult to render a fair and impartial decision. What is important is not who your friends are, but what the law is and whether or not it has been transgressed. For those who belong to gangs or organizations or families where you stick by someone from your group no matter what they have done, to the point of lying and covering up or withholding evidence, then your thinking is in direct opposition to God's Word.

“And coming in to the priests, the Levites, and in to the judge who is in those days, and you will consult [with them] and they will declare to you the decision. [Deut. 17:9]

This is the first time in Scripture where the priests and the Levites are possibly spoken of as being one and the same. They are not, but that impression can be given here. Let's cover the language first. This reads, literally, **and coming in to the priests the Levites and in to the judge who is in those days...** The words *the Levites* can be taken in two ways: (1) this is a list of different people who can be appealed to. As the times change for Israel, the system of government will change somewhat; and those who are spiritually discerning will change from time to time. This allows us three possible places to go to appeal court cases. (2) The other interpretation is that *the Levites* is modifying *priests*. Judge is in the singular, but priests and Levites are both plural; and only priests and judge are preceded by a preposition and a conjunction. This linguistic construction would tend to indicate that *Levites* modifies *priests*. This is why some translations render this in unto the **Levitical priest and in unto the judge** (*The Amplified Bible*, the NASB and the RSV). The NIV renders this *the priests who are Levites*. The KJV, *Young's Translation* and *The Emphasized Bible* all translate this quite literally (as I have), inserting commas which are not a part of the Hebrew or Greek languages. However, that does not mean that *priests* and *Levites* are synonymous terms. All priests are Levites, as all priests are descended from Aaron and Aaron is a Levite. However, not all Levites are priests. Levites were given by God to assist the Aaronic priesthood. We will see a similar construction in Deut. 17:18 and 24:8, indicating that the two would be grouped together. Still, this does not mean that there is any mixture or confusion of duties nor does this mean that every Levite is a priest. *The Amplified Bible* has this to say: *The Levites were divided into three groups, the descendants of Levi's three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. But only those Israelites could be priests who were descendants of Levi through Kohath's grandson Aaron. The priesthood was made hereditary in the family of Aaron and restricted to it; however, even some of these were debarred by legal disabilities (Lev. 21:16ff). The other families of Levi's descendants, the Gershonites and Meraites and those Kohathites who were not descended from Aaron were charged with the care of the sanctuary. The priests ministered at the altar*¹⁹².

This is a sign of spiritual maturity, when you recognize a matter cannot be resolved by yourself, that you do not have the facts or you are not unbiased enough to render a decision—you take the matter to someone who can.

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The Importance of Obeying the Judgments of the Priest and the Judge

“And you will do according to the rendered verdict [lit., mouth of the word] which they [are causing to] [publicly] proclaim to you, in that place which Y^ehowah has chosen; and you will take responsibility to do according to all which they direct [or, inform] you. [Deut. 17:10]

Let's examine a few translations of this verse:

¹⁹² *The Amplified Bible*, The Lockman Foundation; ©1965 by Zondervan Publishing House; p. 282.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And you shall do according to the decision which they declare to you from that place which the Lord chooses, and you shall be watchful to do according to all that they tell you;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...and thou shalt do according to the sentence which they shall declare unto thee, out of that place which Yahweh shall choose,—yea thou shalt observe to do according to all which they shall direct thee;
KJV	And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall show thee, and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee;
NASB	And you shall do according to the terms of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which the LORD choose; and you shall be careful to observe according to all that they teach you.
NIV	You must act according to the decisions they give you at the place the LORD will choose. Be careful to do everything they direct you to do.
NRSV	Carry out exactly the decision that they announce to you from the place that the LORD will choose, diligently observing everything they instruct you.
Owen's Translation	Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place which Yahweh will choose; and you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And thou hast done according to the tenor of the word which they declare to thee (<i>they</i> of that place which Jehovah doth choose); and thou hast observed to do according to all that they direct thee.

This verse begins literally with **And you [singular] will do...** This is followed by the preposition 'al (ל) [pronounced *a*], which means *upon, beyond, in accordance with, because of, on account of*. Strong's #5920-5921 BDB #752. This is followed by *peh* (פ) [pronounced *peh*], which means *mouth* (referring to that which is spoken); perhaps a reference to a general pronouncement or decision rather than to one which comes out of God's Word. Strong's #6310 BDB #804. *Mouth* is in the construct and it is followed by the oft-used Hebrew word *word*. This is followed by the relative pronoun (referring back to *the mouth of the word*) and the Hiphil imperfect of a verb which means *to publish, to [publicly] proclaim* (among other things). So this now reads: **and you will do according to the mouth of the word which they cause to be proclaimed...** It might be reasonable to translate *mouth of the word* by *rendered verdict*. The middle portion of the verse is fairly straightforward: **from that place which Y^ehowah will choose**. Then we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] which I often translate as *take responsibility*. This is followed by the prefixed lamed preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *to do*. Then we have *all which* and the 3rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of *yârâh* (יָרָה) [pronounced *yaw-RAWH*], which means *to throw, to shoot*. I would think that *to throw down* (Gen. 31:51 Joshua 18:6) or *to throw out* (Ex. 15:4) would better suit this verb. In the Hiphil, this is almost a different word. It is generally translated *teach, instruct, enumerate* (Ex. 24:12 Deut. 33:10 Judges 13:8); although, a superficial glance seems to indicate that *inform* might be a better translation. Strong's #3384 BDB #434. *Yârâh* carries with it a 2nd person, masculine suffix. This leaves us with: **And you will do according to the rendered verdict [or, mouth of the word] which they cause to be [publicly] proclaimed from that place which Y^ehowah will choose and you will take the responsibility to do according to all which they have informed you**. The interpretation is easy enough. The verdict is placed in the hands of an appellant court (actually, just a higher court and not strictly an appellant court as we know them); that court makes a decision and the listener is implored to take the responsibility to carry out the sentencing requirements or to do whatever the rendered verdict specifies.

Not only must be able to recognize when you cannot render a correct decision yourself, but you must be willing to accept the ruling of the court which is higher up than you. You must abide by that decision. You may be thinking, *Duh!* Let me explain; the purpose of sending this case to another court is that the court at hand is unable to render a verdict which they are comfortable with. They simply cannot determine guilt or innocence for whatever the reason. So the case is kicked upstairs to a higher court. However, you must bear in mind that men with old sin natures will be under this law and they will always be looking for some way to corrupt God's Law. A judge may not want to render a particular verdict because he is concerned that it will make him unpopular or cause a public uprising against him. So, instead of rendering a verdict which he knows is correct, he sends the case upstairs so that they can take the heat for making the decision. We have seen throughout the last dozen decades hundreds

of cases which were determined by a judge on the basis of political expediency—the verdict was rendered in order to keep one group from rioting. Or a punishment was given which did not fit the crime, either being too strict or too lenient, all given more for the purposes of political expediency as opposed to justice. There are certainly some difficult judicial decisions which could be accurate but are not—one way to deal with this is have someone else make the decision. However, this context tells us that once the case is sent to a higher court, then, except for executing the punishment or upholding the decision, it is completely out of the hands of the lower court and the lower court cannot under any circumstances reverse the judgment of the higher court. Let me try to explain this in another way. Judge Joe Bob of the lower court knows that verdict A is the correct verdict, but he may lose his judgeship over rendering that verdict. However, he cannot, for whatever reason, render verdict B; his soul will just not allow that. So he tells High Priest Billy Bob to render a verdict, expecting Billy Bob to render verdict A. For Joe Bob, this is the best of all worlds—he gets the verdict he wants and Billy Bob takes all the heat for the decision. However, let's say that High Priest Billy Bob is under similar constraints and renders verdict B—Joe Bob cannot now change his mind and revise Billy Bob's verdict. My point here, is that on the surface, this passage seems rather straightforward and in fact redundant—however, it is a guard against political expediency and passing the buck.

“According to the rendered instruction [lit., mouth of the instruction] which they instruct you, and according to the judgment which they say to you, you will do; you will not turn aside from the verdict [lit., word] which they cause to be [publicly] proclaimed to you, either to the right or to the left [lit., to you, right and left]. [Deut. 17:11]

In these two verses, we have four verbs of communication and just as many nouns and substantive phrases referring to information which has been communicated. This would be a good pair of verses to examine all of these words together.

In a situation such as this, you must follow the directions of your superior to the letter. They are to give this pronouncement the same regard that they would for instructions from God. **“So you will take the responsibility to do just as Y^{ehovah} your God has commanded you; you will not turn aside to the right or to the left.”** (Deut. 3:32). No matter how you feel about the decision, you were unable to render a decision, therefore it is placed in another's hands and you must carry out the punishment or you must release the defendant. Or you must make a ruling in favor of whichever person was chosen by the appellate court.

“And the man who acts presumptuously [lit., with presumption], so as not to listen to the priest, who is standing there to serve Y^{ehovah} your God, or to the judge, even that man is to die and you will have put away the evil from Israel; [Deut. 17:12]

When a verdict is read, and consequences are placed upon those involved, then these instructions are to be followed to the letter. The interpretation of the law by a priest or the determination of a verdict by a higher judge was final. The appeal to the higher judge or to a priest is analogous to appealing to the supreme court of heaven. As was mentioned in the previous verse, the rendered verdict and its related instructions are to be followed as though spoken by God. This is authority orientation. A person who has listened to what the priest has to say or the judge, both of whom are acting in place of God in their positions of authority, and then does not do what they have directed him to do or he does not abstain from doing that which they forbid has committed a very criminal act. This is a person who is anti-authority and who is rightly called *the evil* in this context.

“And all the people will hear and fear, and they will not act presumptuously any more. [Deut. 17:13]

God's Word clearly teaches that capital punishment has the influence of dissuading others from a life of evil—in this context, acting against the established authorities. If capital punishment is administered justly and fairly, then it will act as a deterrent. We do not need case study statistics to tell us that. I used to experience this on a daily basis: for several years, I substitute taught in California when the discipline was quite poor and I had to come down hard on those children in order to teach anything. One of my ploys, a common behavior management tool of many teachers, is in first period, during the first twenty minutes, I would take the least respectful, loudest mouth, and

send him out to the principal's office. This, 95% of the time, would curtail the majority of my discipline problems for the rest of the day. Once and awhile, in extreme cases of malcontent, I would have to send two or three children out of a classroom. This immediate administration of justice acted as a deterrent to other children. If there were no consequences, they would continue being belligerent and disrespectful—however, when certain and just consequences became a part of the picture, proper order and discipline was achieved.

Moses was personally a big fan of the fact that properly applied capital punishment acts as a deterrent. We have already seen this mentioned in Deut. 13:11 and we will see it again in Deut. 19:20. Now, I realize that there are statistical studies which show that capital punishment does not act as a deterrent. However, these studies do not take all the other contributing factors into consideration. Furthermore, when capital punishment is re-instated and then only applied to a half a dozen people when there are several thousand convicted murderers in the system and several hundred murders a year in that state, then this is not capital punishment. This is merely a ploy to placate the overwhelming public majority which supports capital punishment. A person who commits a capital offense under these circumstances has an even chance of either winning the lottery or being executed¹⁹³.

People are often foolish in the crusades which they represent. They suffer a personal injustice and then go on some crusade intending to wipe out that injustice, often when that injustice affects less than one-thousandth of one percent of the court cases or criminal matters. The system laid out by Moses was not designed to eliminate crime. As long as man possesses an old sin nature, there will be crime. Nor would this eliminate inequities or incorrect verdicts. Given the fact that everyone has an old sin nature, that there will always be criminal activity and that some judicial decisions will be wrong, this is the best system of justice for Israel for that period of time. This would keep criminal behavior to a minimum and it would ensure that the vast majority of the verdicts rendered by the courts would be just and fair.

As a final note, the court system herein is described in general terms; this would be more likely the words of Moses than those of a later writer. A later writer would have gone into much more detail, describing with more precision the court system of his own day.

Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
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The Future Function of a King over Israel

“When you come in to the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to and you possess it and you dwell in it, and you have said, ‘Let me set over me a king like all the nations which [are] in my periphery [lit., round about me].’ [Deut. 17:14]

What we find in these last few verses is quite interesting. Moses, as you will recall, is speaking from his own authority, which was granted him by God. Throughout the previous three books of the Bible, Moses very carefully recorded what information was spoken by God and what he said himself. Here, not only is Moses speaking *ex cathedra*, as it were, but he is doing so with the authorization of the Holy Spirit. That is, Moses is setting up Law himself. Throughout much of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses deals with the history of Israel and draws conclusions and exhorts them based upon their history. However, here, he looks down the corridors of time to when Israel would desire a king over her, and he sets up some laws concerning the future kings of Israel.

Verses like this cause critics to assume that Deuteronomy was written well after the time of Moses. This is because there was Moses, then Joshua, both military leaders, who were over Israel; however, they each served directly under God. Following their time, there were judges in the land who were the authority figures, during a lengthy period of apostasy. Finally, over 300 years after the time of Moses, Israel petitioned God for a king and

¹⁹³ Yes, I fully realize that statement is statistically unsound; I said it for effect.

received one. Moses, through the guidance of God the Holy Spirit knows that is what the people will desire in the future and that God will grant them this desire. Critics do not like verses like this because in their limited world there is no such thing as prophecy or divine inspiration and the Holy Spirit is just some vague force with no real power. However, Moses both wrote and spoke under the power of God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit perceives the future with the same clarity as He does the past. Sometimes future events will illustrate an important doctrine and sometimes future events fit into the context of the teaching, as they do here. The elders of Israel will make a formal request for a king in 1Sam. 8:5: **Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, "Look, you have grown old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Not appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."** Samuel will give several reasons why this request was poorly thought out, but the elders insisted, and God allowed their request (1Sam. 8:10–22).

"You will certainly set a king [lit., in setting, you will set a king] over you whom Y^ehowah will choose; out from the midst of your brothers you will set over you a king; you will not be able to set over you a stranger who is not your brother. [Deut. 17:15]

So that the people listening do not miss what he has said, Moses mentions again that they will require of God a king to be placed over them. Moses was divinely appointed to lead Israel as a prophet of God. Joshua was also selected by God to lead Israel as a military and spiritual leader. The prophecy of placing of an Israelite over them does not appear to rank with the great prophecies at first—Moses makes it clear that the rulers which will be place over Israel will at first be fellow Israelites. This statement is added to make it clear that Israel would demand of God a king and God, under His permissive and not directive will, would allow them to have a king. However, the far fulfillment is found in Jesus Christ. **"And their congregation will be established before Me and I will punish all their oppressors. And their leaders will be one of them. And their ruler will come forth from their midst; and I will bring Him near and He will approach Me. For Who is He who would give his heart in pledge to approach Me?" declares Y^ehowah. "And you will be My people and I will be your God."** (Jer. 30:20b–22). One of the great purposes of the genealogical records found throughout the Bible, and particularly in Matthew and Luke, are to establish the royal line of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the King of Israel Who will rule forever.

God chose two kings as a contrast: He chose King Saul, who looked and acted the part, but went bad; and God chose David, who was not even viewed by his father as statesman material, to illustrate that the person does not have to look the part. We have that trouble with electing presidents. In every election since Kennedy v. Nixon, we have elected the better-looking candidate due to the overwhelming influence of television (I don't mean that we elect someone because we are so directed by the networks, but because we actually see these candidates day after day). Following David, we have David's son, Solomon, who had his good days and his bad (Solomon wrote a great deal of Scripture). And following Solomon, we have a series of generally horrible kings.

There are many theologians who do not like the fact that Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy. This passage is one of the reasons that they do not like this. Here, nearly a half millennium separated from King Saul, Israel's first king, Moses discusses the appointment and character of a king. Moses discusses this topic herein because: (1) he is intelligent; (2) he has foresight; and (3) he is being led by God the Holy Spirit. Moses has set up the Law for Israel for the coming millennium; therefore, we should expect him to speak of every important aspect of Israel's political agenda. Moses knows that the people of Israel will demand a king someday (he has no idea when), and he sets up guidelines for the people and for the kings to come. Partially because of Moses' foresight, there are many theologians who believe that Moses could not have written the book of Deuteronomy but that it was written during the reign of King Josiah (640–609 B.C.)—a full 800 years after Moses gave this speech.

"Only, he is not to multiply to himself horses nor cause the people to turn back to Egypt, so as to multiply horses, seeing Y^ehowah has said to you, 'You [all] will never return that way again.' [Deut. 17:16]

Moses assumes the fact of the appointment of a king over Israel and now gives some directives which are not so much designed for this people but for the future kings of Israel. In this context, I am not convinced that the ownership of horses merely stands for wealth; horses, in the ancient world, are connected to power and a personal army and going to Egypt increases the size of their combined force. **Some boast in chariots, and some in horses;**

but we will boast in the name of Y^ehowah our God (Psalm 20:7). They were not used in the the East either for farming or for traveling, but for war. Egypt and horses are often tied together, as Egypt was one of the principle providers of horses for much of Western Asia (Ex. 14:5–23 1Kings 10:28–29 2Kings 7:6). Therefore, when a king chose to multiply horses to himself, that would cause entanglements with Egypt, possibly leading to an alliance, which was not in God’s plan for Israel. This does not mean that God denied peaceful co-existence between Israel and Egypt—it means that Israel was not to look to Egypt for deliverance. A second reason this prohibition is given is not because there is anything inherently wrong with using horses or using horses in warfare; the intention here was that Israel to be dependent upon God for deliverance and not man and not horses.

King Solomon was somewhat of an anomaly. He came from great stock and wrote marvelous portions of God’s Word. However, he did not always follow God’s Word himself. **And Solomon has 40,000 [probably 4000 or 1400] stalls of horse for his chariots and 12,000 horsemen** (1Kings 4:26; see also 1Kings 9:19 10:26–29 2Chron. 2:14).

The latter portion of this verse was a prophetic warning against an alliance with Egypt. **Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help—to rely on horses and trust in chariots because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong. But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek Y^ehowah...now the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit; so Y^ehowah will stretch out His hand and he who helps will stumble and he who is helped will fall and all of them will come to an end together** (Isaiah 31:1, 3; see also Jer. 42:13–43:7 Ezek. 17:15). For we know: **The king is not delivered by a mighty army and a warrior is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a false hope for victory; nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength** (Psalm 33:16–17; see Psalm 147:10 as well). Psalm 20:7 gives the alternative: **For the king trusts in Y^ehowah and through the grace of the Most High, he will not be shaken.**

“And he will not multiply to himself wives, and his heart will not be turned aside; and he will not greatly multiply silver and gold to himself. [Deut. 17:17]

One of the perks of being a king is the ability to have as many wives as one chooses. There are several problems which come hand-in-hand with several wives. There is the problem of space and having too many of these wives close at hand and underfoot, involved in jealousy and arguments. A king had a large enough palace where he could avoid the personal involvement here, if he so chose to. He had the room to entertain one or two wives without having the others so close at hand. Another problem was one of finances—it is expensive to support several wives and one’s children. A king can afford this sort of luxury. So, throughout the ancient world, bigamy was the norm for a king. However, God, here in the Law of Moses, held the kings of Israel to a higher standard. They were not to have many wives.

The theological problems with have more than one wife can be enumerated as follows: (1) Marriage illustrates the union between Jesus Christ and the nation Israel. God did not choose several nations from the earth and flit from nation to nation—He chose Israel and has always been faithful to Israel. (2) Right man right woman can only be found in a marriage of one man and one woman. Other partners confuse the issue and destroy the rapport. This is why having several sexual partners or having been married more than once confuses the soul and makes both identifying and relating to one’s right person difficult if not impossible. (3) Multiplying the number of sin natures makes life more difficult, not easier. (4) Wives of other cultures would serve other gods and cause the believer to either back pedal on the exclusivity of Jesus Christ, or to abandon Him entirely (Ex. 34:16 1Kings 11:4–9 Prov. 31:3).

We find that David succumbed to temptation and took several wives to himself (2Sam. 5:13), as did Solomon (1Kings 11:3). These wives turned Solomon’s heart away from God: **For it came about when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to Y^ehowah his God, as had been the heart of David his father** (1Kings 11:4). Solomon further deepened his inroads to reversionism with the abuse of wealth, which he stole from the people in taxes (1Kings 10:14 Eccles. 2:8–10).

Kings, in particular, were mandated not to have many wives because their successor was then a difficult choice. David had several children by a variety of wives. Therefore, both during and after his life, there was civil unrest

because there were so many young men who had claim to his throne. The events of Judges 9 in themselves are a good argument against a king/judge/leader having many wives.

We do learn something from the life of both David and Solomon. Neither man was perfect and they both turned against God's Word in this respect. This tells us that it is possible to enjoy right man right woman (David and Bathsheba) under these circumstances, just as it is possible to be a great king. However, the more likely scenario is never finding one's right man or right woman (the Song of Solomon illustrates this) and falling prey to false gods and the doctrine of demons, as Solomon did for much of his life. I have to be careful here. We note that despite his failures, David was a man of greatness, the one great king of Israel. More typical would be the illustration of Rehoboam, who was generally a failure (2Chron. 10:8) and caused the division of the Land of Promise into Judah and Israel (2Chron. 10:14–19); who was a man of many wives (2Chron. 11:21).¹⁹⁴ These examples would, by application, indicate that it would be *possible* for a pastor, for instance, to be divorced and remarried and still do a competent job. However, this is not very likely, which is why we have a New Testament prohibition of a pastor being a husband to more than one wife. However, the general result of sexual promiscuity or being married and divorced once or twice is a destruction of the Christian life and a ruination of the possibility of right man right woman.

The second prohibition is against using the office of king to become wealthy. It is easy to tax the people with out regard to their ability to pay. It is easy to frivolously spend money which you taxed and did not earn. This is what our government has done for years. As we fall further and further into nation debt we get into, the politician simply borrows more money or taxes more heavily. There is no personal accounting for the squandering of money. If a politician's salary or retirement was tied to fiscal responsibility, he would be more parsimonious, but it is not. One of the reasons Israel was warned by Samuel not to choose a king is that the king would just tax and tax them. This is above and beyond the spiritually-related tithes and offerings.

This passage sounds as though we are speaking of King Solomon, who was David's son and had the potential of being one of the greatest kings of Israel, had he continued to pursue God's truth (2Chron. 1:8–13). Instead, he broke the mandates herein laid down by Moses (1Kings 10:27–11:5) and this led him from the truth. **For it came to pass when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to Y^ehowah his God, as the heart of David, his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites. And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of Y^ehowah and...built a high place for Chemosh, the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods (1Kings 11:4–6a, 7–8).**

This passage in general points toward a Mosaic authorship, rather than an author from the time of Solomon, as has been alleged. Think about it: would it make sense to record in what would be called *Holy Scripture* several quotes which are in direct opposition to the king in power? This clearly tells Solomon to not do what you are doing. Whereas, prophets were never shy about telling it like it is directly to the face of a king, this would have been different. This would have been a man or a group of men who write something which was supposedly written four hundred years previous and then to somehow, slip this in as *Scripture* past a king who read and wrote *Scripture*. It would be one thing for a prophet to show up at Solomon's front door and speak to him about his mistakes; another to try to fake that this was God's Word written four hundred years ago. The author herein is concerned about an alliance with Egypt; during the time of Solomon, when this was supposed to have been written, this was not a serious concern. However, during the time of Moses and much later, during the time of Isaiah, this was a real fear.

For the present day application: although the number of people today who are involved in bigamy is relatively small, we have a huge number of people involved in adulterous relationships. You cannot serve God and allow yourself to fall into a relationship of this sort outside of marriage. Such a relationship requires you to spend a great deal of your waking hours outside of fellowship due to lying, deception and adultery. Furthermore, such activity

¹⁹⁴ Incidentally, you will notice in this verse that God graced Rehoboam out and gave him his right woman, Maacah.

is extremely hurtful to the other person and has caused the ruin of many a child's life, causing them to be disoriented and therefore disabled for most of their lives.

The second application is you do not allow yourself to marry someone who is not a believer in Jesus Christ or someone who really has no interest in God's Word. It does not matter at this point how much you think you love this person, your relationship is doomed if you are both pulling in two different directions. This does not mean a Catholic cannot marry a Jew, as a for instance, as both might be unbelievers. The application given here applies to believers.

“And it will come to pass, when he sits upon the throne of his kingdom, that he will write for himself a copy of this law in a book out from the face of the priests—the Levites. [Deut. 17:18]

There are two opinions here: that the king is to write this himself and that he is to have the book of the Law written for him.¹⁹⁵ The verb is *kâtha*^bv (כָּתַב) [pronounced *kaw-THAH^bV*] and means *to write, to write down, to chronicle, to record, to document*. Surprisingly enough, this is never found in the Old Testament in the Hiphil (causative) stem. The Qal stem is simple action; there are no accompanying verbs nor are there any qualifying words to indicate that the king has assigned this project to someone else. If that was what God required, then this would simply be stated that the king would *obtain* for himself a copy of the Law. Strong's #3789 BDB #507. Therefore, I believe that the king, with his own hand, is to record the Law of Moses.

Of utmost importance, the king is to have a personal copy of the Law which he will write himself before the face of the priests. This is a solemn occasion; one that will require a great deal of time each morning or afternoon when this is done; and it seems to indicate that the king is to do his own writing. This will cause the king to actually read what it is that he is writing. This is to be done in the presence of the priests—the Levites. **“This book of the law will not depart from your mouth, but you will study it day and night. So that you may be responsible to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success.”** (Joshua 1:8). So in Joshua's last message to his people, he said, **“Be stabilized and keep and do all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left.”** (Joshua 11:6).

This requirement parallels those things required of a vassal king under the suzerainty treaties during that time period. There would be an agreement and/or which has been drawn up; the vassal king who is subject to this treaty was to copy it down and study it and live by it. A king over the Israelites is similar to a vassal king, having been given rulership over the people of the land. He is given temporary custodianship over these people. Their true ruler is Jesus Christ.

“And it will be with him and he will read in it all [the] days of his life, so that he will learn to fear Y^ehowah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them; [Deut. 17:19]

“So you will take responsibility to do just as Y^ehowah your God has commanded you; you will not turn aside to the right or to the left.” (Deut. 5:32). The authority of God's Word was instituted from the top down. If the king was spiritually growing and functioning under God's directives, then it was very likely that Israel as a whole would be experiencing spiritual growth. God spoke to Solomon, saying, **“Then it will come to pass that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.”** (1Kings 11:38).

As we have examined many times, there is nothing more important than God's Word in our lives, perceived by means of the Holy Spirit: **“My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and I have not turned aside. I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”** (Job 23:11–12). O, how I love Your Law! It is my study all the day. Your commandments make

¹⁹⁵ This is the position taken in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 1, p. 929.

me wiser than my enemies, for they are forever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my study. I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word (Psalm 119:97–100). And David's charge to Solomon: "And keep the charge of Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that Y^ehowah may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you will not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'" (1Kings 2:3–4). And note how often the king was to study God's Word: **All the days of his life**. There is no precedent in the Bible for examining God's Word but once a week; there is no precedent in the Bible for going to God's Word only when you are in a jam. You don't deal with trouble in your life by opening up the Bible and dropping your finger on some random verse and reading it and practicing it. God's Word is designed to be studied every day of your life—it is more necessary to your life than the food you eat.

"So that his heart is not high above his brothers and so that he will not turn aside from the command, right or left, so that he will prolong [his] days over his kingdom—he and his sons, in the midst of Israel. [Deut. 17:20]

The king has a great position of authority, but he is no greater than the least in his kingdom. One of the great arrogant gestures of several bureaucracies in Washington and the United States Congress is that they would routinely exempt themselves from legislation which they pass. Having great authority does not place you above or outside of the laws of the land in any way. The writing down of the Law of God and the studying of the same is a clear indication that the kings over Israel were subject to the Laws of God as much if not more so than the general populace.

Furthermore, the king is not to look upon his position of authority as one of superiority. This is too often the case today: a person in authority is perceived as being superior to a person who is under him. People in authority and people under authority just have different well-defined roles. Having authority does not mean that a person is smarter than any of those below him. It is just where God has placed him. If you are placed in a position of authority, it is not a time for you to flaunt your authority or to abuse your authority, but you are to have respect for those under your authority and to take responsibility for those under your authority. A good leader guides his people and sets an example for his people; and he will do what is right by his people. General George Patton and General Douglas MacArthur were great men of great authority, whose every decision impacted the life and death of hundreds and thousands of men. This was delicately balanced against the freedom of the United States which they fought for. They were men to emulate when it comes to the concept of leadership.

Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
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Deuteronomy 18

Deuteronomy 18:1–22

Outline of Chapter 18:

- Vv. 1–8 **Special treatment afforded the Levite**
- Vv. 9–14 **Association with demon activity is strictly forbidden**
- Vv. 15–19 **God will raise up a true prophet to Israel: the Messiah**
- Vv. 20–22 **The test for a true prophet**

Charts:

- v. 13 **Miracles vs. Magic**
- v. 14 **How Can You Tell that Someone is a False Prophet?**
- v. 17 **Why the Prophet in Deut. 18:15 Does Not Refer to Mohammed**
- v. 19 **Jesus is the Prophet of Whom Moses Spoke**

Introduction: At the end of Deut. 17, Moses describes how different the king of Israel must be from other kings. Moses knows, through God the Holy Spirit, that Israel will desire a king, so he sets down in the Law how the king should be set apart from all others. In Deut. 18, Moses will explain that since the Levites are set apart, Israel must provide for them. Then God will explain in what ways the sons of Israel will be separated from the other nations. Then, suddenly, as in opposition to the witch craft and spiritism practiced by other nations, Moses speaks of the coming Messiah, a prophet, Who God will raise up. Finally, Moses sets the standard that a prophet must meet in order to be considered a prophet of God. Because of the translation and the subject matter, there will be a number of times during this chapter when we delve into the Hebrew more often than usual.

Deuteronomy 11	Deuteronomy 12	Deuteronomy 13	Deuteronomy 14	Deuteronomy 15
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Special Treatment Afforded the Levite

Not there will be to the priests, the Levites—all the tribe of Levi—a portion and an inheritance with Israel. Fire offerings of Y^ehowah and His inheritance they will eat.

Deut. 18:1

For the priests, the Levites—all the tribe of Levite—there will be no portion or inheritance with Israel; they will eat fire-offerings to Y^ehowah, His inheritance.

Most translations read *Levitical priests*. Even though the book of Number is clear as to the purpose of the Levites in assistance to the priests and the book of Leviticus is clear as to the duties of the priests, they are often grouped together and called the *Levitical priesthood*. After changing the order somewhat and replacing an *and* with an *or*, we have: **There will not be to the priests, the Levites—all of the tribe of Levite a portion [or, tract or territory] or inheritance with Israel. The fire offerings of Y^ehowah and His inheritance they will eat.** The construction of this verse further indicates that there is no Levitical priesthood, per se. Moses emphasizes here that he is not just speaking of Levites which are priests, which is the line of Aaron, but of all Levites. Each tribe of Israel will be given a portion or tract of land, which land will then be divided up among the families. However the Levites will not be given their own territory, but they will live among their brothers.

For awhile, I was not certain if I was the only person to notice that there are specific differences between the priests and the Levites, but Keil and Delitzsch wrote: *Moses felt it to be superfluous to enumerate these gifts one by one from the previous laws, and also to describe the mode of their application, or define how much belong to the priests and how much to the Levites. However true it may be that the author assigns all these gifts to the Levites generally, the conclusion drawn from this, viz., that he was not acquainted with any distinction between the priests and Levites, but placed the Levite entirely on a part with the priests, is quite a false one. For, apart from the evident distinction between the priests and Levites in v. 1, where there would be no meaning in the clause, "all the tribe of Levi," if the Levites were identical with the priests, the distinction is recognized and asserted as clearly as possible in what follows, when a portion of the slain-offerings is allotted to the priests in v. 3–5, whilst in vv. 6–8 the Levite is allowed to join in eating the altar gifts, if he come to the place of the sanctuary and perform service there. The repetition in v. 2 is an emphatic confirmation: "As He hath said unto them," as in ch. 10:9.*¹⁹⁶ I also noticed only today that Alfred Edersheim also makes such a distinction. In fact, I never realize until today that anyone else used the phrase *Aaronic priesthood*¹⁹⁷.

We in the Church Age have a lot in common with the Levites. I believe they are the shadow of the church. There is much in the Old Testament which foreshadows that which will occur in the New. This is not quite the same as prophecy, but there are several parallels which we have examined before. It was through the sacrifices performed by the Aaronic branch of the Levites that the gospel was conveyed. Similarly, we reveal the gospel to a lost and dying world. **"You are the light of the world. A city set upon a hill cannot be hidden....Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, Who is in heaven."** (Matt. 5:14, 16). The Levites had a place in the world, but they did not own any real estate (Num. 18:20, 23 Deut. 10:9). **"I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil [one]. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."** (John 17:15–16, 18). We live in the world, but we are not of the world. Whatever we have, it is temporary, given to us briefly by God, but we have no inheritance in this world. The Levites share in the blessings of God (Num. 18:8–24), as we in the church age do. We share in Christ's inheritance. **Also, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His plan, who works all things after the counsel of His will** (Eph. 2:11). **Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, resulting in an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and will not decay, reserved in heaven for you** (1Peter 1:3–4).

"And he has no inheritance in the midst of his brothers; Y^ehowah Himself [is] his inheritance, as He [God] has spoken to him. [Deut. 18:2]

The first *he* in this verse refers to the Levite. This encompasses the priesthood, but does not make the Levite tribe equivalent to the priesthood. The Levite is in the midst of the other Israelites and has no land inheritance. As we have seen, this is found in several passages throughout the Old Testament (Num. 26:62 Joshua 13:14). Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, is the inheritance of the Levite (Num. 18:6, 20). Similarly, we, as the body of Christ, have an inheritance in heaven, not on this earth. As our Lord said to His disciples, **"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, you may be also."** (John 14:1–3).

"And this is the priest's [legal] right from the people: from the sacrificing a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep, he has even given [lit., and he has given] to the priest the strength [lit., the shoulder (or leg)] and the two cheeks and the stomach [possibly, the cursed inner portion].
[Deut. 18:3]

Legal right here is *mish^opâṭ* (מִשְׁפָּט) [pronounced *mish-PAWT*] is a judgement or a verdict rendered by a judge (Ex. 21:31 Ezek. 44:24) (God can *be* the judge in context). It can also mean the act of deciding a case

¹⁹⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 1, p. 931.

¹⁹⁷ Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*, pp. 408 & 773

(Deut. 1:17 Prov. 16:33), or the place where a judgement is rendered (Deut. 25:1 1Kings 7:7). In this context, it refers to one's legal right, or one's privilege or due (Deut. 18:3 21:17 Jer. 5:28) Strong's #4941 BDB #1048

Now notice that in this verse we do not have the word *Levite* or *Levitical* because we are now dealing with duties which are specifically priestly duties. When describing the portion which the priest receives, some Bibles have *shoulder* and some have *leg*. This is quite a difference in translation, but this is because the word is *z^erowâ* (זרוע) [pronounced *z^er-O-wah*] (there are about five different spellings) and this word literally means *arm, shoulder* and figuratively means *strength*. Strong's #2220 BDB #283. Figuratively—where we derive some meaning from this verse—this refers to the strength of the sacrifice; the portion of the priest, the spiritual one, is the strength of the sacrifice, just as our portion is from the strength of our sacrifice, Jesus Christ. **I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me** (Philip. 4:3). **Therefore, I am well content with weakness, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak [and helpless], then I am strong** (2Cor. 12:10). Literally, this is simply the leg up to the breast portion above it, as is made clear in Ex. 29:26–28 and Lev. 7:32–33. The second item is the *cheeks* (in the dual) or *jaw, jawbone* in the singular (Judges 15:15–16).

I was going to skip the last item until I did some investigation. It is the word *qê^bvâh* (קֵבֵאֵה) [pronounced *kayb-VAWH*] and it is found only here, making its meaning rather abstruse. Strong's #6896 BDB #867. However, there is a very similar word, *qô^bvâh* (קֹבֵאֵה) [pronounced *koeb-VAWH*] which possibly means *belly* but it is found only in Num. 25:8. Strong's #6897 BDB #867. However, what I think is the key is the word *qâ^bva^bv* (קֵבֵאֵה) [pronounced *kawb-VAHV*], possibly a foreign word for *curse* (Num. 23:8, 27). Strong's #6895 BDB #866. The primary difference between these words (and there is another similar word) is the vowel points (and *curse* ends in a *^bv.*, not an *h*). I would think that we have a relationship here—the *cursed, inner portion*. At the time that this was written, and for centuries afterward, this would make little or not sense; here are the most spiritual of the tribe of Levi, the priests (and Levi is the most spiritual of the tribes) and what they are given is the *cursed inner portion*. However, this makes great sense to us today, as **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree** (Gal. 3:13 Deut. 21:23).

“You will give to him the first of your corn, of your new wine and of your oil and the first of the fleece of your flock; [Deut. 18:4]

God receives the first of all of that which He has given us. **“You will not delay [the offering] from your harvest and your vintage. The firstborn of your sons you will give to Me.”** (Ex. 22:29). **“All of the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain, the first fruits of those which they give to Y^ehowah, I [God] give them to you [the priests].”** (Num. 18:12). He blesses us and we give to him from our blessing. In this historical context, the Israelites gave to the Levites, who stood between them and God in their spiritual service. For those who are called into a spiritual service which precludes them earning a living in another way, they are supported through the financial contributions of others who give as God has prospered them. Moses, as guided by God the Holy Spirit, adds the first of the wool shearing to the first-fruits mentioned in Num. 18:12.

McGee points out here that it is interesting that the king's salary is never mentioned—how much it should be, from where he should get it, etc. However, several times is the salary of the priests and the Levites mentioned (Lev. 7:32–35 Num. 18:11–14). Throughout this portion of the Law, much more time is spent with the spiritual structure of Israel as opposed to the political structure. This is not because the political rulers were the spiritual leaders—the mention of a king indicates that is not the case—but that the political system is not nearly as important as the spiritual aspect of Israel. Plus, at this time, Israel was ruled directly by God through his mediator-prophet, Moses.

“For Y^ehowah your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand to serve in the name of Y^ehowah, he and his sons continually. [Deut. 18:5]

Again, *him* is Aaron, not the Levite, who performs the spiritual services in relationship to God. Notice that in v. 3 we begin speaking specifically about the priests, which is Aaron and his sons. **“And you will gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and place headgear on them, and they will have the priesthood by a perpetual statute. So you will fill the hand of Aaron and his sons.”** (Ex. 29:9; see also Ex. 28:1 Num. 3:10). Similarly, every believer in

the Church Age has a plan for his life designed by God. This does not necessarily mean that every believer becomes a pastor-teacher, a missionary or an evangelist. We all have individual gifts, but we all play a major part in His plan. Paul did not disparage other believers because he was out roaming the countryside, evangelizing and establishing churches and they were not. That would have been foolish. God had a plan for Paul and God had a plan for the thousands or millions of other believers of that time period, just as He does now. During the time of Israel, God's plan worked primarily through specific individuals and groups. He worked through Israel as a nation, through the Levites as a tribe, and through the Aaronites as the priestly portion of that tribe. God also worked through specific individuals, such as prophets and scribes, to speak His Word and to record it.

“And when the Levite comes from one of your cities [lit., gates] out of all Israel, where he has lived [lit., which (place) he sojourned there], and he comes with all the desire of his soul to the place which Y^ehowah chooses; [Deut. 18:6]

There are two basic interpretations to this verse. (1) The Levite has been caused to move from one place to another. He used to live in one town and he has chosen, completely within God's will, to move to your town. This is not the thrust of this particular verse; however, this application this would still be reasonable. (2) The correct understanding of this verse is that a Levite has decided to come to the place where God has chosen in order to worship. So not to sound so mysterious, the Levite has decided to come to Jerusalem to worship and to officiate there during one of the feast days. We can infer this as this is the typical language used to refer to Jerusalem (see Deut. 12:5 14:23). The word *sojourned* is used here, as the Levites was not given a permanent home on this earth. Therefore, where they live is where God has placed them temporarily. They are only living there for a time. This is not their home (a topic we have already covered). Although the implication of this passage is that this would be for a particular feast day, this would all hold true for a Levite who chose to move to Jerusalem permanently.

In any case, the scenario herein described is a Levite, who lives in Israel, who is caused by God to go from his area to another area. Let's make an up-to-date application here: one thing which is notable about this verse, is that the will of the Levite and the will of God are the same. People object to becoming a Christian and learning God's Word and growing up spiritually because they think that eventually they will have to start doing things that they do not want to do. Here the Levite is moving as per the desire of his own soul—as per his own free will, and this is also the place which God chooses. Now, this does not always mean that what we want to do and what God chooses for us is the same. The less mature we are, the more often our will and God's will come into conflict. However, His will is always what is right for us. When I first moved to Texas, it was my third choice of the places where I wanted to move to. It was God's first. When I hired on at a school, it was my second choice—it was God's first. In retrospect, I would not have done it any other way. In every respect, God's choice was by far the best. I am much happier with these choices than I could ever imagine; I have been blessed beyond what I would have ever expected because of these decisions. My point in all this is that, our will and God's will do not have to be diametrically opposed. However, wherever we disagree, God's will is the very best choice. Now this does not mean you have to learn a new language and go into the mission field; this does not mean you have to quit your job and become a pastor-teacher. This does not mean that you have to set up a tent somewhere and become an evangelist. If this is God's will for your life, the desire will be almost overpowering. It will take more patience to wait for the right time.

A point of interest: nowhere throughout Deuteronomy do we have a direct reference to Jerusalem. Obviously, there is no Jerusalem in terms of being the *holy city* at this time. However, this is never given to us prophetically. Continually, Moses refers to this as the place which God will choose. Let me offer a few reasons for this: (1) At this point in time, God was not going to show any preference for any of the twelve tribes. No tribe is specifically told that God would favor them by choosing them to house the holy city. (2) If God chose a particular geographical area at the beginning, then there would have been no little strife as to which tribe would occupy the surrounding area. Therefore, Levites would live throughout all of Israel, just as there would be cities of refuge scattered throughout all of Israel. (3) Had Deuteronomy been written long after the time of Moses, long after the establishment of Jerusalem as the holy city, then it would make sense for the enterprising young priest(s) or religious group falsifying these records to include the prophecy that Jerusalem would be the place. To wit, whenever we think of Israel and the Jew, we all think of Jerusalem as the holy city, even though we may not know

why. This would be the ideal time to throw in some sort of a mysterious prophecy that this would be Jerusalem. However, this is not found here because these records were not faked.

“Then will minister in the name of Y^ehowah his God, like all his brothers, the Levites, who are standing there before Y^ehowah, [Deut. 18:7]

Because the Levites are not tied to a specific piece of real estate, God may require them to move to another area. In that situation, they are to continue doing what all Levites do. Many Levites will come to the holy place because more help will be required during the feast days because of the huge temporary increase in population of those who have come to Jerusalem. Jerusalem could swell in size by perhaps twenty times during the three feasts which require the men of Israel to come there. Therefore, the increased religious activity along with the increased population would require an influx of Levites as well.

One of the arguments against Mosaic authorship was that this portion of Scripture did not differentiate between the Levites and the priests. However, when exegeted carefully, it assumes those differences and does not contradict them. Note, when speaking of the tribe of Levi in general, they are never involved in actually sacrificing an animal—this was reserved to the priestly portion of the tribe of Levi; to the sons of Aaron.

“Portion as portion they will eat, apart from his sold things, concerning [or, with] the fathers. [Deut. 18:8]

This is all a bit difficult in terms of translation, so we will look at vv. 6–8 in a few other translations to get the gist of this passage (v. 8 in particular):

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel, where he is a temporary resident, he may come whenever he desires to [the sanctuary] the place the Lord will choose, then he may minister in the name [and presence of] the Lord his God, like all his brethren the Levites, who stand to minister there before the Lord. They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what may come of the sale of his patrimony.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And when the Levite shall come in out of any of thy gates out of any part of Israel, where he is sojourning,—yea shall come in with all the desire of his soul, into the place which Yahweh shall choose then may he minister in the name of Yahweh his God,—like any of his brethren the Levites who are standing there before Yahweh. Portion for portion shall they eat,—apart from his possessions upon his patrimony.
KJV	And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose, Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, who stand there before the LORD. They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.
NASB	Now if a Levite comes from any of your towns throughout Israel where he resides, and comes whenever he desires to the place which the LORD chooses, Then he shall serve in the name of the LORD his God, like all his fellow Levites who stand there before the LORD. They shall eat equal portions except <i>what they receive</i> from the sale of their fathers' estates.
NEB	When a Levite comes from any settlement in Israel where he may be lodging to the place which the LORD will choose, if he comes in the eagerness of his heart and ministers in the name of the LORD his God, an equal share of food with them, besides what he may inherit from his father's family.
NIV	If a Levite moves from one of your towns anywhere in Israel where he is living, and comes in all earnestness to the place the LORD will choose, he may minister in the name of the LORD his God like all his fellow Levites who serve there in the presence of the LORD. He is to share equally in their benefits, even though he has received money from the sale of family possessions.

Young's Lit. Translation And when the Levite cometh from one of thy cities out of all Israel, where he hath sojourned, and hath come with all the desire of his soul unto the place which Jehovah doth choose, then he hath ministered in the name of Jehovah his God, like all his brethren, the Levites, who are standing there before Jehovah, portion as portion they do eat, apart from his sold things, with the fathers.

So what has happened is that a Levite has come to Jerusalem to minister during the feast days (although, by application, this would all fit if the Levite is simply moving from one area to another). He will minister, just as his brothers minister, and he will receive his portion of food and sacrifice, even though he may have money from the sale of his family's property. That is, even if a Levite has personal funds or a personal savings account, God does not expect him to live off of that first and then receive his rightful due for his spiritual service. What the Levites received for their service was not welfare; it was not to tide them over or to help out; it was not social security. They performed absolutely necessary spiritual functions and were to be remunerated for same. This was apart from any personal funds which they might have saved, earned or inherited. This passage also makes it clear that Levites had personal possessions beyond that of basic personal needs. The sale of property enough which might preclude a salary, which Moses is guarding against here, indicates that they might accumulate a great deal of property, including ownership of a home. They would not own the land the house was on, but they could own a house. The lease or sale of a former residence would account for this clarification on the part of Moses. Such a sale would not remove them from their spiritual benefits.

To pursue that thought and to apply it to today: we are not precluded from owning things. There is no reason to assume that becoming a Christian means that you must take a vow of poverty and live in squalor. This does not mean that you, as a Christian, must give away every valuable possession so that you only own a handful of personal items. We are allowed to accumulate property and wealth, although ownership of same carries with it responsibilities enumerated in 2Cor. 8–9. Furthermore, the wealth does not preclude spiritual benefits. In context, a Levite did not give up his right to the first fruits just because he had a little wealth. By application, we do not give up spiritual reward in heaven because we have wealth here on earth.

Hezekiah instituted several reforms—one of which was the remuneration of the Levites and the priests for their spiritual services. [Also he \[Hezekiah\] commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of Y^ehowah](#) (2Chron. 31:4). We find when Israel was regathered under Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, that the payment of the priests and the Levites was mentioned as a part of the celebration (Neh. 12:44–47). In fact, the amount set aside for the priests and Levites had to be carefully administered, just as those in charge of the treasury for a church must be honest and careful in their work (Neh. 13:12–13).

This basic principle is the same for the pastor-teacher. If a pastor-teacher begins the ministry with money in his pocket, for whatever reason, he should not be expected to spend this money towards his own living expenses until he reaches a point of poverty and then his church begins to support him. When a pastor spends several years and thousands upon thousands of dollars to get a postgraduate degree, they are not to receive some puny pittance which is an insult to his family and his devotion. He should receive a decent, living wage. His family should not starve nor should the pastor be blackmailed into giving a huge chunk of his salary back to the church as his offering. This applies, no matter what the pastor has by way of personal savings. Now, the pastor may choose, as Paul did in dealing with the Corinthians, not to take a personal offering from them, but rather to support himself through his own skill of tent-making. However, this was Paul's choice, not theirs. He was not going to be in the debt of the Corinthians.

A further application: a lot of church groups sink a great deal of money into a piece of real estate and build a beautiful and expensive church. This is not God's plan if the pastor is not remunerated. In the Apostolic Age, the beginning of the Church Age, they all met in people's homes. There was no New Testament directive to build a house of God or houses of God. On the other hand, the salary of the pastor and the salary of the Levite are the topics of several passages throughout the Old and New Testaments. This does not mean that a group of believers should not look into building a church—this means that priorities must be straight and the #1 priority in God's Word is the support of those in spiritual service.

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Association with Demon Activity Is Strictly Forbidden

“When you come in unto the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you, you will not learn to do according to the abominations of those nations; [Deut. 18:9]

Throughout the Old Testament, God continually instructs Israel to be different from the surrounding nations (see 2Chron. 34:33 Ezra 6:21 9:11 Jer. 44:3–4). Religion is the invention of Satan and, when allowed to take its natural course, can get quite out of hand. Those who lived in the land prior to Israel had turned to incredibly depraved religious practices. They had degenerated to the point where God needed to have them removed. **“It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”** (Deut. 9:5). The degeneracy of these nations had reached such a point of crisis that God demanded their destruction. **“Only in the cities of these peoples that Y^ehowah your God is giving you as an inheritance, you will not leave alive anything that breathes.¹⁹⁸ But you will utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusites, as Y^ehowah your God has commanded you, in order that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against Y^ehowah your God.”** (Deut. 20:16–18; see also Lev. 18:3, 26–30 Deut. 12:29–32). The rest of this passage will cover the most complete list in Scripture of the degenerate practices of the peoples of the Land of Promise.

“There is not to be found in you one causing his son and his daughter to pass over into fire; a user of divinations: an observer of times, and an enchanter, and a sorcerer; [Deut. 18:10]

There were religions which actually required their adherents to sacrifice their own children to appease the gods. Although we may find it hard to believe, large groups of people at that time allowed their children to be sacrificed to Molech (or did it themselves). Such a sacrifice was required by their religious beliefs. This is mentioned in Ex. 20:4 Lev. 18:21 20:2–5 Deut. 12:31 Ezek. 16:21 23:37. A person cannot be more lacking in natural affection than that. Furthermore, this was a painful sacrifice, often laying the child on the red-hot hands of an idol. Even one of the kings of Judah, the evil Manasseh, caused his own son to pass through the fire (2Kings 21:1–5).

We have a situation today which is designed to help remove the natural affection that men and women should have for their children: abortion used as a means of birth control. There are many people without having been saved, who believe in evolution, that we are the result of an almost uncountable number of favorable genetic mutations, which resulted in the human race. Taking this to its logical conclusion, a child who has brain activity in the womb (which occurs within three weeks of conception, if memory serves) could be considered no less a person than a child outside the womb (we are considered dead when our brain activity ceases). However, still, as a matter of personal convenience and birth control, children are aborted by the thousands. Whereas this is not the same as offering a child in a sacrifice, it tends to dull one’s natural affection. If I was uncertain as to the *aliveness* or the *humanness* of a child in the womb, then it would take an awfully selfish decision to terminate that child’s life in the name of personal convenience. My point here is that an unbeliever does not *know* when a child becomes a person—I would think that the Biblical evidence would be that a child becomes a person when God breathes into it the child’s first breath—however, the unbeliever has no such belief, no such revelation and no reason to believe that. An unbeliever who terminates a pregnancy is faced with such a decision, not knowing whether they are terminating the life of their child. That kind of a decision requires the same thinking and emotion as those who allowed their children to be sacrificed to Molech.

¹⁹⁸ It was the failure of the Israelites to follow God’s directive to the letter, resulting in many spiritual problems in the years to follow (2Kings 21:2 2Chron. 28:1–4 33:1–9).

The other items, we should take up one at a time: the **Doctrine of Divination—not finished yet**, the **Doctrine of an Observer of Times, an Enchanter, and a Witch—not finished yet!!** In this verse, notice the colon after *divination*. The Hebrew language punctuates grammatically. Notice that all of the words following *divination* are separated by a conjunction. This indicates that *divination* is the general category of things being examined here—a generic term, if you will—and the list that follows are the specifics.

“And a caster of spells [or, a charmer of charms], and an inquirer of a ventriloquist demon, and [the] demon-possessed, and one seeking [or, inquiring of] the dead [ones]; [Deut. 18:11]

We begin with the Qal active participle of *châ^bvar* (חַבַּר) [pronounced *khawb-VAHR*] which generally means *to join, to unite* (Gen. 14:5 Ex. 26:3). We have this used in a negative sense with regards to demonism only in Deut. 18:11 and Psalm 58:5. This word is used in a negative sense in Psalm 94:20 Hosea 4:17. When used in conjunction with demonism, it is always accompanied by its noun cognate: *che^bver* (חַבַּר) [pronounced *kheb-VER*], translated *enchantment, charm, company, and wide* in the KJV. It is associated with demonism in Deut. 18:11 Psalm 58:5 Isa. 47:9, 12. It is only found in three more places: Prov. 21:9 25:24 Hos. 6:9. Strong's #2266 BDB #287 (verb). Strong's #2267 BDB # 288 (noun*). I am a little hard-pressed for the connection between the two very different meanings of the verb. There is an emphasis in the Old Testament of being bound by one's oath or word (Joshua 9:20) and this may be the connection between the disparate meanings. A third-party is bound by the statement of the one who makes it. Essentially, something is said to have a supernatural affect on another. In the Talmud, when one encounters a witch, they are instructed to say, “May a pot of boiling dung be stuffed into your mouth, you ugly witch,” in order to remove her powers (P^oçâhîm 110a). From the reading which I have done, my take on this is that a phrase is repeated several times to, as it were, place a curse upon another or casts somewhat of a magical curse or spell upon them. It is possible the connection here is the *uniting* of the spirit world with our world. One of the suggestions quoted by Freeman is one who tied knots in order to divine, but I don't think that is the meaning here.

Then next phrase is the Qal active participle of *shâ^lal* (שָׁאֵל) [pronounced *shaw-AHL*], which means *to ask, to petition, to inquire*. Strong's #7592 BDB #981. The person who is inquired of is the *ôw^bv* [demon] (אוֹב) [pronounced *ow^bv*], a word which properly means *to mumble*. This is a reference to the *ventriloquist demon*, one who speaks through a person (it is often translated *medium* for that reason).¹⁹⁹ Because of its speaking quality, it is often translated *a familiar spirit* in the KJV. We find this in Lev. 20:6, 27 Deut. 18:11 1Sam. 28:3, 7–9 2Kings 21:6 23:24 1Chron. 10:13 2Chron. 33:6 Job 32:19 Isa. 8:19 19:3 29:4. This is a demon which usually possesses a person and speaks through that person (this can all be seen in the 1Sam. 28 passage). Strong's #178 BDB #15.

The third person in this verse not be found in Israel is a *yîdd^e ʿônîy* (יִדְדֵי ʿוֹנִי) [pronounced *yid-d'-ô-NEE*] refers to a person who has a familiar spirit; that is, he is *demon-possessed* (the KJV uses the word *wizard*, which tells us nothing). Freeman translates this *the knowing one*. These may also speak through their host; although this demon possesses the body of its person whereas the *ôw^bv* demon only works through that person's vocal chords (some Christians who speak in tongues allow the working of the *ôw^bv* demon; this close contact with this demonic entity accounts for their trances, ecstatic behavior and, on occasion, visions). Strong's #3049 BDB #396

The final person in this verse begins with the Qal active participle of *dârash* (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *dah-RAWSH*], which means *to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to inquire*. This word can be used for man *seeking or making inquiry* of God (Gen. 25:22 2Kings 8:8 Psalm 105:4). There are even a few instances where God is the subject (Gen. 9:5 (three times) Job 3:4 10:6 39:8). Strong's #1875 BDB #205. That which is being sought or inquired of is preceded by the preposition *ʿal*, which means *in, into, unto, in the direction of*. The thing being sought is the Qal active participle, masculine plural of *mûwth* (מוֹת) [pronounced *mooth*], which means *the dead ones*. Freeman lists one of the methods was to pour warm blood into a corpse, although we do not have anything like that listed in the Bible. Many of those who seek the dead are generally faking it (the witch of Endor is a good example here). Strong's #4191 BDB #559. So man is not allowed to seek information from the dead.

¹⁹⁹ Both Thieme and Freeman concur on this point.

The application to today is simple. We are to avoid the occult. We are not to have contact with mediums, white magic, black magic, those who are in contact with demons, those who speak in tongues, etc. All demon-involved people are to avoided.

“For whoever does these things [is] an abomination to Y^ehowah; and because of these abominable practices, Y^ehowah your God is driving them out from before your face. [Deut. 18:12]

God makes it clear that these things are abhorrent to Him and is removing these people out of the land for this kind of behavior. **“Do not defile yourself by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.”** (Lev. 18:24).

“You will be complete [or, whole or entire] before the face of Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 18:13]

Tâmîym (תָּמִיִּם) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*] means *to be complete, mature, whole, entire*. Strong’s #8549 BDB #1071. Moses is speaking to individuals, not to the nation of Israel, as the verb is in the masculine singular. This is a reference to the spiritual growth and maturation process. We all start at zero, but this is hoped that we will reach spiritual maturity when God *harvests* us. In this context, the aspect of maturity which is examined is that each person was to be separated completely from demonism. Noah was an example of a man who was *complete and mature*. **Noah was a righteous man, complete [and mature] in his generation. Noah walked with God** (Gen. 6:9b). God’s charge to Abram: **Now, when Abram was ninety-nine years old, Y^ehowah appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God All-sufficient; walk before Me and be complete [and mature].”** (Gen. 17:1). **How happy is the man whose way is complete [[and mature], who walk in the Law of Y^ehowah** (Psalm 119:1). **“Therefore, you are to be complete as your heavenly Father is complete.”** (Matt. 5:48).

Allow me to insert here a list of those activities associated with Satan and his demon army (this was taken from *When Skeptics Ask* by Geisler and Brooks; ©1990; Victor Books; p. 90): (1) Witchcraft (Deut. 18:10); (2) fortune telling (Deut. 18:10); (3) communication with spirits (Deut. 18:11); (4) mediums (Deut. 18:11); (5) divination (Deut. 18:10); (6) astrology (Deut. 4:19 Isa. 47:13–15); (7) heresy (false teaching) (1Tim. 4:1 1John 4:1–2); (8) immorality (Eph. 2:2–3); (9) self-deification (Gen. 3:5 Isa. 14:12); (10) lying (John 8:44); (11) idolatry (1Cor. 10:19–20); (12) legalism and self-denial (Col. 2:16–23 1Tim. 4:1–3).

Let me further include a chart based upon the chart found in *When Skeptics Ask* by Geisler and Brooks; ©1990; Victor Books; p. 90:

Miracles vs. Magic			
Miracles	Scripture	Magic	Scripture
Under God’s control	Ex. 14:13–30	Under human or demonic control	Ex. 7:11–12 2Thess. 2:9
Supernatural power	Ex. 3:2 4:6–7	Natural or mystical power	Ex. 7:11
Associated with good	Matt. 9:18–38 12:35	Associated with evil	Deut. 18:10–14 2Thess. 2:9
Associated only with truth	Ex. 4:1–5	Association with some error	Deut. 18:22 2Kings 22:23 2Thess. 2:10–11
Can overpower evil	Ex. 14:13–30	Cannot overpower good	Ex. 7:12
Associated only with Y ^e howah, the God of Israel	1Kings 17:17–23 Matt. 15:31	Associated with other gods	Deut. 13:1–5

Miracles vs. Magic			
Miracles	Scripture	Magic	Scripture
Affirms that Jesus is God in the flesh	Mark 2:8–12 Luke 7:20–22	Denies that Jesus is God in the flesh	2Peter 2:1
Associated prophecies are 100% true, often fulfilled twice	Deut. 18:22	Associated prophecies are sometimes false	Deut. 18:22
Never associated with the occult	1Kings 18:21	Often associated with the occult	Deut. 18:10–14

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“For these nations, whom you are dispossessing, they listen to astrologers, and to diviners. And Y^howah your God has not so given you [these]. [Deut. 18:14]

We examined the word *ʿānan* (אָנָן) [pronounced *aw-NAHM*] in Lev. 19:26. This word is generally translated *soothsayer* or *an observer of times*. However, it seems to mean *to practice astrology*, although it is a tough call. This word is also found in Judges 9:37 2Kings 21:6 2Chron. 33:6 Isa. 2:6 57:3 Jer. 27:9 Micah 5:12. This practice is associated in Isa. 2:6 with influences from the East and is related to the practices of the Philistines at that time. In Jer. 27:9 they are associated with those who foretell the future apart from God. Bowing to translations from before, I will go with *astrologer*. Strong's #6049 BDB #778. I don't know that I would condemn those of you who might read your horoscope once a week or once a month and promptly forget it—more out of curiosity, a very limited means of entertainment. However, if you read your horoscope on a daily basis, or as often as you come across it and you give it any serious thought, then you in violation of the mandates of God. If you ever look upon astrology seriously as a means of foretelling the future, then you are in violation of God's mandates. **And when they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? (Isa. 8:19).**

One of the profound differences between the Church Age and the Age of Israel is in the area of God's revealed Word. We have the entire revelation of God to man. We have a complete map of the future with respect to God's people the Israelites and a fairly reasonable map of our future as Church Age believers. Israel did not have God's complete word as a nation and even as a nation under Roman rule, they did not have His complete Word. Therefore, it was standard operating procedure for God to send them a prophet now and again, to warn them of the level of degeneracy to which they had fallen, and to add to His Word. God's Word is now complete and we live in an era of historical trends. We can study God's Word, God's dealing with Israel, and have a fairly good idea as to our future. We are not prophets, but we can recognize when our nation is operating within God's Will and when it is not. We know the various types of discipline which accompany our disobedience. We do not require a prophet to tell us that continual remarriage, adultery, divorce and sexual improprieties (including sex outside of marriage) is wrong. We do not need God to come down and remind us that homosexual activity is wrong. We do not need additional information to understand that lying, cheating, stealing, mental attitude sins, and verbal sins are wrong. We know how to become saved, we know what the Christian life consists of, we have God's tremendous promises and His love, we know how to get back into fellowship when we fall out of fellowship. God has given us all of the information that we require to lead a life which glorifies Him. You might think, well I need to know if I should take job A or job B—this is a decision which will affect me and mine for the rest of our lives. Don't be foolish—if you are taking in God's Word on a daily basis through the accurate teaching of a pastor, God will take care of that for you. But if you neglect your spiritual growth, then whatever decision you make will be wrong because you have made it in a spiritually immature state when God has given you enough time to make this decision in a spiritually mature state.

Let me give you a personal example. When it was time for me to find a teaching job, I knew that I could no longer remain in my home town of Sacramento, even though of all the people I knew, I had the least interest in ever moving out of Sacramento. When I made this decision, I checked into three areas to move to, the third choice was Houston. All of the doors opened to Houston and no doors opened to the other two areas. In all the schools I applied at, I had a first choice and a second choice. God placed me in my second choice. In retrospect, I know that all of these choices which God made for me were correct and my preferences were incorrect. My point is not that you always go with your second or third choice—my point is that I did not require even one small bolt of lightning from heaven directing me to the right or to the left. These choices, which affected my entire subsequent life, were taken care of by God. When there came a time when I thought that God might be moving me out of my district because of problems which I had there, my pastor at that time, Bob Thieme, taught that you do not leave a job just because you have problems. So, I was open to a move and explored other school districts, but God did not move me, so I remained. In retrospect, as of this writing, I cannot imagine making better decisions. This is what God chose and I was lucky enough to fall into it. My part in the decision making was primarily to listen to the study of God's Word every night, which rarely had anything which dealt directly with my decisions (with that one exception). God vindicated His Word in my soul and led me. Not even one time did this require some audible message from God to me.

Paraphrasing ZPEB, a *diviner* is one who *consults other beings (generally divine, demonic or departed) or things (by observing objects or actions) in the attempt to gain information about the future and such other matters as are removed from normal knowledge*²⁰⁰.

V. 14 basically sums up these who the people listen to as astrologers and diviners—those who seek information apart from divine revelation. We are never told that we can know whatever we want to know; however, God will make the truth known to anyone who desires to know it. What is important for our guidance in this world, God will give that to us. Isaiah sums this up with [And when they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? \[Should the consult\] the dead on behalf of the living? To the Law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no light \[lit., dawn\]](#) (Isa. 8:19–20). We do not need revelation beyond that which God has given us. You do not have to receive extra revelation in order to determine if you should turn left or right; whether you should stop of Krogers or HEB on the way home. God has given us enough revelation whereby we can conduct our lives as a glory to Him.

When we move into the New Testament era, there will still be demon activity, however its infiltration into religion will be more subtle than influence of Satan over these people in the land. Satan will eventually work through the priests of the scribes of Israel. When our Lord was speaking to a mixed crowd of Pharisees (John 8:13), believers (John 8:31) and Jews in general (John 8:48), He said, **“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.”** (John 8:44a). In fact, in the time of our Lord, we had very flagrant instances of demon activity (the several demon-possessed people whom He cured) and more subtle demon activity—Judas and the religious leaders. Today, we do not find the same child sacrifice in our religions, but we continue to find Satanic demonic activity. **But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons** (1Tim. 4:1). **Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light** (2Cor. 11:14). We find the more flagrant instances of demon activity in violent racism against the Jews, the rise to power of Hitler, the many instances of mass murderers and their abnormal lust for blood and killing and their preying upon the weak and helpless.

One of the greatest works of the subtlety of Satan today is the Roman Catholic church. Although their profession of faith seems quite similar to ours, the Catholic church is filled with people who are trying to be delivered through their works. Even though the official church position on salvation is that it is faith in Jesus Christ, their concept of grace is infused grace, not imputed grace—that is, when a person is saved, he will naturally exhibit the characteristics of salvation. That is, if a person does not behave as though they are saved, then they are not. Salvation, by some Catholics, is seen more as a process than an instantaneous occurrence. Finally, even though it is not official church doctrine, the Catholics whom I have personally witnessed to refuse to accept that salvation

²⁰⁰ Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible; ©1976; Vol. II, p. 146.

can occur without any works whatsoever on the part of the person who is saved. And, in any case, the concept of purgatory indicates that even if salvation is still in effect, we can fall into a state between heaven and hell. Satan's design in all of this is to bring those who have a strong interest in religion as close as possible to the truth with the infiltration of enough falsehood to keep them from salvation.

How Can You Tell that Someone is a False Prophet?

Finally, let me give you a list slightly revised and appended²⁰¹ from Geisler and Howe's excellent book, *When Critics Ask*; ©1992, Victor Books. In the time of Israel, there were many false prophets in the world. How could they tell the difference between a true and a false prophet? How can we tell the difference between a true and a false teacher today? Even one infraction from the following list will automatically exclude any person as a messenger from God.

- They give false prophecies (Deut. 18:21–22)
- The contact departed spirits (Deut. 18:11 1Sam. 28:7–13)
- They use various means of divination (Deut. 18:11)
- They are involved with mediums of witches (demon-possessed females) (Deut. 18:10)
- They follow gods, idols or a religion different from fundamental Christianity (Ex. 20:3–4 Deut. 13:3)
- They deny the deity of Jesus Christ (Col. 2:8–9)
- They deny the humanity of Jesus Christ (1John 4:1–2)
- Their prophecies shift the focus from Jesus Christ to someone or something else (Rev. 19:10)
- They advocate abstaining from certain foods and meats for spiritual reasons (1Tim. 4:3–4)
- They depreciate or deny the need for marriage (1Tim. 4:3)
- They promote immorality (Jude 7)
- They encourage legalistic self-denial (Col. 2:16–23)
- They teach a different gospel (2Cor. 11:4 Gal. 1:7–8)
- They teach another Jesus other than the One revealed in Scripture (2Cor. 11:4)

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God Will Raise up a True Prophet to Israel: the Messiah

“Y^howah your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your midst from your brothers—similar to me—you will listen to Him. [Deut. 18:15]

At this point, we ought to examine the **Doctrine of a Prophet—not finished yet!!**

Moses is making a tremendous statement right here. One of the things which Moses recognizes in this last month of his life is that God will speak through him. In the previous books of Moses, he was very careful to point out what God said and what he said. And when we studied his psalm from the *dry years*, we note that it was not even placed with his other writings because Moses did not fully grasp the gift that he had (after all, he was one of the first prophets). Here, not only does he recognize that he is a prophet, and therefore can speak for God (through the guidance of God the Holy Spirit), but that our Lord, our Savior, would be a prophet, who would be raised among His people as a prophet as well—and here is the kicker, Moses recognized that in some way, he was the shadow of He Who was to come.

²⁰¹ Their list dealt exclusively with prophets, although some of their examples did spill into false teachers; I have included points which distinguishes false prophets and false teachers from those who are from God.

There are two prophecies in this context concerning a prophet to come; v. 18 will be a general reference to a series of prophets through whom God will speak. However, this particular verse is not a reference to the prophets of the future for Israel; this is a Messianic reference—this is to Jesus Christ. When John the Baptizer came on the scene, the question put to him was: “Are you **the prophet?**” And he answered, “No.” And they asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are no the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” (John 1:21b, 25; see also John 1:45). The people of the Lord’s time recognized this as a Messianic reference. When our Lord fed five thousand, some observed: “This is of a truth the Prophet Who is to come into the world.” (John 6:14b; see also Matt. 21:11 John 4:24–25 7:39–40). Jesus recognized this Himself. “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me.” (John 5:46). Peter quoted this on his famous Pentecost message: “But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Messiah [Greek, Christ] should suffer. He has thus fulfilled. Change your minds, therefore, and return, that you sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Messiah, appointed for you, Whom heaven must receive until a period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers; to Him you will listen carefully in everything He says to you. And it will come to pass that every soul that does not listen carefully to that prophet will be utterly destroyed from among the people.’” (Acts 3:18–23 Deut. 18:15, 19; see also Acts 7:37).

It is from Jesus Christ whom we receive all of the information that we need to know. It is He who is **the way, the truth, and the life** (John 14:6b). “If you abide in My word, you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:31b–32).

Finally, this verse is one of the greatest *proofs* that Deuteronomy was written by Moses. The false theory which is often presented is that some romanticist who lived many centuries after Moses wrote all of this. One of the primary reasons for this is that theologians of the previous century did not like the idea of prophecy or miracles. If this was written by Moses, then there were many prophecies which he made which came to pass. Furthermore, all the miracles cited throughout Deuteronomy, particularly in the first dozen chapters or so, are verified by the hearers (had these miracles not occurred, the books of Moses would have been difficult to pass off as inspired writing—that is, his contemporaries would know that a large portion of what he was writing was falsehood and fabrication). However, what he said and wrote has been accepted as God’s Word as far back as our records indicate. Now, this is why a romanticist would not have written this passage. The romanticist was looking back to the time of Moses, romanticizing (supposedly), the time of Moses and even exaggerating the greatness of Moses. What a romanticism would write at this point is: *You have no need of another prophet—God has said all that we require through Moses.* A romanticist would not point forward to some future prophet, if he wants the *writings of Moses* to be taken as God’s Word, because he has no way of insuring that whatever charismatic future leader comes along will agree with him. The whole purpose of a romanticist ghost-writer is that he is looking backwards, not forwards. So this is illogical. On the other hand, Moses writing this through the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit makes perfect sense.²⁰² On the other hand, the generation led by Joshua and Joshua himself felt this way about Moses: Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom Y^ehowah knew face to face. For all the signs and wonders which Y^ehowah sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants and all his land, and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel (Deut. 34:10–12). That is quite a favorable postscript to the life of Moses. However, that was inspired by God the Holy Spirit, as the rest of the Bible. Hence, the passage that we are examining and the one just quoted compliment one another. If written by a mere man centuries late, they are contradictory. One passage says a prophet is coming who is like Moses (however, nothing more is mentioned, so no previous or contemporary prophet could *fulfill* this) and another says that no prophet has come on the scene which compares to Moses. This makes sense to us because we know the passage at hand was written by Moses, through the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit; that the passage cited was written by Joshua, also under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The quote from Moses looks forward primarily to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the quotation by Joshua looks back after a decade or so after the death of Moses.

²⁰² This brief interlude was made possibly by *The Emphasized Bible*; Rotherham, pp. 217–218.

“According to all that you asked for from Y^ehowah your God, in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not add to hear the voice of Y^ehowah my God, and this great fire; let me not see anymore, and I die not.’ [Deut. 18:16]

The Israelites did not want direct contact with God. They preferred to have a go between. **And all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die.”** (Ex. 20:18–19; see also Deut. 5:23–28 Heb. 12:18–19). This is divine viewpoint. This was one place where they were exactly right on tract, surprisingly enough. It is God’s Word which teaches us that there must be a mediator who stands between God and man. **For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men—a man, Christ Jesus** (1Tim. 2:5).

“And Y^ehowah said to me, ‘They have done well—that which they have spoken. [Deut. 18:17]

It made good sense for the people of Israel to be fearful of God, to desire to have a man communicate to them the will of God. **“And Y^ehowah heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and Y^ehowah said to me, ‘I have heard to voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done will in all that they have spoken. Oh, that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and guard all of My commandments always, that it would be well with them and with their sons forever!’ “** (Deut. 5:28–29). The lament of God the Father here is that the Israelites said one of the most profound and accurate things which they ever had—if only they could continue in this vein! This was exactly God’s plan and this was one of the very few things the Exodus generations did right. If they would only continue to fear God and to obey His Word.

Allow me to insert a quote from McGee: *Some people still ask why God does not reveal Himself today. Friend, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, God put the period at the end of the sentence. God wrote finis at the end of the book. He has nothing more to say to the world than He has said in Jesus Christ. We are to hear Him. We are to hearken unto Him. At the transfiguration, God the Father said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5). Listen to Him. He has the final Word. For believers today, the Lord Jesus Christ is God’s ultimate, God’s full, God’s final revelation to man. This is what Moses is saying way back here in Deuteronomy.²⁰³ If God were to speak out of heaven at this very moment, He would not say anything that He had not already said. He would just repeat Himself, because all He intends to say to you and to me is in the person of Christ.²⁰⁴ If God was to speak to you right now and tell you, “Wear the blue shirt, not the white one” do you think you would listen? You do not obey God’s revealed will as you know it right now—why do you think having more direct commandments from Him would make a difference? You know that you are not to gossip? Do you gossip? You know that you are not to commit adultery—even in your thoughts—do you commit adultery? You know that anger, bitterness and resentment are mental attitude sins—are you occasionally angry, bitter or resentful? You have enough on your plate right now to obey—you do not require additional revelation from heaven. Furthermore, do you know the entirety of God’s Word? If you don’t, why do you think He needs to write a couple more chapters then? Are you so arrogant to think that He forgot something?*

Why the Prophet in Deut. 18:15 Does Not Refer to Mohammed

An interesting addendum to this passage. The Muslims accept the first five books of Moses as Scripture (along with the *Koran*) and further believe that this prophecy is fulfilled in the prophet Mohammed. Surah 7:157 reads: “The unlettered Prophet [Mohammed], Whom they find mentioned in their own [scriptures], in the Law and the Gospels.” There are several reasons why this is improperly interpreted by them:

²⁰³ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 116.

²⁰⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 117.

(1) Moses is speaking to Israelites and he uses the term *brothers*—this could refer only to Israel and not to their cousins who were often their antagonists. It would not make sense for God to raise up a prophet from the enemies of Israel. (2) Immediate context points to *brothers* as referring to fellow Israelites (recall that the Levites would not have an inheritance among their *brothers* (v. 2). (3) Throughout the message, *brothers* refers to fellow Israelites—Israel is told to choose a king from among their *brothers* and Israel has never taken this to mean anything else but to choose an Israelite king. (4) Mohammed is a descendant from Ishmael, the older brother of Isaac. Abraham prayed to God, “[Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!](#)” God replied: “[My covenant I will establish with Isaac...in Isaac, your seed will be called](#)” (Gen. 17:21 21:12). (5) The Koran itself states that the prophetic line came through Isaac and not through Ishmael. *And we bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and We established the Prophethood and the Scripture among his seed* (Surah 29:27). How do the Muslims get around this? Muslim scholar Yusuf Ali adds the word Abraham to this verse, rendering it as follows: *We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and ordained Among his progeny Prophethood and Revelation*. Abraham’s name was not in the original Koran. Furthermore, Mohammed is still a descendent of Abraham through Ishmael and not through Isaac and Jacob. (6) Mohammed did not speak to God *face to face*. (7) Mohammed did not perform signs and wonders (these were ways that Jesus was a prophet like Moses).

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“I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers like you and I will place My words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him.” [Deut. 18:18]

This is still Moses telling the people what God said to him. This is an almost seamless movement from the Messianic reference in v. 15 to a reference to the prophet of God in general found in this verse. V. 15, as we have seen, undoubtedly refers to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Prophet of God, Who was to come. Moses tells the people that the only intelligent thing that they ever did was ask God not to speak to them directly but through Moses. God would continue to speak to the people in that manner—He would give them a series of prophets through whom He would speak. The expression *I will place word in his mouth* does not refer to some sort of unconscious speaking. We found this in Num. 23:5, in reference to Balaam, and in the conversation between Balaam and Balak, you can tell that Balaam is not a robot speaking God’s Word. He would like to tell Balak otherwise—however, he is only telling Balak what God told him. In fact, throughout the Old and New Testaments, the writers and speakers always appear to have their own personal style and there is nowhere where a prophet sounds as though he is an empty shell through whom God speaks. Moses fully grasped this fact, which can be seen in his interchange with God in the first half of Ex. 4. God wants Moses to be his mouthpiece and Moses would rather not.

The key concept in all of this is not some sort of automatic speech, but mediatorship. There must be a mediator between God and man, as God is too holy to have direct contact with man; and man is too sinful to have direct contact with God. The people who requested that God not speak to them directly were unaware of the theological implications of what they said; but future generations of people would understand. However, God would continue to send them prophets with His message on their lips and the people would continue to reject God’s Word.

The gist and the implication from this entire passage is that the people of Israel will not need to consult spiritists to find out what they need to know. God will send them a group of prophets who will teach God’s Word and who would proclaim future events. Why search out demon-possess people, psychotics and those who have an unnatural lust for attention and approbation if God will send to them His own prophets?²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ *The Amplified Bible*; p. 235.

The religion of Islam teaches that this verse predicts the coming of Mohammed and not Jesus. Therefore, now would be a good time to undertake the **Doctrine of Islam and Mohammed—not finished yet!**

“ ‘And it will come to pass the man who does not listen to My word which He will speak in My name, I Myself will exact [it] out of him. [Deut. 18:19]

The verb found at the end of this verse is *dârash* (דָּרַשׁ) [pronounced *dah-RAWSH*], which does not mean *to require*, as it is erroneously rendered by Owen’s and the KJV (and others, I am sure). This word means *to seek, to make inquiries concerning, to consult, to inquire*. We examined this word in Deut. 18:11. This word is used often for man *seeking or making inquiry* of God (Gen. 25:22 2Kings 8:8 Psalm 105:4). Here, God is the subject. The difference between the two subjects is the difference in the intelligence of the subject. Man is limited in his cognizance, so this verb is used to *me seek, inquire* to fill in some of the gaps of his intelligence. However, since God is omniscient, He does not need to seek after knowledge. Here, God has *carefully examined* the land. God examining carefully and looking into things is an anthropopathism. He knows this in His omniscience already. However, this is not its usage here, either. Here, we have prepositions which follow the verb and determine its meaning. The two prepositions, *min* (מִן) [pronounced *min*], which denotes separation (*out from, away from, on account of*) and *‘im* (עִמּוֹ) [pronounced *im*], which means *with*. Together, these modify considerably the meaning of *dârash*. This same phrase is found in Deut. 23:21 and 1Kings 14:5. My feeling is that this is a colloquialism, meaning *exact out of him* (in the case of 1Kings 14:5, this would be to exact out from him information). An English colloquialism which might convey the same thing would be *And I myself will personally take it out of his hide; I personally will see to it that he pays for this decision*. The idea here is accountability for one’s decisions. The rendering of this phrase here might seem difficult or abstruse; however, the Septuagint’s slant on this verse is: **And whatever man will not listen to whatever words that prophet will speak in My name, I will take vengeance on him**. The corresponding statement in Acts 3:23 is: **And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet, [he] will be utterly destroyed from among the people**. This is why the rendering of this verse is obviously somewhat difficult, as it reads somewhat differently in the Hebrew, the Greek translation, and its usage in the first century. Strong’s #1875 BDB #205.

The implication of this verse is that God will make His truth available and it is our responsibility to take it or not. I know that there are hundreds and thousands of people and religions and philosophies which purport to have the truth—however, the implication here is that if you actually desire the truth, God will make it available to you and you are responsible for that. In other words, we do not have an excuse that *we didn’t know*. If we desire the truth, God will make it available to us. If we reject His truth, He will personally take it out of our hide. **See to it that you do not reject Him Who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they rejected Him Who warned [them] on earth, much less [will we escape] who turns away from Him Who [warns us] from heaven** (Heb. 12:25). **Then he [Elisha] went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young punks came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, “Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!” When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of Y^ehowah. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of them** (2Kings 2:23–24). God takes His Word very seriously, as does He concerning those whom He speaks through. Quite obviously, when God reveals His truth to you, you do not want to be so arrogant that you reject it.

Because the request of the Israelites pleased God, Moses promises that there will be another prophet, similar to him, who God will raise out of Israel. This has come to be known as a Messianic passage in both the Hebrew and Christian interpretations. However, this is still a dual fulfillment, something found quite often throughout God’s Word. This was a prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ, as we have seen in v. 15; but then, from what follows this verse, this is also a prophecy concerning the prophets to come. Moses will explain how to tell a false prophet from a true prophet. Therefore this applies to all of God’s prophets who came to Israel and how they could be distinguished from Satan’s counterfeits. The Israelites are ordered here, in a passage which stands forever, to listen to the One Whom God will send.

Finally, we should list how our Lord fulfilled these prophecies exactly:²⁰⁶

Jesus is the Prophet of Whom Moses Spoke			
Old Testament prophecy	Scripture	New Testament fulfillment in Jesus Christ	Scripture
Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob	Deut. 18:15	Genealogy tables on his mother's side and on the side of his step-father, Joseph.	Matt. 1:1–17 Luke 3:23–34
"I will put words in His mouth and He will speak to them all that I [God] will command Him."	Deut. 18:18	Jesus therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am and I do nothing on My Own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me." [The testimony of John]: "For He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure."	John 8:28 ²⁰⁷ 12:49 John 3:34
He would be a prophet.	Deut. 18:15	Jesus Called Himself and prophet and the people to whom He ministered considered Him a prophet.	Matt. 21:11 Luke 7:16 13:33
He would be a prophet like Moses	Deut. 18:15	Our Lord spoke face to face with God. Our Lord performed signs and wonders.	Matt. 4:23 11:1–5 John 1:18 12:49
Moses commands the people concerning this prophet to come: "You will listen to Him."	Deut. 18:15b	God the Fathers speaks directly to the disciples, saying, "This is My Son, [the] Chosen One; listen to Him!"	Luke 9:35b
This prophet to come would be a mediator, as a fulfillment of the request of the Israelites.	Ex. 20:18 Deut. 18:16	Christ is the mediator of a new covenant; He is a mediator between God and man.	Heb. 8:6 12:24 1Tim. 2:5
"And it will come to pass that whoever will not listen to My words which He will speak in My name; I Myself will exact it out of him."	Deut. 18:19	"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." "This is My Son, [the] Chosen One—listen to Him!"	John 3:36 Luke 9:35b

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Our only problem in interpretation in this passage is that you have a sizable group of theologians who line up on opposite sides, some claiming this refers exclusively to Jesus Christ and others who claim this refers to the Old Testament prophets (or the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament prophets). Although I have given you the truth

²⁰⁶ Also partially taken from *When Critics Ask*; Geisler and Howe, ©1992, Victor Books, p. 126.

²⁰⁷ I want you to take note that not only is this a fulfillment of Deut. 18:18, but that John does not point out this fact. Not every fulfilled prophecy is pointed out specifically in Scripture.

earlier concerning vv. 15 and 18, the Bible is filled with prophecies which have a dual fulfillment, one near and one far, and that is the general gist of this passage. In other words, you do not need to take a stand with respect to whom Moses is referring here.

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The Test for a True Prophet

“ ‘Only, the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, that which I have not commanded him to speak, and [the one] who speaks in the name of other gods—even that prophet will die.’ [Deut. 18:20]

Moses is still quoting God. We have to watch out for the one who comes along and claims that he is speaking in the name of Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, but in reality is not. One who claims to speak in God’s name and does not also faces a stiff penalty. In the case of the unbeliever, that person will spend eternity in hell. If you want to inquire of Buddha—he is in hell. Joseph Smith—he is in hell. Edgar Cayce—he is in hell. Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy—she is in hell. Unless one of these people believed in Jesus Christ and trusted Him exclusively and implicitly for their salvation, they are burning in hell in continual torment. And if you want to follow their false teachings, you have the freedom to do so. However, before you do so, make certain that you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, so that you will be able to die the sin unto death, horribly and miserably on earth, and then spend eternity in heaven in the presence of God. Otherwise, you will spend your eternity with them.

In the context of this verse, that false prophet is to die by execution. We find a similar phrasing in Deut. 17:12–13: **“And the man who acts presumptuously [or, arrogantly] by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve Y^ehowah your God, nor to the judge, that man will die; thus you will purge the evil from Israel. Then all the people will hear and be afraid, and will not act presumptuously [or, arrogantly] again.”** If necessary, God would personally remove them from Israel: **Then Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah, the prophet, “Listen now, Hananiah, Y^ehowah has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie. Therefore, thus says, Y^ehowah, ‘Observe, I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This year you are going to die, because you have spoken rebellion against Y^ehowah.’ “** So Hananiah the prophet died in the same year in the seventh month (Jer. 28:15–17). In Jer. 14:14–16, both the false prophet and the people are responsible for their negative volition. **Then Y^ehowah said to me, “The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds. Therefore, thus says Y^ehowah concerning the prophets who are prophesying in My name, although it was not I Who sent them—yet they keep saying, ‘There will be no sword or famine in this land’—by sword and famine those prophets will meet their end! The people also to whom they are prophesying will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and there will be no one to bury them—[not] them, [not] their wives, [nor] their sons, [nor] their daughters. For I will pour out their wickedness upon them.”** Also see Zech. 13:2–5.

Now, for the 1%: if you happen to come across someone who is speaking lies in the name of God, it is not your personal mission to publicly berate them, to gossip about them, to attempt to make their lives miserable or to kill them. We are under a different dispensation altogether and we are not in a nation ruled by God. Therefore, our freedom of speech and our freedom of religion is tied directly to theirs.

“And when you say in your heart, ‘How do we know the word which Y^ehowah has not spoken?’ [Deut. 18:21]

This is common behavior of the old sin nature. There are a significant number of people who put some stock in their horoscope, in palm-reading, in the reading of tea leaves, etc. They consult with psychics, they read

predictions, etc. People, especially in times of personal or nation crisis, go to those who claim to know the future for a consult. Today, this is easy—there are no modern-day prophets. God has provided all that we need in His Word. If someone claims to know the future and comes to you with this information, then avoid them. They are not speaking from God; at best, they are speaking in arrogance and at worse, as a mouthpiece for Satan’s demon army. However, during that period of time, prophets from God would walk the earth. So, Moses knows that his audience is confused now. Right now they are thinking how will they know when God is speaking through a prophet and when He is not? The only prophet they have known is Moses. It is not as though they have had a lot of experience in this area. Moses gives them another test:

“[If] that which the prophet say in the name of Y^ehowah does not come to pass —this is not the word which Y^ehowah has spoken; in presumption, the prophet has spoken it. You will not be afraid of him. [Deut. 18:22]

When there is a popular demand for prophecy, prophets will come out of the woodwork. Jeremiah and Ezekiel, both of whom prophesied around the time Judah was going into Babylonian captivity, had to contend with scores of prophets who prophesied falsely in God’s name. Their motivations were multifarious. One of the main motivators was money. People needed a prophet, and were willing to pay for it. The messages of Jeremiah and Ezekiel were too bleak and demanded obedience. The people wanted a prophet to tell them what they wanted to hear. Some prophets came for the approbation; some got a good job in the king’s castle during these times. Finally, some are motivated by their own arrogance and self-importance.

Here is by far the simplest way to know if a prophet comes from God or not: if what they predict does not come to pass, then they were not a prophet of God. Let me steal the illustration given by J. Vernon McGee. *Isaiah is a prophet of God, a true prophet of God. How do we know? He prophesied that a virgin would conceive and bring forth a son. He clearly marked out the coming of the Lord Jesus, His birth, His life, His death. Suppose someone had asked Isaiah when all this would take place. He would have answered that he was not quite sure but that it could be hundreds of years. (Actually, it was seven hundred years.) Well, that crowd would laugh and say they would never be around to know whether he was telling the truth or not. Their test was that they had to give a prediction about a local situation that would come to pass right away, and they [the prophets] had to be completely accurate. They couldn’t miss in any point of their predictions. Any inaccuracy at all would immediately disqualify them as a true prophet of God. Now let us look at Isaiah again. He prophesied the virgin birth and we today can look back 1900 years to the fulfillment of that and know that he was accurate. But how could the people of his day know that? The could know because Isaiah went to the king, Hezekiah, with a prophecy concerning a local current event. There was a great Assyrian army of trigger-happy soldiers surrounding the city, but Isaiah said that not one arrow would enter the city. These Assyrians had conquered other nations and they were there to conquer Jerusalem and to carry Israel into captivity.²⁰⁸ However, this is what Isaiah told them: **Therefore, thus proclaims Y^ehowah concerning the king of Assyria, “How will not come into this city nor shoot an arrow there nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same he will return and he will not come into this city,” says Y^ehowah (Isa. 37:33–34).** McGee: *All of those fellows in the Assyrian army had bows and arrows. You’d think that just one of those fellows might let an arrow fly over the wall just to see if he could hit someone. Now if one arrow is shot into the city, Isaiah loses his job as a true prophet of God. He would be out of business. That was one of the tests Isaiah passed. There were others where Isaiah spoke to a local situation and it came to pass just as he had said. The true prophet had to be correct 100% of the time²⁰⁹.**

There have been a lot of so-called prophets over the past several centuries; however, we know if their batting average is 90%, they are not a prophet from God. In fact, if the prophecies which come to pass are in the 99% range, they are not a prophet from God. All of the short-term and the long-term prophecy from a man of God will come to pass. We must carefully understand that there are no prophets today.

As McGee said; Now what about today? This test would disqualify everyone on the contemporary scene who claims to be a prophet by predicting the future. I grant you that some of them sometimes hit the nail

²⁰⁸ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 119.

²⁰⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 119–120.

right ton the head, but more often they miss the nail altogether. You don't hear of their misses; you only hear of their accurate guesses. I could give many instances of false prophecies. We have folk predicting the end of the world on a certain date, the Rapture of the Church on a certain date, calamities that will come to a particular section of the country on a specific date, and a host of other things. If we applied God's test to these self-acclaimed prophets, they would be out of business in short order. A true prophet must be accurate in every detail ever time.²¹⁰

Now, a pastor might make observations and predictions based upon historical trends and the divine interpretation of history—this does not make him a prophet nor does he have to be 100% right to be a man of God. This test applies to all of those who claim to have a gift of prophecy. There is also an implication which comes with this verse—a man of God will prophesy concerning things to come in the very near future as well as the far future. A prophet who comes and tells the people what will come to pass two hundred years in the future will not garner much of an audience. However, if the prophet deals with the political situation at hand and with the current enemies of Israel, then they will pay closer attention. Therefore, all prophets of God had messages which dealt with near future events and with events in the far future (and often individual prophecies had both a near and a far fulfillment—a feat which only God the Father, to Whom the future is as perspicuous as the past, can do).

Furthermore, the prophet must speak in the name of Y^ehowah, the God of Israel. No other prophet, whether he is a Buddhist or a Moslem, is a prophet from God. This is taught in Deut. 13:1–3: “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and give you a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them.’ You will not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for Y^ehowah your God is testing you to find out if you love Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” So, it is a simple, two-fold test: does the prophet accurately prophesy the future and does he come in the name of Y^ehowah. Today, we have an analogous two-fold test: “Does the one who claims to speak the truth teach what is in God’s Word and does he glorify the name of Jesus Christ?” Who’s glory is emphasized? Yours (through your works and good behavior), the Holy Spirit’s? (Who is God, but Who does not speak of Himself). Jesus Christ must be held above all else and God’s Word must be taught, carefully and accurately. **Whoever believes that Jesus is the Messiah [Greek, Christ] is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the one born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and execute His commandments (1John 4:1–2). Even though we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel alternative to that which we have proclaimed to you, then let him be accursed. As we have said on a previous occasion, if any man is proclaiming to you a gospel which oversteps the boundaries of that which you received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:8–9). As Barnes puts it: Nothing therefore contrary to the revealed truth of God was to be accepted under any circumstances²¹¹.**

Although those are the two primary tests, there are secondary tests: Often, a prophet who proclaimed an easy message in hard times was a sign of an apostate prophet (Jer. 23:16, 17, 29, 28:8–9 Ezek. 13:10–16).

If what a prophet prophesies comes true, then he is of God is not a reliable test. Even when stated in this manner in Jer. 28:9 in relation to Hananiah, the expected result was that what he prophesied would not be true.

One final word—the Law of Moses is filled with warnings concerning false prophets, but we find no direct guidance in the New Testament concerning false prophets. Why? God no longer uses prophets to speak His Word. He uses pastor-teachers. He has given us His complete and connect thought, all that we need, the Bible, the all-time best seller in the world. No other book even comes close. So where do we read about this change? You may have read this many times and didn’t catch it. **But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you who will surreptitiously introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves (2Peter 2:1).** In the past, the people (the Jews) had been infiltrated with false prophets. However, now we find false teachers creeping into the church. Satan changes and adjusts his program to mimic God’s. It doesn’t matter how nice and pious these people are, how smooth are their words and how we get this little chill every now and again while listening to their sermons.

²¹⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 120.

²¹¹ *Barnes’ Notes*, Vol. II, p. 307.

The key is God's Word. If they teach God's Word carefully, accurately, verse-by-verse, that is what we want. If they do anything else instead of that, they are a false teacher.

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Deuteronomy 19

Deuteronomy 19:1–21

Outline of Chapter 19:

- Vv. 1–10 **Cities of refuge**
- Vv. 11–13 **Voluntary manslaughter and the cities of refuge**
- V. 14 **Property boundaries**
- Vv. 15–21 **Perjury**

Introduction: The first portion of Deut. 19 is the real estate chapter. Moses will cover the cities of refuge, previously mentioned, and, in context, those who would flee to a city of refuge. Then Moses will briefly cover the importance of accurate boundaries, indicating that personal possessions—in this case, land—are to be inviolate under the Law. The last portion of Deut. 19 deals with laws of evidence and the seriousness of perjury.

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Cities of Refuge

Num. 35:6–28 Joshua 20:1–9

“When Y^ehowah your God cuts off the nations, whose land Y^ehowah your God is giving to you, and you have dispossessed them and you dwell in their cities, and in their houses; [Deut. 19:1]

Cutting off the nations means that God will cut off the nations from their possession of the Land of Promise. Recall that Moses has already warned Israel: “Do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out from before your face, ‘It is because of my righteousness Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land.’ On the contrary, it is because of the degeneracy of these nations Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before you.” (Deut. 9:4).

Throughout this message given by Moses, he will go back to *when you enter into the land*. He will say it in several different ways, but much of what he is teaching deals with the laws of the land which the Israelites are about to possess (see, for instance, Deut. 7:22–23 9:3 12:29).

By the way, this verse contains the most interesting verb *kârath* (כָּרַת) [pronounced *kaw-RAHTH*], which means *cut off, cut down*. (Gen. 17:14 Lev. 17:10 Deut. 19:5 Judges 6:28, 30). Although I have cited texts for every verb stem where *kârath* is found in the Hebrew, *cut off* is generally the meaning found in the Nipahl and the Hiphil stems. However, the same word is used quite often in the Qal stem only to mean *to make a covenant* (Gen. 15:18 21:27 Ex.24:8 Deut. 4:23 9:9). BDB's explanation is *the cutting up and distribution of the flesh of the victim for eating in the sacrifice of the covenant...the calf which they cut*²¹² and they cite Jer. 34:18, where this word is found twice in both senses. Strong's #3772 BDB #503.

The Israelites have been under slavery for four hundred years, and therefore have not owned land or homes and have been unable to build an estate to hand down for generations. God gives them the land and the homes of the Canaanites. “Then it will come to pass when Y^ehowah your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give to you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive

²¹² P. 503.

trees which you did not plant, and you will eat and be satisfied.” (Deut. 6:10–11).²¹³ God will remove the blessing that he has given to you and give it to another in times of great degeneracy. One of the things which a person under the sin unto death might observe in his life is the removal of his material prosperity. This is why Moses added the stern admonishment: “Then guard yourself, so that you do not forget Y^ehowah Who brought you from the hand of Egypt out of the house of slavery...otherwise, the anger of Y^ehowah your god will be kindled against you and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.” (Deut. 6:12, 15b).

“You will separate three citites for yourself in the midst of the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you to possess it. [Deut. 19:2]

This refers specifically to the three refuge cities on the west side of the Jordan. “You will select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, that the manslayer who has struck down a person unintentionally may flee there. And the cities will be to you as a refuge from the avenger, so that the manslayer may not die until he stand before the congregation for judgment. And the cities which you are to give will be your six cities of refuge. You will give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan—they are to be citites of refuge. These six cities will be for refuge for the sons of Israel and for the alien and for the temporary visitor among them; than anyone who strikes down a person unintentionally may flee there.” (Num. 35:11–15). Recall that Moses had already set up three cities east of the Jordan, therefore, not all six cities are mentioned here. Then Moses set apart three citites across the Jordan to the east, that a manslayer might flee there, who unintentionally killed his neighbor without having enmity toward him in time past; and by fleeing to one of these cities he might live (Deut. 4:41). God required such cities to be set up as far back as Ex. 21:12–13: [God is speaking to Moses] “He who strikes a man so that he dies will certainly put be to death; however, if he did not lie in wait for him, but God [allowed him] to fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee.”

There is a lesson to be found in the concept of these cities of refuge. People are continually going to court to sue for this reason or that and juries are awarding them settlements out of pity. It is God’s determination when we will die and there are hardships and trouble which come to us that God brings upon us or to our family. You do not look for someone to blame and you do not sue the person with the deepest pockets, even though their contribution to the incident was minimal or nonexistent. You will have trouble in this world and you will not be compensated directly for it. If a company is rich, that does not mean they should be required to give money to every person with a hard-luck story which is remotely related to that company. These cities of refuge tells us that we do not always look for someone to blame and we do not always look to someone for compensation.

These cities were so important that God reminded Joshua in Joshua 20:1–4: Then Y^ehowah spoke to Joshua, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, “Designate the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the manslayer who kills any personal unintentionally, wihtout premeditation, may flee there, and they will become your refuge from the avenger of blood. And he will flee to one of these cities and he will stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and state his case in the hearing of the elders of that city; and they will take him into the city to them and give him a place, so that he may dwell among them.”

“You will establish for yourself the road [system] and you will divide the border of your land into three parts, which [and] Y^ehowah your God is causing you to inherit, and they [lit., it] will be [for] any manslayer to flee there. [Deut. 19:3]

For some reason, the first phrase never registered in my mind the first several times I read this. The verb is kûwn (קוּן) [pronounced *koon*] and its definition seems to be a little obscure, despite the fact that this word occurs in the Old Testament almost 250 times. It appears to mean *erect (to stand up perpendicular)* an dby application, *to establish, to prepare*. Strong’s #3559 BDB #465. The word often translated *way* means *road*. Therefore, this means to *establish a road system*. The people needed someway to travel about, and the purpose of the road system here was to allow anyone to flee to a city of refuge when necessary.

²¹³ It is interesting how some people think alike. When reading this verse, I immediately thought of this warning delivered by Moses and quoted it. The only scriptural reference given by the NIV Study Bible is also this verse.

Barnes' Notes read: *It was the duty of the Senate²¹⁴ to repair the roads that led to the cities of refuge annually, and remove every obstruction. No hillcock was left, no river over which there was no bridge; and the road was at least two and thirty cubits [16 yards] broad. At cross-roads there were posts bearing the words Refuge, Refuge to guide the fugitive in his flight.²¹⁵ Isaiah uses the imagery of preparing these roads. A voice is calling: "Clear the way for Y^ehowah in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up and every mountain and hill be made low, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; then the glory of Y^ehowah will be revealed and all flesh will see together. For the mouth of Y^ehowah has spoken."* (Isa. 40:3–5).

The land was to be divided into three areas so that there would be a refuge city easily accessible to anyone who resided on that side of the Jordan. That is, these cities were not to be located side-by-side or all within the area belonging to one tribe.

The taking of a life is a serious matter, the gravity and solemnity of which is almost completely ignored in this country, the standard excuse being that whatever we do will not bring Charlie Brown back. The Law was never designed to bring good old Charlie Brown back. It was designed to punish the perpetrator of the crime and make it less likely that John Smith is not murdered. Our land is filled with murder because we have allowed many murderers to walk on technicalities, or they are given sentences which do not fit the crime, or they have been housed at state expense for the rest of their lives. One of the familiar examples of technicalities and compensation was found in the trial of O.J. Simpson. Two different juries passed down two different verdicts concerning his guilt and the first jury was not allowed to examine some of the evidence. The Bible nowhere suggests that evidence be excluded from a trial, particularly if that evidence is damning or expiatory.

On the other hand, however, there is the occasion of involuntary manslaughter. As we have already seen, this changes the life of the person who committed this deed forever. He is uprooted and moved to this new town and is to remain here. However, that is his only chance to avoid execution. What is interesting is that cities of refuge are mentioned several times throughout Scripture whereas, at that time, the number of likely involuntary manslaughter occurrences was few or none. However, the principle of involuntary manslaughter would be important for millenniums to come. This passage along with the others establishes *intent* and *motive* as extremely important aspects of criminal law.

Although all of this is very literal, let's examine the following analogy: we inherited our old sin nature, we did not chose it. We can argue whichever side we want, but the fact is that we did not personally choose to have an old sin nature. Adam chose that for us and in Adam, all die. Adam, as the federal head of the human race, made the choice to disobey God, affecting human history forever. God has given us a city of refuge to flee to, whether we feel as though we are guilty or not. He has given us a city of refuge in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. **God has established for us *the way or the road to get to this city of refuge. That is Jesus Christ, Who is the way,*** the truth and the life (John 14:6b). We flee to Him and we cling to Him and He is our salvation, our escape from execution. Here, we do not have to argue the point of accountability (as many of us refuse to take responsibility for our own decisions)—we need only come to Him and believe on Him. I don't know if there are many people who come to our Lord Jesus Christ, not feeling as though they have done anything all that wrong. However, no matter what the personal feeling, the Bible reads: "He who believes in Him—Jesus Christ—has eternal life." (John 3:16, 36). There will times when I will draw analogies which you may not have heard before. This does not mean that they are not apt analogies nor does it mean that God did not intend for us to see them as such. However, this **analogy is well-testified to in the New Testament, occurring in all four gospels: They [men sent by the pharisees] said then to him [John the Baptizer], Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself? He said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."** (John 1:22–23, Isa. 40:3b). Therefore, we see the literal application in this

²¹⁴ I don't know who this is unless this is a reference to the Roman Senate of later times.

²¹⁵ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, p. 307.

portion of Deuteronomy, the *spiritualizing*²¹⁶ of this in the book of Isaiah, and the application of this to our Lord Jesus Christ by John the Baptizer in all four gospels (see also Matt. 3:1–3, Mark 1:2–4 Luke 3:4–6).

“And this is the treatise [or, procedure] [lit., word] of the manslayer who is fleeing there and lives: who strikes down his neighbor unintentionally [lit., with no knowledge], and he, even he, has not hated him in recent time [lit., since the day before yesterday, yesterday]; [Deut. 19:4]

Da'ath (דַּאֲת) [pronounced *DAH-ahth*] means *knowledge*. However, in this passage and elsewhere, it is obvious that the manslayer realizes what he has done. A manslayer would not flee if he did not realize that he has killed someone. So therefore, the *vêyth* preposition and the negative together with this word mean *unintentionally*. Strong's #1847 BDB #395.

Notice again that in this verse, motive is a part of the determination of guilt or innocence based upon this being intentional manslaughter or not. It would be quite the coincidence if there were an incident of involuntary manslaughter between two people who hated one another.

“And he who has come in with his neighbor into a forest to cut wood, and his hand drove with an ax to cut the tree and the iron slipped from the wood and had met his neighbor and he died—he will flee to one of those cities and he will live; [Deut. 19:5]

This may be very loosely translated: “For instance, if one goes into the forest with a neighbor to cut wood, and while cutting wood, the ax-head portion slipped off the wood and hit the neighbor, who then died—the other man will flee to one of those cities in order to live.” This is obviously not the only way involuntary manslaughter could occur. This was merely an example; the principles put forth in this passage apply to all cases of involuntary manslaughter.

As has been observed before in Deut. 3:11, iron was used for tools during that time period (the *iron* referred to here was probably the black basalt of that area which contained 20% iron. Copper (usually translated brass) was the metal of choice for home furnishings and weapons. Gen. 4:22 indicates that these metals were used prior to the flood.

The ax found here (and Deut. 20:19 1Kings 6:7 Isa. 10:15) is likely very similar to the one we use today and was attached in a similar fashion (as opposed to some ancient axes which were fastened to the handle with a leather strap). The axes in this context were used to cutting down trees and hewing lumber²¹⁷.

This next verse is long and rather difficult, so let me give you some other renderings:

The Amplified Bible Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his [mind and] heart are hot with anger, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; although the slayer was not worth of death, since he had not been at enmity with him previously.

Emphasized Bible ...lest the blood redeemer pursue the man-slayer, because his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and ddhe smite him so as to take away his life,—he not being worthy of death, seeing that he had not been hating him, aforetime.

KJV Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while hisheart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.

²¹⁶ *Spiritualizing* a particular verse does not make its literal meaning any less literal. God continually gives us prophecies which are fulfilled twice and it would make sense for Him to give us verses which have multiple applications. This is not in any way license to go off the deep end with weird interpretations and doctrines found only by *spiritualizing* a passage.

²¹⁷ This information courtesy of *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 205.

NASB	...lest the avenger of blood pursue the manslayer in the heat of his anger [lit., while his heart is hot], and overtake him, because the way is long, and take his life [lit., smite him in the soul], though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated him previously.
NEB	Otherwise, when the dead man's next-of-kin who had the duty of vengeance pursued him in the heat of passion, he might overtake him if the distance were great, and take his life, although the homicide was not liable to the death-penalty because there had been no previous enmity on his part.
NIV	Otherwise, the avenger of blood might pursue him in a rage, overtake him, if the distance is too great, and kill him even though he is not deserving of death, since he did it to his neighbor without malice aforethought.
NRSV	But if the distance is too great, the avenger of blood in hot anger might pursue and overtake and put the killer to death, although a death sentence was not deserved, since the two had not been at enmity before.
Young's Lit. Trans	...lest the redeemer of blood pursue after the man-slayer when his heart is hot, and hath overtaken him (because the way is great), and hath smitten him—the life, and he hath no sentence of death, for he is not hating him heretofore;

So I will attempt a rendering, somewhat between the very literal translation of Young and the very readable NEB rendering:

“Otherwise, a family member will, in vengeance, pursue [lit., a redeemer of the blood will pursue] after the killer [or, man slayer] when in a rage [lit., when his heart is angry (or, hot)] and he overtakes him (because the road is long), and he strikes him [down]—a soul—although he does not deserve the death penalty [lit., and to him no judgment of death], because [there was] no malice aforethought concerning him [lit., for he not expressing hatred to him since the day before yesterday, yesterday]. [Deut. 19:6]

Because the road is long means that the person who had killed in an involuntary manslaughter is not going to be looking to make a run for it. This person is upset and disoriented because of what transpired. On the other hand, the family member is going to be in a rage and he will be traveling fast. Because of the disparity of their gait, the relative will catch up to the manslayer and strike him down in anger if the road to the city is long. The family hothead pursues the killer of his relative and catches up to him. He strikes this man dead out of vengeance, even though the accused accidentally killed the relative. This is the rationalization for the cities to be spread out throughout the land as per v. 3.

Now the word often translated *avenger* in this passage is the word for *redeemer* and can refer to the *kinsman-redeemer*, who is a type of Christ (see Gen. 48:16 Isa. 59:20). The difference here is not only the context but the additional modifier *of blood*. We might use the colloquialism *it's payback time*. Their colloquialism also involved payment—the accused paid with his life and the redeemer saw to it that he did. Fleeing to this city of refuge did not automatically absolve the accused. He still had to stand trial: **“And the cities will be to you as a refuge from the avenger, so that the manslayer may not die until he stand before the congregation for judgment.”** (Num. 35:12).

“Therefore, I am commanding you, saying three cities you will separate to yourself. [Deut. 19:7]

Moses concludes this portion of this topic; he will soon deal with the other side of the coin; the guilty party who flees to a city of refuge.

“And if Y^{ehowah} your God enlarges your border, as He has sworn to your fathers, and gives to you all the land which He has promised [lit., spoken] to give to your fathers; [Deut. 19:8]

This verse is the protosis of a conditional clause. Moses recognizes that God will fulfill this promise. The Israelites have conquered a reasonable amount of land on the east side of the Jordan already. When they move into the land of Canaan, they will expand their borders further. The greatest historical expansion of their borders occurred

under the rulership of King David, which was preserved by God's grace under Solomon. However, even under David and Solomon, the full portion of land promised by God to the Israelites was not yet fulfilled (Deut. 11:24 gives a quick geographical description of the land which would be theirs).

“If you keep all the commands to do it, which I am commanding you today, to love Y^howah your God, and to walk in His ways all the days—then you will add to yourself yet three cities to these three; [Deut. 19:9]

God promised Israel a much larger portion of land than they took. Pretty much everything between the Nile and the Euphrates was to be theirs. Once they conquered the heart of the Land of Promise, they were to set apart three cities on the west side of the Jordan River. Here, however, is an order to add an additional three cities if their borders are extended considerably further. These three cities at the end of v. 9 are not the three on the west side of the Jordan mentioned in vv. 2 and 7; they are expressly distinguished in this verse. These are three additional cities to be established on the west side of the Jordan. This was to be done out of obedience to and love for God. Joshua established the first three west of the Jordan in Joshua 20:7: **So they set apart Kedesh in Balilee in the hill country of Naphtali and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah.** The additional three were never established because the borders of Israel have never been extended as far as God had promised them. That will occur in the Millennium. David did conquer the kingdoms of Aram, but he allowed the population of Aramæans to remain in their land. Furthermore, he never attacked the Tyrians or the Phœnicians. There were two major sins in David's life which prevented him from making full use of destiny under God's plan for his life.

“And [therefore], you will not shed innocent blood in the midst of your land which Y^howah your God is giving to thee—an inheritance, and there would be upon you blood [-guilt]. [Deut. 19:10]

Here, *blood* refers to *guilt* as it does in Lev. 20:9 Deut. 21:8. This is why some translations (*The Amplified Bible*, the NIV, etc.) render it that way.

This is a fascinating little verse. If Israel falls to vigilantism and a person involved in involuntary manslaughter is executed by a relative of the original victim, the guilt for this injustice falls upon all of Israel. This generation is responsible to set up a just and fair system of law. If they do not, they are responsible for the violations of justice. **“So you will not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.”** (Num. 35:33). Executing a person guilty of involuntary manslaughter or executing one who is innocent of a crime pollute the land just like the original death pollutes the land. God requires a just system of jurisprudence. Jeremiah, in a time of serious degeneracy, called for the people to change their ways: **“For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.”** (Jer. 7:5–7). Notice that a just system is high on God's list.

Our application: we our responsible for our justice system, and the courts and judges who often end up making the law in their interpretation of the law and in their rulings by setting precedents are also responsible for the resulting miscarriage of justice. Our laws of evidence have become quite degenerate over time, whereas the guilty too often go free on technicalities—the guilt here falls upon the head of the judge. The system of law should be to protect the innocent from judgment and to see that the guilty are punished. Whatever other ethics and standards are brought into the system of law are a human distortion of our law. When the courts ruled at one time that capital punishment was inhumane and unfair, they were responsible for the many deaths and crimes which occurred as a result of that decision. This is the evil side of human good. The judges who ruled that captial punishment was cruel and unjust punishment were no doubt sincere men who desired the best for their society. As a result, they threw their society into a turmoil.

The school where I taught orginally brought drug dogs onto the campus and brought these dogs into the classroom at unspecified intervals and rooted out students who were in possession of drugs. This involved a very very small percentage of students. The district policy was to throw these kids out of school. It was an outstanding

policy which protected the majority of students who did not carry drugs. This further enforced the notion that drugs were inherently evil and illegal and that there were swift and sure consequences for the possession and use of drugs. In class meetings, the principals made it known to the students that they knew they could not prevent a child from taking drugs—a very realistic viewpoint—but they would do whatever it took to keep drugs off our campus. The policy was an outstanding policy and I rarely heard even the mention of drugs in the school. Then some do-gooder or group challenged this policy of bringing the dogs into the classroom as a form of illegal search and seizure and no longer can the be done. The dogs could go into the parking lot and check the lockers, but not into the classroom. It took no time at all before the children realized that as long as they personally carried their drugs, they were safe from prosecution. Furthermore, they did not have the periodic reminder of seeing the drug dog brought right by them that drugs were wrong. Although drug use did not dramatically increase that first year, over a period of ten years, I personally estimate that drug use increased to somewhere between 30–60% of the student body. Drug use among students in college-prep courses, i.e., math courses of geometry and above, was marked and astonishing. Children need limits set for them; they need the enforcement of right and wrong to be done in their daily lives. It is our responsibility to protect them from the bad decisions which they will make. They have old sin natures and these old sin natures must be held in check. That is the responsibility of our society when it comes to raising a child. And yet the person or persons responsible for this change of policy, in their attempt to do good, caused irreparable damage to the youth of our school—thousands upon thousands of students from out school district alone were adversely affected by this act of human good. That is but one example of the evil side of human good. Moses squarely places the responsibility for the establishment of these cities upon the shoulders of those listening to him and includes with it the responsibility for innocent blood which would be shed as a result.

Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
Deuteronomy 21	Deuteronomy 22	Deuteronomy 23	Deuteronomy 24	Deuteronomy 25
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

Voluntary Manslaughter and the Cities of Refuge

“And if a man hates his neighbor and lays in wait for him, and rises up against him and strikes him down—the soul—and he dies and he flees to one of these cities; [Deut. 19:11]

The protasis looks at the other side. We know that most criminals have a basic streak of dishonesty, which is often the basis for their criminality, and they will do anything to avoid prosecution and punishment. So this is the person who is guilty of first-degree murder, yet claims that the death was a result of involuntary manslaughter. He runs to a city of refuge in order to avoid prosecution. Moses understands the old sin nature, having seen two million people slaughtered from before his eyes for their transgressions against God. He also knows that some people in the audience are thinking *what if*. A good speaker anticipates his audience, which is what Moses often did. He determined what is his audience thinking and then spoke to that topic.

Okay, what if you have a beef with your neighbor? **“You will not hate your fellow-countryman in your heart; you may certainly reprove your neighbor but you will not incur sin because of him.”** (Lev. 19:17). In other words, there **are ways to deal with a disagreement or a dispute; but hatred is to an option. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that not every murderer has eternal life abiding in him** (1John 3:15).

“Then the elders of his city will extradite him [lit., send and take him] from there and will give him into the hand of the redeemer of blood and he will die; [Deut. 19:12]

This is of course after a fair trial and laws of evidence have been followed. **Then the congregation will judge between the slayer and the blood redeemer according to these ordinances.** (Num. 35:24). Therefore, these cities of refuge will not just become places of refuge for criminals. They are provided only for the innocent (Num. 35:25). For, **“He who strikes a man so that he dies will certainly be put to death.”** (Ex. 21:12).

In the Bible, blood is used an awful lot to represent different things. Here, the redeemer of *blood* is one who is essentially an avenger of *murder*. It is found used in this way in Psalm 9:12(13) and Hosea 1:4.

“Your eye will have no pity on him and you will put away the innocent blood from Israel, and it will be well with you. [Deut. 19:13]

You do not pity the convicted criminal. The arguments that his execution will not bring back Charlie Brown do not apply. Punishment against this criminal must be swift and sure. This is divine viewpoint. There is only one solution for capital murder—the execution of the criminal. When our society and court system fails to do this; if a jury fails to require this out of pity, then we go against the laws of God. **“So you will remove the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the eyes of Y^ehowah.”** (Deut. 21:9; see also Deut. 13:8 25:12).

God required the execution of criminals and the execution of His own enemies who, at that time, occupied the land. There was to be no pity shown toward either: **“And when Y^ehowah your God delivers them before you, and you defeat them, then you will completely destroy them [lit., devote them]. You will make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.”** (Deut. 7:2).

Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
Deuteronomy 21	Deuteronomy 22	Deuteronomy 23	Deuteronomy 24	Deuteronomy 25
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

Property Boundaries

“You will not remove a border of your neighbor, which they of former times have made, in your inheritance, which you inherit in the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you to possess it. [Deut. 19:14]

It is incorrect to interpret this verse as being connect closely to what preceded. The false interpretation is that the change or removal of boundary lines could potentially have a life and death affect upon one guilty of involuntary manslaughter. However, the verse specifically cites the border of a neighbor and the reference to *the land which you [singular] inherit* applies to all who are listening, regardless of where they will live. The connection between the adjacent passages is that while life is sacred, so is property boundaries and ownership²¹⁸.

With this verse, we move into the examination of some miscellaneous laws. Next to a man’s life, his property is held sacred by God’s Law. Boundary stones were set up along the perimeter of a property, between two or more properties. Obviously, what is examined here is a person who moves the stones so as to increase his own property. The borders set up and agreed upon in the past are to remain. God allows for personal possession of property—in fact, in Israel, it was required and the right to your property was inviolate. **“Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor’s boundary marker.”** (Deut. 27:17a; see also Psalm 16:6 Prov. 22:28 23:10). The property did not belong to the state and God protected it by requiring that the boundry lines remain what they have always been.

Fences were not employed in the East by landowners, but boundaries were marked by heaps of small stones, posts, or by single sstones set upright about a rod apart. A greedy and dishonest person could easily moe these markings year by year, absorbing more and more land. Such a practice is alluded to in Job 24:2 and spoken of figuratively in Hosea 5:10. This type of legislation was not confined to the Israelites. In the British Museum, the are several very ornate Babylonia monuments where were likely landmarks and they are covered with curses upon

²¹⁸ I am indebted here and in v. 10 for the correct slant on this material as provided by Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 1, pp. 937–938.

those who remove them. One of these is made of marble and shaped like a large fish, with a serpent at its head. The curses are written upon the sides²¹⁹.

Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
Deuteronomy 21	Deuteronomy 22	Deuteronomy 23	Deuteronomy 24	Deuteronomy 25
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

Perjury

“One witness will not rise against a man for any iniquity or [lit., and] for any sin, in any sin which he sins; [only] by the mouth of two witness or by the mouth of three witness, is a thing established. [Deut. 19:15]

Moses pounds this law of evidence into the Israelites. He has already written this in the Law (Num. 35:30) and he has already stated this in his speaking to the Israelites (Deut. 17:6). This repetition stands in God’s Word to protect the innocent from some other person’s hidden agenda or enmity. One of the reasons police will interview witnesses or suspects separately is to get a clear picture of what happened and to determine whether anyone is lying. It all goes back to this principal of establishing a fact by the witness of two or three people. And, as I have mentioned before, this does not mean that we necessarily have to have the actual witnesses of the crime itself. Two witnesses could testify as to the animosity between a victim of a crime and the perpetrator who claims it was involuntary manslaughter.

The laws given here are the very best for Israel at that time—in fact, they are a reflection of God’s perfection. However, these laws can be sullied because we all possess old sin natures which corrupt that which God has designed for us (examine your own life, for instance—aren’t there several things which you have done to screw it up? This is despite the fact that God has a perfect plan for our lives. Obviously, we can tamper with God’s perfect law concerning rules of evidence, and that has already been mentioned in Ex. 23:1: **“You will not carry a false rumor; do not join your hand with an evil person to be a malicious witness.”** Man’s old sin nature can always find some way to corrupt God’s perfect plan—here, it is by making certain that false testimony agrees prior to giving it. Because of this, David writes: **Do not deliver me over to the soul of my adversaires; for false witnesses have risen against me** (Psalm 27:12b).

Our Lord faced several trials, most or all of them illegal, prior to going to the cross. However, those in charge tried to keep of the appearances of legal proceedings, and this requirement was invoked. Our Lord was seized by a multitude of people (Matt. 26:55), so there were no shortage of people who hated Him. When he was brought before Caiaphas, the high priest, there were other priests, elders and scribes in attendance at this late night trial. **Now the chief priests and the whole Sanhedron kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death. And they did not find it, even though many false witnesses came forward (Matt. 26:59–60a). For many were giving false testimony against Him and their testimony was not consistent (Mark 14:56).** You see, it requires more than two or three witnesses to testify that a crime was committed by the accused—it must be the same crime and their stories must be consistent. Furthermore, this false testimony is done at some considerable risk, as we will see in this passage of Deuteronomy. **But later on, two [witnesses] came forward and said, “This man stated, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.’” (Matt. 26:60b–61).** The instance to which they referring occurred early in the ministry of our Lord. The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews therefore said, “It took forty--six years to build this temple and You will raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken (John 2:19–22). To continue their

²¹⁹ This paragraph is courtesy of *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 110.

semblance of a legal trial, the high priest asked the defendant to stand and defend Himself against these charges. It is a point of honor, although in this case, false honor, to allow the defendant to speak a few words in His defense. It is similar to the sayings that *you don't shoot a man in the back* and *you don't kick a man when he's down*. And the high priest stood up and said to Him, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against you." But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the Living God, that You tell us whether You are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said it—nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witness? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy—what do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death!" (Matt. 26:62–66). The law to which they refer is Lev. 24:16: "Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of Y^ehowah will surely be put to death; all the congregation will certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death." This is not even a proper application of this particular law; however, almost everything which occurred in the seven or so trials of our Lord was illegal.

Now here, the reason for that this topic of the two or three witness requirement is brought up is different in this passage from Deut. 17:6. There it is found as a simple requirement in the sphere of evidence. Here, Moses will explore what happens when one person testifies as to the guilt of another, and there are no corroborating witnesses, and further it is suspected that the one witness might be lying. That adds a new dimension to the crime.

“When a corrupt witness rises against a man, to testify against him—a legal offense [or, a turning away]— [Deut. 19:16]

This verse is rendered somewhat differently elsewhere:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	If a false witness rises up against any man to accuse him of wrongdoing,...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	When there shall rise up a wrongful witness against a man,—to answer against him perversely,...
KJV	If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him <i>that which is wrong</i> ,...
NASB	“If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse [lit., testify against] him of wrongdoing [lit., turning aside],”
NIV	If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse a man of a crime,...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	‘When a violent witness doth rise against a man, to testify against him apostasy,’

The second to the last word in this sentence is not in the construct, so it is improper to write *accuse him of wrongdoing*. Furthermore, the last word is not an adverb, so rendering it *perversely* is not correct either. The last word in the verse is *çârâh* (הַרְחִיק) [pronounced *saw-RAWH*] and of this word, BDB writes: *defection, used appar. of any moral or legal offence*.²²⁰ The *wrongdoing* here is not a reference to the supposed wrongdoing of the accused, but a reference to the legal wrong doing—the legal offense—made by the witness, as that will be the topic of this passage. This is the turning aside or the turning away from of the legal system devised by God. Young would have been even closer if he had rendered this: **‘When a violent witness doth rise against a man, to testify against him—an apostasy**, as the last word is not preceded by a definite article, often allowing for the indefinite article in the English. The judge is a representative of God on earth rendering judgment in His stead. When a witness lies to God’s representative, it is as though he is lying directly to God—this is the *apostasy* and the *legal wrongdoing* referred to in this passage.

Here we have an occurrence of perjury. A person who is corrupt tries to get a person falsely convicted of a crime that he has not committed. **There are six things which Y^ehowah hates—in fact, seven which are an abomination to Him: arrogant eyes [pride], a lying tongue, and hands that commit homicide [lit., shed innocent blood]; a heart that devises evil conspiracies, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness uttering lies [this includes the courtroom, but has wider application], and one who plays one person against another [lit., who spreads strife among brothers]** (Prov. 6:16–19).

²²⁰ *The New Brown—Driver—Briggs—Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*; ©1979, Hendrickson; p. 694, mine.

“Then both men who have the disagreement will stand before Y^ehowah, even²²¹ before the priests and the judges who are in those days, [Deut. 19:17]

Perjury is a serious offense, not to be taken lightly. When we have an accuser and an accused, without the benefit of other witnesses, then both are to stand before the authorities of those days. This goes further than Deut. 17:9: “So you will come to the Levite, priest or the judge who is in those days, and you will inquire, and they will render the verdict in the case to you.” In that context, the case was too close to determine; here, the guilt of the witness who has perjured himself is now the issue.

“And the judges will investigate [lit., search] diligently and observe, if the witness [is] a false witness—he has testified a falsehood against his brother; [Deut. 19:18]

At this point in time, the witness is on trial as much as the accused. The judge has to be particularly careful as the witness may be coming forward completely on good faith—there just is no corroboration for the testimony of the witness. The witness may be mistaken in their appraisal of the situation—what they thought they saw and what occurred were slightly but significantly different. Even though the witness is being carefully scrutinized, the intention is to determine whether or not the witness is intentionally lying for the purpose of framing the accused. The intent of the witness is extremely important here.

This is a serious offense, every bit as serious as the crime that the original defendant is accused of. One of the Ten Commandments is “You will not bear false witness.” (Deut. 5:20). “You will not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you will not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am Y^ehowah.” (Lev. 19:11–12). We will later read of how King Ahab was guilty of conspiracy because he found to men to bear false witness against Naboth in 1Kings 21.

“Then you will do to him as he devised to do to his brother, and you will put away this evil thing out of your midst. [Deut. 19:19]

The punishment of the crime which the false witness accuses the innocent person of will be applied to him. If the false witness accused the defendant of a capital crime, the false witness is to be executed. If the false witness accused the defendant of a crime requiring that his hand be cut off, then the hand of the false witness is to be cut off. This is the utmost in evil when we accuse another person of a crime that we know that they did not commit.

We have a marvelous New Testament analogy which comes out of all of this. When we judge and gossip about another person, the discipline meant for him will be poured out on us. We occasionally, when out of fellowship, take it upon ourselves to gossip about another believer, to judge and to malign them. This brings upon a person a great amount of discipline. You are disciplined for the mental attitude sins which you hold against the person, for the sin of gossiping if you spread this rumor, and for the sin of judging. Finally, the punishment which God was going to give to that person for a real offense, or the punishment that person would have received for that sin had they committed it, is all placed upon you. Depending upon how many of these compound offenses you have committed, this is either triple or quadruple compound discipline. “Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measure to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” (Matt. 7:1–3). “And do not pass judgement and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned.” (Luke 6:37a).

This person who would actually false accuse another is like leaven—a little leaven leavens the whole lump. If this kind of crime is allowed, then it allows the Jewish society to devise a different kind of murder. It is no different than holding a gun to someone’s head and shooting. Murderers are not total imbeciles. If a killing can be accomplished without legal repercussion, then certainly that will become the murder method of choice. An act like this is not to be tolerated. Since this crime could result in the death of another, it is treated as such. **A false witness will not**

²²¹ *Even* (or and) is found in the western Samaritan, Septuagint, and Syriac versions. It is not found in the Massoretic text.

go unpunished; and he who tells lies will perish (Prov. 19:9). A foreign king under Daniel's influence had a similar law: Then [Darius] the king gave orders and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children, and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones (Dan. 6:24).

In the Church Age, although we don't get carried away with judging, there are certain things we are to do. We are to separate ourselves from Christians who practice certain kinds of behavior. Your boasting [or having an incestual deviant in the congregation] is not good. Do you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; not at all with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. But, actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater or a hell-raiser, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For What have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within [the church]? But those outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves (1Cor. 5:6–13).

“And those who are left will hear and fear, and add not to the do any more according to this evil thing in your midst; [Deut. 19:20]

Notice that Moses, inspired by God the Holy Spirit, is a firm believer that the punishment of a criminal act is a deterrent. This has also been stated in Deut. 11:13 17:13 21:21—for that reason alone, no matter how close-minded this will sound to the outsider, since this is God's Word, it does not matter what any survey or study shows—God's Word teaches that swift and certain punishment deters crime and I believe God's Word. Today, our punishment is neither swift nor sure, and for that reason, any study which disagrees with the fact of deterrence will be incorrect.

“And your eye will not pity [him]; life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” [Deut. 19:21]

That is a fair and just judicial system. The punishment should fit the crime. One of Satan's inroads which he has successfully made in the industrialized world is that such a code is barbaric and anarchaic. I know that part of the rationale is that our criminal justice system will reform the criminals (which almost anyone realizes is a myth) and that by punishing a criminal, we bring ourselves down to his level. These are completely fallacious. **“And if a man takes the life of any human being, he will certainly be put to death. And the one who takes the life of an animal will make it good, life for life. And if a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it will be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it will be inflicted on him.”** (Lev. 24:17–20). The closer we can place a criminal in a situation which parallels the situation of his victim, the more we will reduce crime levels and reduce repeat offenders. If a white collar criminal must spend the rest of his life making financial restitution, with interest, to those he defrauded—with no allowance of bankruptcy or any other method to side step this judgment, other white collar criminals will not be so eager to defraud the helpless or the uninformed. If a white collar criminal cannot manage to make restitution to those while he is outside of a penal institution, then he should be required to remain in jail until he has made financial restitution to those he bilked.

For the murderer, a swift and certain execution. God required this of Israel immediately after giving Israel the Law: **“But if there is any injury, then you will appoint life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”** (Ex. 21:23–25). When the evidence is damning beyond a shadow of a doubt, the criminal should have no more than a month on this earth to get his life straight with God before he dies. Our system of capital punishment is a joke. Whereas in Houston alone there might be 300-500 murders in a given year, during that same year there might be twenty executions in the entire state of Texas. That is not the reinstatement of capital punishment. That is throwing a meager bone to the majority of Americans who unequivocally support capital punishment. This system set up here in Israel should be a guide to the civilized

world, if we are to remain civilized. God tells us concerning the criminal in Deut. 19:13 **“You will not pity him, but you will purge the blood of the innocent from Israel, that it may be well with you.”**

Some confuse this with what our Lord said in Matt. 5:38–39: **“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil, but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.”** This does not mean that man had *evolved* enough in the time of our Lord to be able to allow the criminals to run rampant in the streets. The point of this dissertation is not to become involved in personal vendettas—we are involved in a spiritual warfare where the stakes are far greater than we realize. We witness life and death and personal suffering on a scale that is beyond the ability of the human mind to comprehend. Our battle in the angelic conflict involves suffering and pain—Satan will, at every opportunity, try to thwart our spiritual progress and our spiritual impact. We are not to become bogged down in the day-to-day altercations which we face. We are not to obsess on the heartaches and trials which we face, along with all of the injustices which come to us. This does nothing but slow us down. We cannot afford that—the stakes are far too high. This is why the remainder of this portion of the Sermon on the Mount deals precisely with **personal vendettas and personal entanglements**: **“And if any one wants to sue you and take your cloak, let him have your coat as well...love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”** (Matt. 5:40, 44b).

Let me close with McGee’s final word on this chapter: *That is Law, friends. There is no mercy in Law. I thank God today that the Lord is not judging me on the basis of Law. He saves me by grace. If He were saving me by Law, I would be lost forever, because I could never, never measure up to the requirements of the Law. Law is law—we have developed such a careless attitude about it today—but God enforces His Law. It was eye for eye, tooth for tooth. How I thank God that Jesus Christ paid the penalty of the Law so that there is pardon for sinners. The throne of God has become a mercy seat because Christ died and His blood has been sprinkled there—and that’s the blood of the covenant. God saves us by His grace. We have not kept the Law; we have broken it. We are all guilty before God. Christ paid the penalt; so the requirements of the Law have bveen fulfilled. Now God is free to save sinners by His marvelous, infinite, wonderful grace²²².*

Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
Deuteronomy 21	Deuteronomy 22	Deuteronomy 23	Deuteronomy 24	Deuteronomy 25
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

²²² J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 123.

Deuteronomy 20

Deuteronomy 20:1–20

Outline of Chapter 20:

- Vv. 1–8 **Warfare and those who are exempt from a military campaign**
- Vv. 9–15 **General procedure to be followed for campaigns against distant cities**
- Vv. 16–20 **General procedure to be followed for campaigns against nearby cities**

Introduction: Deut. 20 is one of the more cohesive chapters of Deuteronomy. It deals with all of the many aspects of war: fear, conscription, when a person is exempt from military service, and specific instructions given to Israel concerning specific groups of people.

It is McGee's opinion that the framers of our constitution were very knowledgeable of the Scriptures. Since roughly 97% of the people who came to America would be classified today as Protestants, this would make sense. Therefore, they put together a document which has stood a great test of time, and a government which has functioned under the concept of checks and balances, with the intention that one branch of the government not become too powerful. However, since those days, the average politician today has no concept of God's Word and no framework for a true absolute standard of what is right and wrong. Therefore, much of the legislation which is passed, although intended as well-meaning at times, ends up being self-serving and it creates many more problems than it ever solves.

Conscription (the draft) is a problem that we have dealt with for decades—who should serve in the armed forces and for how long. Deuteronomy is a very practical book and will give us insight into the correct way to run an army.

In my personal study of God's Word, one of the highlights is reading what J. Vernon McGee has to say on a given chapter or verse. He had the ability to communicate like few others: *We see little mottos which read, "Make love, not war." That may sound good, but like so many little mottos, it is absolutely meaningless. Because we are living in a sinful world where the heart of man is desperately wicked, there are times to make war. There are times when we need to protect ourselves. There are wars in which God is on one side. Frankly, the important question any nation should consider—and certainly a so-called civilized and Christian nation—is whether this is a war that God is in. If He isn't in it, then we shouldn't be in it either*²²³.

Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
Deuteronomy 21	Deuteronomy 22	Deuteronomy 23	Deuteronomy 24	Deuteronomy 25
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²²³ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 125–126.

Warfare and Those Who Are Exempt from a Military Campaign

“When you go out to battle against your enemy,²²⁴ and you have seen horse and chariot—a people more numerous than you—you will not be afraid of them, for Y^ehowah your God [is] with you, the one bringing you up out of the land of Egypt; [Deut. 20:1]

The Canaanites and the Philistines had iron chariots, as we will see in Joshua 17:16 Judges 4:3 1Sam. 13:5. We know that the Egyptians used chariots in war from Ex. 14:7. The Syrians also were fond of using the chariot in war (2Sam. 8:4 1Chron. 18:4 19:18 Psalm 20:8). Obviously, for chariots to be of any use, they require horses, so the Canaanites would have horses as well. We will hear about the horsemen in 1Sam. 13:5.

No other army in the history of the world had a protector like Y^ehowah, the God of Israel. Therefore, Moses reassures Israel concerning warfare on several occasions: “If you should say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?’ You will not be afraid of them; you will well remember what Y^ehowah your God did to Pharaoh and to all of Egypt.” (Deut. 7:17–18). “Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for Y^ehowah your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.” (Deut. 31:6).

We have had times in our history where God has preserved us in battle, but Israel is given full assurances of God’s participation in her battles. Obviously, with God as their Protector and Leader, Israel did not have to be concerned about being outnumbered or about having inferior equipment. **Some [boast] in chariots, and some in horses; but we will boast in the name of Y^ehowah our God (Psalm 20:7).** God only expected for Israel to lean upon Him, rather than any human ally: **Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, [who] rely upon horses and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong. But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek Y^ehowah! (Isa. 31:1).**

The mental attitude of the Generation of Promise was crucial to their survival. Moses told their parents, generation X, the same thing: **“Do not rebel against Y^ehowah; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them and Y^ehowah is with us—do not fear them.”** But all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, **“Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!”** (Num. 14:9, 1–2). This left God with only one alternative: [God speaking to Moses]: **“Say to them: ‘As I live,’ sayeth Y^ehowah, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will certainly do to you; your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.’ “** (Num. 14:28–29). The Generation of Promise has two choices: they could choose God and believe in Him and live or distrust the Word of God and die. When David faced Goliath, this was his mental attitude: **Then David said to the Philistine: “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of Y^ehowah of the armies, who you have taunted.”** (1Sam. 17:45).

The promise which I heard many times in church went as follows: **“Do not fear, for I am with you, do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, certainly I will help you, and certainly I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”** (Isa. 41:10). That is a promise for all believers in Jesus Christ throughout the ages.

“And it will come to pass, in your approaching the battle, that the priest will bring himself near, and he will speak to the people; [Deut. 20:2]

War, for the Israelites, was a spiritually significant experience. God had specific plans for the Israelites in war; primarily it was to destroy those degenerate peoples in the Land of Promise. Prior to battle, the priest, one who represented Israel to God, would approach them. This was not necessarily the High Priest. This practice had

²²⁴ Several codices, the western Samaritan, the Targum of Onkelos, the Syriac and the Vulgate have *enemies* in the plural. This could just be the way their language was structured where the singular seemed convoluted to them, whereas, such a usage in the Hebrew is quite commonplace.

already been instituted by Moses when Israel went into battle against Midian—he sent Phineas, the son of Eleazar, who was the High Priest, along with the soldiers (Num. 31:6). There were even times the priests went into battle with the Israelites. When Joshua went into battle against Jericho, the Israelites rounded their fortified city as instructed by God, and seven priests carrying the ark of the covenant accompanied their armed forces (Joshua 6).

Key to this is preparation. The priest did not just give a pep talk minutes before going into battle. In this context, war is imminent, possibly unavoidable, but not immediate. This dismissal of certain groups of people (vv. 5–8), the appointment of lower rank authorities (v. 9) and approaching a city and offering them *peace* are all indications that the Israelites are preparing to go to war, but it will not be in the next fifteen minutes. The spiritual preparation takes a lifetime. At this point in time, the priest is merely reminding the people of what they have learned throughout their lives—that God will fight on their behalf and that they are not to worry.

The only true holy wars were those fought by Israel against the enemies of God. As long as their faith was in Him and as long as they obeyed Him, they would win battles and wars against all odds. Those wars which took place in the Middle Ages had nothing to do with being *holy*. They were heathen fighting against heathen, clinging to a God with Whom they had no relationship. This does not mean that we as Christians eschew war. We belong to a nation and we owe service and allegiance to that nation—in many cases, that will include joining the armed forces and possibly going to war. People tend to over-think this situation, but we are under authority and we are to obey that authority. Whatever the situation, as long as we remain in fellowship and continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, God will guide us. And always carry with you the promise: **“Fear not and be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yea I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness.”** (Isa. 41:10). Being a soldier for your country is an honorable profession—a doctrine which we covered before in Num. 31:2. **Happy is Y^ehowah, my Rock, Who trains my hands for war—my fingers for battle. [He is] my loving kindness and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and He in Whom I take refuge; [the One] Who subdues my people under me** (Psalm 144:1–2).

“And he will say to them, ‘Hear, Israel, you [all]—the ones drawing near—today to battle against your enemies: do not allow your heart to become weak; do not fear and do not retreat in alarm and do not be terrified from before their face; [Deut. 20:3]

Châphaz (כָּפַח) [pronounced *khaw-fahz*] means *to run away in fear, to retreat in alarm, to move away from out of trepidation*. This is why the KJV renders this as *hasten* and as *tremble*. Qal: Deut. 20:3 2Sam. 4:4 2Kings 7:15 Job 40:23 Psalm 31:32 116:11* Niphal: 1Sam. 23:26 Psalm 48:5 104:7.* Strong’s #2648 BDB #342. We have, in fact, a repetition of synonymous phrases, known as a synonymia [pronounced *sin-o-NIM-i-a*], combined with a polysyndeton, which uses several *and*’s. Together, these two concepts emphasize the importance, in this instance, of mental and emotional stability in war: **Do not allow your heart to become weak; do not fear and do not retreat in alarm and do not be terrified from before their face**. The key is a stable mental attitude by focusing upon God and His Word. We attempt to accomplish the same thing in our training of soldiers by repetition under normal circumstances, so that under the abnormal circumstances of war, the actions are performed almost as by rote.

Moses told the people in v. 1 not to be afraid. In the future, God will give the Israelites the same instructions, speaking through a priest, about their behavior in battle. There are certain behaviors to be found in battle and certain ones not to exhibit. They are not to fear their enemies. Because Y^ehowah their God would be with them, **“One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for Y^ehowah your God is He Who fights for you, just as He promised you.”** (Joshua 23:10). David, when speaking to his brothers and to other soldiers while they cowered in their tents: **“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?”** (1Sam. 17:26b). David even comforted King Saul: **“Let no man’s heart become weak on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”** (1Sam. 17:32b). David knew Bible doctrine and he knew that there was no reason to fear Goliath. The Israelites are enjoined not to, in the midst of battle, retreat out of great fear. **For if God be for us, who can be against us?** (Rom. 8:31).

God will return to Israel in the Tribulation: **Say to those with an anxious heart, “Take courage, fear not. Observe, your God will come [in] vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but He will deliver you.”** (Isa. 35:4).

“For Y^ehowah your God—[it is] He Who is going with you, to fight for you with your enemies, to deliver you.’ [Deut. 20:4]

Israel should have had no difficulty when it came to war—whenever Israel was to go to war, the Creator of the Universe, Y^ehowah their God, went into battle with them. There was no army which could oppose Him. Moses told these men in the past: “Do not fear! Remain stabilized and see the deliverance of Y^ehowah which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. Y^ehowah will fight for you while you keep silent.” (Ex. 14:13b–14). And Moses reminds them of this in this great series of messages: “Y^ehowah your God, Who goes before you, will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.” (Deut. 1:31). We will see another great example of this in 2Chron. 20:14–26. Therefore, I will not trust in my bow, nor will my sword deliver me; but You have delivered us from our adversaires, and You have put to shame those who hate us (Psalm 44:6–7).

“And the commissioned officers [lit., authorities] will speak to you, saying, ‘Who [is] the man who has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and turn back to his house, so that he not die in battle, and another man dedicate it. [Deut. 20:5]

A *commissioned officer* is the word *shôṭêr* (שׁוֹטֵר) [pronounced *sho-TARE*] means *official, officer* who is not the highest in command, but holds a subordinate position. These officers organized the armies of Israel (Joshua 1:10 3:7). This same word is used for the overseers of Israel under Egyptian slavery (Ex. 5:14). Strong’s #7860 BDB #1009.

There are two words we need to examine: *bânâh* (בָּנָה) [pronounced *baw-NAWH*] means *to build* and it is in the perfect tense, meaning that we are speaking of a completed action. Therefore, the house has been completed. It may or may not be completely furnished and the fixtures may be in or not; but the house itself, the building of it, has been completed. Strong’s #1129 BDB #124. *Chânak*^e (חָנַךְ) [pronounced *khaw-NAK^e*], is generally rendered *dedicate* and is found twice in this verse, and in 1Kings 8:63 2Chron. 7:5 and Prov. 22:6 (all in the Qal stem).^{*} In 1Kings 8:63, Solomon offers **22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep—so the king and all the sons of Israel dedicated the house of Y^ehowah.** 2Chron. 7:5 is a parallel passage. Prov. 22:6 reads: **Dedicate a child according to his way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.** Obviously, this has to be more than some one-shot ceremony performed while the kid is an infant. It is a day-in and day-out process. For the child, it involves guidance and proper direction. So what is involved is probably more than a ceremony, but it is a day-in and day-out choosing of the impact and direction of the house. Strong’s #2596 BDB #335. Freeman has nothing of note to add to this, saying that *we are not informed as to the ceremonies accompanying the dedication of a dwelling.* He mentions some customs held by the rabbins, which may or may not be pertinent, and adds that Egyptians and Hindus have some sort of a dedication ritual which they perform.²²⁵ However, when we are lacking in solid historical confirmation or evidence of a particular Jewish custom or historical note, we should allow God’s Word to interpret itself, which allows me to give the interpretation which I have given. Our application to today becomes obvious: we all have dwelling places and they are either, by our daily actions and thoughts, dedicated to the things of this world or dedicated to God. There is no phoney, one-shot ceremony which determines this. It is our day--to-day life within this home which determines to Whom it is dedicated.

Now we will hear the ways that keep a person from going out to battle with the enemy. The first one is the exception of the man who has recently built his own house. We have a Psalm which apparently was read at the dedication of a house built by David (or for David) in Psalm 30. We can assume that the time allotted to such a man would be a year, as was given to the newly married (Deut. 24:5). Josephus, in Ant. iv. 8, 41, concurs (although he also places a year as the time on the next verse, which would be incorrect).

One of the things implied by this verse, which is important, is that some men who went into battle were killed and they would not return. Even with God leading them into battle, there will still be some casualties—it will be their time to go. We will all check out of this life; God has already determined the place and the time and the

²²⁵ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 110.

circumstances. We have no control over that. We need merely to be in His will, which includes being in fellowship and growing in grace and the knowledge of Bible doctrine.

“ And who [is] the man who has planted a vineyard, and has not made it common? Let him go and turn back to his house, so that he not die in battle and another man make it common.

[Deut. 20:6]

Châlal (חָלַל) [pronounced *khaw-LAHL*] is one of the more unusual words in the Hebrew. It has several disparate meanings, which are hard to reconcile to one another. Its root means *to bore*, by implication meaning *wound, dissolve*. BDB gives three separate definitions and listings for this verb, and I will try to correlate them. Men killed using swords and arrows, and those who died had been pierced. Because death is so closely associated with defilement and uncleanness, this word also came to mean *defiled, polluted*, as well as *pierce, bore*. It means *pollute, defile, profane*.²²⁶ *Profane* is something properly applied in relationship to God and to that which is holy, such as the sabbath (see Lev. 20:3 Neh. 13:18 Ezek. 23:39).²²⁷ Finally, in this passage, the vineyard is, for all intents and purposes, virginal—it has not been used or harvested from. It is in a pristine state. The first harvest makes the vineyard *common, used, no longer in a pristine state*. Strong's #2490 BDB #319–320.

Recall that the fruit of a vineyard was not to be eaten for three years and in the fourth, it was considered holy to God, an offering to Him (Lev. 19:23–25). It was the fifth year when they could eat of the fruit. It was in this way that they *profaned* the vineyard. That is, it was no longer brought as a holy offering to God. Therefore, the time period of exemption from the military for this man could be up to four years.

Again, as before, there was unfinished business in the life of this person going to battle; God allows him to harvest his vineyard in the fifth year, so that it is not on his mind during battle. In modern life, we might apply this to a new business venture or a new career.

Paul will use this to illustrate the tight-fisted²²⁸ Corinthians why he and Barnabas should be remunerated for their spiritual services: **Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working [i.e., side jobs so that they may teach and do missionary work]. Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You will not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.” If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?** (1Cor. 9:6–9a, 11).

In the millennium, the planting again of vineyards and the building again of personal residences will be a sign of God's return to Israel: **Thus says Y^ehowah God, “When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and I manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant Jacob. And they will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards, and live securely, when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them around about them. Then they will know that I am Y^ehowah their God.”** (Ezek. 28:25–26).

“ And who [is] the man who is engaged to [lit., has betrothed] a woman and has not taken her? Let him go and turn back to his house, so that he not die in battle and another man take her.’

[Deut. 20:7]

Here is a man who has become engaged to a woman, yet they have not consummated their marriage nor have they moved in with one another. A man in battle will have his mind on her and not his duty. For that reason alone, he might be killed. The word for *take* is *lâqach* (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*], it means, among other things,

²²⁶ Châlal also means *begin* primarily when found in the Hiphil stem (see Gen. 11:6 Deut. 16:9 2Chron. 31:10), and rarely in the Piel (Deut. 20:6 28:30).

²²⁷ For those who cannot distinguish between profanity, obscenity and the use of expletives, profanity is properly taking God's name in vain, by using in conjunction with expletives or using it in such a way as to trivialize God, as in *oh my God*.

²²⁸ They were tight-fisted, but probably the richest of the people to whom Paul ministered.

to take in marriage. Strong's #3947 BDB #542. We see in Deut. 24:5 that the period of time this man is exempted from the military is one year.

*The intention of these instructions was neither to sent away all persons who were unwilling to go into the war, and thus avoid the danger of their interfering with the readiness and courage of the rest of the army in propsect of the battle, nor to spare the lives of those persons to whom life was especially dear; but rather to avoic depriving any member of the covenant nation of his enjoyment of the good things of this life bestowed upon him by the Lord.*²²⁹ However, the last reason for exemption was different.

“And the commissioned officers [lit., the authorities] will add to speak to the people, saying, ‘Who [is] the man that is afraid and weak of heart—let him go back to his house so that [lit., and] the heart of his brothers will not melt like his heart.’ [Deut. 20:8]

Melt is the Hiphil perfect of *mâçâh* (הִצָּח) [pronounced *maw-SAWH*] and it means essentially *to melt* as it is found in Psalm 147:18. The context is He gives snow like wool; He scatters hoarfrost like ashes. He casts forth His ice as fragments; who can stand before His cold? He sends forth His word and melts them (Psalm 147:16–18a). This word is also found in Psalm 6:6 39:11.* Strong's #4529 BDB #587 and is related to but different from Strong's #4549 (also translated *melt* in Ex. 16:21).

McGee wrote: *There might be a man who very frankly says, “I am a coward. I am afraid to fight, and I don't want to fight.” So here are four good reasons for a man not to go to war. I could not have used the first three reasons, but that last one I could have used. If a man was afraid, fainthearted, fearful, he was not to go. I believe I would have turned and gone home.*²³⁰ *in American we have had problems with out young men dodging the draft and burning their draft cards. I have great sympathy with many of these young men, but I wish instead of trying to blame the government and blame everybody else, they would just come out and say they are afraid to go fight. That is a good reason. That would have kept me out of the battle, I can assure you of that. I don't mind admitting I'm a coward.*²³¹

We have an illustration of this exemption in Judges 7:3: **“Now therefore come, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is afraid and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.’ “ So 22,000 people returned, but 10,000 remained.** Fear and cowardice is catching. When one person fails due to cowardice, this will infect many of those around him. Even though God has promised victory to the Israelites, for some without faith, this is not enough. If they are still terribly apprehensive about going to war, then there is no purpose for them going into battle. At best, they will quietly retreat or be killed while too afraid to do anything. At worst, and the more likely scenario, their fear will infect the hearts of the others.

McGee: *God say here that He wants His people to know two things before they go to war. First of all, they must be on His side. They must be fighting for what is right and know that God is with them. Secondly, they must be enthusiastic about it. There is a time when one should fight for his country, and there is a place for the flag and for patriotism. The way things are carried out by our politicians actually encourages this motley mob who burn their draft cards. But the way God does it is very wise. He had a marvelous arrangement for His people, even in time of war*²³².

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²²⁹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, pp. 939–940.

²³⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 127.

²³¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 128.

²³² J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 128.

General Procedure to Be Followed for Campaigns Against Distant Cities

“And it will come to pass as the commissioned officers [lit., authorities] finish speaking [lit., bring to an end to speak] to the people, they will appoint princes of the armies at the head of the people. [Deut. 20:9]

At this point, the squads will require squad leaders. Although an army functions as a unit, it is really a unit of several smaller units which is made up of several smaller units. This is the only way war can be fought—with careful organization and levels of authority. The authorities, or commissioned officers, are actual field commanders. This is not a civilian-run army.

“When you approach a city to fight against it, then you will call to it for peace [or, make a proclamation with a view toward peace]; [Deut. 20:10]

Obviously, it is an unfair fight when the Israelites approach with God as their commanding general. And many look back at the Old Testament as a time of great barbarism. However, those cities which Israel were to rise up against were given first an opportunity to surrender. Why would another city surrender? It would recognize that the God of the Universe, Y^ehowah, was the God of Israel. This indicates positive volition in their land and they would therefore have the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they could also avoid being destroyed in battle by surrendering. Obviously, a people who did not believe in Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, would stand firm in their opposition to Israel.

There are times when warfare might be imminent, but unnecessary. Our Lord said, as an illustration: **“Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.”** (Luke 14:31–32).

We our ourselves at enmity with God, yet He calls to us with the word *peace*. We choose to remain as enemies of Him or with take His offer of peace. **For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we will be delivered in His life** (Rom. 5:10). **Now all things are from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself** (2Cor. 5:18–19a).

“It is will come to pass, if peace it answers you and it opens to you, then it will come to pass, all the people the ones found in it will be to you as a body of forced laborers [or, tributaries] and they will serve you. [Deut. 20:11]

A body of forced laborers is one word: *maç* (מַחֲ) [pronounced *mahs*] and it means that or *laborers, task-workers, labor-group, serfdom*. The use of this word in Ex. 1:11 indicates that this is more than just being tributaries (although, that would be at the discretion of Israel). Strong’s #4522 BDB #586. This is how much the city had to recognize that Y^ehowah was the God of the Universe: they had to be willing to present themselves as slaves to Israel.

We have a situation which was almost like this. There was a revolt which was pretty much spearheaded by Sheba ben Bichri—Joab halted a total destruction of the city where Sheba ben Bichri was when his head was tossed over the wall (2Sam. 20:10–23). When Moses and the Israelites were traveling through the wilderness to the land of Promise, they often would ask permission to route themselves through a given nation (e.g., Deut. 2:26–28). Israel was only openly hostile to those who were hostile to them or to those God had chosen for destruction. See also 2Kings 6:19–23).

This is ideally our expected service—to be slaves to the Living God, Jesus Christ. As Paul began some of his letters: **Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons** (Philip. 1:1). We have two responses to the demands of God in our lives: we can surrender or we can fight. It should be obvious to any one of us that the resist God is fruitless. The only reason

that God does not kill us immediately for our rebellion is that we are either kept alive as a matter of grace or He keeps us alive as an example to others. **Therefore, I urge you, family of God, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [as] a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God—your spiritual service of worship** (Rom. 12:1).

However, let's get back to the reality of this situation. The Jews were to offer peace to a city, and if they accepted this peace, this meant that they must submit themselves as slaves to the Jews. They did not just co-exist; they did not just pay tribute; they became Israel's slaves. There was no way God would allow these men to continue in their Satanic worship, which is exactly what they would do if they were given the option of co-existing with the Jews.

I want you to think back to the slavery which took place in the United States and try to think about it apart from simply being an inhuman imposition. God brought these men and women from Africa—and God chose these men and women personally. Now, it is quite obvious, like other men, they were hard-headed and not easily converted. Slavery gave them a humility—a forced humility—so that a huge number of slaves became believers in Jesus Christ. Many of the masters who owned these slaves realized that this was their missionary field, and they evangelized their slaves. God expected no less from the Jews.

In our own country, one of the results of slavery was, there were many, many generations of men who were previously Africans, who heard the gospel when under forced humility, and they responded to the call of Jesus Christ; and they believed in Jesus Christ. The depth of their faith was passed on from generation to generation; and their music reflected their deep faith in Jesus Christ (slaves passed along music that they themselves wrote, called spirituals and called gospel music).

God knew the hearts of these slaves—former freedmen in Africa; God knew how negative they were but how positive that they would become with some enforced humility (or, to be more accurate, extreme enforced humility). You may think that slavery is the worst thing that men can do to one another, but it was through slavery in the United States that millions of men from Africa were saved, throughout dozens of generations, even to today. These millions of men and women are now face to face with Jesus Christ because of the institution of slavery.

What we do not find here is a specific mention of evangelizing those of the city who agree to become slaves to Israel. We do not have evangelization really alluded to at all, as we have in the New Testament. The disciples were given the mandate to go out to all the people and to tell them all about Jesus Christ; but we do not find similar mandates for the Jews. For those who agreed to be slaves to the Jews, they would do this first out of fear, knowing that the God of the Jews was greater than their own gods; knowing that the Jews would destroy them and their families and their city if they did not surrender. Eventually, in becoming a part of Jewish society, even as slaves, these people would be exposed to the sacrifices made to God, and, at some point, God the Holy Spirit would make the gospel real to them—probably through observing or offering up a sacrifice—and they would believe in Jesus Christ (or, in the God of the Jews).

“And if they [lit., *if*] do not make peace with you and they make war with you, then you will lay siege against them [lit., *if*]; [Deut. 20:12]

The city is given the opportunity to surrender and to serve Israel—which, in turn, is serving the living God. Their other alternative to to oppose Israel, in which case, Israel is to attack the city. It is foolish to fight a war of containment or a war without the intention to win, as per General Douglas MacArthur. He warned us against a land war in Asia roughly a decade before we became embroiled in one—which war caused a great deal of dissension and bitterness. Furthermore, we made the mistake of not fighting such a war to win—using every implement of war that we had. Otherwise, we should not have been there in the first place. In this verse, if you are going to make war, then you make war with the expressed intention of winning.

“And Y^ehowah your God has given them [lit., *if*] into your hand, and you will strike down every male of it by the mouth of the sword. [Deut. 20:13]

If the people of the land do not surrender, the first order of business is to destroy those who are in authority, all of the males of the city. When the Midianites became involved in the plot to neutralize Israel through Balaam, Moses to tal by God to: “Take full vengeance for the sons of Israel on the Midianites.” So they made war against Midian, just as Y^ehowah had commanded Moses, and they killed every male (Num. 31:2a, 7).

“Only the women, and the infants and the cattle and all that is in the city, [and]²³³ all its spoil, you will seize for yourself, and you will consume [lit., eat] the spoil of your enemies which Y^ehowah your God has given to you. [Deut. 20:14]

The choice for the city is simple—they either all go into slavery, or the men are killed and those who remain go into slavery. In any case, the city then belongs to the Israelites. God would clearly instruct the Israelites what they could take and what they could not. “And you will do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you will take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves.” (Joshua 8:2a; see Num. 31:11, 53 Joshua 11:14 22:8 as well). *Consuming the spoil* meant that the Israelites were to take the people of the land and the things of the land and use them for their own building up and maintenance.

“So you will do to all the cities which are very far off from you, which are not of the cities of these nations. [Deut. 20:15]

God has another program for the indigenous peoples of the land. For the cities which are far away from Israel, they will be given the opportunity to surrender. By that time, they will have heard of the Israelites going into the land and conquering it and they would have heard of God’s mighty deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. “And I [Y^ehowah] will fix your boundary from the Sea of Reeds to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River [Euphrates], for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. You will make no covenant with them or with their gods. They will not live in your land, so they will not make you sin against Me—for if you serve their gods, it will certainly be a snare to you.” (Ex. 23:31–33).

Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
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General Procedure to Be Followed for Campaigns Against Nearby Cities

“Only, of the cities of these peoples which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you [as] an inheritance—you will not keep alive all that breathe. [Deut. 20:16]

While this reads, *you will not keep alive all that breathe*; this is a reference to human beings and not to animals. This is easily seen when one compares Joshua 10:40 and 11:11 with 11:14.

This group of peoples in the land had been given an opportunity to change their minds about the incredible evil in which they were involved. They had reached a saturation point of evil where there was no return. They had to be removed from the face of the earth. “When Y^ehowah your God will bring you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and He will clear away many nations before you—the Hittites and the Gergashites and the Amorite and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites—seven nations greater and stronger than you; and when Y^ehowah your God delivers them before your face, then you will defeat them and you will utterly destroy [lit., devote] them. You will not make a covenant with them and you will not show any favor to them. Furthermore, you will not intermarry with them; you will not give your daughters to their sons, nor will you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following after Me to serve others gods; then the anger of Y^ehowah will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.” (Deut. 7:1–4). The ideal plan is that the Israelites destroy these indigenous peoples entirely. However, since they will not, they are warned

²³³ The conjunction is found in several codices and two early printed editions of the Masoretic text.

not to intermarry. Obviously you cannot intermarry with a nation whose population has been thoroughly and completely destroyed. And Moses said to them, “Have you spared all the women? Look, these [women] caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of Y^ehowah. Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones and kill every woman who has known man intimately. However, all the females who have not known man intimately, keep for yourselves.” (Num. 31:15–18).

“For you will completely destroy [lit., devote] the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, [and]²³⁴ the Hivite and the Jebusite, as Y^ehowah your God has commanded you; [Deut. 20:17]

These groups of people were degenerate beyond the ability to reform. Five hundred years prior to this, the iniquities of this people had not reached a saturation point (Gen. 15:16). However, at the time of Deuteronomy, these nations had entered into great human depravity, practicing sexual deviations and human sacrifice—both of which were often closely associated with their worship of the gods. Recall that the demons at one time had physical contact with the human race and bore a race of half-human, half-angelic creatures. It is this precedent of sensuality that the peoples of the Land of Promise aspired to, being influenced by these demons who could no longer cohabit with man. They were a cancer on society and God determined that they were to be completely removed before they infected the rest of the human race. They had become such a saturation of evil, that God said, “For the land has become defiled, therefore I have visited its punishment upon it, so that the land would vomit out its inhabitants.” (Lev. 18:25). Their deviations, which included child sacrifice and homosexuality and bestiality are listed in the Lev. 18 context. “Take personal responsibility that you do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, so that it not become a snare in your midst. But, you will tar down their alters and smash their pillars and cut down their Asherim. For you will not worship any other god, for Y^ehowah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. So you do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods, and sacrifice to their gods and someone invite you to eat of his sacrifice, and you take some of his daughters for you sons and his daughters play the harlot with their gods, and cause your sons to play the harlot with their gods.” (Ex. 34:12–16). And they completely destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword [with the exception of Rahab and her family].” (Joshua 6:21). However, sometimes, only the people were destroyed: And they struck every person who was in [Hazor] with the edge of the sword completely destroying; there was no one left who breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire. And all the spoil of these cities and their cattle, the sons of Israel took as their plunder; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them. They left no one who breathed.” (Joshua 11:11, 14).

Satan preyed upon the Israelites through the survivors of the nations Israel was to completely destroy. The Israelites were easily influenced by evil religion; therefore the peoples of the land were known as a *snare* to Israel (Ex. 23:33 Deut. 7:16 12:30).

“So that they do not teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done to their gods, and you [all] sin against Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 20:18]

Primarily, they were to be destroyed so that they did not corrupt the Israelites themselves. “When you enter the land which Y^ehowah your God gives you, you will not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.” (Deut. 8:9). “[Therefore] do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out from before your face, ‘Because of my righteousness Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land,’ but because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before your face. It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of you heart that you are going to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah your God ds driving them out from before your face, in order to confirm the oath with Y^ehowah swore toy your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” (Deut. 9:4–5).

²³⁴ As per the western Samaritan, the Targum of Jonathan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate codices.

“You you lay siege to a city for many days, to fight against it, to capture it, you will not destroy its trees to force an ax against them, for of them you will eat and they you will not cut down—for [is] the tree of the field a [lit., the] man to come in before your face in the seige? [Deut. 20:19]

Barnes Notes reads a portion of this verse literally as “For a man is a tree of the field”; interpreting this as a man receives his sustenance by these trees.²³⁵ Although Rotherham states: *The difference here is not one of text but of vocalization;*²³⁶ I think we can be more dogmatic. According to the NASB, this final sentence of this verse is probably an interrogative: “For is the tree of the field a man that it should be besieged by you?” However, Keil and Delitzsch not only concur with this viewpoint, but state their case more vehemently, writing, “For is the tree of the field a man, that it should come into siege before thee?” This is evidently the only suitable interpretation of the difficult words...and the one which has been expressed by all the older commentators, though in different ways. But it is one which can only be sustained grammatically.²³⁷ Finally, the rendering I have given this verse is one of the most literal, word-for-word which I have found, supplying the question mark, as the Hebrew does not have any such thing as a question mark (or any other sort of punctuation mark).

So you may ask: why would anyone think to destroy the trees in the first place? Two reasons: (1) Out of legalism, they might destroy the tree as a part of everything that breathes. In the zealotry of some to destroy a populace, the legalistic Jewish population might be inclined to raze a land entirely, taking out orchards of fruit trees. Egypt was notorious for razing the land that it conquered.²³⁸ The complete laying waste of a country seemed to be the order of the day in ancient times, as it is recorded on Assyrian monuments²³⁹ and found in classical writings.²⁴⁰ (2) They would use the wood for warring implements (to build shelters, battering rams, etc.). Now, for Israel, there were some individual exceptions to this (see 2Kings 3:16–25 Jer. 6:6).

Trees that bore apricots, almonds, olives, etc. were to be left alone in a seige, as these things are basically uncorrupted, even if the surrounding population was exceptionally degenerate. Furthermore, without other fruit trees around, these trees are not just going to pop out of the ground again by themselves. If you remove an entire orchard of fruit trees, it takes more than four or five years to bring them back—unless they bring in fruit trees from elsewhere or have some others nearby, they have destroyed that source of food, making the land that they just conquered less desirable.

“Only, the tree, which you know that it [is] not a fruit tree, you will destory and you will cut down and you will build a bulwark against the city which is making war with you until you have subdued it.” [Deut. 20:20]

However, the other trees which do not produce anything, they could be used for battle implements. Sometime after Old Testament times, various armies have not followed this rule of allowing the trees to remain and consequently, the land of Palestine has been stripped of many of its trees. The fact that there are very few woodland areas in Palestine is actually of recent origin²⁴¹.

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²³⁵ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 310.

²³⁶ *The Emphasized Bible*; Rotherham, p. 219).

²³⁷ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 940. Keil and Delitzsch go into greater detail on this particular verse, pp. 940–941, which I highly recommend as reading to students of the Hebrew language.

²³⁸ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 310.

²³⁹ Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 588; *Monuments*, 1st Ser. Pl. 73; 2 Ser. Pl. 40. This references came by Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*, p. 758

²⁴⁰ Both Herodotus and Polybius write of such a mode of warfare, as is mentioned by Canon Rawlinson in the *Speaker's Commentary*.

²⁴¹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 265.

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Deuteronomy 21

Deuteronomy 21:1–23

Outline of Chapter 21:

- Vv. 1–9 **An unsolved crime and the city nearest the crime**
- Vv. 10–14 **Choosing a wife from the enemy**
- Vv. 15–17 **Polygamy and the right of inheritance of the first-born**
- Vv. 18–21 **The secret to dealing with rebellious teenagers**
- Vv. 22–23 **A Restriction on the public display of executed criminals**

Introduction: The topics covered in Deut. 21 are not clarifications of the Law handed down by God to Moses; in fact, this portion of God’s Word has no parallel anywhere else. Little matter—this is still the Word of God. Moses did not run out of things to say and decided to just start making up laws off the top of his head. He did not think, *you know, this topic wasn’t covered yet; let me make a ruling on it.* He spoke (or, read from his notes) as inspired by God the Holy Spirit. And this portion of the Word of God is as inspired and is as meaningful as any other portion.

This passage begins interestingly enough with a dead body which has been disposed of out in a field. At first what appears to be required as a ceremony on behalf of the man who has been slain but which is actually performed on behalf of the city as part of an oath that no one in the nearest city committed the murder and no one in the city is a witness to same.

The next portion of Deuteronomy 21 deals with taking a captive woman for yourself as a wife. This Israelites would be involved in war for the next several years and God would allow for them to choose a wife from among the peoples whom they have conquered.

Thirdly, we deal with rules of inheritance under a polygamous marriage; and fourthly, the Bible reveals the simple key to dealing with rebellious teenagers. Finally, although an execution is public, the Bible forbids leaving the corpse out to hang throughout the evening.

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An Unsolved Crime and the City Nearest the Crime

“When one is found slain on the ground which Y^ehowah your God has given to you to possess it—having fallen in a field—it is not know who has struck him down; [Deut. 21:1]

This chapter begins like the prologue of a murder mystery. The scenario here is an unsolved murder. The body was found out in a field and there are no witnesses and no suspects.

“And the elders and your judges will go out and determine which city is closest to the corpse [lit., measure from the cities which are round about the slain one]; [Deut. 21:2]

Israel will begin as a group of hamlets which will be held together through a road system and through the headship of Jesus Christ, so it would be most likely that the city nearest the body would contain the person or persons responsible for the death.

The elders represented the people in general; men who were respected in their community; men who were older and wiser in almost all affairs. The judges were those who tried the various legal cases and had been elected or appointed (recall that there was never a specific method given for their office). With the priests represented in v. 5, we have people taken from all sectors of society in this matter.

“And it will come to pass, the city which [is] near to the slain one, that [lit., and] the elders of the city will take a heifer of the herd, which has not been worked and has not been pulled in the yoke; [Deut. 21:3]

The translation for this verse is not as accurate word-for-word as I would like, but the meaning is clear. This is a heifer who has never been worked nor has never had a yoke upon her. The last time that there was a call for a sacrifice of an animal which had not been yoked was in Num. 19:2 in the ordinance of the red heifer, immediately prior to the thirty-eight silent years. This was also related to purification from contact with the dead. In this context, the town itself, due to its proximity to the crime, is considered unclean.

“And the elders of that city will bring the heifer down to a valley or rushing water [lit., an ever-flowing torrent-valley], which is not tilled nor sown, and they will break the neck there the heifer in the torrent-valley. [Deut. 21:4]

My first impression when I read this that this was some kind of an atonement for the person who had died, although I realized that there are no prayers or alms for the dead. However, we will see that this is not done on behalf of the slain person.

When covering this verse, I almost missed the translation. I depend heavily upon Young’s translation and had rendered this as a *hard valley* that the heifer was brought into. However, the word is *nachal* (נַחַל) [pronounced *NAHKH-al*], which we have studied before. It is a *torrent of rushing water through a narrow channel*. Today, probably more often than then, it could be a river which is only found during the rainy season. Since a torrent or a river tends to run through a valley area, this word is also used to refer to the valley that a river might run through. Strong’s #5158 BDB #636. In this verse, it is further modified by the adjective *ʿêythân* (עֵיטָן) [pronounced *ay-THAWN*] and which means *perennial, ever-flowing*, and therefore, *permanent*. Strong’s #386 BDB #450 (Strong’s places this with the aleph’s and BDB with the yod’s)

This heifer suffers for the crime of the murder. A heifer which has not worked is taken to a valley which has not been worked—a valley with rushing water—and has her neck broken there. The verb is *ʿâraph* (עָרַף) [pronounced *aw-RAHPH*] and we have only had this verb twice before in Ex. 13:13 34:20. This was related to the consecration of the firstborn. Actually, if the firstborn of a donkey has not been redeemed, then the neck of the firstborn donkey is broken. I don’t believe that *beheading* is the sense of this word. Strong’s #6202 BDB #791. I don’t have a clear picture as to what all of this means here. The relationship I believe is one where the dead person’s killer was not found, therefore he is not redeemed in the death of the killer. Therefore, the breaking of a neck is the substitution. The heifer which bears this guilt had to be one *full of growth and strength, and had not yet been ceremonially profaned by human use*.²⁴² A death is required for the innocent shedding of blood, as per Gen. 9:5–6. So this sacrifice both speaks of an unprofaned Christ and a substitutionary punishment. The unusual mode of sacrifice distinguishes this animal from the sin-offering, where blood must be shed. Finally, the rushing water speaks of the cleansing which takes place.

“And the priests, sons of Levi, will be brought near, for them Y^ehowah your God has chosen to serve Him and to bless in [the] name of Y^ehowah, and every dispute and every bruise [or assault] is in accordance with their mouth; [Deut. 21:5]

This was difficult to translate, as a couple of these verses were. Let’s see what others have done:

²⁴² Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 310.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name [and presence] of the Lord, and by their word shall every controversy and every assault be settled.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Then shall the priests the sons of Levi come near, for of them hath Yahweh thy God made choice to wait upon him, and to bless in the name of Yahweh, and at their bidding shall be settled every controversy and every punishment;
KJV	And the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near; for htem the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bles in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be <i>tried</i> .
NASB	“Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for the Lod your God has chosen them to serve Him and to bless in the name of the LORD; and every disput and every assault [lit., stroke] shall be settled by them [lit., shall be according to their mouth].”
NIV	The priests, the sons of Levi, shall step forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister and to pronounce blessings in the name of the LORD and to decide all cases of dispute and assault.
NRSV	Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come forward for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to him and to pronounce blessings in the name of the LORD, and by their decision all cases of dispute and assault shall be settled.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	‘And the priests, sons of Levi, have come nigh—for on them hath Jehovah thy God fixed to serve Him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah, and by their mouth is every strife, and every stroke—’

As we have often seen, the closer we are to the literal translation, the better chance we have to determine what is being said here. First, *sons of Levi* is not preceded by a definite article. As we have seen several times, the Levites are not synonymous with the priesthood. The priests are a subset of the Levites, through Aaron. *The sons of Amram were Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was set apart to sanctify him as most holy, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the face of Y^ehowah, to minister to Him and to bless in His name forever* (1Chron. 23:13). The verse, as is often the case in the Hebrew, begins with the verb, which is followed by the subject—in this case, the priests, sons of Levi. That verb is *nāgash* (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-GASH*] and it means *come near, draw near, approach* in the Qal stem; here, it is found in the Niphal, which is the passive. The priests will be brought near, or drawn near. The Niphal is often used in worship. Strong's #5066 BDB #620. The next portion of the verse reads, literally, *for them has chosen Y^ehowah your [singular] God to serve Him [or, minister to Him] and to bless in [the] name of Y^ehowah*. This portion of the verse explains why they are chosen for this task. Their qualifications are that God specifically chose them, the priests, to serve Him and to bless others in His name.

It is at this point that many translators become creative. We have the common conjunction and a prepositional phrase followed by the absolute status quo verb *to be*, in the Qal imperfect. Literally, it is: *and in accordance with their mouth is [or, shall be]*. There is no verb for *settle*. They are giving testimony, which will be the final testimony as to the disposition of the case. The case will be *on account of their mouth* or *in accordance with their mouth*. Because of the high responsibility that God has placed upon them, what they say will be what is. Perhaps, I should say, what it is. We finish with: *every dispute and every assault [or, bruise, or injury]*. In other words, they are chosen because of their solemn profession to give testimony and what they say is the end of the matter. This is it. Recall when a legal matter is appealed to the higher authorities in Deut. 17:9–11: “*So you will come to the priests, the Levites, and the judge who is in this days and you will inquire, and they will declare the verdict in the case and you will do according to the mouth of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which Y^ehowah chooses; and you will be careful to observe according to all that they teach you. According to the mouth of the law which they teach you, and according to the verdict which they tell you, you will do; you will not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left.*” When there is a the strong possibility of perjury being committed against one who stands accused of a crime, “*...then both the men who have the dispute will stand before the face of Y^ehowah, before the face of the priests and the judges who are in those days, and the judges will investigate [the matter] thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness—he has accused his brother falsely; then you would do to him as he had intended to do to his brother. In this way you will purge the evil from among you.*” (Deut. 19:17–19). These are the ones chosen by God to judge in His stead.

Finally, notice that these men in authority in their service do one of two things in God's stead: they bless or they judge—when we stand before Jesus Christ at the great white throne, we will be blessed if we stand upon His righteousness and we will be judged if we stand upon our own (Rev. 20:11–15). These are essentially the two dispositions of our case at death. These who judge in His stead have an analogous authority on earth.

“And all the elders of that city, the near [one] to the slain one, will wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, [Deut. 21:6]

This is a solemn ceremony over which both the elders of the city and the priests of the city give their solemn testimonies. The sacrifice indicates that this is done before God. The ceremony indicates that they have had nothing to do with the matter and do not know anything about the matter at hand. The washing of the hands is a symbolic declaration to both innocence and the final disposition of a matter. Their innocence will be proclaimed in v. 7; and we all recall the famous washing of the hands by Pontius Pilate: **And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of this Man's blood—see yourselves.”** (Matt. 27:24; see Psalm 26:6 as well).

“And they will answer and say, ‘Our hands have not shed this blood, nor are we eyewitnesses [to this] [lit., and our eyes have not seen]. [Deut. 21:7]

The heads of that area, the priests and the elders, are called upon to give testimony concerning the slain person found in the field nearest them. They give sworn testimony before God in a solemn ceremony that they were personally not involved and that they know nothing of this matter.

“ ‘Forgive [lit., cover over or atone for] for Your people Israel, who You have ransomed, O Y^ehowah, and do not place unpunished blood in the midst of Your people Israel'; and the blood [-guilt] is covered over with respect to them. [Deut. 21:8]

In this verse, the elders are continuing to speak. They ask for atonement or forgiveness of their town, as they are Israelites, ransomed, or paid for, by God. Then we have the adjective *nâqîy* (נָקִי) [pronounced *naw-KEE*] and it means *acquitted, cleared, free from, unpunished*. Strong's #5355 BDB #667. *Blood* here stands for *blood-guilt*, as it does in the next verse. It is the guilt from the murder.

This ceremony is not for the dead person but for the forgiveness and the covering over of the people of this town. There has been a murder and it is obvious that someone has done it. It is not going to be solved, so, after testimony has been taken, the sins of the town are taken away by this ceremony. **“So you will not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. And you will not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I Y^ehowah am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.”** (Num. 35:33–34). The key is that we must be removed from all vestiges of sin. **And they called on Y^ehowah and said, “We earnestly pray, O Y^ehowah, do not let us perish on account of this man's life, and do not put innocent blood upon us; for You, O Y^ehowah, have done as You please.”** (Jonah 1:14).

“And you will remove [or, purge] the unpunished blood out of your midst, for [or, when] you do that which [is] right in the eyes of Y^ehowah. [Deut. 21:9]

This ceremony is what is expected of them. As long as their testimony is true—they have done what is right in the eyes of God—then there will be no guilt imputed to the city. Again, all association with sin must be removed: **“You will not pity him [one who has committed murder], but you will purge the blood of the innocent from Israel, that it may go well with you.”** (Deut. 19:13). So there is no confusion here; the substitutionary animal sacrifice is purely symbolic. If the real murderer is later discovered, he is not off the hook because of this ceremony. He would still have to stand trial and face the ultimate punishment.

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Choosing a Wife from the Enemy

“When you go out to battle against your enemies, and Y^ehowah your God has given them [lit., him] into your hand, and you have taken captive its captives; [Deut. 21:10]

We are now on a completely new topic. We go from an unpunished murder to falling in love with your enemy. The enemies spoken of here must be those who are outside the land of Canaan, as **“Only in the cities of these people that Y^ehowah your God is giving you as an inheritance, you will not leave alive anything that breathes, but you will completely destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as Y^ehowah your God has commanded you.”** (Deut. 20:14).

“And you see in [or among or with] the captives a woman of [eye-catching] form and you you place your love her and you would take [her] to yourself to wife; [Deut. 21:11]

What you see is a woman of *form*. Tō`ar (תֹּאֵר) [pronounced *TOE-ahr*] appears to refer to a *striking figure, an eye-catching form* or, simply, a *form*. It is a word used of males (Gen. 39:6 1Kings 1:6), cattle in dreams (Gen. 41:18), children (Judges 8:18) and of women (Gen. 29:17). Generally speaking, it is *a form which stands out, which catches your eye, which gets your attention*. BDB refers to it as *something gazed at*. Strong’s #8389 BDB #1061.

We have studied the word *châshaq* (חַשַּׁק) [pronounced *khaw-SHAK*] before in Deut. 7:7 10:15. With the prefixed preposition *bêyth*, it means *placed his love in, set his love with* (taking into account the preposition which follows). Strong’s #2836 BDB #365. So, you have rounded up all of the captives and there is a person that you observe among the captives that catches your eye. In face, you are so taken by her beauty that you even think to yourself, that’s the kind of woman I would marry. When the Israelites slaughtered Midian, they were allowed to keep alive the young women who were virgins for themselves (Num. 31:16–18).

“Then you will bring her into the midst of your household, and she will shave off her head and do her nails. [Deut. 21:12]

I have given a literal rendering of this verse, by my thoughts are conflicted here. On the one hand, I would assume her nails, also a symbol of femininity, are cut off as well, along with her hair. However, the verb here means *to do, to make* and there is no corresponding word which would mean *to make shorter*. So, by the translation, it sounds as though she *does her nails* as women do their nails today. Perhaps this in part identifies her as a woman, as her hair has been shorn. The shaving of the head represents several things: (1) it is often a part of a purifying or cleansing ceremony when closely associated with death, as we have seen in Lev. 14:8–9 Num. 6:9 8:7; (2) it is symbolic of the woman leaving her old life and beginning a new life; (3) it is symbolic of mourning (v. 13 Isa. 15:2); (4) it is symbolic of humiliation (2Sam. 10:4–5); (5) it is symbolic of capture by the enemy (Micah 1:16); it is symbolic of personal disgrace (1Cor. 11:5); and, (6) it is symbolic of God’s judgment upon a people (Isa. 3:17).

“And she will remove [or, turn aside] her captive’s clothing from her and she will remain in your house and mourn her father and her mother a month of days; and afterwards, you will go in unto her and you will marry her [or, rule over her], and she will be to you to wife. [Deut. 21:13]

Her captive’s clothing is literally *her clothing of captivity*. This is nothing more or less than the clothes she was wearing when taken captive. She has not been garbed in some sort of a convicts uniform; nor, at capture did she change into anything different.

Like it or not, the Bible treats women much differently than men. On the one hand, you perhaps have noticed that there is very little volition here allowed the woman. On the other hand, you will note that she has been allowed to live and she is not placed into a life of slavery. Her native dress, the captive's clothing, is also removed. This woman has all of her previous life removed from her—parents, hair and clothing.

She has, out of free choice, come from a heathen culture where her mother and father have despised the God of Israel. However, every normal person will mourn the passing of their parents, believers or not. In fact, the loss of one's parents who are unbelievers is much more tragic as they will never be seen again.

After she is given a month to mourn, then the male Israelite is given her as his wife. This gives her time to adjust and to let go the attachments of her former life and to prepare herself for an entirely new life.

“And if it comes to pass you do not delight [or, have pleasure] in her, then [lit., and] you will send her where she desires [lit., with respect to her soul]; and you will not sell her for money; you will not deal tyrannically with her because you have humbled her. [Deut. 21:14]

There are two views expressed concerning this verse. The first is that the son of Israel could sample the wares of this woman first and could dump her if he did not like her. The primary reason given for this is that when it reads *you have humbled her*, the word is *ʿânâh* (עָנָה) [pronounced *aw-NAWH*] and it is said to be used twelve times for men who have sexually forced themselves upon women (Gen. 34:2 Deut. 22:24, 29 Judges 19:24 20:5 2Sam. 13:12, 14, 22, 32 Lam. 5:11 Ezek. 22:10–11). That means this word is used about seventy times where rape is not involved. *ʿÂnâh* is a very common word used in two entirely different ways (it also means *to answer*; it is used over 300 times in that manner). This word is also used to denote grace-orientation, as we noticed when we studied this word before in Num. 12:3. This same word is found in reference to afflicting slaves (Gen. 15:13 Ex. 1:11 Psalm 105:18), for afflicting those in war (Num. 24:24) and for God's afflicting those under discipline (1Kings 11:39 2Kings 17:20 Nahum 1:12). In this context it is very clear how this woman was afflicted—her country was just defeated by the Israelites and her parents and brothers (if any) were also just killed. She has been taken by force to become a man's wife who has been a part of those who just destroyed her family and country. It is in this way she was humbled. Strong's #6031 BDB #776

Even though this is not for today, I at first had trouble with this verse. I was concerned that this was an allowance by God for an Israelite to try any captive woman that he so chooses and to cut her loose if he later decided that he really didn't like her that much. However, this is the incorrect interpretation. We have dealt with the word *humble* and have interpreted it correctly for this context. The man would be able to send the woman away sometime during the month of the butch haircut. It would be illogical for this to occur any time after their marriage was consummated for several reasons: (1) There are already a whole set of rules for marriages which would be considered null and void for foreign captive women, which is contrary to the concept of marriage. (2) The implication is that such a woman never really becomes a Jewess. (3) This would allow is any male who is taken by any female captive to say, “I want this one”; and they are given free reign to *play house* until he grows tired of her. (4) This would completely distort the grace and the permanence of God to the heathen captive woman to know that at any time, her husband could decide to dump her.

However, this give the woman a month to grieve, the man a month to be in close contact with her during this time of mourning, which is not the best of circumstances for either of them. After a month, he will have some idea as to whether he would be willing to spend the remainder of his life with her. With the shaved head, the attraction would have to come from the soul. Again, the *humbling* referred to is not that he has had sex with her, nor does it mean that he has raped her. The humbling has just been described in context: **“When you go out to battle against your enemies and Y^ehowah your God delivers them into your hand and you take them away captive.”** (Deut. 21:10). In fact, this verse specifically states, euphemistically, that they have not had sexual contact: **“...and if it comes to pass that you do not delight [or take pleasure] in her.”** That is sexual contact and it did not occur.

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Polygamy and the Right of Inheritance of the First-born

“When a man has two wives, the one loved and the other not loved [lit., hated]; and they have borne him sons, the loved and the not loved; and the first born son is hers that is not loved; [Deut. 21:15]

This certainly opens up a can of worms, does it not? We are dealing here both with having two wives and secondly, what if they both have children and the first born is the son of the one disliked by the husband. In fact, this is the most-likely scenario. A man might get married young, have children young; and then, he becomes successful enough to afford a second wife and finds a younger woman that he prefers. In fact, with two women under one roof, it would be difficult to love them both and they would have trouble with the arrangement themselves. Due to their natural feistiness, there would likely be a strong preference for one or the other. What we also need to cover here is the **Doctrine of Polygamy**.

We have already seen a case history of this: Jacob married two women and took on two mistresses. His Uncle Laban had tricked him into marrying Leah, the sister of the woman he loved. In fact, for that reason, God gave Leah her children first. **Now Y^ehowah saw that Leah was hated and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, “Because Y^ehowah has seen my affliction. Certainly now my husband will love me.” Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, “Because Y^ehowah has heard that I am hated, He has therefore given me this son also.”** So she named him Simeon (Gen. 29:31–33).

The right of primogeniture did not originate with Moses at this time. Our first mentioned of it is in Gen. 25, where it is obviously a common right or a tradition already at that time. This is where Esau, Jacob’s older brother by a few seconds, is bribed into selling his birthright to Jacob. Jacob recognized its importance whereas Esau did not. These rights could be set aside for reasonable cause by the father, as Isaac did in the case of Jacob and Esau in Gen. 27:33; however, mere favoritism was not reason enough to favor one child over another when it came to the rights of the firstborn.

“And it will come to pass in the day of his causing his sons to inherit that which he has, he is not able to a first born—the son of the loved one—against a face of the son of the hated one—the first born. [Deut. 21:16]

In the day of is a idiomatic way of saying *when*.

Let’s examine some other translations to grasp what is occurring here:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then on the day when he will his possessions to his sons, he shall not put the first-born of his loved wife in place of the first-born of the disliked, who is oldest.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...then shall it be that her that in the day when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath he may not treat the son of the beloved instead of the son of the hated, as the firstborn;
KJV	Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit <i>that</i> which he hath, <i>that</i> he may not make to son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, <i>which is indeed</i> the firstborn.
NASB	...then it shall be in the day he wills what he has to his sons, he cannot make the son of the loved the first-born before the son of the unloved, who is the first-born.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...then it hath been, in the day of his causing his sons to inherit that which he hath, he is not able to declare first-born the sons of the loved one, in the face of the son of the hated one—the first-born.

Here, he will not be allowed to place the son of the loved wife over and above the older son of the life whom he does not love. In other words, *the order of birth rather than parental favoritism governed succession, though the rule was sometimes set aside with divine approval (cf., e.g., Jacob or Solomon)*²⁴³.

In fact, the preference of the parent is often worthless if the parent is a poor judge of character. Isaac certainly preferred Esau, his firstborn, over Jacob; and Esau, as a younger man, was not near as devious and as manipulative as was Jacob. However, the seed of Abraham was to pass through Jacob rather than through Esau, because Jacob was a believer who eventually experienced some limited spiritual growth (his son, Joseph, showed tremendous spiritual maturity). In fact, Joseph was practically the last one born, but to him belonged the birthright of Jacob, which meant the double portion (1Chron. 5:1–2). This is why through Joseph there are two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. Reuben, the eldest, lost his position as firstborn because he was *unstable as water* (Gen. 49:3–4). Actually, what this means is, water assumes the shape of whatever it is poured into. Reuben adjusted his values and opinions to reflect those around him, rather than to take an unequivocal stand for what is right. Reuben today would be a politician. He knows how to give the people what they want and he knows what to say to gain the approval of those around him—but Reuben would not take a firm stand for what is right. Recall, Reuben talked his brothers into placing Joseph into a pit as opposed to killing him; however, Reuben should have allowed Joseph to enjoy his freedom without any constraints. Reuben knew what was right and could have enforced it—however, he chose not to (Gen. 37).

“But he will recognize the firstborn, the son of the hated one—to give him a double portion out of all which is found in regards to him, as he is the beginning of his strength; to him [therefore]²⁴⁴ the right [or, judgment] of the firstborn. [Deut. 21:17]

The sons had no say in the man’s choice of wives, or to which couple they were to belong. The Bible upholds the right of the firstborn throughout, unless the firstborn himself relinquishes that right. The right of the firstborn, also known as the right of primogeniture, to a double portion has its parallel in surrounding cultures. The NIV Study Bible points out that we find this in the Nuzi (which predates the book of Deuteronomy), Larsa during the Old Babylonia period, Assyria in the Middle Assyria period. Israel as a nation was first among nations and received a double portion: **But you will be called priests of Y^ehowah. You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches, you will boast. Instead of your shame, a double portion; [instead of] humiliation, they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore, they will possess a double portion in their land—everlasting joy will be theirs** (Isa. 61:6–7).

With the double portion also comes great responsibility and often double discipline. **“Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of Y^ehowah’s hand double for all her sins.”** (Isa. 40:2).

So you are wondering, what is the application, if any, of this today? This passage has great far-reaching application. The short application is that you do not short-change your own children because you prefer one wife over another (i.e., one mother over the other mother). Have you been married twice? Do you have children from the first marriage? Properly applying this verse means that you cannot short-change that child. He should receive your time and your support. It is an embarrassment to Jesus Christ if you are behind in your child-support payments. If that is you, don’t tell a soul that you believe in Jesus Christ. It is better than they don’t know. Ideally, you wait on God to bring you your right woman and you wait upon God to for this right woman before you get married, which is to occur before you have sex. Don’t blame anyone else but yourself if you jumped the gun and married someone who was incredibly attractive at the time, who turned out to lack substance (or, perhaps you were the one lacking in substance). In any case, you don’t get to begin over again as though nothing happened. If this person bore your children, then they require your support and guidance and you are not allowed by God to short-change them in favor of the children of wife #2. Let’s say that you chose to have a whole slew of children

²⁴³ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 266.

²⁴⁴ The western Samaritan, the Onkolos of Jonathan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate codices all have the word *therefore*.

in your wild years and then you grew up, perhaps got saved, or just spiritually got a grip. You cannot erase the past. Those children require your financial assistance and guidance whether or not you have any feelings for their mother.

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The Secret to Dealing with Rebellious Teenagers

“When a man has a son acting stubborn and being rebellious, one not listening to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and they have chastised him, and he does not listen to them; [Deut. 21:18]

Acting stubborn is the Qal active participle of çârar (סָרַר) [pronounced *saw-RAHR*] is listed in BDB as meaning *stubborn, rebellious*. However, these are two words which perhaps go together, but they are not synonyms. Çârar is found used strictly as a verb only once in Hos. 4:16 where it is also found in the Qal participle. The KJV reads *Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer*. I know your thinking; Israel is in for some serious discipline, as there is nothing worse in this world than a backsliding heifer. However, the NASB gives us a clearer picture: *Since Israel is stubborn like a stubborn heifer, can the Lord now pasture them like a lamb in a large field?* This is an animal which is going to do what it wants to do when it wants to do it. Lambs, although not the brightest animals in the world, can be controlled and guided by a good shepherd. Israel, out in the large field of the world, had become *willful, headstrong and uncontrollable*. It is also used in that sense in Prov. 7:11. When Israel, through the Levites, confessed their sins, they said, *“And they gave a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not listen.”* (Neh. 9:29b; see Zech. 7:11). Have one of your children walked away from you in a rage and you put your hand on his shoulder and he pulled it forward? That is being *willful and stubborn*. We cannot make a determination of the meaning of this word from its use in Psalm 66:7 68:6, 18 Isa. 1:23 Hos. 9:15. In Isa. 30:1a, although this is often translated, *“Woe to the rebellious children,” declares Y^ehowah, “Who execute a plan, but not mine...”* The sense here is not of being rebellious, per se, but *being headstrong, doing what they want to do, stubborn*. *Willful and headstrong* is the sense this word is used in Isa. 65:2. Therefore, a more accurate assessment of this word is *stubborn, willful, headstrong*. Strong’s #5637 BDB #710.

The next descriptor is the Qal active participle of mârâh (מָרָה) [pronounced *maw-RAWH*], found over forty times (e.g., Num. 20:21 27:14 Psalm 5:10 Lam. 1:20) and it is more consistently rendered *rebel, rebellious*, with the exceptions in the KJV of Job 17:2 Psalm 78:17, 40, 53 106:7, 33, 43 Isa. 3:8 (where it is rendered *provoke, provoking*). The words are found together here, Deut. 21:20 Psalm 78:8 Jer. 5:23, indicating that they might be related, but they are probably not synonyms. Strong’s #4784 BDB #598.

There is a natural progression here. The son goes from being *headstrong, wilful, stubborn* to being outright rebellious. Then the father speaks to the son, and he does not listen. The mother speaks to the son, and he does not listen. They discipline him, and he still does not listen. Every child has a certain amount of willful rebelliousness in then; they have old sin natures which manifest themselves quite early in life. However, the parents’ job is to orient that child toward authority and life—and quickly. *Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire the causing of his death* (Prov. 19:18).

God takes adolescent rebellion quite seriously. We receive our first training, discipline and a tremendous amount of love and sacrifice from our parents. *Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and do not forsake your mother’s teaching—indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, and ornaments about your neck* (Prov. 1:8–9). *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that you may be prospered and that you may live long on the earth* (Eph. 3:1–3 Ex. 20:12). Furthermore, there is great discipline for the child who rejects this. *The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out and the buzzards will eat it* (Prov. 30:17). Recall from God’s

Law: “And he who strikes his father or his mother will surely be executed. And he who curses his father or his mother will certainly be executed.” (Ex. 21:15, 17; see also Lev. 20:9).

Society cannot function with a generation of children who despise authority, as we have seen. Coming out of the sixties, I have seen many horrible results of my own rebellious, willful generation—one of the very simple results has been the huge homeless population, many of which came out of that generation. Many of these homeless people (certainly not all) have abused drugs and drinking and have so set their souls in rebellion against society that they are unable to function within the boundaries of society. Another result has been the great amount of crime which has centered itself around the illicit drug market. God has a prescription to deal with these children.

“Then his father and his mother will lay hold on him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives; [Deut. 21:19]

The gate of the city was somewhat of a public forum, an official meeting place between the populace and the elders of the city. It was there that some disputes were settled. For instance, in Deut. 22:15, a girl’s parents bring proof of her virginity to the elders at the gate. When a surviving brother would not sire children on behalf of his deceased brother, his sister-in-law was to take him to the gate before the elders of the city. According to Keil and Delitzsch, who quote two other sources, going to the gates of the city is a present-day custom for the Syrians and the Moors.²⁴⁵ It soon came to pass that the gates of a city became synonymous with the governing bodies and the authorities of that city. Therefore, we will later read of the *gates* of hell in Matt. 16:18—this is a reference to the powers or authorities of hell, not to some entrance gate.

The son is still manageable enough that he can be controlled for a few minutes at a time by force. His parents have to physically lay hold on him. He is brought out to the elders not for a trial, as his guilt or innocence is not in fact being debated. This does not require a great many witnesses—just the two parents and the son brought before those in authority at the gates of the city. The elders do not thoroughly investigate this matter, as we have seen in, for instance, Deut. 13:14. These were just the proper steps which parents, at wit’s end, had to take, to remove their son, the blight of their lives, from this world and from their lives. Here the elders act not as judges, but they simply uphold the final act of parental authority in a case of the unmanageable young adult and carry out the death penalty which is proscribed in this passage.

“And they will say to the elders of his city, ‘This—our son—is willfully stubborn and rebellious—one not listening to our voice—a gluttonous person and a drunkard.’ [Deut. 21:20]

A difficult word in this verse is *zâlal* (זָלַל) [pronounced *zaw-LAHL*] found in the Qal participle in Deut. 21:20 Prov. 23:20, 21 28:7 Jer. 15:19 Lam. 1:11 and in the Niphal perfect in Isa. 64:1, 3.* *Glutton* seems to be the best rendering, as Prov. 23:20–21a read: **Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine [or] with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty.** This is a person looking to satiate his own appetites above all else without regard for anyone else. It is a very specific brand of hedonism which is found in some people, particularly females, today. However, *zâlal* is used in apposition to *precious* in Jer. 15:19. The connection here, to my way of thinking, is that one who is completely interested in satiating his own appetites is essentially worthless to anyone else. When one’s own motivation is one of self-pleasure, then, although he may be involved with other people, he does nothing but use those other people in the satisfying of his own appetite. Such a person can be personable, charming and sincere. I have known alcoholics with this personality—charming and sincere as can be, but their immediate pleasure is their only desire and their only motivation. The need of any other person is inconsequential. In this way, they are *worthless* to anyone else. In Lam. 1:11, this word is rendered *vile and abominable* (*The Amplified Bible*), *worthless* (*The Emphasized Bible*, RSV), *vile* (KJV, NASB), *despised* (NIV), and *lightly esteemed* (Young’s)—*worthless* is the best rendering in that verse, as it is consistent with the rest of Scripture, the context of the verse and with the use of the word elsewhere. Strong’s #2151 BDB #272.

²⁴⁵ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 943.

Their testimony is short. Their son is stubborn, willful and rebellious, he does not listen to his parents. He is worthless and, as a son, is drinking to the point of drunkenness on the regular basis, interested only in self-gratification. Note that things had to get to quite a point for the parents to bring the child in. This often occur with poor or absent parents but it could occur with great parents. At some point in time, there are choices the child is making for which he is responsible. When we begin to develop a knowledge of right and wrong, perhaps in our early teens or earlier, then we begin to become responsible for the choices that we make.

Note that these parents do not have to bring in additional proof or witnesses. This is not a trial. Their word and the fact that they are willing to bring their son in is testimony enough. For any parent, the idea of bringing one of their children to the judicial system for the purpose of execution is almost beyond comprehension. This is obviously an extreme case where the child is completely out of control and has succeeded at making the life of his parents worse than miserable. Most parents would not have the ability to do this. In fact, we have seen in court case after court case where the family will stand behind their son, a young man who is a violent and reprehensible criminal deserving of death.

I recall a talk show which I saw sometime back with uncontrollable children (they were eleven or twelve or thirteen) and their parents (actually, there was no father; in every case it was just a mother). The child physically withstood his mother and apparently called her every obscene name that he could think of when standing in opposition to his mom. The moderator, who has no children, knew it all, and just knew that you should not physically whip this child. The expert child therapist on the show could tell what they needed was therapy. She finds out that they were in therapy. Well, then, they needed separate therapy. They had both had joint and separate counseling. Then they needed counseling for longer periods of time. "You can't undo thirteen years of bad habits in four counseling sessions," she arrogantly explained. Both the mother and the child had spent the last five years in therapy. Then obviously, it was the wrong therapist. The moderator backed her up 100% all the way. The child needed a father, someone who was physically his superior, to knock the stuffing out of him for his impertinence, and if that did not do the trick, then the mother needed the Mosaic Law. The original problem was the mother (or the father) married out of sexual lust; or they overindulged their child and suddenly found that, at age five, they had a monster on their hands. A child must know discipline, control and respect by the time he is five or six. If not, for a particularly hard-headed child, there is hell to pay for the next twenty or more years. On the other hand, this mother could have done everything right. Some children are incorrigible; and God had an answer for those kind of children. Recall, even a child who cussed out his mother was to be executed. God has no tolerance for children out of control with no authority orientation. It is best for them to face a certain death early in life and make their peace with God before they have become too hardened. And, this quick intervention reduces the crime rate considerably. This was a child who was already involved in criminal activity. If that is his life at age thirteen, it will only escalate. The amount of money that society will pour out on the child will be phenomenal. God knew how to deal with such a child.

“And all the men of the city will stone him with stones and he will die and you have put away the evil out of your midst, and all Israel will hear and fear. [Deut. 21:21]

Now obviously, some children become uncontrollable because their parents were over-indulgent. You may think to yourself that this is not fair. The child pays the price. Wrong! The parent who is this over-indulgent would not take his child to be stoned. This is the parent who says, when his son is caught with the smoking revolver in his hand while standing over the corpse that his son was just holding the gun for a friend. Scholls see this all of the time when a child is caught with a lit cigarette or a lit joint in their hand. *They were just holding it for a friend* and the parent believes and supports their child. This ruins the child. The obvious solution to this problem, as certainly, 1 out of 100 kids were actually holding it for a friend, is that you give the kid the punishment due, no matter what, unless the *friend* comes forward. As Thieme used to say, you cannot make policy around less than 1%.

In the case given, we have a parent who has tried everything, and, even though there is no such thing as a perfect parent, this parent has tried what they knew to get the child under control. They could not. It is drastic action, but such a child is in the fast tract for a life as a criminal. This will be his end anyway. God is just eliminating the middle man (the victim) of his crimes.

There is certainly a flip side to this. We have the natural result of being an overindulgent parent—that parent will have to put up with their children for the rest of their lives. Their children will move back into their house years later, and make their lives miserable in the process. Their children will be involved in criminal activity and dishonorable behavior, bringing shame upon the family, and pain and suffering to innocent people.

And there is another side to this as well. [“You will also say to the sons of Israel, ‘Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens temporarily living in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, he will certainly be executed; the people of the land will stone him with stones.’ ”](#) (Lev. 20:2).

One of the repeated themes in God’s Word is the negative impact of the degenerates who are in close association with God’s people. Throughout the Book of the Law, Israel is mandated by God to remove certain types of people from the land (in this case, it is the uncontrollable teenager). In the book of 1Corinthians, it is the incestuous couple (1Cor. 5:13). True separation for believers is from other believers—not from unbelievers.

Finally, my friend, we are that stubborn and rebellious son. [All of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way. But Y^ehowah has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him](#) (Isa. 53:6). Under the Law, our heavenly Father demands our execution. However, as McGee was often wont to say, *friends, aren’t you glad that we are not under Law today? Instead of judgment, there is mercy for us.*²⁴⁶ When the crowd listened to our Lord tell the parable of the prodigal son, several in the crowd expected when the son returned home that he would be executed. Instead, he was received with the open arms of his father. *Friends, aren’t you glad that we are not under Law today?*

Now for the 1%: this does not mean that under grace that it is okay to be the overindulgent parent. You ruin your children when you do not discipline them and when you do not consistently hold them to high standards. A parent has the duty to properly raise their child. When you do not properly train your child, you will cause him pain and suffering for the rest of his life unless he learns discipline from either some branch of the military or from Bible doctrine.

And now for the other 1%: we are not under the Mosaic Law, so you do not have the right to execute your own child, no matter how far out of line they have gotten.

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A Restriction on the Public Display of Executed Criminals

[“And when there is in a man a sin, a cause of death, and he has been put to death, and you have hanged him on a tree \[or, crucified him on wood\],](#) [Deut. 21:22]

In this verse we have the rarest of the seven major stems, the Hophal of *mûwth* (מִוּת) [pronounced *mooth*], the simple word for *die*. In the Hophal, this means *execute*. Strong's #4191 BDB #559 There were several methods of execution practiced by the Israelites. As we have seen used most often, we have stoning (Ex. 17:4 Deut. 13:10 21:21); burning (Lev. 20:14 21:9); and the sword (Ex. 32:27 Num. 25:7–8). The tradition of the rabbis has it that the most common execution was by strangulation, to be used when another method is not authorized in Scripture. However, there is no support for this Biblically. Strangulation, as a method of execution, is found in the Mishnah, which is a warped and legalistic commentary on God’s Word. However, the hanging of a person from a tree, cross, stake or gallows was done after the execution, perhaps as a warning and an example. The Pharaoh’s chief baker was hanged after being put to death by the sword (Gen. 40:19) and Joshua will hang five kings after

²⁴⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 133.

executing them in Joshua 10:26. We do have examples of hanging as a method of death by the Persians (Esther 2:23 7:9–10 9:14) and the Romans (the crucifixion of our Lord).

Tâlâh (תָּלָה) [pronounced *taw--LAWH*] simply means *hang*. We have seen this verb used already in Gen. 40:19, 22 41:13 and we find a similar verb in Deut. 28:66. However, in the Torah, this is found only in this passage, here in the Qal perfect and in v. 23 in the Qal passive participle. Although this word is found two dozen times throughout Scripture (e.g., Joshua 8:29 10:26 2Sam. 4:12 21:12 Psalm 137:2 SOS 4:4), nowhere in the Law of Moses are the Israelites ever told to hang anyone for any offense or to hang someone up after being executed for some offense. Strong's #8518 BDB #1067 The point being is that God the Hoily Spirit recognized that God the Son in His human body would die upon the cross as a man hanged—therefore, this law was instituted. **The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and they might be taken away** (John 19:31)²⁴⁷.

The NIV Study Bible reads *this phrase doubtless intends, "impaled on a pole"*.²⁴⁸ The word for tree is the ordinary word for tree, which could also mean *wood*. However, there is no *doubtless* about it. The use of the word *hang* does not indicate that *impale* is the correct understanding of this word. We do have a phrase which indicates being impaled on a piece of wood in Ezra 6:11; however, both the words for *hang* and *impale* are completely different; and the words for *tree* and *beam* are completely different. Without greater internal evidence, I would not be inclined to read any more into this verse other than **and you have hanged him on a tree**.

"His corpse will not remain upon the tree all night but you will bury him in that day—for accursed of God [is] the hanged one, and you will not defile your ground which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you as an inheritance." [Deut. 21:23]

When the body of an executed person was hung overnight over the land, it defiled the land which God gave to the sons of Israel. **So he [Joshua] hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at sunset, Joshua gave command; and at sunset Joshua gave command and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the city gate, and raised over it a great heap of stones which are there to this day** (Joshua 8:29; see also Joshua 10:26–27). **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it stands written, "Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree."** (Gal. 3:13).

This verse would indicate, along with several others, that there is nothing wrong with a public execution. In fact, the several Scriptural references concerning the deterrent affect of the death penalty would indicate that a public execution is what is preferred. However, this is not to go into a morbid continual display of a rotting corpse.

The Israelites have been instructed several times not to defile their land (Lev. 18:25, 28 Num. 35:34). Barnes postulates that it was not the hanging per se which defiled the land, but the person who was hung who defiled the land, as whatever crime he committed must have been particularly heinous to invoke a hanging after the execution.

Let me close with a word from McGee: *Moses did not realize, and certainly the children of Israel did not realize, the full significance of this law. In Galatians 3:13, Paul picks up this statement in the law and applies it to Christ. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." In the time when our Lord Jesus lived on earth, He was delivered into the hands of the Romans for execution. Because Rome was in control of the land, the death penalty could only be executed by Rome. Our Lord was crucified on a Roman cross, sometimes called a tree. Now Paul picks that up and say that when Christ was hanging there on the tree, He was taking our sins and was accursed of God in that condition. Because of what He had done? No. He became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the Law. He*

²⁴⁷ An interesting note that they did not require the bodies to be removed because of the Law, of which they were ignorant, but this had something to do with their man-made Sabbath Day regulations.

²⁴⁸ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 266.

redeemed us from the curse of sin. He redeemed us from the penalty of sin, and He has bought our pardon. Why? Because He was made a curse for us²⁴⁹.

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²⁴⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 134.

Deuteronomy 22

Deuteronomy 22:1–30

Outline of Chapter 22:

- Vv. 1–4 **You are your brother's keeper**
- Vv. 5–8 **Cross-dressing, animal conservation and building codes**
- Vv. 9–12 **Do not be unequally yoked**
- Vv. 13–19 **If a man alleges his wife was not a virgin when they married**
- Vv. 20–24 **Adultery: during and before marriage**
- Vv. 25–27 **Rape**
- Vv. 28–30 **Pre-marital sex and incest**

Introduction: Deut. 22 is filled with even more various and sundry laws than chapter 21, as you can see by the outline below. We will find out that we are our brother's keeper and Moses will explore rape, marriage and pre-marital sex. God's laws apply to social law as well as to criminal law. One of the reasons for the chapter split between chapters 21 and 22 is that the bulk of Deut. 21 is criminal law; the bulk of Deut. 22 is civil law and social concerns.

The big picture is that the Ten Commandments were reiterated and covered in more detail in Deut. 5–7; the religious and national regulations in Deut. 8–21; and now until Deut. 26, regulations concerning domestic and personal relations are covered. The big picture in this chapter is that Moses will make it very clear that we have a responsibility to our brothers (fellow Israelites in context) and then the remainder of the chapter will illustrate that very thing. That is, we are given ways not to treat our fellow countryman.

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You Are Your Brother's Keeper

“You will not see the ox of your brother or his sheep having been drawn away and you disregard them [lit., hide yourself from them]. You will, without fail, take them back to your brother [lit., in returning, you will return them to your brother]. [Deut. 22:1]

The second verb found here is *nâdach* (נָדַח) [pronounced *naw-DAHKH*], which means *banish, cast away, cast down, compel, draw away*. The Niphal is the passive stem and it means specifically *to compel, to be drawn away*. Strong's #5080 BDB #623. The following verb is *ʿâlam* (עָלַם) [pronounced *ah-LAWM*], which means *to hide, to conceal*. In the Hiphil, it is often used in conjunction with eyes or ears, and it can mean *to hide one's eyes from* which means *to disregard*. In hiding the ear, it is similar to our expression *to turn a deaf ear* (Lam. 3:56). Here, it is found in the Hithpael stem (the intensive, reflexive stem). My guess is that this might be a shorthand idiom meaning essentially the same as *turning a deaf ear to* or simply *disregarding*. Strong's #5956 BDB #761.

We have an interesting figure of speech here called an *anastrophe* [pronounced *a-NAS-tro-phree*]*—*this is where the word order is unusual or has been transposed. I have translated the verse literally with the negative associated with the word *see*. However, it is obvious that we are examining the situation where the person *does* see the animal wandering about loose. What they are *not* to do is they are *not to hide themselves from the incident**—*i.e., they are not to ignore the escaped beast.

You are your brother's keeper. You do not get to ignore it or act as though you did not see the wandering ox. Moses gives them no choice—they will return the beast to its owner. Here, *brother* refers to a fellow Jew, which is why the NASB renders this as *countryman*. Whereas *brother* in our dispensation means one who is spiritually related to us—that is, they are believers as well; it refers to a fellow Jew in the Age of Israel. It did not necessarily mean someone with whom you are on good terms with. **“If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you will without fail, return it to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its load, you will refrain from leaving it to him. You will, without fail, release [the load] with him.”** (Ex. 23:4–5). Fair compassionate treatment from you toward all is expected by God. Personal property under the law is such a fundamental right that Israelites were enjoined by God to protect and preserve the property of others. When they came upon the property of another, they were to act as an conservator of sorts, doing whatever was necessary to protect the property of a fellow Jew. **“And just as you want men to do to you, do to them in the same way.”** (Luke 6:31). **“Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, you too do so for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”** (Matt. 7:12). Our Lord says that this is a summation of the Law and the Prophets, in terms of our relationship to man. If the missing item was yours, you would want it to be return quickly to you. Therefore, you are to do the same for a fellow Israelite. In our dispensation, we are to do that toward anyone, whether friend or enemy (which does not represent a change from the Age of Israel).

“And if your brother [is] not near to you or [lit., and] you do not know him, then you will transport it to the midst of your house and it will be with you until your brother seeks for it; then [lit., and] you will return it to him. [Deut. 22:2]

In the English, our disjunction *or* can mean an inclusive or an exclusive disjunction. In an inclusive disjunction, *A or B* means A could be true, B could be true or A and B could be true. If only A is true or B is true, it is called an exclusive disjunction. The common conjunction of Hebrew here appears to function here as an exclusive disjunction—that is, you either know who the animal belongs to and they do not live anywhere near you, or you have no clue as to who the animal belongs to.

'âçaph (אָפֵף) [pronounced *aw-SAHPH*], and this word means *to gather, remove, got*. This word appears to be used when things which were in one place have now been moved to another. Therefore, we could also use the words *transfer, relocate, transport*. Strong's #622 BDB #62.

Here you find the roaming animal; you cannot just allow it to roam because you do not recognize who it belongs to or you know, but they live a tremendous distance away. You must take the animal in as if it were your own and care for it. It does not matter if you know the owner or not. There are certainly minor issues to deal with. If the animal has come from a distance, it would make sense to return the animal whether or not the owner contacted you in particular. Although Moses does not go into any great detail, there is no implication that it is your if the owner does not look for it but you know who the owner is. However, in the case where you do not know the owner, then you don't have much choice but to wait until someone announces that they are missing one of their animals.

“And so you will do to his donkey and so you will do to his garment and so you will do to any lost item of your brother's which is lost by him and found by you [lit., you have found it]. You are not able to ignore it [lit., you are not able to hide yourself]. [Deut. 22:3]

The phrase *you are not able to hid yourself* is equivalent to our *you will not look the other way*. You cannot ignore this and you cannot choose to not become involved. Because you and the personal property have run into one another, you are automatically involved. You do not have a choice. That property becomes your responsibility.

The addition of this verse means that we are talking more than just humane treatment of animals. With only vv. 1–3a, a case could be made that the animal is cared for and returned out of compassion for the animal. The Bible does not teach cruelty to animals. However, the point here is the ownership of the animal, not just the welfare of the beast. Certainly, the animal is to be treated well, but it is also to be returned. The animal rights activists are a logical outgrowth of evolutionary thinking. If we are here by chance accident, man descending eventually from non-organic molecules, with animals being branches of our evolution, then logically we are no better than flies, fleas or monkeys. We have no more value than they. However, the animal rights activists cannot

go to God's Word for support. **For it is written in the Law of Moses,** "You will not muzzle to ox while he is threshing." **God is not concerned about oxen is He? [No, that is not the point]."** (1Cor. 9:9 Deut. 25:4). Early on in man's history, immediately after the flood, the eating of animals was allowed. We have even seen distinctions made between which animals could be eaten and which could not in the book of Numbers. So, the overriding principle here is personal property, not the care of animals.

We all have more than just a right to own property. Even when our property wanders off, we misplace it, etc., it still belongs to us. Similarly, when you see such items of value which obviously belong to someone else, that is their property. Just because they misplaced it, does not make it any less theirs. And the Israelites were more than required to not steal it—they were required to see that it gets back to its rightful owner.

"You will not see the donkey of your brother or his ox, falling in the way, and look the other way [lit., hide yourself from them]; you will certainly cause [them] to stand up with him [lit., in raising up, you will raise them up with him]. [Deut. 22:4]

Here is an animal which has fallen, perhaps under a heavy load, or a rut in the road or a combination of the two. This is going to require some work to right the animal. You cannot walk by your brother in these circumstances and ignore the situation. Even if this is your enemy, you cannot ignore the situation. Recall Ex. 23:5: **"If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its load, you will refrain from leaving it to him. You will, without fail, release [the load] with him."** God required the Israelite to assist any fellow Israelite. There are many instances when our help should be given to others, as well. We find people stranded, with flat tires or dead batteries. This does not mean to be foolish and risk your life; but it means you are to lend a helping hand. This is the gift of some believers and God gives them many opportunities to assist others. You may be in some sort of a service organization or in a bureaucracy, and there are those who are frustrated and come to you for help—you can give them the response, *I'm sorry, but that is just our policy and there is nothing I can do to help you;* or you can help them (when it is possible and when it does not violate mandates from above). The applications here are endless. There is more help needed in this world than there are hours in a day. However, by application, this is part of our life as a believer in Jesus Christ.

From here to the remainder of this chapter, the information given is almost more illustrative of the principles of vv. 1–4 than a separate set of regulations. The building codes, the strict punishment for adultery and rape, all deal with the Israelite's treatment of his fellow countryman. God's Laws illustrate our responsibility toward our fellow believers and fellow countrymen.

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Cross-Dressing, Animal Conservation and Building Codes

"The articles of a man will not be upon a woman nor will a man put on a woman's outer garment, for all doing these things [are] an abomination to Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 22:5]

Articles here is a word that we have studied before: k^elîy (כֶּלִי) [pronounced *k^elee*], and it is an all-purpose word standing for anything which has been finished, made or produced. It could be translated *an article, utensil, vessel, object, stuff, load, baggage, implement, apparatus, weapon, furniture, receptacle*. It essentially refers to anything which has been manufactured. In this context, it refers to *clothing* and probably *jewelry and accessories*. Strong's #3627 BDB #479. In that day and time, the tunics worn by the men and women were almost identical, except that the women's tunic was longer. This was enough of a difference.

The deviant crowd does not like the Bible. Drunkenness and hedonism are out, homosexuality is forbidden, pre-marital sex is forbidden and cross-dressing is not allowed. Perhaps for some of you, it takes away the only fun

that you could ever imagine having. Nevertheless, we have to go with the plain meaning of Scripture and here those fashions which pertain to a man are for men and those which pertain to women are women's. The fashions change from time to time; however, whatever is in fashion for women is not to be worn by men and vice-versa. The Christian is not supposed to be on the cutting edge of fashion when a formerly feminine item is being worn by men or vice versa. As during the time of Moses, earrings worn by male children was acceptable—at this point in time, it is still not quite common and still essentially feminine. Therefore, Christians males should not be wearing earrings. However, this could change in twenty or thirty years. The key is no whether a man should or should not wear earrings; the key is whether or not this at this time is generally worn by men or by women. We are just not allowed to be on the cutting edge when a change is being made (with respect to items worn exclusively by one sex or the other). You see, the difference is not the fashion, per se, but the distinction between men and women. God created the man and the woman differently and has given us different stations in life. We are distinct as male and female and transvestism and homosexuality (which may or may not be exclusive of one another) are forbidden. Every man has a right woman designed for him and vice versa. We are different in our approach to sex, fashion, interests; we are different in our emotional and psychological makeup; and we are distinct in our physical beings. We are nowhere near grasping the importance of genetics in relation to our psyche, but it only stands to reason that men and women who are genetically distinct are also emotionally and psychologically distinct due in part to the differences of our genetic makeup. We are not to confuse or to blur these distinctions. **"You will not [as a male] lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination."** (Lev. 18:22). **"If a man which lies with a male as those who lie with a female, both of them have committed a detestable act; they will be put to death without fail. Their bloodguilt will be upon them."** (Num. 20:13). Part of this has to do with being satisfied in whatever state God has placed you. **For I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with little and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of giving abundance and suffering need** (Philip. 4:11b–12). A man should be happy that he is born a man and a woman should be happy that God has chosen for her to be a woman. Therefore, we should dress the part, not behaving as though we think we have missed out on what God has given the other camp.

Contemporary fashion, while it has a place, is often an attempt by Satan to blur the distinction between man and woman, a distinction which is natural and divinely appointed. The other attempt of fashion is to steal from the woman her inherent beauty. This does not mean that each and every fashion designer has both of these purposes in mind when they create their latest masterpieces. However, in some cases, they are inspired to do one or both of these things to women. For those who hear this and find it humorous to mention Satan as an influence, it is his greatest modern triumph to make men think that he does not exist. I do not know what hell is like in terms of the ability to recognize others, but I can imagine Satan meeting certain people at their death and taking great glee in their surprise at seeing him. It's kind of like jumping out from behind a door and screaming *boo* and they jump. He probably gains a great deal of personal satisfaction from that—enough to make up for his lack of notoriety among those who serve him.

A little McGee: As my wife and I were driving in San Francisco, we were behind a little Volkswagen. I remarked that the wife was driving and the man was sitting next to her, and she was driving pretty fast. When they were going up a hill, they couldn't maintain their speed, so I passed them. Do you know that I was wrong? The was driving and the woman was sitting beside him. The man looked like a woman and the woman looked like a man. Frankly, I don't see the benefit of that²⁵⁰.

Finally, as mentioned, there are no general statements as to what kind of clothing is masculine and what kind is feminine. That is, as mentioned, mostly a function of culture. Therefore, there are times and places when a kilt is very masculine for a male and times and places when a skirt would be forbidden a male. About the only particular differentiating factor between a man and a woman which stands for all time is hair—the man is to have short hair and the woman longer (1Cor. 11:14–15).²⁵¹ It is also interesting to note that Deut. 22:5 is the only verse in the book of the Law which deals with this issue.

²⁵⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 136.

²⁵¹ The Nazarites were an exception to this.

“When a bird’s nest comes before you in the way, in any tree or on the ground, brood or eggs, and the mother sitting on the brood or on the eggs—you will not take the mother with the young ones; [Deut. 22:6]

My guess is that this has something to do with the conservation of natural resources. We have had a similar command back in Lev. 22:28: **“But an ox or a sheep—you will not kill it and its young in one day.”** In addition, there is a certain amount of humanity, so to speak, that we are to learn in this and in verses such as Deut. 25:4: **“You will not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.”** Although that verse has a second, and more important meaning, the principle of care for the animal kingdom is found here as well. It is a balanced, compassionate, but not rabid, care. Animals are not caused to suffer for capricious reasons, nor are they destroyed en masse as target practice.

“You will certainly send away the mother and the young ones you will take to yourself, so that it is well with you and you will have prolonged days. [Deut. 22:7]

I assume the eggs would be eaten or the brood would be raised domestically. The mother, in any case, is a wild bird and is to remain a wild bird. For the Israelites, the following of God’s commands were the key to their long survival in the Land of Promise: **“So you will keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you for all time.”** (Deut. 4:40).²⁵² Now if God is concerned enough about the birds to set up a law involving them, then you know He is concerned about you.

“When you build a new home, then you will make a parapet to your roof, and you will not put blood on your house when one falls from it. [Deut. 22:8]

Welcome to the first building code to be found in the Bible. A parapet is any low barrier, wall or fencing at the end of any roof (or bridge or balcony). This is common-place today in modern building. People in the ancient world used the roof of their house, which was flat, as another living area, just as some people in New York City do the same on their roofs. We will see the roof being used in Joshua 2 used as storage and to keep Joshua’s two spies. Some people slept on their roofs during certain parts of the year (1Sam. 9:25–26, in the Septuagint). David was hanging out on his roof when he first saw Bathsheba (2Sam. 11:2). Peter went to the rooftop to pray occasionally (Acts 10:9). Since it was common for people to spend time on their roofs, then a reasonable barrier or protection fence was to be erected simply for the sake of safety. McGee comments: *Do you know that it is only in recent years that our nation has had building codes to protect people? God is not behind the times as a great many people seem to think He is. God has a concern about the way people build their homes*²⁵³.

Whereas, this is easy to understand and to follow, the rabbis made additional laws for the 1%. Certainly, a small number of people would make a decorative 6 inch barrier because they are stupid. So the Rabbis required this barrier or fence to be about three feet high. This was man’s, not God’s, requirement. We see this with neighborhood committees or organizations. The general idea is that the neighborhood is to be kept up and kept nice. There are innumerable regulations designed for this purpose. One such requirement is the submission of a paint chip prior to painting a house a new color. This is to protect the neighbors from being subjected to a bright purple house with orange trim. However, some do not realize that this paint chip must be submitted and they paint their house one day a very conservative color. There have been neighborhood associations who actually have required people to repaint their houses the original color, submit a chip, and allow them to paint the houses back—and threaten suit if they do not comply. These are the rabbis of our modern day. They have a general purpose, which is important, and they fall into some sort of a power play. This power play does nothing to keep the neighborhood up—it is just the function of someone with an old sin nature who has a smattering of authority and cannot handle it properly. There are some people who should have no authority whatsoever and this is one of those kinds of people. It is completely beyond their ability to function within it.

²⁵² As a side note, it is obvious from this verse that Moses recognized what he was saying to the people were God’s commandments, even though they did not all come directly from the previous four books of the Law.

²⁵³ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 137.

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Do Not Be Unequally Yoked

“You will not sow your vineyard in two kinds [of seed], so that the full produce—the seed which you sow and the yield of the vineyard [or, harvest]—will not become set apart. [Deut. 22:9]

The person has a vineyard which is not to be sown with *two kinds*; which is the masculine substantive dual of *kil^oayim* (כִּילָיִם) [pronounced *kiP-AH-yim*], a word found three times in Lev. 19:19 and here only. It probably means *two kinds*. Lev. 19:19 reads: “You are to keep My statutes. You will not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you will not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.” Strong’s #3610 BDB #476. My guess is that a spiritual purity is required here. Furthermore, we have found when two crops are sown side-by-side that one takes on some of the characteristics of the other. This does not mean that a person could not have several different things planted. They just were not to be mixed. There was to be a clear demarcation between the types of things sown. Jesus told the parable of the wheat and the tares, the produce and the weed which were sown side-by-side. As young plants, they could not be distinguished. He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who has sown good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weed seeds also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident as well. And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ And the slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, so that you do not root up the wheat with them while you are gathering up the weeds. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’” (Matt. 13:24–30). This parable represented the believers and the unbelievers growing up side-by-side in the world.

The result of sowing two kinds of seed together is given by the averting or deprecating conjunction *pen* (פֶּן) [pronounced *pen*],²⁵⁴ unfortunately best translated with the Old English *lest*. I render this with the more modern *so that + a negative*. It could also be translated simply *else, or for the aversion of, for the avoidance of, so that [you] avoid, in order to prevent*. Strong’s #6435 BDB #814. What is being avoided is *qâdash* (קָדַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DAHSH*] and it is translated *consecrate, sanctify, dedicate, hallow*. Any of these words are good translations, particularly *consecrate*, however, unless you have been going to church for a long time or speak old English fluently, it doesn’t mean much to you. This verb means that something is set apart to God; this something takes on the quality of being sacred, holy, different from that which is tied to the earth. Strong’s #6942 BDB #872. Therefore, the reason not to sow two different kinds of seed together is so that their yield does not become set apart. My guess here is that this is not used in the religious sense of set apart to God, but so that it is not set apart because the crops are unusable. I am not fully confident of that interpretation at this time.

Unfortunately, there are no insights to be found on this verse in the notes of the NASB, the NIV Study Bible or in Scofield’s Reference Bible; nor does Barnes’ Notes help us here. So you may wonder why such a thing is forbidden, along with them mixture of clothing material in this context. For that, we need to examine the **Doctrine of the Zabians (Sabians)—not finished yet!!** From this short doctrine, we can see that these mixtures of seeds for crops and mixtures of different types of cloth were done to obtain the blessing of the gods. The lack of mixture enjoined of the Israelites was both symbolic of purity and separated them from the heathen practices of that day.

“You will not plow with an ox and with a donkey together. [Deut. 22:10]

²⁵⁴ Strong’s: *pên* (פֶּן) [pronounced *payne*].

Here, the animals will be unbalanced, one (I believe its the donkey) will be doing most of the work and their difference in size, strength and temperament will make it difficult for both of them. This is later applied to marriages where we are told not to be unequally yoked (to unbelievers): **Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?** (2Cor. 6:14). For a young person, the biggest mistakes which can be made are pre-marital sex, drugs and pregnancy. If a person is a believer, along with these serious mistakes, one could add marrying an unbeliever. This kind of errors have results which last a lifetime.

“You will not put on a mixed cloth—wool and linen together. [Deut. 22:11]

This is a continuation of the theme in v. 10. When washed, wool will shrink whereas linen will not. Today, we have become very adept at material blends, but it was not so in the ancient world. Moses was repeating what God had instructed him: **“You will not...wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.”** (Lev. 19:19b). The context of Lev. 19 is the forbidding of idolatry. The Israelites were not to mix together idolatry and worship of Jesus Christ. Their worship of God was to be separated from the heathen worship of idols (Lev. 19:1–8) and their behavior was to be separate from the behavior of the unbeliever (Lev. 19:9–18). The passage from 2Cor. 6 is also contiguous with a call to separate from idolatry: **Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God and they will be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And do not touch what is unclean and I will embrace you. And I will be a father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me,”** says the Lord Almighty (2Cor. 6:16–18 Ex. 29:45 Lev. 26:11b–12 Isa. 52:11 Ex. 4:22 2Sam. 7:14). As we have seen, this separated the Israelites from one of the more pervasive idolatrous cults of their time, the Zabians.

“You will make for yourself fringes on the four skirts of your covering with which you cover [yourself]. [Deut. 22:12]

The tassels the Israelites were to make were to remind them of the commandments of God. **Y^ehowah Also spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they will make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they will put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. And it will be a tassel for you to look at and to remember all the commandments of Y^ehowah, so as to do them and not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot,. [They are] in order that you may remember to do all My commandments and to be holy to your God. I am Y^ehowah your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am Y^ehowah your God.”** (Num. 15:37–41). However, these tassels, although worn by our Lord,²⁵⁵ were later used as a religious symbol, rather than a reminder to the wearer. **Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore, all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say and they do not do. And they tie up heavy loads, and they leay them on en’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them which a finger. But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries²⁵⁶ and lengthen the tassels [on their clothing].”** (Matt. 23:1–5).

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If a Man Alleges His Wife Was Not a Virgin When They Married

“When a man takes a wife and has gone into her and hates her; [Deut. 22:13]

²⁵⁵ Matt. 9:20 14:36.

²⁵⁶ Recall that these are the holders for the Scriptural verses which they carried around with them.

It is obvious that this is the consummation of a marriage. The euphemistic phrase includes the Qal perfect of *bôw'* (בּוֹא) [pronounced *bo*] which means, in the Qal stem, *come in, go, go in*; and it is used here to refer to sex in marriage. Strong's #935 BDB #97. The action of this verb requires a direct object or a prepositional phrase as an object. The preposition found here is *'el* (עַל) [pronounced *e/*], which denotes direction and is often rendered *in, into, unto*. Strong's #413 BDB #39. A marriage was consummated by the sexual act (Gen. 29:21).

So here is a man who marries a woman, has sex with her, and then decides that he hates her. This is a common occurrence in marriage today and this will apply to men as well as to women. In fact, it is extremely common when either pre-marital sex is a part of the picture or a very strong physical attraction exists, whereas there are no other common bonds. When this occurs, one does not get to know the other person and often important differences and areas of contention are glossed over by the sex or by the desire thereof.

During this time period, a very large majority of the women who married were virginal. There would be reasons when a very small minority would not be and apparently, that must be fully disclosed right up front.

“And he attributes to her baseless charges [lit., puts to her actions of words], and brings out against her an evil name [or, a reputation of evil], and says, ‘This woman I have taken and draw near to her, and I have not found with respect to her virginity.’ [Deut. 22:14]

Let's just see how this played out in some other translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And charges her with shameful things and gives her an evil reputation, and says, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I did not find in her the tokens of a virgin.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...and raiseth against her occasions of speech, and bringeth upon her an evil name, and saith— This woman I took, andd approached her, and found not that she had the tokens of virginity
KJV	And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid;
NASB	...and charges her with shameful deeds and publicly defames her, and says, 'I took this woman, <i>but</i> when I came near her, I did not find her a virgin,....'
NIV	...and slanders her and gives her a bad name, saying, "I married this woman, but when I approached her, I did not find proof of her virginity,..."
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and laid against her actions of words, and brought out against her an evil name, and said, This woman I have taken, and I draw near unto her, and I have not found in her tokens of viginity;

The first verb is the Qal perfect of the very common verb *sîym* (סִיַּם) [pronounced *seem*] which means *to put, to place, to set*. Strong's #7760 BDB #962. This is followed by the *lâmed* preposition with the 3rd person feminine suffix. Therefore, this is literally, **and he places [or puts] to her [or, with reference to her]**. This is followed by an unusual Hebrew word *'ălîylâh* (אֲלִיִּלָּהּ) [pronounced *al-ee-LAW*] and it means *wantonness, deeds*. It is a difficult word to determine a meaning for. It is used to refer to actions of God in Psalm 9:11; so I will go with the more neutral rendering *actions*. Strong's #5949 BDB #760. It is followed by the word *words*.

My guess is that the phrase *actions of words* is idiomatic for something like *baseless charges*. This gives us (adding in a few more words): **and he places with reference to her actions of words and he brings against [or upon] her a name [or, reputation] of evil**. The remainder of the verse is fairly literal except that he does not find or discover *with respect to her virginity* (there is no *tokens of* in this verse).

This is more than just deciding that this woman is hated. The man accuses her of not being a virgin prior to marriage and this is the reason that he hates her. Then, this was a serious charge. Today, unfortunately, it is commonplace for neither the man and the woman to be stained (which is one of the many reason marriages often don't work out).

“Then the father of the young woman and her mother will take and bring out the [proof of the woman's] virginity of the young woman to the elders of the city gate; [Deut. 22:15]

Throughout this rest of this chapter, we will have several words which are similar, but not synonyms. Na'ārâh (נַאֲרָאִים) [pronounced *nah-ar-AWH*] means *girl, damsel, miss, young woman, woman of marriageable age*; it can refer to a prostitute (Amos 2:7), an engaged girl (Deut. 22:25, 27), a little girl (2Kings 5:2) or a mistress (Judges 19:3–6). It refers to female attendants or maids only when in the plural (Gen. 24:61 Ex. 2:5 Prov. 9:3). This is an unmarried woman. Strong's #5291 BDB #655. B[°]thûwlâh (בְּתוּלָה) [pronounced *beth-oo-LAWH*] means *virgin*. Strong's #1330 BDB #143. Here, the word *virignity* is a form of b[°]thûlâh (b[°]thûlfîym). Below, in v. 16, we have the word for *daughter*: bath (בַּת) [pronounced *bahth*], obviously related to b[°]thûlâh. Strong's #1323 BDB #123.

Here, they are bringing out the evidence of her virginity, which, we will see, are stained bedsheets or stained clothing. Today, the woman's purity could of course be testified to by a gynecologist. Such a charge was to be dealt with at the city gates with the elders of the city. The word *virignity* stands for the *evidence or proof of virginity* throughout this passage. As you will recall, this is known as a metonymy [pronounced *me-TON-y-my*]. There is possibly another name for this along the line of an *abbreviation*, as this is a shortened way of referring to *proof of virignity*.

“And the father of the young woman will say to the elders, ‘My daughter I have given to this man for a wife [lit., to wife] and he hates her; [Deut. 22:16]

So the problem here is not that she was not a virgin but that he just decided that he hated her. In fact, this man is such a cad, that he not only besmirches her reputation but, as we will see, sets her up to be executed. A man could not be more despicable than that.

“ ‘And see, he has lodged against her libelous charges [lit., placed actions of words] [against her],²⁵⁷ saying, ‘I have not found with respect to your daughter virginity.’ However [lit., and] this is [proof of] my daughter’s virginity!’ And they will spread out the garment before the elders of the city. [Deut. 22:17]

So, apparently, this could occur anytime after marriage. This might be a month later and it might be ten years later. The implication is that it occurs soon thereafter. The parents were to keep the bedsheets which show that their daughter is a virgin in case the man does try to pull this stunt. So, the scenario would be, if this occurs much later in marriage, is that the man claims to be troubled throughout the entire marriage by this and finally just can't handle the fact that he married someone who was not a virgin. Then the parents bring out the bedsheets or the garment she wore on her wedding eve to prove she was.

And, like it or not, this was a double standard. There are some laws given in terms of the masculine or the feminine which apply to both sexes; however, this applies to the man and the woman just as it is given. There is not a parallel passage where the man is similarly examined (which would involve witnesses). In the absence of that, we recognize that there was not a parallel examination of the man. This does not mean that the man was given free reign to sleep around prior to marriage. He was just not subjected to this sort of trial.

“And the elders of that city will take the man and chastise him; [Deut. 22:18]

The man laying these charges against his wife is despicable. If you would like application, either spouse who runs down the other spouse is evil. And when you not only run down your spouse but you exaggerate or outright lie about their actions, it is despicable. Apparently, the man was both whipped and then fined. Tradition, which may or may not be correct, has the number of strokes limited to 39.

“And they will fine him a hundred [pieces of] silver, and give to the father of the young woman, because he has brought out an evil name on a virgin of Israel, and she is to him for a wife. He is not able to divorce her [lit., send her away] all his days. [Deut. 22:19]

²⁵⁷ As per the western Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate codices.

The training of the daughter reflects upon her father and family. This young woman's husband is rumoring all over town that she was not a virgin. There are financial penalties imposed upon him for his evil, lying ways. Barnes' Notes mentions that if the woman is an orphan, then the fine would revert directly to her. The penalty for him, as compared to the woman, is rather light. However, this does not mean that this was a small fine. The NIV Study Bible estimates that this was almost seven times what Hosea paid for Gomer (Hosea 3:2). This indicates an entirely different social status between men and women. The man, in this situation, is not allowed to divorce his wife, which was probably his desire in the first place.

There is an idea which I have been toying with. God has a particular form of government which He gave to the Israelites—a perfect form of government. However, what has come to my mind is that perhaps it was a perfect form of government for that day and time. That is, although God is a God of absolutes and although some standards and expectations and punishments should stand throughout time (e.g., execution for rape and murder), there might be other regulations and laws which are given primarily for that time period of man's history. For instance, the woman here is not given the option to divorce her husband. I would think in a society where the woman is capable of self-support that divorce would be a legitimate option allowed her. Now I mention this gingerly, not in deference to the equal rights amendment today nor in an attempt to make God's Word more palatable by watering it down, but because this viewpoint might be true. For instance, God's Word in the Old Testament calls for the execution of those involved in idolatry. This would be a frightening thing to have today, as who would be in charge of deciding what is idolatry and what is not. We already have a history of similar laws which were enforced outside of the context of Israel, and many innocent people died because of them. When the Catholic church proposed that they were the only true church of Jesus Christ, a wealth of evil came from that. My point is, there are many laws and regulations which would be peculiar to Israel because there has never been before a nation ruled directly by God. Similarly, there are many laws and regulations which would be peculiar to that time period and general culture of the people. Therefore, there will be many laws and regulations which are similar to peoples around them. It was not a matter of Moses copying other law systems (although, his studies in Egypt would certainly have included courses in history and government) nor was it necessarily a matter of Satan counterfeiting God's Laws, as some of the similarities pre-dated Israel as a nation; but, some of the laws given by God to Moses and given by Moses to the people as inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, are laws which fall into a particular historical and cultural framework. I say these things gingerly and with great trepidation, recognizing that this could open the door to a lot of human viewpoint and manipulation of God's choices for us. With reference to the historical and cultural background for the Law, under our government, we could not necessarily institute laws like these and simultaneously glorify God, even though these are God's Laws. We find ourselves in a country where we can organize grass-roots legislation and, through the political process, actually get it passed. My point in all of this is that if we could get every law and regulation found in the Mosaic Law passed in our country, sans those peculiar to Israel as a nation with God at the helm, we would not necessarily be glorifying God. Let me give you some specific instances. I tend to be very apolitical and our system of government allows for that. This does not mean that every Christian should be apolitical. There are Christians who take contemporary legislation and candidates more seriously than they should, but I would not for an instant suggest that you not vote or support certain issues or candidates. If there were a law which would increase the number of times the death penalty were to be used—for instance, for all cases of first and second degree murder and forcible rape (with some exceptions), then verbally I would be for such a law and might even vote in order to vote for it. However, if there were a law to be passed which would call for the execution of any woman who is not a virgin at marriage, then I would be against such a law, even though it is right and correct in any era for a woman to be a virgin at marriage. We just happen to live in an incredibly immoral society where that is not the case. Another for instance: Jacob had two wives and two concubines. Although God did not encourage polygamy, Jacob was not chastised for it and God raised up his seed through these four women to be Israel. Today, a believer who had four wives would be severely chastised by God.

One of the reasons I would take the position that the laws given to Israel also had a cultural and historical context apart from their dispensational context is that some of the laws were very similar to those which pre-dated the laws found in the Torah. For instance, Deut. 22:22–30 is very similar to laws found in the Ebla tablets. The Ebla tablets were discovered in Northern Syria in the late sixties and early seventies as an eventual result of an expedition led by Dr. Paolo Matthiae and Dr. Giovanni Petinato, both professors from the University of Rome. Over 17,000 tablets have been found since 1974, testimonies to the Kingdom of Ebla, a kingdom of 260,000 people, which has

at the height of its power in 2300 BC. It was destroyed by Naram-Sin in 2250 BC. Although we do not know the relationship between Ebla and Egypt, this indicates that laws similar to those given by Moses were already in existence; and, Moses, being trained in the Egyptian castle, was probably quite learned in the laws of other nations.

Another example would be the laws concerning marriage here are similar to those of the Code of Hammurabi. The Code of Hammurabi was an 18th century BC document and a crime committed against an engaged woman was also a crime against her father and her husband to be (#130). There is a Babylonian law which commands an engaged virgin who has been raped to be freed while her attacker is executed.

As another tangent, the discovery of these tablets shoots another hole in the documentary hypothesis. The proponents of documentary hypothesis have taught (incorrectly) that writing was unknown in the time of Moses—and that was given as one of the reasons that Moses could not have composed the Torah. However, it is obvious from the tablets of Ebla that writing existed at least a millennium prior to the time of Moses²⁵⁸.

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Adultery: During and Before Marriage

“And if this thing is true—virginity was not found for the young lady; [Deut. 22:20]

The other side of the coin is that this man marries a woman who is represented to him a virgin and she is not. There certainly would be times when a woman would represent herself as a virgin but was not. We will see that such an assertion had serious consequences.

“They they will bring out the young woman to the opening of her father’s house, and the men of the city will stone her with stone and she will die, for she has committed folly in Israel, to act a slut in her father’s house; thus you will purge the evil from among you. [Deut. 22:21]

God has required in the Old Testament as well as in the New that a woman be a virgin at marriage. **“Do not profane your daughter by making her a [temple] prostitute, so that the land may not fall to prostitution and the land become full of immorality.” (Lev. 19:29). “Also, the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by [temple] prostitution, she profanes her father—she will be burned with fire.” (Lev. 21:9). Let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers (Heb. 13:4b).**

There is no need to proceed with a divorce, as the woman was to be executed. Immorality to God is a repulsive thing. The Law calls for the execution of those who marry who are not virgins yet represent themselves as such. Now you might understand a little better what was meant in the gospel of Matthew, when Joseph realized that his bride to be was pregnant: **And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, observe, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you will call His name Jesus, for it is He who will deliver His people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:19–21).** Whereas the Law prescribed execution for Mary, it was likely that the Jews were not allowed to execute in a case like this any more. Nevertheless, the calling of of the wedding because of her condition would disgrace Mary.

²⁵⁸ The information of the previous two paragraphs is courtesy of Josh McDowell’s excellent *A Ready Defense*; ©1990; Here’s Life Publishers.

In case you have a good memory, and you wonder why there was a different method for testing for adultery in Num. 5:13–22—it is because, in context, that dealt with adultery after marriage and this passage deals with adultery prior to marriage.

“When a man is found lying with a woman, married to a husband, then they will die—even both of them—the man who is lying with the woman and the woman; and you will put away the evil thing out of Israel. [Deut. 22:22]

The phrase *married to a husband* is an alliteration in the Hebrew. The verb is the Qal passive participle of bâ'al (בָּאֵל) [pronounced *baw-AHL*], which means *marry, rule over, possess*—used primarily in relationship to a wife or mistress. Strong’s #1166 BDB #127. This is followed by the masculine singular of ba'al (בַּאֵל) [pronounced *bah-AHL*], which means *owner, lord, husband*. Strong’s #1167 BDB #127. This literally is *owned of an owner*.

A woman committing adultery was not taken lightly by the Law. When they are caught, both parties were to be executed. This is a repeat of what God had told Moses: **“And a man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, which he commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress will definitely be executed.”** (Lev. 20:10; see Ezek. 16:38 as well). **Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived—neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God** (1Cor. 6:14–15). McGee comments: *Under God’s law to Israel, a person guilty of adultery was stoned to death, whether man or woman. If we did that here in Southern California, there would be so many rock piles it would be impossible to drive a car through this part of the country*²⁵⁹.

An interesting point is that there have been several cases in history where this was not done, and the line of our Lord was preserved. Judah and Tamar, in Gen. 38; and David and Bathsheba in 2Sam. 11 are two examples. We can ignore many of the references to John 8:5 as being significant in any way, as this passage is likely not a part of Scripture.

“When there is a young woman, a virgin, betrothed to a man, and a man found her in a city and laid with her; [Deut. 22:23]

So now we are dealing with a woman who was not raped but has decided to enjoy a last fling prior to marriage, which is an evil, evil thing to do. Having sex prior to marriage is just as much adultery as sex with someone other than your spouse after marriage. In this case, we are dealing with a woman who is engaged. As we have seen, Joseph had assumed the same thing had occurred with Mary (Matt. 1:18–19), yet did not want to disgrace her publicly, as he apparently loved her.

Sex prior to marriage, while a terrible sin, was not one which resulted in death if the woman was not engaged. **“Now if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for another man, but who has not been redeemed [or, paid for], nor given her freedom, there will be punishment. They will not be put to death, because she was not free. And he will bring his guilt offering to Y^ehowah to the doorway of the tent of meeting—a ram for a guilt offering. The priest will also make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before Y^ehowah for his sin which he has committed and the sin which he has committed with be forgiven him.”** (Lev. 10:20–22). Here, there is no guilt imputed to the woman, as it would be too difficult to determine motivation on her part—that is, whether she was forced physically or psychologically as a slave, or whether it was an attempt to get out of slavery.

One interesting point of this verse—it identifies this woman as a virgin. Moses either assumes that this woman is a virgin immediately prior to marriage or does not deal with the case of a woman who is not a virgin, who is engaged to a man and has an affair during the engagement period.

²⁵⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 140.

“Then you [all] will bring them both out to the gate of that city and stone them with stones and they will die—the young woman, because she did not cry out in the city; and the man, because he has humbled his neighbor’s wife; and you will have put away the evil thing from out of your midst. [Deut. 22:24]

This woman is in a city, she has sex with a man who is not the one she is engaged to, and she does not cry out as she would if she was being raped. This was a mutually agreed upon tryst. The law condemns them both and they are both executed just as if she were married already. She has been promised to a man and she has decided to entertain herself prior to being wed. In fact, being engaged is so serious, that in this verse, she is called a *wife*. It is no less solemn than the act of marriage, which is witnessed by several people. According to Keil and Delitzsch, written agreements of engagement did not yet exist at this time, and quote Tobit 7:14.²⁶⁰ This should not be viewed as primitive, as we generally do not have written agreements of engagement today.

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Rape

“And if the man finds the young woman in a field who is betrothed and the man has laid a hold on her and lays with her, then the man who lies with her will die alone; [Deut. 22:25]

In this verse, we do not see the word *virgin*; however, the young woman is preceded by a definite article, referring back to the woman of v. 23. Obviously, it is not the same woman who sleeps with a man in the city, but it is the same woman in terms of being a virgin who is about to be married. *Man* also has a definite article, which refers back to the same man of the previous couple verses. A verb here is interesting: *châzaq* (כָּזַק) [pronounced *khaw-AHK*] and it means *to grow firm, to be strong, to strengthen*. It has been used in the Qal imperative to mean *be of good courage be strong* (Deut. 31:6 2Sam. 10:12). However, here it is found in the Hiphil perfect. This is followed by the *vêyth* preposition and a feminine singular suffix. This all means **the man has caused strength against her**. Other translators render this *the man seizes her* (*The Amplified Bible*, NRSV), *the man force her* (*The Emphasized Bible*, KJV), *the man forces her* (NASB), *the man rapes her* (NIV), and *the man hath laid hold on her* (*Young’s Literal Translation*). The Hiphil perfect of the same verb is translated *took, strengthened, repaired, hold fast* (2Sam. 15:5 2Chron. 26:8 Neh. 3:4 Job 27:6). Strong’s #2388 BDB #304. Here we have an engaged woman and the presumption of rape, as this takes place in the country where there is no one to hear her cries for help.

In the city, the woman can call out that she is being raped and someone will hear. Out in the countryside, this cannot be. Here, 99% of the time, this is known because the woman makes it known. And if she makes it known prior to marriage, then this is rape and the man who has raped her is to die. The Law did not kid around. God set up some perfect standards and death lies upon the one who transgresses those standards.

“And you will do nothing to the young woman—the young woman has no deadly sin. For just as a man rises against his neighbor and murders him—a life [lit., strikes him down a soul]—so is this thing; [Deut. 22:26]

God does not kid around. Rape is akin to murder and the rapist is to die. In God’s eyes, there is no significant difference. So that you realize how serious a crime rape is, let me quote a couple of other translations:

NASB

“But if in the field the man finds the girl who is engaged, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her shall die. But you will do nothing to

²⁶⁰ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 947.

the girl; there is no sin in the girl worth of death, for just as a man rises against his neighbor and murders him, so is this case.”

NIV But if out in the country a man happens to meet a girl pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man who has done this shall die. Do nothing to the girl; she has committed no sin deserving death. This case is like that of someone who attacks and murders his neighbor,...

NRSV But if the man meets the engaged woman in the open country, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lays with her shall die. You shall do nothing to the young woman; the young woman has not committed an offense punishable by death, because this case is like that of someone who attacks and murders a neighbor.

This is similar to attacking and killing a neighbor in two ways: (1) the crime is equally heinous, requiring a sentence of death upon the criminal; and, (2) the victim is not to be punished for the sin of the perpetrator.

“For in a field he found her, she cried out—the young woman who is betrothed—and she has no savior. [Deut. 22:27]

In a field, it does not matter if the woman cries out—no one can hear her. This explains why she is the victim. Again, as was mentioned, if such a thing becomes known, it will only be because of the woman who tells what occurred and a woman would do that 99% of the time if she was raped. One of the interesting things in this general passage is that Moses does not call for a group of witnesses to come forward to testify as to the character of the man or the woman involved; he sets up a general scenario where, in one case, the sex was likely consensual, and in the other, the sex was likely forced. In the first, case, the couple are discovered and in the second, the woman tells what happened.

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Pre-marital Sex and Incest

“When a man finds a young woman, a virgin who is not betrothed, and has manipulated [and seized] her and lays with her, and they have been discovered; [Deut. 22:28]

In this verse we have the verb *tâphas* (טַפַּח) [pronounced *taw-FAHS*] and it means *to manipulate, to seize*. *Manipulate* is a great rendering of this word here, as this is what some men do—they have no real feelings for the woman—they simply manipulate her into having sex with them. Strong's #8610 BDB #1074. Here, the woman is a virgin and she and the man are caught in the act of having sex.

“Then the man who lay with her will give fifty [pieces of] silver to the father of the young woman, and to him she is to wife, because he has humbled her, he is not able to divorce her [lit., send her away] all his days. [Deut. 22:29]

This sounds pretty much like consensual sexual activity. They are required to be married and the man, under these circumstances, is not allowed to divorce her ever. You may suppose that this resulted in several unhappy marriages. Certainly—however, there were many men and women who waited on God because of these unhappy unions. And God can allow those who have sinned to be happy. It is possible under divine guidance for these two to be happy. Any marriage could result in general happiness for both the man and the woman, if they choose to follow God's standards and God's requirements.

Now, don't panic at this point: the woman was not forced to marry this man. We have already covered this before in Ex. 22:16–17: **“And if a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and lies with her, he must pay a dowry for**

her to be his wife. If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he will weigh out silver equal to the dowry for virgins.” Therefore, the woman can implore the father to withhold her hand in marriage and he will.

“A man will not take his father’s wife and he will not uncover his father’s wings [or, extremity of his garment]. [Deut. 22:30; 23:1 in the Hebrew]

What is uncovered is the father’s *kânâph* (כַּנָּף) [pronounced *kaw-NAWF*] and it refers to the wings of birds (Gen. 1:21 Ex. 19:4 Deut. 32:11) and it refers to the extremity of a garment (Deut. 22:12, 30 Ruth 3:9). There might come a time where we have to carefully examine the cherubim *wings* (Ex. 25:20 1Kings 6:24, 27). Strong’s #3671 BDB #489. The wife is under the protection of his father and what she wears is under his protection as well. It is obviously an embarrassment to the father to have his own son sleep with his wife. This does not have to be the son of that wife, although it could be. In whichever case, it is completely forbidden. This was given by God already: “If a man lies with his father’s wife, he has uncovered his father’s nakedness; both of them will certainly put to death—their bloodguilt will be upon them.” (Lev. 20:11; see also Lev. 18:8). The congregation of Corinth was impressed with itself because it had gone so far the other direction from legalism that one of its members had an openly adulterous relationship with his mother (or, step-mother). Paul unequivocally told the congregation to remove them from their midst (1Cor. 5:2, 13).

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Deuteronomy 23

Deuteronomy 23:1–25

Outline of Chapter 23:

- Vv. 1–8 **Those excluded from the assembly and foreign relations**
- Vv. 9–14 **Ceremonial uncleanness during a military campaign**
- Vv. 15–16 **Escaped slaves**
- Vv. 17–18 **Cult prostitutes/immorality**
- Vv. 19–20 **The charging of interest and usury**
- Vv. 21–23 **Performing that which one has vowed**
- Vv. 24–25 **Welfare recipients**

Topics:

- v. 7 **God's Promises to Esau and to Jacob**

Introduction: Deut. 23 covers a great many social topics, as one can see by the outline below. It immediately jumps into international relationships, in general. Then we examine cleanliness during a military campaign, cult prostitutes, and escaped slaves. Some of the information you will find surprising, particularly when we come to the charging of interest and usury. The chapter with having integrity and the welfare system used in Israel. Obviously, a very wide range of topics, and Moses moved from one to another in rapid fire without much of a segue between any of the varied topics.

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Those Excluded from the Assembly and Foreign Relations

“One wounded, bruised, or cut in the member will not enter into the assembly of Y^howah;
[Deut. 23:1; 23:2 in the Hebrew]

The description of the person not allowed to enter varies from Bible to Bible:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He who is wounded in the testicles, or has been made a eunuch, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Neither he that hath been mutilated by crushing, nor he that hath had his privy member cut off, shall enter into the convocation of Yahweh.
KJV	He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.
NASB	No one who is emasculated, or has his male organ cut off, shall enter the assembly of the LORD.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	One wounded, bruised, or cut in the member doth not enter into the assembly of Jehovah;

The 3rd person, masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *will not enter* is the first verb. The person who will not enter is then described as the Qal passive participle construct of p^hatsa' (פָּצַעַת) [pronounced *paw-TSAH*], which means *bruise, wound*; it is only found here and in 1Kings 20:37 SOS 5:7. Strong's #6481 BDB #822. There is its noun cognate p^hetsa' (פָּצַעַת) [pronounced *peh-TSAH*], which means *wound*. Strong's #6482 BDB #822. The *wounding*

of crushing is what is the next. We then have the conjunction operating as an exclusive disjunction (either/or) and the Qal passive participle construct of *kârath* (כָּרַת) [pronounced *kaw-RAHTH*] which means *cut off, cut down*. Strong's #3772 BDB #503. This is followed by a word used once in the Old Testament which means *male organ*. Therefore, this description could be *who has been bruised, crushed or cutting off of a male organ* or it could be one *who has a bruising of crushing or a cutting off of the male organ*. There is no word here for testicles. God had chosen his people and required the males to be circumcised and this was the sign of their separation to him. It was something which they saw every time that they urinated, but no one else could necessarily see. If this separation was distorted by emasculation or a bruising or crushing, then God did not allow them into his assembly. This was all very symbolic and did not imply that a eunuch, for instance, could not be saved or have a relationship with Y^ehowah, the God of Israel. He was just not allowed into the assembly.

The assembly of Y^ehowah here is not the nation of Israel, but those who gather about the tabernacle to worship Him. God had already given Moses a similar commands in Lev. 21–22: **“No one who has a defect will approach: [not] a blind man, a lame man...or [one with] eczema or scabs or crushed testicles.”** (Lev. 21:18a,20b). This applied both to the person who was bringing the sacrifice and to the sacrifice itself. **“And anything bruised or crushed or torn or cut you will not offer to Y^ehowah or sacrifice in your land.”** (Lev. 22:24).

There are men who choose celibacy for their lives and that means there must be a few who are so ascetic as to choose to be eunuchs. God's Word does not support asceticism. If you are not married, you should be celibate. However, there is no call for any man to choose celibacy. Paul, because time was short and God called him to a tremendous ministry which shaped the entire church, chose celibacy, pointing out that he could have led a wife around as did Peter. God wants men who are in control of their bodies, not ascetics. McGee relates his experiences: *I have never found one of those folk to be a joyful person. As a matter of fact, I have found some of them to be dangerous people. They are very pious and seem very shocked when anything that is worldly is mentioned before them. I have found that those same people can be the meanest gossips, and they are not always honorable in their business relations. I have had a very bitter experience in my own life with a little group of “separated Christians” who were totally, absolutely dishonest. I believe God is warning against asceticism*²⁶¹.

It should be obvious that most of the time a person does not become a eunuch of his own volition. This was more often the result of an accident or it was inflicted upon others for various reasons, hence the use of the passive participle here. Most often, these were slaves who were in close contact with the women of a high official or a rich man and they were made eunuchs because of this close contact. So, does this mean that there was no salvation or no spiritual life for a eunuch? Certainly not! Whereas the Law was as symbolic as it was literal (and I say that with trepidation, because everything in the Law could be taken literally), only that which was pure and whole could come before God. However, we all know that within our hearts, we are all black and evil. However, **for thus speaks Y^ehowah, “To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast to My covenant—to them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial and a name better than that of sons and daughters; [and] I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.”** (Isa. 56:4–5). So, was the eunuch supposed to behave like some horsey woman who demands a place in the podium of God? No (and neither is the woman). Everyone has a place in God's plan and the eunuch was simply not allowed to bring his sacrifices forward as he was typologically incorrect to come before the face of God. A woman has a marvelous place in God's plan; however, that place is not in the pulpit. In case there is any confusion whatsoever, we have the conversion of a eunuch in Acts 8:26–39; God has never excluded them from His heart.

“An incestuous child will not enter into the assembly of Y^ehowah, even a tenth generation of him will not enter into the assembly of Y^ehowah. [Deut. 23:2(3)]

The word found here may or may not mean that. It is the masculine singular noun *mam^ezêr* (מַמְזֵר) [pronounced *mahm^e-ZĀR*], which means *a child born of incest*. The word for incest is *mam^ezêrûwth* (מַמְזֵרֻוּת) [pronounced *mahm^e-zâ-RUTH*]. BDB specifically signifies that this is a child born from incest, possibly because the following

²⁶¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 141–142.

verse mentions the Moabites and the Ammonites. BDB renders this *bastard*²⁶² and also suggests that it might signify a mixed population, noting its use in Zech. 9:6, its only other occurrence in Scripture. One reason for not rendering this *bastard* is that when we find a perfectly good time to use the word in Judges 11, it is not used (Jephthah of Judges 11 was a bastard child). The Talmud indicates that these are those conceived in incest or adultery. The *New Englishman's Concordance* indicates that it came from a verb which means *to alienate*. Keil and Delitzsch give its rot as being equivalent to *corrupt, foul*. Carrying this out to the tenth generation is a way of saying *forever*. Bearing all of this in mind, we will go *a child born of incest, an incestuous child*. Strong's #4464 BDB #561.

This is symbolic. One must have a proper relationship with the father to enter into the relationship with God. A child of incest generally has no relationship with his father. Passages like this partially account for the careful genealogical records which were kept by the Israelites.

Now, let's be frank about this—there are a lot of bastards running around out there. Does this mean that they cannot come to church. Of course not! We are not in a period of time where we look forward to the coming of God's Son Who is perfect in all respects. We look backward to that; therefore, the symbology of our dispensation is quite sparse. We have the Lord's table and maybe baptism and that is it. It is a far cry from the typology found throughout the Old Testament.

McGee: You must be born against to be a child of God. There are a lot of people today who say, "I am a child of the King," but they are not a child of the King. They are illegitimate. One can be religious and not be born again. Such an one is not a child of God at all. God makes that very clear. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a very religious man, a spiritual ruler of the people, a man who wore his phylacteries. Yet that man was illegitimate, and our Lord said to him that he must be born again. Our Lord almost rudely interrupted him to make that clear to him (John 3:3)...God doesn't have illegitimate children. His children are all legitimate because they have been born again²⁶³.

One more tangent must be covered. God's Word has meaning on several different levels, particularly in the Old Testament. However, a rule of thumb is that God's Word should always be taken literally in all respects unless the context leaves us no other choice. However, when a passage is taken literally, that does not mean that it does not have a symbolic meaning or a hidden type within it. Here, eunuchs and bastards were literally barred from coming to the tabernacle of God to offer sacrifices. It did not matter if they were the most devout people in the land (obviously, it might be easier for a young male eunuch to be much more devout than a young male). And even to the tenth generation, a bastard's progeny could not come before the tabernacle of God. This is because we have a father-son relationship with God the father. Once we are related to Him, we cannot become unrelated. The bastard is exactly the opposite. He begins by being genetically related to his father but he is not in a family with his father. This goes against type; therefore, they were excluded.

Now for the exclusion of women from the pulpit: this is a different matter entirely. The symbology is not important here, as we are not in a dispensation of types and symbology. However, the key is that women are to be under the authority of men (with the exception, of course, of a mother and her children, a coach and her athletes, a teacher and her students). In those cases, we are dealing with children and an adult, where sex is not the issue, authority is. However, in the adult world, women are not to have authority over the males. Therefore, women are not allowed to occupy the pulpits of a Bible believing church.

Okay, now that I brought up that can of worms, what about female authority in life? We have few cases of female authority in the Bible. Deborah is the only one who comes to mind. In a very degenerate society, women will occupy more and more positions of authority. This does not mean it is our duty as males to oppose that authority or to strike down the authority of a woman. Whoever has authority over us, we are to respect and obey that authority, regardless of gender.

²⁶² For you youngsters who think that *bastard* is just a cool vocative, it refers to someone whose mother never married his biological father.

²⁶³ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 142.

“An Ammonite and a Moabite will not enter into the assembly of Y^ehowah; even a tenth generation of them will not enter into the assembly of Y^ehowah—forever! [Deut. 23:3(4)]

Recall that Moab and Ammon were countries directly east of the Dead Sea and that Moab and Ammon were the result of the incestuous union of Lot (Abram’s nephew) and his two daughters (Gen. 19:30–38). Because of his association with Abram, God had blessed and given support to these two groups of people. However, despite their close blood ties to the Jews, and despite the needs of their cousins, Moab and Ammon were, at best, cold toward Israel, and, at worst moderately hostile to Israel. The same could be said of Edom. When Israel made its trek across the wilderness, they had the opportunity to reveal a concern for Israel and to help Israel, thus cementing a friendship with God’s people; however, they chose to, instead, behave coldly toward the Israelites.

When the Israelites were traveling through the wilderness, they received no help or assistance from the Ammonites or from the Moabites. These groups of people had heard what had happened with Israel in Egypt and had the opportunity to believe or to not believe in what God had done on behalf of the Israelites.

There are two problems with the Torah, besides the ridiculous theory that several people put it together over a period of centuries, all long after Moses. The first problem is the Leviticus and Numbers are almost ignored in Biblical exegesis and they are almost entirely direct quotations from God. But a second problem is, knowing that Numbers and Leviticus (and the latter portion of Exodus) are all directly quoted from the God of Israel, what about Deuteronomy, which is a quote from Moses? How should that be viewed? The Israelites recognized the entire Torah as being authoritative: **On that day they read aloud from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and there was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God because they did not meet the sons of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However, God turned that curse into a blessing** (Neh. 13:1–2).

As we will see, there will be significant exception to this: Ruth was a Moabite who will be placed in the line of our Lord. Recall, that we are members of the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ, so any person of any race and religion can enter into the family of God as did Ruth through simple faith in the gospel. Also, a person’s national origin was determined by that of his father. Boaz was a Jew and Ruth was a Moabitess. Their children would be considered Jewish.

“Because they did not come before you with bread and with water in the way, in your coming out from Egypt, and because he had hired against you Balaam ben Beor, of Pethor of Aram-Naharaim, to curse you. [Deut. 23:4(5)]

As you will recall, on their march north, the Israelites desired to pass through the land of the Amorites, which had recently belonged to the Moabites. Not only did the Amorites say no, but they brought out an army against Israel. Israel defeated them and took possession of the land which bordered Ammon, but they did not enter into the land of Ammon. Ammon, had they been smart, would have rejoiced that the Israelites took over that land, as the Amorites were a definite threat to them and the Israelites were not. However, Ammon did not even send an embassy to Israel. While in this area, the Moabites became concerned. They had several options and the option which they chose was to locate a prophet to prophesy against Israel. They did not try to speak to Israel, to make a treaty, or to even ask them what their intentions were (Israel bypassed Moab and Ammon both without a threat of invasion). They went directly to Balaam ben Beor and asked for his services to curse Israel.

Most of the major translations read: **and because they had hired against you Balaam ben Beor...** (or words to that effect). The NIV, NASB, Owen, Rotherham, the KJV, the NKJV, etc.—all of these and almost every other version has that *they* hired Balaam ben Beor. *They*—Moab and Ammon—did not hire Balaam. Moab hired Balaam. *He* hired Balaam. *They*—Moab and Ammon—both did not meet Israel with food and water while Israel went up along the King’s Highway to east of the Jordan River.

Pethor was a city in Northern Mesopotamia on the western banks of the Upper Euphrates River, a few miles south of Carchemish. The Hittites captured this town while the Israelites were in Egypt and held it until the ninth century BC. This does not mean that Balaam or his father were Hittites—just that city had been captured by the Hittites.

Balak ben Zippor, the king of Moab, had to send to Pethor to find Balaam, who either lived there or resided there temporarily doing work there (I'll have to look at my notes to find where he was actually from).

“And Y^ehowah your God had not been willing to listen to listen to Balaam; and, Y^ehowah your God, turned the cursing for you to blessing, because Y^ehowah your God loves you. [Deut. 23:5(6)]

Balaam wanted to curse Israel, not out of any dislike for Israel, but it would have been a means of making money. He was, in essence, praying for something he knew was against God's will, in hopes of making some extra cash. Such a move was despicable in God's eyes. However, God turned that cursing into blessing. **Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together, and Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times.”** (Num. 24:10). **“But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. he had to bless you, and I delivered you from his hand.”** (Joshua 24:10).

Our lives are a series of events which turn cursing into blessing. We continually screw up our lives through the mistakes that we make, through our own terrific arrogance, through the bad choices that we make. God is expert in the field of taking what we've done and fixing it. **And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to a pre-determined plan...for I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord** (Rom. 8:28, 38–39). This doesn't mean that God takes things that we ruin and fixes them in the way that we would like. You might marry a person out of sexual passion who is absolutely wrong for you—God can fix that, just not in the way that we would expect. Sometimes, through God's grace, you learn to tolerate and even to like one another and you often have wonderful children together, and you allow your attention to be diverted from your bad choice of each other to the importance of raising these children correctly. Sometimes, you make a bad choice which involves sin and God must discipline you for awhile; and later, after you name you sin to Him, He might have to keep up the pressure in order keep you on the right track (here is a place where discipline is turned to blessing; and, sometimes retaining the pain in your life helps to guide you).

The last phrase may seem surprising to you: **“Because Y^ehowah your God loves you.”** God originally was bringing them into the land out of a love for their fathers. **“Because he loved your fathers, He therefore chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power.”** (Deut. 4:37). And even more to the point, **“Do not say in your heart when Y^ehowah your God has driven them out before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness Y^ehowah has brought me in to possess this land,’ but because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah is dispossessing them before you.”** (Deut. 9:4). And even more on point, **“Therefore, I was disgusted with this generation** and said, “They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know my ways.” (Heb. 3:10 Psalm 95:10). There are two generations, the Generation of Promise, which is the younger generation (they were under twenty years of age at the exodus); and the older generation (twenty years and above), or gen X. God loathed that older generation and killed them all, with less than a handful of exceptions by the sin unto death in the desert. Now God did not love the Generation of Promise because they were wonderful people and always did what was right—Deut. 9:4–6 makes that abundantly clear. The remainder of Deut. 9 indicates that this Generation of Promise occasionally had some of its members involved in the rebellious activities prior to the thirty-eight silent years. However, God loved them apart from personal righteousness, this passage and Deut. 9:4 say together. We receive a similar love of God—it is because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, not because of our own righteousness, that God loves and saves us. His love was bestowed upon Israel in the same way. **Abraham believed God and it was credited to his account as righteousness.** (Rom. 4:3 Gal. 3:6 Gen. 15:6). **Because, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing by means of the Holy Spirit** (Titus 3:5). **We love, because He first loved us** (1John 4:19). The Old Testament teaches that God bestows His love on individuals (*you*, in Deut. 9:4 and 23:5, is in the masculine singular) apart from their own personal righteousness. You might have to dig a little deeper, as we did in this paragraph, to show that, but both Old and New Testaments teach the same thing about God's love and our personal righteousness. What we do in the way of personal works will not gain God's love—it is what God has done on our behalf.

“You will not seek their peace and their good all your days—forever. [Deut. 23:6(7)]

The reaction of the Moabites and the Ammonites to Israel's needs is indicative of their interest in God's Word. It was obvious to the ancient world that God had some things unprecedented in human history through Moses and Israel. They could stand in favor of God's people or oppose them, and they chose to oppose God's people, which meant the opposed God. God knew that this would continue throughout their generations, with a few notable exceptions, like Ruth the Moabitess.

Because of their negativity toward God's people, and, therefore, God's Word, the Moabites and the Ammonites remained under cursing for a long time. "Moab has been put to shame, for it has been shattered. Wail and cry out; declare by the Arnon that Moab has been destroyed." (Jer. 48:20). And the Word of Y^ehowah came to me, saying, "Son of man, set your face toward the sons of Ammon and prophesy against them...therefore, observe, I am going to give you to the sons of the east for a possession, and they will set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they will eat your fruit and drink your milk." Thus says Y^ehowah God, "Because Moab and Seir say, 'Look, the house of Judah is like all the nations.' Therefore, observe, I am going to deprive the flank of Moab of cities—of its cities which are on its frontiers, the glory of the land, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon and Kiriathaim. And I will give it for a possession, along with the sons of Ammon, to the sons of the east, that the sons of Ammon may not be remembered among the nations. Thus I will execute judgments on Moab and they will know that I am Y^ehowah." Thus says Y^ehowah God, "Because Edom had acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has incurred grievous guilt and avenged himself upon them, therefore," thus says Y^ehowah God, "I will stretch out My hand against Edom and cut off man and beast from it. And I will lay it waste; from Teman even to Dedan, they will fall by the sword." (Ezek. 25:1–2, 4, 8–13). "I have heard the taunting of Moab and the revilings of the sons of Ammon with which they have taunted My people and become arrogant against their territory. Therefore, as I live," declared Y^ehowah of the armies, the God of Israel, "Certainly Moab will be like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah—a place possess by nettles and salt pits and a perpetual desolation. The remnant of My people will plunder them and the remainder of My nation will inherit them." (Zeph. 2:8–9; see Isa. 15–16 and all of Jer. 48 as well). Because of their negativity toward the gospel, Israel was not to even intermarry with the daughters of Ammon, Edom or Moab (Ezra 9:12). However, and this is very important, there is no injunction by God for Israel to hate or to retaliate against Edom, Moab or Ammon. When Jesus Said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You will love your neighbor and hate your enemy'";²⁶⁴ He was not quoting Scripture for the last phrase. That had been added to *love your neighbor*, which was accurate. "The alien who resides with you will be to you as the native among you, and you will love him as yourself; for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am Y^ehowah your God." (Lev. 19:34). Recall what God said to Moses early on: "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you will certainly return it to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its load, you will refrain from leaving it to him—you will certainly release it with him." (Ex. 23:4–5). See the next verse as well.

Some people who witness are very obnoxious. Either God's Word will have an affect upon the person witnessed to or it will not. We do not have to convince anyone of anything, argue them into anything—we merely present them with the facts and allow the Holy Spirit to work through God's Word. Their reaction toward us is indicative of their desire or lack thereof for a relationship with God.

"[But]²⁶⁵ you will not abominate an Edomite, for he [is] your brother; you will not abominate an Egyptian, for your have been a temporary visitor in his land; [Deut. 23:7(8)]

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob (Gen. 25:24–26). If you recall, Esau even demonstrated greater character than did Jacob throughout most of their lives. Jacob's one good move is that he chose the birthright from his father—he recognized the importance of the relationship with Y^ehowah, their God. Esau did not. God favored the Edomites because of their close blood-relationship to Jacob. However, they did not receive quite the same marvelous blessing that God, through Isaac, gave to Jacob:

²⁶⁴ Matt. 5:43 and Lev. 19:18.

²⁶⁵ The western Samaritan, the Onkolos of Jonathan, the Syriac and the Vulgate all read *but you*.

God's Promises to Esau and to Jacob	
To Esau:	To Jacob (also called Israel):
<p>“Observe—your dwelling will be of the prosperity of the earth and of the dew of the heaven from above. And you will live by your sword and you will serve your brother. But it will come to pass when you become restless that you will tear off his yoke from your neck.” (Gen. 27:39–40).</p>	<p>“Now may God give you the dew of heaven and the prosperity of the earth and an abundance of grain and new wine; may peoples serve you and nations bow down to you; be master of your brothers and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed are those who curse you and blessed by those who bless you.” (Gen. 27:28–29).</p>
<p>Interpretation: Esau would also enjoy some prosperity; however, it would not be directly attached to some plot of ground. There will be times when they are subjected to the control of Israel and times when they would be independent.</p>	<p>Interpretation: Jacob’s prosperity is associated with grain and wine, indicating that Jacob will have a particular plot of ground. The famous promise that there will be blessing and cursing by association. The reaction of a people to Israel determines God’s dealings with them.</p>

- [Deuteronomy 16](#)
- [Deuteronomy 17](#)
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God desired for Israel to pass near the Edomites in such a way as to not cause problems: “[And Y^howah spoke to me, saying, ‘Command the people, saying, “You will pass through the territory of your brothers, the sons of Esau who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful.” ‘ So we pas beyond our brothers, the sons of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road, away from Elath and from Ezion-geber. And we turned and passed through by the way of the wilderness of Moab.](#)” (Deut. 2:2, 4, 8).

Now, despite the trouble experienced by Israel in relationship to Egypt, all of that fell within God’s great plan. God required problems to occur between Israel and Egypt. The marvelous signs and wonders which God was obligated to perform to lead Israel out of bondage were broadcast throughout the entire ancient world, allowing those without an opportunity before, to trust in the Savior of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ. Israel received her *seed money*, so to speak, from Egypt—Israel received what she needed to begin a long trek through the wilderness. All of Egypt was not unsympathetic, and some even left with Israel (known as the *mixed multitude*, who are given, incorrectly, a bad rap by several commentators). At the very worst, Israel was to learn from the way they were treated by Egypt. “[And you will not wrong an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.](#)” (Ex. 22:21). “[And you will not oppress an alien, since you yourselves know the feelings \[lit., soul\] of a stranger, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.](#)” (Ex. 23:9). Furthermore, Egypt did not originally treat Israel in such a despicable manner. At first, Egypt allowed Joseph to advance in power and responsibility, based up his personal abilities and character. Joseph became the #2 man in the land. Similarly, Moses himself was being groomed to rule over all of Egypt. Therefore, Egypt was not always hostile toward the Jew and the Israelites are not to abhor Egypt. In fact, the greatest opposition to the Israelite came primarily from the various pharaoh’s in power at that time (Ex. 1:8–11, 15–19 11:2–3).

It is passages like these which tell us that Israel was never commanded to hate her enemies. When they entered into particularly vicious evil, then Israel was to go to war with them. However, Israel was to go to war not out of hatred but out of obedience to God.

McGee had an interesting interpretation which I will take and run with. Esau and Jacob represent the battle between the old sin nature and the Holy Spirit. We are not to hate our flesh or mutilate our flesh, nor are we to serve our flesh. We are to be under the control of God the Holy Spirit. The flesh is just something that we are saddled with in this life, a part of us that we are not to yield to. However, it is as simple as naming your sins to

God. Whenever you are out of fellowship, God made it easy to stop serving the flesh and begin serving Jesus Christ, our Lord—just name your sins.

McGee also taught that Egypt represented the world, and that is a reasonable interpretation. God came and took Israel out of Egypt, just as He takes us out of the world. We are not to hate the world, nor are we to love the world. God did not place us on this earth to clean it up, to make it a better place, etc. This does not mean that you don't recycle, that you don't mow your lawn or weed your garden. These are things which you do so that your brother or a non-Christian does not fall. Personally, I have recycled for years. It is not because I love the devil's world and want to make it a better place—that is immaterial; but **we must be all things to all men so that we might by all means save some** (1Cor. 9:22).

“Sons who are begotten to them, a third generation of them, will enter [to them] into the assembly of Y^ehowah. [Deut. 23:8(9)]

The inserted *[to them]* obviously does not help the sense of this verse. However, it is found in the Massoretic text. An annotation in the Massoretic text indicates that the standard codex known as the Babylonian read *unto you* instead, which makes more sense. Another less likely possibility is that this tiny word was copied twice.

Now you may be wondering, *what about this three generation curse—wasn't it a ten generation curse just a few verses ago?* Yes, it was. It was a ten-generation curse for Moab and Ammon and here it is a three generation curse for Egypt and Edom. What will happen is that Moab and Ammon will drift further and further from Israel in spirit until they become quite antagonistic with Israel, which indicates their strong negative volition toward Jesus Christ.

Three generations removed from the Egyptian generation which opposed the leaving of gen X from Egypt would be allowed to enter into the Land of Promise and worship with the Israelites. Also, the grandchildren of the Edomites would be allowed to worship with the Israelites.

Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
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Ceremonial Uncleanness During a Military Campaign

“When a camp goes out against your enemies, then you will keep them from every evil thing. [Deut. 23:9(10)]

When preparing for war, there would be a certain state of purity which would be expected. The encampments mentioned here and following are not the encampments made by Israel in traveling from Egypt to the Land of Promise, but these are army camps, the focal point of the armies moving into the Land of Canaan. These regulations are both for sanitary purposes and symbolic of the purity of soul to be shown by the Israelites. We saw similar laws in Lev. 15, which were applied to the people in general.

“When there is in you a man who is not clean, from an accident at night, then he will go out into the outside of the camp; he will come into the midst of the camp; [Deut. 23:10(11)]

Let me give you the various translations, which also, essentially, interpret the passage:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	If there is among you any man who is not clean by reason of what happens to him at night, then he shall go outside the camp,...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	When there is in thy midst a man who is not clean, through a mischance of the night then shall he go forth unto the outside of the camp,...

KJV	If there be among you any man who is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp;...
NASB	"If there is among you any man who is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he must go outside the camp;..."
NIV	If one of your men is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, he is to go outside the camp and stay there.
NRSV	If one of you becomes unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he shall go outside the camp;...
Young's Lit. Translation	'When there is in thee a man who is not clean, from an accident at night—then he hath gone out unto the outside of the camp—

So you have balked and groaned anytime that I mention the original Hebrew and now you want to know, just what the heck is that Hebrew word? It is *qâreh* (קָרַה) [pronounced *kaw-RAY* or *kaw-REH*] and it is the noun cognate of *qârâh* (קָרַה) [pronounced *kaw-RAWH*], which means *encounter, meet, befall*. The verb is found throughout Scripture and this particular noun cognate (there is another) is found only here and Lev. 15:16, which reads: "**Now if a man has a seminal emission, he will bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening.**" It is in the construct and followed by the word *night*. Whatever it is, it is a chance occurrence at night which causes a soldier to be unclean. Noun: Strong's #7137 BDB #899. My semi-educated opinion would say that a nocturnal emission would be one of several possible accidents which would cause a soldier to become unclean. My feeling is that this word takes in a greater area than that.

When a person becomes unclean for whatever reason, they were to remove themselves from the camp of Israel. War was the action of the hand of God and the people were not to enter into war unclean. They analogy today is that we must be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to engage in God's Word. When we are out of fellowship, we have left the camp. We are no longer involved in a war of God's. We must be cleansed in order to re-enter the fray. Some of us do not even have a clue as to what this means. Some believers have been out of fellowship from thirty seconds after being saved and you have nothing but a handful of works which will all be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And when you find out how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, by confessing your known sins, you refuse, holding on frantically to those works of wood, hay and stubble.

"And it will come to pass at the turning of the evening, he will bathe with water and at the going in of the sun, he will come into the midst of the camp. [Deut. 23:11(12)]

This is simply a cleansing act, similar to rebound. They had to go through this entire ritual. It is likely that rebound made them clean; but this ritual proclaimed their cleanness.

"And there will be to you a place along side [lit., to you a hand] at the outside of the camp, and you will go out to it; [Deut. 23:12(13)]

In a few instances, the word *hand* is used figuratively for *side* in relation to land (Gen. 34:21 Num. 2:7 Judges 18:10). Here, it is an area outside the camp of soldiers.

"And there will be to you a shovel [lit., a peg upon your implements] and it will come to pass, in your sitting outside, that [lit., and] you will dig with it, and turn back and you will cover your excrement; [Deut. 23:13(14)]

This is simply a restroom outside of the camp and this is a matter of personal cleanliness. They were to dig a hole first and then to cover it up afterwards. Moses must say these things because, after all, these are men he is speaking to. If anyone has ever been into a high school rest room prior to it being cleaned, you will fully understand that males need to be told to clean up after themselves. It is as though to a male, he has created something wonderful and he just cannot part with it. I do not know the psychology behind males and their occasionally trend toward absolute filth, but it exists and Moses speaks to it, as guided by God the Holy Spirit. So, application to anyone today: if you use a public restroom, flush the commode. In the spiritual vein, this is a separation from and a covering of filth.

God did not pollute this world; man did. God gave us clean air, clean streams and lakes. It is man who pollutes what God has given us. Even in war, God required that the camps be clean and sanitary. McGee: *God wants us to be clean in body, clean in environment, clean in thought, clean in action. We are to be a holy people in this world today*²⁶⁶.

“For Y^ehowah your God is walking up and down in the midst of your camp,²⁶⁷ to deliver you and to give your enemies before you, and your camp will be holy; and He will not see in you the nakedness of anything and turn back from after you. [Deut. 23:14(15)]

The rationalization for cleanliness is remarkable. God is going to be walking throughout the camp when they go to war. The camp is to be holy to him; so God does not expect to see anyone using the restroom in the middle of the street nor does he expect to find human excrement within the camp. Although the phrase *cleanliness is next to Godliness* is not found in the Bible, this passage is one place where such a concept could be inferred. The obvious spiritual analogy is that God cannot have any relation to or contact with human filth or uncleanness. He cannot function within our day to day lives if we carry around with us our filth. This is the whole purpose of rebound is to separate us from our filth, which allows God to work in our lives. When the Jews functioned as they were supposed to, then God walked among them and worked through them. **“Furthermore, I will make My tent with you and My soul will not abhor you. I will also walk among you and be your God and you will be My people.”** (Lev. 26:11–12). Nothing can be more important than this image of God walking among the Israelites. This is Jesus Christ, who millenniums previous walked through the Garden of Delights during the spiritual part of the day to fellowship with Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8). And this is Jesus Christ, who, 1400 year later, would take upon Himself a human form, and walk among the Jews as one of them. **In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth** (John 1:1–3, 14)

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Escaped Slaves

“You will not imprison, [or, cause to shut up] a slave regarding his master, [a slave] who has escaped to you away from his master; [Deut. 23:15(16)]

This verse means more than you notice that a slave is escaping from his master and you happen to see that slave. This slave has come specifically to you. This indicates that it is not necessarily the social standing of being a slave which is a problem for him but rather his particular master. We have a situation later in 1Sam. 30 which is similar to this, but there will be significant differences. Whereas, it is generally taught that this is a slave to a master from a different country, there is no such specification made here. This could be a slave to a fellow Israelite.

“He will dwell with you, in your midst in the place which he chose within one of your gates, where it pleases him—you will not oppress him. [Deut. 23:16(17)]

The situation is this slave is not rebelling against his life as a slave. He has come to you and has placed himself under your authority. Under these circumstances, it is legitimate to keep the slave, as it is implied that his master abused him. Since the keeping of slaves is unusual today, this applies to employee and employer relations.

²⁶⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 145.

²⁶⁷ There is some confusion whether *camp* is found in the singular or plural. My Hebrew Bible indicates that both times it is in the singular. *The Emphasized Bible* indicates that it is found first in the singular then in the plural in the Hebrew, but then quotes several different codices which have it the other way. None of this affects the interpretation, however.

Whereas nowhere in the Bible is it ever suggested that the slaves bind themselves together in some sort of a union, we are, as workers, allowed to choose employment where our options are best. I say this, but I must quickly add that your life should not necessarily be a continual moving up to higher salaries and better positions. There is more to life than chasing higher salaries. Furthermore, there is more to life than finding positions where you have fewer problems. One of the most important things which I ever heard while in Bible class in my youth is you do not just pick up and leave a job because you are having problems. God has placed us in certain jobs and in certain places for a reason. When He requires for us to leave or to move on, He will make that clear. Just because you are under a little pressure—and often it is your own damn fault—you just stay there and work under it.

Now are you ready for the analogy? In v. 14, we have Jesus Christ coming to the Israelites and walking among them and suddenly, Moses starts talking about escaped slaves. Now Moses is an older man who might tend to free associate or just simply jump from topic to topic, but how can there be any connection whatsoever between these two thoughts? We are the slaves—we are enslaved to this world and to our father the devil. **“You are of your father, the devil.”** (John 8:44a). We escape through salvation to Jesus Christ, Who walks among us. **For...He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of divine endowment, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust** (1Peter 1:4b). **How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation** (Heb. 2:3a)? When we run to Him, He will allow us to dwell with Him and He will not return us to our former master. **“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”** (John 6:37). And He will not oppress us. **“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My load is light.”** (Matt. 11:28–30 Jer. 6:16). **Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God** (Gal. 4:7).

Now, notice that little book of Philemon. I am hoping that this book will now spring to life for you. Onesimus was a slave to Philemon. At salvation, Onesimus left Philemon and went to Paul. Under this law, as per the very passage we are studying, Paul could have retained Onesimus as his personal slave. However, Paul returned Onesimus to his master Philemon, writing: **And I have sent him back to you in person, that is, my very heart—whom I wished to keep with me in order that in your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; but without your consent, I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your own free will. For perhaps, he was for this reason parted for an hour, that you should have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a respected brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then you regard me a partner, accept him as me** (Philemon 12–17). Paul had the freedom to retain Onesimus as his own slave, but he chose not to act upon this freedom in order that Philemon would not stumble (1Cor. 9).

Now perhaps, you are ready for the big picture. In Exodus, we have the Jews enslaved to their masters of this world, the Egyptians. God chose a servant to walk among them, a servant who was one of them, a servant who had originally come from royalty. God chose this man to deliver them from slavery and to lead them into the Land of Promise. Now do you see the big picture? Moses was a real historical figure; Israel was really enslaved to Egypt. All of the history that we have read occurred; however, all of it was a shadow of what was to come. Jesus Christ, who would come from a royal line, who was fully God, would come and, of His Own free will, take a place among the slaves, and He would lead them out of bondage to this world to a glorious salvation. And we become His slave when we escape to Him. Paul, himself, often opened his letters with: **Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus** (Rom. 1:1a Philip. 1:1a Titus 1:1a). And, can you imagine, with this careful planning and precise analogy that there are people who doubt that this is God’s Word? The God of Moses is our God—**Jesus Christ, the same today, yesterday and forever** (Heb. 13:8). Now, perhaps, you see why God’s Word, the Bible, is more than just some inspired writings with a bit of truth here and there to green out. God the Holy Spirit authored the entire Bible, just as much as these human authors did. God’s grace, love, righteousness and His perfect plan are found throughout its pages.

Now, if God could orchestrate such a tremendous shadow image of the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior, coming to this earth to save His people, all illustrated by Moses, sent to the Israelites to deliver them from

bondage, then certainly Jesus Christ can handle the day-to-day disappointments and troubles in our own lives. In fact, I shouldn't say *can handle*; He has already handled all of our problems from eternity past.

For one or two decades after the crucifixion, there was little or nothing written down by way of New Testament Scripture. The believer-teachers of that day often exegeted from the Old Testament. Whereas most churches ignore the Old Testament almost in its entirety (other than teaching a few simple Bible stories during Sunday school), and even a significant number of churches ignore both testaments when it comes to teaching, the early church taught almost exclusively out of the Old Testament, adding information occasionally of new Church Age doctrine. This is why we spend so much time in God's Word, the Old Testament. This is why we continually jump from Old Testament to a New Testament passage. By the time we are finished with the Old Testament, we will have already quoted and explained the bulk of the New Testament.

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Cult Prostitutes/Immorality

“There will not be a cult prostitute out from the daughters of Israel; neither will there be a cult prostitute out from the sons of Israel; [Deut. 23:17(18)]

First, the tie-in. When reading this on your mission to read the Bible over the period of a year, this portion of God's Word seemed to jump from topic to unrelated topic, without any segue between. Moses is getting old and he just starts talking and thinks, *oh, yeah, I need to mention this as well*. The Israelites have fled their master, Egypt. God has taken them in and He will not oppress them. What they do not want to do is to place themselves under bondage to the world again. However, that is the draw of these cult prostitutes—to enslave the believing Israelite to Satanic control. We have the exact same thing going on today. There are men and women who are enslaved to their sexual desires. They have ruined their marriages, destroyed the lives of their children, betrayed those closest to them, gone against their own principles, all for the purpose a few hours of sexual pleasure taken here and there. Men and women have gotten married who have practically nothing in common because they have blinded themselves with sexual lust. You have young men today who behave like animals, ruled by their sexual lust. With a few exceptions of hedonists completely given over to their own lusts, modern man has merely removed the trappings of religion from sexual lust.

God has already warned Israel: **“Do not profane your daughter by making her a slut-whore, so that the land may not fall into slut-whoredom and the land become filled with immorality.”** (Lev. 19:29). How many of you parents have done this? By age 9 or 10, many of your daughters understand to a certain degree what sex is and most of them think that it is expected of them prior to marriage. Perhaps half of them are having sex by age fifteen. You have allowed your own daughter to think that way. You have betrayed her future happiness to allow her to think that way, exposing her as you do to the television and movies which carry that message to them. You have not taught them anything else. You have relied upon the public schools to teach them morality. Having been in the public school system for years, I can recall a small handful of instances where students were specifically told not to have sex outside of marriage; yet hundreds of instances where they were taught how to use prophylactics when they did. You cannot depend upon the schools for their moral upbringing. How could you be so foolish? And how could you be so unfeeling toward your own daughter?

God designed sex are a form of bonding, recreation and procreation between right man/right woman or between two married people. It is never to be used outside of those boundaries. During that time period, sex was used as a way to draw people into cult worship. This is absolutely repugnant to God. So repugnant, in fact, that God would eventually remove the Israelites from the land, in part, for disobeying this command of Moses. **And there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which Y^ehowah dispossessed before the sons if Israel** (1Kings 14:24). Israel (actually, Judah) was saved due to the

actions of King Asa and later King Jehoshaphat and King Josiah (1Kings 15:12 22:46 2Kings 23:7). As a matter of interest, Elihu, in the book of Job, makes mention of male cult prostitutes (Job 36:14).

“You will not bring the gift of a fornicator or the wages of a dog into the house of Y^howah your God for any vow; for the abomination of Y^howah your God [are] indeed both of them; [Deut. 23:18(19)]

Okay, I know what you are interested in: you saw the word cult prostitute in the previous verse and fornicator in this verse and you want to know what the Hebrew is. *Fornicator* is the feminine singular, Qal active participle, of *zânâh*, which means *to fornicate*. Strong’s #2181 BDB #275. As has been mentioned when this word was covered before, this is used most often for *committing adultery*; however, context is the key. *Qâdêsh* (קֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DAYSH*] means *male temple prostitute* (Strong’s #6945 BDB #873) and *q^odêshâh* (קֹדֶשׁהּ) [pronounced *ked-ay-SHAW*] means *female temple prostitute* (Strong’s #6948 BDB #873). There are some translations which render this *Sodomite*, but it has nothing to do linguistically with Sodom. The *female cult prostitute* is found also in Gen. 38:21–22²⁶⁸ and Hosea 4:14.*

It is not the amount but the source of the money which is important. You do not rob some bank and give it to the church. You don’t sell drugs on the street or sell your body on the street and then give money to the church from that. You do not give money while out of fellowship. Under those circumstances, you might as well keep your money. It is not any good to God. It does not perform any sort of divine good and is not rewardable. Now let’s be even more realistic. A Christian organization is not to take money from any company or industry involved in immorality or illegality. Some businesses give as a part of advertising, to make them seem legitimate. A church should not accept money from an organization or business whose ethics or practices are questionable. God cannot use that money.

I do not know what the wages of a dog are. This does not mean the *price of a dog* as one commentator has said (think about it—that would not make sense). This is the noun *kele^{bv}* (כֶּלֶב) [pronounced *KEH-leh^{bv}*], which means *dog* and is found in Ex. 11:7 Judges 7:5 1Sam. 17:43. *The Emphasized Bible*, the Scofield Study Bible, the NIV Study Bible and the NASB identifies this as a *male prostitute sodomite*., quoting Lev. 18:22 20:13; however, there is nothing in those passages which suggest that, either in the original language or in the English. Keil and Delitzsch make the most reasonable suggestion, that this referred to the male temple prostitute because of *the dog-like manner in which the male kadesh debased himself*.²⁶⁹ In the New Testament, there is evidence of identifying the dogs with Gentiles or those who are impure,²⁷⁰ but I do not find that in the Old Testament. This would not refer to the unrepentant nature of a dog with regards to its sexual proclivities because I do not believe that dogs were the household pets then as they are now (see Ex. 22:31). Strong’s #3611 BDB #476. We will examine the **Doctrine of Dogs** when we come to Psalm 59:6 (which I will teach within 1Sam. 19).

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²⁶⁸ This is where Tamar, who was to be Judah’s daughter-in-law, made Judah think that she was a *temple prostitute* as he did not fulfill his obligation to marry either of his sons to her.

²⁶⁹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 949.

²⁷⁰ Matt. 7:6 reads: “Do not give what is holy to dogs and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces. Rev. 22:15 reads: Outside are the dogs and the drug addicts and the fornicators and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices lying. See also Matt. 15:24–28, which seems to identify *dogs* with *Gentiles* and see Philip. 3:2 (Beware of dogs).

The Charging of Interest and Usury

“You will not lend with interest to your brother; [not] interest of money, interest of food, interest of anything which is lent as interest. [Deut. 23:19(20)]

The verb questioned here is *nâshak*^e (נָשַׁךְ) [pronounced *naw-SHAKH*^e] either means *to charge interest* or *to charge usury (unusually high interest)* (Deut. 23:19–20); but it also means *to bite off* (Gen. 49:17 Num. 21:9 Jer. 3:17 Micah 3:5). Strong’s #5391 BDB #675. It is found in this verse at the beginning in the Hiphil imperfect (and in the next verse) and at the end of this verse in the Qal imperfect. The noun, also found thrice in this verse, is *neshek*^e (נֶשֶׁךְ) [pronounced *nay-shayk*^e] and it consistently means *interest, usury* (Ex. 22:25 Lev. 25:36–37 Psalm 15:5 Prove. 28:8 Ezek. 18:8, 13, 17 22:12).*

Originally, I was flip-flopping between *neshek*^e meaning *usury* or just simply *interest*. I do recall that my parents lent me money, and for years it was interest-free. In fact, I believe that we agreed to include interest in the payments as I got older. My heart wants the Israelite bank to be able to charge a fair and even low interest at least to his fellow Jew. However, under the economy of the Law, we have a very careful mixture of property rights along with the fact that the land and their wealth was given to the Israelites by God. Furthermore, their economy at that time did not have such a large market of funds to loan and funds borrowed as we do today. When a brother was in trouble, you helped him out. However, there is no indication that large amounts of money were borrowed as we have today. The opinion that I am leaning toward is that interest-free loans were offered to fellow Israelites at that time. In fact, I see no justification for this to be interpreted that you could charge normal interest rates to fellow Israelites and abnormally high interest rates (usury) to non-Israelites.²⁷¹ **“If you lend money to My people, to the poor with you, you are not to be a creditor to him; you will not charge him interest. If you ever take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge [i.e., as collateral], you will return it to him before the sun sets, for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else will he sleep in?”** (Ex. 22:25–27a). **“Now, in case a brother of yours becomes poor and his hand with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like an alien or a temporary visitor, that he may live with you. Do not take interest or increase from him, but revere your God, that your brother may live with you. You will not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain. I am Y^ehowah your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan—to be your God. And if a brother of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you will not subject him to a slave’s service. He will be with you as a hired man, as if he were a visitor with you, until the year of jubilee. He will then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and he will go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his ancestors.”** (Lev. 25:35–41). A believing Jew under the Law was not to profit by the misfortune of another believing Jew. He was to profit by the hand of God and to help out his brother. This is why Laban’s relationship to his two daughters and to Jacob was wrong. He took advantage of Jacob’s need to begin with, and then took advantage of his desire for Rachel.

God’s Law took this even one step further. Not only was the prosperous Israelite not to charge interest to his brother, but he was to completely forgive his debt ever seven years. **“At the end of seven years, you will give a remission of debts. And this is the manner of remission: every creditor will release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he will not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because Y^ehowah’s remission has been proclaimed. From a foreigner, you may exact, but your hand will release whatever of yours is with your brother. [Furthermore], beware, so that there is not a base thought in your heart, saying ‘The seventh year, the year of remission, is near.’ and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to Y^ehowah against you, and it will be a sin in you. You will generously give to him, and your heart will not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing Y^ehowah your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings.”** (Deut. 15:1–3, 9–10). Allow me to shout: **if you are under the Law, you may not charge interest to a brother** (whoever you may interpret a brother to be). Not only that, but if a loan is outstanding and the seventh year comes, then the debt is cancelled. And not only that, but if a person takes up residence with the Jews as a statement of his faith in Y^ehowah, then he receives the same preferential treatment: **“The alien who resides with you will be to you as the native among you, and you will love him as yourself; for you were aliens in the land of**

²⁷¹ Keil and Delitzsch concur in Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 949.

Egypt; I am Y^ehowah your God.” (Lev. 19:34). If you try to interpret this in any other way, you are only trying to bend Scripture to make it say what you want it to say.

Now, this does not mean that today a Jew should offer a fellow Jew an interest-free loan. This is because we are no longer under the Law, the Israelite included. However, in your own family, you might lend your child money on their allowance (if you so choose to make this an option) without interest. And you make certain that you are paid back; you do your children a disservice by not expecting them to live up to their obligations. The fact that you can forgive a loan to a child because it is such a small amount of money is not the issue here. The issue is their character. In any case, when money was lent outside of Israel or to a non-Israelite, the lender could charge interest.

“To a non-Israelite (or, alien) you may lend with interest, and to your brother you will not lend with interest, so that Y^ehowah your God will bless you in every putting forth of your hand on the land wherever you go in to possess it. [Deut. 23:20(21)]

Blessing ultimately comes from God. An Israelite was not to make money off the misfortune of a fellow Israelite (which would be the primary reason for charging interest during the early years of the nation Israel). However, there was no such provision made for the person who was not an Israelite. When a person from outside of Israel chose to borrow money or even a foreigner living inside the country chose to borrow money, those in the money lending business were allowed to charge the market rate of interest. In any case, no one is under the Law today, and the world economy has changed considerably since those days. Therefore, by application, charging interest to one’s fellow countryman should be routine today. Charging a high interest loan to someone else who is a greater credit risk is also reasonable. Those who charge interest should be allowed to make some money—certainly above the inflation rate.

However, during this particular historical time period, those who followed these economic laws were blessed by God. **“Y^ehowah will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow.”** (Deut. 28:12).

So, how about the application to your fellow Christians? This is a tougher call, as we are not under the Law and we do not have the same relationship with other believers as the Israelites had with other Israelites (ours, ostensibly, should be closer). I should think that it would depend upon the type of loan. I personally borrowed money from my mother in order to make an investment in a house and to pay off another higher interest loan. I would not have expected her to give me the loan interest-free. That was never suggested; however, if I was ever down and out, then I would expect financial help from her that I may not be able to return. We have to make this sort of difficult determination with our fellow believers. There are believers who are out there who would bilk you for all your worth and not give it a moment’s thought. There are also believers and unbelievers out there who are in need. In fact, God often places them in a position of need so that you can help them. Often, this is accomplished through Christian missions. Sometimes you will be called upon by God to handle this on a personal basis without any expectation of return or later remuneration. I have been placed in that situation in the past and have felt lucky that God would call upon me to provide in that way. My blessing comes from God, not from the recipient of any meager gift that I may have given. **“And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is [that] to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same. But love your enemies and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil [persons].”** (Luke 6:34–35).

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Performing That Which One Has Vowed

“When you vow a vow to Y^ehowah your God, you will not delay to complete it; for Y^ehowah your God certainly requires it from you and it will be in you sin [to delay]. [Deut. 23:21(22)]

So far, we have not seen anywhere in God’s Word where a vow is required. This is something which a person does of their own free will. Today, it is usually done when someone is in a jam. They promise to give more money to the church, promise to go to church more often, promise to be a better person, etc., hoping that this will get them out of a jam. Here, a vow was made and God expects the promise to be kept. It is sin for one to make a vow and not to keep it. **“If a man makes a vow to Y^ehowah or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he will not violate his word; he will do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.” (Num. 30:2).**

“And when you cease to vow, it is not in you a sin; [Deut. 23:22(23)]

This verse makes it clear that God did not require anyone to make a vow to Him. However, when a vow is made to Him, He takes it seriously. And we hear about vows quite often in the Old Testament: Psalm 61:8 65:1 76:11.

“The produce of your lips you will take responsibility for and you will do as that which you have vowed to Y^ehowah your God voluntarily, which you have spoken with your mouth. [Deut. 23:23(24)]

I have generally given this a fairly literal rendering. *Voluntarily* is the word usually translated *freewill offering*. It can mean both. It is simple—when you make a vow, particularly in public, but in any case, before God, you are to keep that vow. **When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. (Ecc. 5:4–5).**

For today’s application, it is best not to even make a vow in the first place. **“Again, you have heard dthat the ancients were told, ‘You will not make false vows, but will fulfill your vows to the Lord.’ But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Nor will you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.” (Matt. 5:33–35 Lev. 19:12 Num. 30:2 Psalm 48:2).**

Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 17	Deuteronomy 18	Deuteronomy 19	Deuteronomy 20
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Welfare Recipients

“When you come into the vineyard of your neighbor, then you will eat grapes according to the satisfaction of your soul, but you will not put any into your vessel. [Deut. 23:24(25)]

This is a situation where you do not have food or you are hungry. The land is given by God to all of the Israelites and they are all allowed to share in its produce. However, when a land is worked by its owner, then, you may not take the produce from it as though you were harvesting the land. This is keyed into the no-interest charged to

fellow Israelites. Both those who are hungry and those who have fields of produce were aware that a portion of that produce could be utilized by the poor as nourishment.

“When you come in among the standing corn of your neighbor, then you will pluck the ears by your hand, but a sickle you will not wave over the standing corn of your neighbor.” [Deut. 23:25; v. 26 in the Hebrew]

As above, when grain is required, which could not be eaten right there in the field, a poor person was allowed to enter into the field and harvest a portion of it. However, he could not go in with a sickle to take a large amount. This is where people observed what the Lord was doing, and, not having a background in the Law, thought that He was stealing. **At that time, Jesus went on the Sabbath through the grainfields and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads and eat** (Matt. 12:1). This was allowed under the Law.

Notice the simplicity of their welfare; the hungry could not go with reapers and reap the fields; however, they could go to the fields to eat enough to get by. Nobody did the work for them; they had to pick the food themselves.

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Deuteronomy 24

Deuteronomy 24:1–22

Outline of Chapter 24:

- Vv. 1–5 **Divorce and Remarriage**
- Vv. 6–9 **Miscellaneous laws**
- Vv. 10–16 **The poor: collateral and their wages/individual responsibility**
- Vv. 17–22 **Welfare In Israel**

Introduction: Deut. 24 covers many of the popular topics: divorce, loans and collateral and welfare. There are about a half-dozen slightly variant readings which I have not mentioned as they do not seem to affect the meaning significantly.

Deuteronomy 21	Deuteronomy 22	Deuteronomy 23	Deuteronomy 24	Deuteronomy 25
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Divorce and Remarriage

“When a man takes a wife and marries her and it comes to pass [that] she does not find grace in his eyes, for he has found in her some indecency [lit., nakedness of whatever], and he has written for her a bill [or document] of divorce and has given it into her hand and has sent her out of his house; [Deut. 24:1]

Unfortunately, people dig deep into that word for *immorality*, *lewdness* or whatever here in order to determine another out for them so that they can get divorced. Deut. 24:1 does not begin by giving us a reason for divorce. Do not look here to find another out for your situation. This describes something which has occurred and context will determine why this situation has been brought up in the first place.

What he has found in her is 'er^ewâh (עֶרְוָה) [pronounced *erê-WAWH* or *ger-VAWH*], which strictly speaking, means *nakedness*; and more broadly *lewdness*, *indecency* (see Gen. 9:22–23 42:9 Ex. 20:26 Lev. 18:6); it is found twice (Deut. 23:14 24:1) with dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced *daw-BAWR*], which means *word, saying, doctrine, command*. Together, BDB guesses that they mean *indecency, improper behavior*; in any case, we cannot tie down a precise meaning for these two words together. It is something which proceeds from the mouth and the context determines its exact parameters. Perhaps this is a way of saying, he has found in her some *nakedness—of whatever*. This would give it a broad interpretation (lack of this phrase elsewhere does not allow us to narrow its meaning down anymore). However this would work just as well in Deut. 23:14. Strong's #6172(6) BDB #788. Moses here is intentionally vague, because giving them a reason to divorce is not his purpose in this passage. Moses is assuming that the man found a problem, whatever it was, and divorced the woman. At that point in time, when a man divorced a woman, he would certainly blame it upon some flaw in the woman.

Much of what the Israelites did was committed to writing. The word kâtha^bv (כָּתַב) [pronounced *kaw-THAH^bV*] means *to write, to write down, to chronicle, to record, to document*. We do not find this word in Genesis; we first find it in Exodus (e.g., Ex. 17:14 24:4, 12 31:18 34:27–28). Strong's #3789 BDB #507. Its noun cognate is mîk^eththâ^bv (מִכְתָּב) [pronounced *mik^e-TAW^bV*] and this word occurs rather infrequently, compared to the verb (Ex. 32:16 39:30 Deut. 10:4 2Chron. 21:12 35:4 36:22 Ezra 1:1 Isa. 38:9).^{*} This late occurrence in the Torah would indicate to me that this word was probably taken from the Egyptians or described the writing of the Egyptians as opposed to the kind of writing which occurred outside the land of Egypt. Strong's #4385 BDB #508. This does not mean that writing was unknown to the authors of Genesis (which would not make much sense).

We know that by Abraham's day, several languages had already been committed to writing. Furthermore, what this man writes is called *çêpher* (כֶּתֹב) [pronounced *SAY-fur*] and it means *book, document, writing*; it occurs once in Genesis (Gen. 5:1) and then almost 200 times after that (e.g., Ex. 17:14 24:7 32:32 Num. 5:23 1Kings 11:41). Strong's #5612 BDB #706 (in case you are wondering, its verbal cognate is found as early as Gen. 15:5 41:49; see also Judges 5:14 2Sam. 8:14 for the use of the verb). I wouldn't be surprised if the custom of writing this certificate of divorce originated in Egypt. There is no precedent for it in Scripture (this is the first time we find such a document).

Now, let's see what legalism did to this. The Pharisees, through centuries of legalism, took this verse as permission to get divorced—all they had to do was provide a document of divorcement. **"And it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of dismissal'; but I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except for cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."** (Matt. 5:33). This subtle change, which changes the meaning significantly, is not the way we should take this passage. This is a very long *if*-clause which continues through vv. 2–3; at that point, it is safe to insert a *then* (as we have seen, the Hebrew does not have the same if-then structure that we do; their *if* clause is followed by just the simple *wâw* conjunction. Therefore, it is a matter in linguistic interpretation as to where to place the English word *then*, as several *wâw* conjunctions may precede the final clause. When the first four verses of this chapter are read together, then it is quite difficult to misplace the apodosis.

Although the passage seemed clear to me, as it did to several of my sources, those who were negative toward God's Law and distorted it—namely many notables rabbis—distorted this passage as well. Rabbi Hillel taught that the reason set forth in v. 1 which allowed divorce was anything repulsive—including a ruined meal. Rabbi Akiba taught that it could be for "any and every reason."²⁷² Others taught that it could be illness, along the lines of an epidermal disorder. The meaning of that phrase, some nakedness of a thing, was an intentionally vague phrase, meaning that *no matter what the reason was that you two got divorced, if she remarries, then your relationship is over, no matter what.*

By reading Scripture, we can see the incredible change in the state of marriage over the centuries. By the time of our Lord, the disciples concluded that if you could divorce someone except for adultery, then you just might as well not get married. **And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He Who created from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man will leave his father and mother and he will cleave to his wife; and the two will become one flesh'? Consequently they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate. They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for adultery and marries another commits adultery." The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."** (Matt. 19:4–10 Gen. 1:27 5:2 2:24 Deut. 24:1).

Our toleration of divorce has reached a point that most people, when they marry, do so, thinking in the back of their mind that they can always get divorced if it does not work out. This kind of thinking almost guarantees divorce. God gave no specific penalty for divorcing without cause. He allowed it due to the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites. In our day and age, it has become even more commonplace. God has a directive will, which is His best for that. Under His directive will, divorce is allowed only for the cause of adultery, and even then it is debatable whether or not that is really His directive will or His permissive will. God has permitted a lot in our lives and has given us a lot of leeway at times—grace that few of us recognize or appreciate. I look at my former life as an unbeliever and many of my first years as a believer and am amazed that God has allowed me to live with the small amount of discipline that I received. Had I been God, I know that I would have meted out far more discipline for myself.

One of the topics which Thieme has touched on is the dual witness of the partners of a marriage and the partners in a marriage. Do you recall **"When two or three are gathered in My Name, there I am in their midst?"** (Matt. 18:20). **"And if two or three of you should agree on anything on earth, it will be done for them by My Father**

²⁷² *Hard Sayings of the Bible*; Kairser, Jr., Davids, Bruce and Brauch; ©1992, pp. i75–176.

Who is in heaven? (Matt. 18:19b). You can't beat a marriage which is spiritually strong. Their prayer life alone can be incredible. They already have the requirement of two people.

Throughout Scripture, God's relationship to Israel (and later the split kingdoms of Judah and Israel) is spoken of in terms of husband and adulterous wife. **The Y^ehowah said to me [Jeremiah] in the days of Josiah the king, "Have you see what faithless Israel did? She went up on every high hill and under every green tree and she has fornicated there. And I thought, 'After she has done all these things, she will return to Me'; but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw that for all the adulteries of the faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and fornicated for money. And it came to pass, because of the lightness [with which she regarded] her fornicating, that she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. And yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception," declares Y^ehowah (Jer. 3:6–10; see Isa. 30:1 as well). God's final word on the matter: "I hate divorce." (Malachi 2:16a). However, rather than consider that final, let's look at the **Doctrine of Divorce—not finished yet!!****

"And she has gone out of his house and has gone and she has become another man's;
[Deut. 24:2]

This Scripture is not to be torn out of context to give some additional reason for divorce. The whole story is that they divorced and she has gone and has become the wife of another man. You have certainly seen unbelievably unstable people and they walk right out of one marriage right into another within weeks; or walk out of one house and into the house of their boyfriend or girlfriend with no intervening time period. Here, even the time period is not an issue; their divorce is final and she becomes the wife of another man.

"And the second [lit., coming after] man hates her and writes with respect to her a writing of divorce, and gives [it] into her hand and sends her out of his house; or when the second [lit., coming after] man dies, [the one] who has taken her to himself to wife; [Deut. 24:3]

So this woman is free again; perhaps months and perhaps years have passed. Her second husband either divorces her or he dies. The reason for the end of their marriage is not really an issue, just as the original dissolution of her first marriage was not the issue either. This is a general scenario. Now I am certain that you have found various points in God's Word where you disagree with God and can give me an instance where things didn't go as per Scripture and they worked out fine. For instance, a man goes back and marries an ex-wife after she has had intervening relations with another man or with other men. Or two people divorce and they each find happiness with someone else. You do not have the entire picture. If God's Laws were enforced, if marriage was taken seriously by those of all ages, if the woman was willing to subjugate herself to her man, thus recognizing his dominance in marriage and placing her trust in him,²⁷³ then marriages would be more stable, making the family more stable. Furthermore, there are people who divorce and remarry and the second marriage is better—however, often, the lives of two or three children were destroyed in the process.

"Her former husband who sent her away is not able to turn back to take her to be to him to wife; for it [is] an abomination before Y^ehowah, and you will not cause the land to sin which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you—an inheritance. [Deut. 24:4]

Marriage is sacred to God. Marriage is not something that you do and then you divorce if it just doesn't go as well as you expected it to. It is not to be taken lightly. You don't marry, divorce, then marry and divorce, and marry the first person again because maybe they weren't all that bad. That is a choice that you have to make and it is a choice you don't get to change your mind about several times. The marriage represents God's relationship to Israel. God has not divorced Israel. Our God Jesus Christ is the God of Israel. The final battle of Armagedon

²⁷³ As I have mentioned in the past, it is easy for a woman to recognize her right man—she is willing to place her trust in him and to obey him from the beginning. If you do not have the trust in a man you are about to marry, then you are making the mistake of your life. If you are willing to place your volition under his, then you probably have the right guy (assuming that you have not engaged in pre-marital sex, which is going to confuse the identifiers in your soul).

will not be some spiritual battle involving members of the church but it will involve a real, regathered nation of Israel, whom God will never leave nor will He forsake them. Israel has played the whore throughout much of their history and God has remained faithful to Israel in terms of what He has promised to her. God has made it possible for everyone to enjoy the same kind of marriage. We just have to wait on God.

To see that Moses is not giving the Israelites additional ways to divorce their wives, let's examine this passage as the one sentence that it is: **"When a man takes a wife and marries her and it comes to pass [that] she does not find grace in his eyes, for he has found in her some indecency [lit., nakedness of whatever], and he has written for her a bill [or document] of divorce and has given it into her hand and has sent her out of his house; and she has gone out of his house and she has gone and has become another man's; and this second man hates her and writes with respect to her a writing of divorce, and gives [it] to her hand and sends her out of his house; or when this second man dies, [the one] who has taken her to himself to wife; [then] her former husband who sent her away is not able to turn back to take her to be to him to wife; for it [is] an abomination before Y^ehowah, and you will not cause the land to sin which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you—an inheritance."** (Deut. 24:1–4).

Allow me to quote the take in Barnes' Notes on this: *Moses neither institutes nor enjoins divorce. The exact spirit of the passage is given in our Lord's words to the Jews, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives" (Matt. xix. 8). Not only does the original institution of marriage as recorded by Moses (Gen. ii. 24) set forth the perpetuity of the bond, but the verses before us plainly intimate that divorce, whilst tolerated for the time, contravenes the order of nature and of God. The divorced woman who marries again is "defiled" (v. 4), and is grouped in this particular with the adulteress...Moses could not absolutely put an end to a practice which was traditional and common to the Jews with other Oriental nations. His aim is therefore to regulate and thus to mitigate an evil which he could not extirpate²⁷⁴.*

"When a man takes a new wife, he will not go out into the army, and he will not pass over concerning him with respect to anything; he is free at his own house one year and will cause great happiness [to] his wife whom he has taken. [Deut. 24:5]

I have given this a very literal translation. The gist can be grasped here—a marriage requires a honeymoon or sorts—a year to make his wife happy (This is either the Piel or the Hiphil of *rejoyce, make happy, make merry*. The tougher phrase is the one which says: **and he will not pass over concerning him with respect to any word [or, anything]**. Let me give you some other renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he has taken.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	When a man taketh a new wife he shall not go forth to war, neither shall he be charged with any business,—free shall be for his own house one year, and shall rejoice with his wife whom he hath taken.
KJV	When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business, <i>but</i> he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife whom he hath taken.
NASB	When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army, nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken.
NIV	If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	'When a man taketh a new wife, he doth not go out into the host, and <i>one</i> doth not pass over unto him for anything; free he is at his own house one year, and hath rejoiced his wife whom he hath taken.

²⁷⁴ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, pp. 315–316.

The verb, which is translated *charge, laid on, or passed over* is the 3rd person, Qal imperfect of $\text{ʿā}^b\text{var}$ (רָבַר) [pronounced $\acute{g}aw^b\text{-VAHR}$] and it means *pass over, pass through, pass on* and it is found in Gen. 12:6 15:17 18:5 Deut. 2:14 3:18, 25 and in roughly 300 other places throughout the Old Testament. I am even wondering in this context if it might mean that he is not to be passed over with regards to ranking or privilege under these circumstances. That would make more sense and fall in with the context. I do not believe that this is a precedent set that he should not work or become involved in a business during this year. Strong's #5674 BDB #716.

This has been covered before from the standpoint of military procedure back in Deut. 20:7.

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Miscellaneous Laws

“No one will take in pledge a pair of millstones—even and rider, for it [is] a life [lit., a soul] he is taking in a pledge. [Deut. 24:6]

We have two separate words here for *millstones*; the first is incontrovertibly a *pair of millstones* (it is in the dual). However, the second word is reche^bv (רֶכֶב) [pronounced *REH-khe^bv*], which is usually rendered *chariot(s)* (Gen. 50:9 Ex. 14:6–7, 9 Deut. 11:4). My guess is that this could have been a word which had its origins in Egypt. There is another useage which apparently has to do with day to day life in the ancient kitchen, although *millstone* may not be correct (Deut. 24:6 Judges 9:53 2Sam. 11:21). Context makes it easy to distinguish the two divergent meanings. Strong's #7393 BDB #939.

When first examining this verse, I didn't have a clue here. So let's examine some other translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	No man shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for he would be taking a life in pledge.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	No man shall take in pledge a handmill or an upper millstone,—for he would be taking life in pledge.
NASB	“No one shall take a handmill or an upper millstone in pledge, for he would be taking a life in pledge.”
NEB	No man shall take millstones, or even the upper one along in pledge; that would be taking a life in pledge.
NIV	Do not take a pair of millstones—not even the upper one—as security for a debt, because that would be taking a man's livelihood as security.

The millstones are used to grind the wheat into flour. This is necessary in order to feed one's family. Today, it would be like taking a person's refrigerator as collateral. Taking a portion of this millstone renders this ancient and indispensable household item useless. This verse goes hand-in-hand with Ex. 22:26, where a creditor is enjoined not to take the cloak of a man as collateral and Ex. 22:22 where the Israelite is told not to take advantage of the widow. Obviously, a creditor should not be taking from a person the basic necessities which allow them to function in life.

“When a man is found guilty of kidnapping a fellow Israelite [lit., found stealing a soul of his brothers, of the sons of Israel], and he has bound [in tyranny] against him and sold him, then [lit., and] the thief will die and you will have purged that evil from out of your midst. [Deut. 24:7]

There is a verb here found thrice in Scripture: $\text{ʿā}^m\text{ar}$ (רָמַר) [pronounced $\acute{g}aw\text{-MAHR}$] and, although it is given two different meanings, I think we can narrow it down to *bind, either actually or under tyranny* (the two different text

book—BDB—definitions are *bind sheaves* (Psalm 129:7) or *to deal tyrannically with* (Deut. 21:14 24:7). Strong's #6014 BDB #771.

We have people today who kidnap for a variety of reasons; however, during this period of time, people were kidnaped primarily for the purpose of being sold into slavery. If any Israelite ever does that to a fellow Israelite, he is to be executed. Like much of this chapter, it has its origins in Ex. 21–22. **“And he who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, will certainly be executed.”** (Ex. 21:16). We have the simple day-to-day application that kidnaping should be a capital offense (with the exception of parents who kidnap their own children).

We also have, on the spiritual side, another application of this verse: if you have a fellow believer who you drag into slavery to the old sin nature with you, then you are liable for discipline. This can be done in a number of obvious ways: pressuring a fellow believer to partake of an overindulgence of alcohol or to use drugs with you; you might entice a believer to become involved in some scheme to defraud others or you may entice that believer into some other illegal activity; however, even more common, you may engage in some gossip with that other believer and thereby entice that believer to join you in gossip. Let me add another: have you, as a male, seduced a female, or you as a female, seduced a young male who is a believer? You have taken these people out of fellowship, as well as confused their sensory guidance systems with regards to locating their right man or right woman. In all these illustrations, you take a believer who is free of the control of the old sin nature and place him under slavery to his old sin nature.

“Take personal responsibility, in [or, against] the plague of leprosy, to watch greatly and to do according to all that the priests, the Levites teach you; as I have commanded them, you [all] will take responsibility to do; [Deut. 24:8]

In this verse we have the verb *shâmar* (שָׁמַר) [pronounced *shaw-MAR*] twice. We first find it in the 2nd person singular, Niphal imperative, where I rendered it *take personal responsibility for* (the Niphal is the passive stem; however, in the imperative, it can refer to an action which is partially in progress). We secondly find it in the 2nd person plural, Qal imperfect, to re-enforce their responsibility as a group. Strong's #8104 BDB #1036.

Leprosy was covered in great detail in Lev. 13–14. As you will recall, leprosy was both real and it was symbolic. Every cell of our body carries within it the old sin nature. We are thoroughly filthy before God, whether we attempt by works to reach Him, or live our lives without thought to God—in either case, we are lepers before God. The plague of leprosy which we carry in our bodies isolates us totally from God. There must be a cleansing process in order for us to have any contact with Him. That process began upon the cross where every sin that we have ever committed and will commit was paid for by our Lord. We complete this process by believing in Him. What we add to the cleansing process is zero. Our Lord put in 100% and we add 0%. We only have to believe in Him in order to appropriate this cleansing process for ourselves.

Don't misunderstand what has been said to the Israelites in this passage. They aren't supposed to be carefully looking about just in case anyone catches leprosy—that is not the intent of Moses. That would be silly. He isn't cautioning them to carefully follow the instructions of the priests and Levites when it comes to cleansing oneself due to leprosy either. The concept here is that they are to pay close attention to the teaching which was entrusted to the Levites and to the priests *because* of the plague of leprosy. Miriam was disciplined with leprosy and she is the case history which Moses brings up. It was not a matter of her not obeying the priests when it came to her cleansing—it was a matter of her rebellion against God's appointed authority here on earth in the person of Moses that caused her to become leprosy.

Again, on the surface, the topics covered here in the general passage sound like a mishmash of unrelated thoughts; we have jumped from selling an Israelite into slavery to leprosy. However, leprosy refers to the control of the old sin nature to a point of taking over the whole person, leaving him in a defiled state for long periods of time (Thieme calls this reversionism). So we have gone from causing another person to join us in slavery (v. 7) to the old sin nature to long-time control by the old sin nature (v. 8). It is quite simple: a believer who would resort

to dragging another believer down is so much under the control of his old sin nature as to be perilously close to leading a life of reversionism, always under the control of the old sin nature and perpetually under discipline.

While explaining the connection between these verses, a thought just occurred to me—Moses, although a great intellect, and a believer without peer in his day, even as an old man, might tend to move from thought to thought with little thought given to segueing from one thought to another. However, God the Holy Spirit, Who is guiding Moses in His teaching (as this is recorded as Scripture), has an underlying relationship between the topics which Moses is teaching. Bearing this in mind as we study the Law, this allows us to make real-life applications to our lives from things said over three thousand years ago. On the other hand, and this cannot be over-stressed, we are not to *spiritualize* everything that we read in the Old Testament. Everything which is said in God’s Word has meaning and import to its time and this is the first place we go when examining a verse. In fact, this would be an excellent opportunity to examine the **Doctrine of Rules of Exegesis and Interpretation—not finished yet!**

“Recall that which Y^ehowah your God did to Miriam in the way, in your coming out of Egypt.
[Deut. 24:9]

Miriam, as you will recall, got horsey and jealous and had her own person woman’s lib movement, claiming that she could teach and prophesy as good as Moses; and so could Aaron, by the way (she needed some additional support). It began with Moses marrying an Egyptian woman (who, as you recall, may have been Black). She and Aaron said, **“Has Y^ehowah indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?” And Y^ehowah heard it.** (Deut. 12:2b). You know that Miriam first went to Aaron, told him what’s what, and then dragged him over to speak to Moses. Aaron was easy. Just about anyone could bully Aaron into doing something, even his sister. She and Aaron had been around for a long time; they had lived full lives. What they said was important for people to hear. So if Moses spoke God’s Word, then, doggone it, they were speaking God’s Word. God, after hearing this, decided to have a little talk with the three of them.²⁷⁵ He said, **“Hear now My words; if there is a prophet among you [i.e., if you Miriam and you Aaron are prophets], I, Y^ehowah, will make Myself know to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. Not so with My servant, Moses. He is faithful in all My household. With him, I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings. Furthermore, he sees the form of Y^ehowah. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant—against Moses?”** (Num. 12:6–8). God struck her with leprosy but allowed her to be healed. Eventually she probably died the sin unto death for her impertinence. The Bible is rather sketchy at this point. Between the end of Num. 19 and Num. 20, there are thirty-eight silent years. **The Israelites likely remained in Kadesh-barnea this entire time. Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people were staying at Kadesh. Now, Miriam was dying there was was buried there** (Num. 38:1). All the tenses in Num. 38:1 are in the imperfect, indicating incomplete action or continuous action. An educated guess on my part would be that she died a long and painful death, although we are not told why. Again, this is an educated guess, not something which is written in stone.

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The Poor: Collateral and Their Wages/Individual Responsibility

“When you lift up on your brother a debt of anything, you will not go into his house to obtain his collateral [lit., pledge]; [Deut. 24:10]

You have lent a fellow Israelite money; you have placed that burden upon him. To assure that you will be repaid, you might want to go into his house and seize something of value which he will want back. God limited the Israelites in this regard. **“If you ever take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, you will return it to him before the sun**

²⁷⁵ Obviously, I am speaking anthropomorphically.

sets, for that is his only covering—it is his cloak for his body. What else will he sleep in? And it will come to pass that when he cries out to Me, I will hear for I am gracious.” (Lev. 22:26–27). Some people who believe in free enterprise have problems with passages like this and with the idea of not charging interest to a fellow Israelite. I personally believe in free enterprise and I believe that the Bible teaches that system of economy. However, this was a different time. Not only were loans made to the poor, but the taking of collateral was severely limited and the debt, every seven years, had to be completely forgiven. If land had been received as a part of debt, as collateral, or for whatever reason, every forty-ninth year, it reverted back to its original owner. Like it or not, God expected that when a successful Israelite dealt with a poor Israelite, that he helped him because he had been blessed by God and recognized this. They did, for all intents and purposes, hold the land of Israel in common. However, do not worry. This does not negate free enterprise. Today, it is common to borrow money for business ventures, to purchase a house, etc. At that time, borrowing money was for those who were in desperate straights (the very people who could not borrow money today). Today, Israel was a nation ruled directly by God; today, Israel is a nation in great turmoil, a nation which God has set aside temporarily. The expectations God placed upon Israel then are different than those He has for them now. However, this is only for those who recognize that we are no longer under the Law. For the Israelite who has placed himself in bondage to the Law—the very Law which condemns him before God—nothing has changed. He is still to lend to his brother without interest and with severely restricted collateral laws.

Our Lord, who taught the Mosaic Law, often gave His listeners the gist of what was taught by this Law, as it had been distorted over the centuries. **“Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”** (Matt. 5:42).

We have adopted several customs from the Mosaic Law. There are nations in which we, the United States, have leased land for twenty, thirty, forty years. A landlord in Texas may go into the house of a tenant and seize property when that tenant is behind in rent. However, the landlord is limited in what he can take in collateral.

“At the outside you will stand and the man on whom you are lifting [it] upon will bring the collateral [lit., pledge] to you at the outside. [Deut. 24:11]

There is privacy given this poor person. You don’t have the chance now to go into his house and claim whatever it is that you want. Again, today, life is different. We are not under the law. Although it is not a common practice for a loan company to send a representative through your house to take whatever appeals to him; there are situations where you collateralize things which you may not want to collateralize (for instance, a lease contract in Texas automatically places certain private possessions of yours under the control of a landlord whom you have not paid). Now, I like this law as a property owner. However, if I was in Israel under the Mosaic Law, it would be sin for me to go into a person’s home and take their property.

“And if he is a poor man, you will not lie down with his collateral [lit., pledge]; [Deut. 24:12]

Although a poor man may have pledged to you a personal possession as collateral for the loan, you do not even get to keep it overnight. You may balk that the poor here seemed to hold all of the cards, as it were. That is because they were poor. The rich were already rich. The prosperous had been prospered by God. Why did they need more? If their fellow Israelite needed help, he was their brother. God has blessed you—now, you help your fellow Israelite.

Well, it is lucky that we are not under the Law, is it not? Listen to what Paul wrote: **But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing so, you will heap burning coals upon his head.** (Rom. 12:20 Prov. 25:2 2Kings 6:22). So we are instructed by God to help our enemies if they are in need. You do not get to ignore those who are in need. And again, this is dealt with in several different ways. God may call on you to help people out directly, you might give to various missions which help the homeless—God will lead you in the way you are to go. In this giving, don’t forget that the man who does not provide for his own family is worse than an infidel (1Tim. 5:8).

“You will certainly give the collateral back to him at the going in of the sun, and he has laid down in his own clothing and has blessed you; and to you, it is righteousness before Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 24:13]

The nation Israel was different from every other nation on this earth. God was its sovereign ruler. Therefore, the people of Israel were to reflect the wisdom and grace befitting God’s people. **“So Y^ehowah commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear [and respect] Y^ehowah our God for your good always and for our survival today. And it will be righteousness to us if we take the responsibility to observe all of this mandate before the face of Y^ehowah our God, just as He has commanded us.”** (Deut. 6:24–25). And this was God’s policy even before the nation Israel came on the scene. **“For when the ear heard, it called me blessed; and when the eye saw, it gave witness of me. Because I rescued the poor who cried for help and the orphan who had no helper. The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, and I made the widow’s heart sing for you. I put on righteousness and it clothed me. My justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy and I investigated the case which I did not know.”** (Job 29:11–16).

The word for clothing mentioned here was a general word, although, in this context, it appears to stand for the large, outer garment which was carefully wrapped around the person during the day and slept in during the night. It was more than just bedclothes at night—it appears to have functioned as a bed spread of sorts in those days so that if a creditor kept this overnight, the debtor would be cold all night.

The application here has to be careful. You are not necessarily a great Christian if you are simply a soft touch and anyone who wants money can come to you and you will give them whatever it is that they want. This does not mean that you give money to every person standing on a corner with a sign, nor do you necessarily give money to every phone solicitor who calls you at night. However, this certainly indicates that we should not be some sort of a Scrooge with our money, which God has given to us. Some of us will be led by God to support our church, various missionaries, certain ministries, certain individuals and certain programs. We already know that we do not neglect our families in order to give—such a person is worse than an infidel—but that does not mean that you are not balanced here.

I think of a young lady who was pondering whether to take her children (or child) to Disney World on vacation. The child was perhaps two or three years of age and she was concerned if he would even remember such a trip. Children are in an extremely important developmental stage in their first four years, one which is often ignored as the children are placed in day care centers. The child needs great stimulation with words and music and activities—and a local carnival will provide a child of that age with as much stimulation as an expensive trip to Disney World. Furthermore, it is near the end of that period of time when a child begins to have a sense of right and wrong, something that no parent should ignore. I have several points here, if I could corral them all. You might give as a family and thereby limit your vacation with your young children—they will not lose anything in this. Furthermore, you might be sacrificing this child’s proper development in order to bring in two salaries; additional money which you essentially squander. As was pointed out to me by my cousin, some couples both work when they don’t have to, feel guilty about neglecting their responsibilities as parents, and materially overindulge their children to make up for it. I realize that I have strayed from the topic here, but giving so that you are unable to take an expensive vacation is not neglect. Giving so that your children are deprived of the basic necessities is. And, even more importantly, getting so that your children suffer neglect is a horrible sin, which you will pay for abundantly when the child gets older. We have a society where it is common for mothers to raise their children’s babies and where it is commonplace for children to return home at age thirty, which, in many but not all cases, is a disgrace.

You may wonder to yourself, what sort of a system should be have in place in our government? After all, since you are in a democracy, you vote for the programs and the people that you believe in. Listen to what Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Chaldea: **“Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness, and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.”** (Dan. 4:27). Don’t be misled, however, there is a careful balance to be struck here. **Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it upon His head as He was reclining. But the disciples were**

indignant when they observed [this] and said, "What is the point of this waste? For this might have been sold for a high price and given to the poor." But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me. For the poor you have with you always; but you do not always have Me. For when she poured this perfume upon My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. Point of doctrine: wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her." (Matt. 26:6–13). Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for obedience to your acknowledgment of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your sharing with them (2Cor. 9:13).

"You will not oppress a hireling, poor and needy, of your brothers or of your temporary visitor who is in your land within your gates; [Deut. 24:14]

The rich often take advantage of the poor or of those from another country. I know of moderately successful bilingual Hispanics who routinely take advantage of their own brothers who cannot speak English. If they are believer, they are an embarrassment to Jesus Christ. They will lease a home to their brother at rent which is above normal or give them work and pay them little or nothing. One of the news stories I recall was a illegal immigrant whose extended American family, when amnesty was being granted across the board, did not inform her of this, and she thus remained an illegal immigrant and under their control. They used her for all intents and purposes as a slave. Since she was not legal, she could not do anything or go anywhere. That is appalling. The poor, particularly when foreign, are routinely exploited. Israel evangelized peoples from other nations by them coming to Israel and receiving the gospel there. It would be horrible for a person on positive signals to come to the land of Israel seeking their God and to have those in Israel take advantage of them. A testimony like that detracts from Y^ehowah, the God of Israel.

The Bible, particularly the Law, is filled with admonishments to treat the poor and the needy fairly and with respect, to help them whenever possible, to lend them money freely. And God tells the people of Israel over and over again not to exploit foreigners and temporary visitors. "If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you, you will not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you will freely open your hand to him and you will generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks. Be careful, so that there is not a base thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is [therefore] hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to Y^ehowah against you and it will be a sin in you. You will gnerously give to him and your heart will not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing, Y^ehowah your Godd will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. For the poor will never cease in the landd; therefore, I command dyou, saying, 'You will freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and dto the poor in your land.' " (Deut. 15:7–11 see Lev. 25:35–43 Malachi 3:5 as well). He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him (Prov. 14:31). He who is gracious to a poor man lends to Y^ehowah and He will repay him for his good deed (Prov. 19:17).

The application is easy. As soon as people know you are a Christian, they will look for all the chinks in your armor. And no matter what, you have them. And they can spot your phoniness a mile away. I know that some evangelists and pastors have told you to tell everyone you know about Jesus and to tell them you are a Christian. That's bullcrap. You ought to keep your mouth shut. You ought to keep your faith in Jesus Christ a secret until you no longer embarrass Him. I have had a lot of finanical and business dealings with various members of cults and from the Christian community and, even though I am a believer in Jesus Christ, the minute that someone who I am about to enter into a business venture with tells me they are a born-again Christian, I look for the other shoe to drop. How are they going to screw me, is my first thought. If I knew nothing about two people and I had to choose between, for instance, a Morman or a Christian, I would choose the Morman. They may be thoroughly entrenched in a cult, but generally speaking, they can be trusted, they will work hard, they will have strong family values and you can believe them. I have been burned by Christians a hundred times in one way or another; I have never been burned by a Morman. That is a shame to us as believers. We borrow money and we don't repay it; we get behind in rent and we never make it up; we cheat on our wives or husbands; we divorce a good spouse, screw up our children, because we just want something else; we sign contracts and we do not obey them; we run our credit cards up knowing that we plan to go bankrupt; we cheat on our taxes; we make promises which we never keep; we borrow something or rent something and either don't return it or we treat it poorly. We are an

embarrassment to our Savior. So I don't give a damn what your evangelist said about going out and witnessing to ten people after you have been saved. I don't care that you have been admonished to let your light shine—you need to keep your mouth shut and grow spiritually. Then, when you are no longer an embarrassment to Jesus Christ, then you can tell everyone.

“In his day, you will give him his hire and the sun will no go in upon it, for his [is] poor and unto it he is lifting up his soul; and he does not cry against you to Y^ehowah and it is sin in you.

[Deut. 24:15]

This is a reference to the very poor; the day-laborer, who requires his money immediately just to survive. Furthermore, by definition the day-laborer will have different jobs with different people. It just isn't right for him to have to come back several times in order to be paid. The person who has hired him is to be mindful of his needs and not to take advantage of him. Apparently this was quite a problem where the businesses and individuals throughout the ancient world hired temporary help and then either would not pay them or they would make it difficult for them to collect their wages. **“You will not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning.”** (Lev. 19:13). **Look, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields which has been withheld by you, cries out. Furthermore, the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth** (James 5:4).

The application to business is endless. Certainly business keep back our checks for roughly a week after the work has been done and this is not a problem for the vast majority of us. However, those who employ should be mindful of those they employ, to treat them with respect and to pay them an honest salary. We have companies, particularly arms of the government, who pay far too much for the work they receive (there are other firms as well) and firms who pay those in charge far too much. On the other hand, those at the bottom of the ladder are often paid far too little. There are a huge number of jobs which do not even allow a person enough of a wage to survive.

“Fathers are not put to death for sons and sons are not put to death for fathers; they are put to death each for his own sin. [Deut. 24:16]

This is a different situation than the four-generation curse. In the four-generation curse, each generation perpetuates the degeneracy of the previous generation and each is under discipline for its own sins. One extremely degenerate or reversionistic generation tends to require three subsequent generations to break the curse, if the curse is to be broken. Gen X may have been that fourth generation and their sons, the Generation of Promise, broke the curse and entered the land. However, God does not punish us for the mistakes or degeneracy of our parents.

When capital punishment is called for, what a child does cannot be placed upon the shoulders of his parent—no matter how poorly the parent raised that son, the son is to pay with his life for the crime he committed. Obviously, vice versa is also true. We find an historical fulfillment of this in 2Kings 14:6 2Chron. 25:4 Ezek. 18:20. God makes a parallel statement in Jer. 31:30: **“In those days, they will not say again, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth will be set on edge,’ but everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge.”** Here, in Jeremiah, we are in the midst of a multi-generational curse where the sins of the fathers have a very negative affect on the sons.

Okay, so where did Moses come up with this stuff? Moses was learned in several systems of law, having been raised in the palace of the King of Egypt. He likely knew several languages as well. He was familiar with geography and with the military. When you are raised as though a son of the king in Egypt, you are not raised a dummy. You don't spend your life playing. At a very young age, Moses was groomed to be king, which meant he had to be learned in international dealings, which would account for a knowledge of law and language. Therefore, it is not unreasonable that, throughout much of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses borrowed various bits and pieces of other law codes as led by God the Holy Spirit. Moses did not fall into a trance, open his mouth, and God the Holy Spirit spoke through him. There is no justification for that. The Law of Moses was a product of his great human intellect as guided by God the Holy Spirit, just as Scripture is the result of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which does not preclude the background, vocabulary or personality of the author. Therefore, Moses could

have lifted directly a law or two from other legal systems of his contemporaries and this would not in any way detract from the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. Almost any legal system will contain in it some measure of truth. **For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, to having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them** (Rom. 2:14–15).

Furthermore, Moses also made certain observations in his life. Moses observed that the Generation of Promise lived whereas gen X died the sin unto death. Recall the rebellion of Korah? **And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, so that they became a warning. The sons of Korah, however, did not die** (Num. 26:10–11). For this reason, Moses rejected a legal custom found in some countries, which occasionally held the sons accountable for the sins of the father. There is apparently historical evidence that the Persian and the Macedonians, among others, practiced putting to death the children and families of convicted felons.²⁷⁶ We find instances of obedience to this law of Moses in 2Kings 14:16 2Chron. 25:5.

Now here is an interesting criticism: Moses says that a father is not to be executed for the crimes of his son and vice versa, but in 2Sam. 12:14–18, we have the death of the first child of David and Bathsheba because of the sin of David as discipline to David and Bathsheba. To an unbeliever, this is a good question. However, it is a matter of context and what is allowed and what is not. What Moses said was within the context of the legal system of Israel. The courts in Israel were to allowed to sanction the death of the son for the crimes of his father, nor the execution of a father for the crimes of his son. However, God is allowed, as He is the perfect lawgiver, to discipline as He sees fit. Part of our problem, we see death as this fearful and horrible thing. When God calls for our death, then it is our time to go. Our death, under those circumstances, is not to be feared—in fact, it is a promotion (except under the circumstances of the sin unto death, of course). This could have been David's greatest son, the one who would most accurately emminate the love which David had for God's Word. However, it was his time to go, and it was as a discipline to David. God will sacrifice His own Son on the cross because of our sins against Him and His own Son will pay the penalty and be executed as we so justly deserve. The death of David's son for David's sin illustrates the death of God's Son on the cross. Since this is a shadow analogy, the one place where it is not a perfect shadow is the fact that it was David who was being punished, not his son (2Sam. 12:14). The son of David, not being old enough to discern good from evil, also did not have the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, he was saved, as his volition was not an issue. David said, **"I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."** (2Sam. 12:23). This is a sovereign decision made by God Who knows all of the facts. The court system of Israel was still precluded from carrying out a similar execution.

There is a more difficult passage—2Sam. 21:1–9—which we will deal with at that time in context.

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Welfare in Israel

"You will not turn aside the judgment of a orphan visitor, nor take in pledge the garment of a widow; [Deut. 24:17]

God watches over the helpless and makes laws to protect them. As we have seen, this is a continual theme of the Torah, as Israel was to evangelize the world through its relationship to God. **"You will not show partiality in judgment; you will hear the small and the great alike. You will not fear [or respect] man, for the judgment is God's."** (Deut. 1:17a). In this way, Israel reflected the grace and righteousness of their God: **"For Y^ehowah your**

²⁷⁶ Keil and Delitzsch quote Herod. 3:19; Ammian Marcell 23:6; Curtius 6:11, 12, etc. to substantiate this in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 952.

God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty and the awesome God who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.” (Deut. 10:17–19). “You will not distort justice; you will not be partial, and you will not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wis and perverts the words of the righteous.” (Deut. 16:19). Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute (Psalm 82:3). Do not rob the poor because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate; for Y^ehowah will plead their case and take the life of those who rob them (Prov. 22:22). See also Isa. 1:23 Jer. 5:28 Ezek. 22:29 Zech. 7:10, where these charges are made against Israel or Judah.

Our application today, I would hope is obvious: we do not discriminate or pre-judge. We do not judge someone unfairly because they are weak, helpless, or different from us in any way. As sons of the King, our lives should be lives of impartiality, justice and grace. **My brothers, do not hold your faith in the glorious Lord Jesus Christ with personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brothers, did not God choose the poor of this world [to be] rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, “You will love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin [and] you are convicted of the law as transgressors (James 2:1–9 Lev. 19:18).**

There are a lot of men and women who pre-judge someone according to their appearance and they reject their right man or right woman that way, or they deprive themselves of a warm and wonderful friendship in the pre-judging. This does not mean that you should search out people whom you find unattractive and cultivate their friendship. However, you do not reject someone because of their outward appearance. **But Y^ehowah said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God not as man sees, for man looks at the appearance, but Y^ehowah looks at the heart.” (1Sam. 16:7).**

“And you will remember that you have been a servant in Egypt and Y^ehowah your God ransomed you from there; therefore, I am commanding you to do this thing: [Deut. 24:18]

Israel, while in Egypt, was just about the lowest form of life there was. The Egyptians treated them with great inhumanity; particularly the Egyptian government. God expect Israel to treat all those within her borders with fairness, respect and honesty. *When the Israelites wre in trouble, the Lord helped them. Therefore [as representatives of the Lord] they were not to take advantage of others in difficulty²⁷⁷.*

“When you reap your harvest in your field, and you forgot a sheaf in a field, you will not turn back to take it; to the temporary visitor, to the orphan and to the widow it belongs [lit., it is]; so that Y^ehowah your God will bless you in all the work of your hands. [Deut. 24:19]

Because we are in the devil’s world, even under an economy where God is in charge, there are the poor and the helpless. This is a function of their old sin natures as well as the function of the sin natures around them. This is also a result of living in the devil’s world. God continually looks out for those who need looking out for. **He who gives to the poor will never want, but he who shuts his eyes [to them] will have many curses (Prov. 28:27).**

This verse is a repeat of Lev. 19:9–10 23:22. Much of Deuteronomy is a reiteration of the Law previously given. Books were not as common then as now, so the information which the Israelites went with came from their souls. They listened to Moses and obeyed the Law as given by him. We do not know the numbers as to how many of the early Israelites were literate and how many were not; therefore, this information had to be taught and re-taught. We don’t know if many of them were capable of taking notes or whether they even had the materials which would

²⁷⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 269.

allow them to do so. Moses likely did a lot of teaching during those thirty-eight silent years as God wiped out gen X.

There are those, as I have mentioned, who do not believe that Moses was the author of Deuteronomy—that some author hundreds and hundreds of years later wrote this to get across his specific viewpoint. This is one of the hundreds of examples where what Moses taught here was in full agreement with the Law which had already been given. The fact that this was obeyed early in the history of Israel (Ruth 2), lends more credence to Mosaic authorship.

“When you beat your olive [tree], you will not examine the branch behind you—to the temporary visitor, to the orphan and to the widow it belongs [lit., it is]. [Deut. 24:20]

There were two ways of harvesting an olive tree. One way was to shake the branches until its fruit fell free (Isa. 17:6 24:13) and the other way was to beat the branches until the fruit fell to the ground. Here, the owner of the vineyard was to beat the branches but one time.

Imagine all of the businesses who squeeze the last bit of work out of their underpaid employees; God is appalled and those in charge will pay. **“Nor will you glean your vineyard nor will you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you will leave them for the needy and for the alien; I am Y^ehowah your God.” (Lev. 19:10).**

“When you cut your vineyard, you will not glean behind you; to the temporary visitor, to the orphan, and to the widow it belongs. [Deut. 24:21]

Again, the business of reaping a vineyard; some is left for those in need. Note that it is not reaped and sent to a store where it can be bought with food stamps. A small portion is left for those in need. Obviously, some work is involved in order for them to eat.

“And you will remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore, I am commanding you to do this thing.” [Deut. 24:22]

The Israelites were once in a helpless, hopeless situation and God provided for them; they are to do the same for others.

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Deuteronomy 25

Deuteronomy 25:1–19

Outline of Chapter 25:

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- v. 4 **The ox**
- vv. 5–10 **Perpetuating a man's name**
- vv. 11–12 **Insuring perpetuation of a name**
- vv. 13–16 **Integrity in commerce is enjoined**
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Introduction: Deut. 25 covers additional miscellaneous laws. There are portions of this chapter where you must recognize that these laws were given to Israel at a particular time in her history and should be interpreted in that historical context. Now, one is not allowed to abrogate the entire Law of Moses using that as an excuse. I am certain that some pastors justify their position against capital punishment by claiming that this was a more violent and backward society and that we have moved beyond that today in modern life. Such a pastor has never read a daily newspaper where illustrations of man's modern-day barbarism is found on every page.

There is the common thread throughout this chapter of the perpetuation of the family and the family name. When an offense has been committed which is not deserving of death, then limits are placed upon the execution of punishment so that it would not result in death. An ox is not worked without the opportunity to eat. The disappearance of a man's name and the disposition of his estate is then covered. This is all important because the Israelites are to bear a family resemblance to the Father Who bought them with the death of His Son—therefore, in business matters, they are to be just and fair. Finally, the destruction of a family as he bears the characteristics of his father, the devil (in the gospel of John, the unbelieving Jews are said to carry the characteristics of their father, the devil—John 8:44).

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Retribution Limitations

“When there is a dispute between men and they have come into the court [lit., judgment] and they judge them, and they justify [or, declare righteous] the righteous and they condemn as guilty the corrupt [or, the guilty]; [Deut. 25:1]

Râsha (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAH*] is translated *to be wicked, to act wickedly* in the Qal, but that is such an old fashioned word. We might want to go with a more modern, but wordy, *behave in a reprehensible manner, to act in malevolence, to commit corrupt acts*. In the Hiphil, this word has a judicial edge to it, which helps to define the other use: it means, in the context of rendering judicial decision, *to condemn as guilty* (Ex. 22:9). Strong's #7561 BDB #957.

The protosis is simple; there is a dispute which is settled in court and the judge (or judges, as the related verbs are in the plural throughout this verse) has rendered a verdict. God set up a court system, but in a very general way (Deut. 1:16–17). This indicates that there were several judges who examined a case (as opposed to our jury system) and rendered a verdict. If they were unable to render a verdict, then the case went to a higher court which would consist of priests, Levites or of higher judges (Deut. 17:8–13). The actual nuts and bolts were not specified, as the system would change from time to time. That is, how did these judges come into office—were they elected,

appointed or did they just assume the authority. The number of judges who sat on which cases is not given. How many judges over what jurisdiction is not covered. What is emphasized is that they be fair and just: **“Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, ‘Here [disputes] between your fellow countrymen [lit., brothers] and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman [lit., brother] or the alien who is with him. You will not show partiality in judgment; you will hear the small and the great alike. You will not fear because of man, for the judgment is God’s.’ ”** (Deut. 1:16–17a). These judges were always responsible to a higher court, as were those who appeared to get away scot free. **“Keep far from a false charge and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty.”** (Deut. 23:7). **“God is always the ultimate judge: Then you will hear in heaven and act and judge Your servants, condemning the wicked and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.”** (1Kings 8:32).

There are even times when we are allowed to take a stand speak in opposition to our judicial system, but those times a far and few between. This is when Satan is using the legal system to persecute those who present the gospel. Our Lord warned His disciples of this: **“But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the courts and they will scourge you in their synagogues.”** (Matt. 10:17). When Ananias commanded that Paul be struck, **Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you white-washed wall! And do you sit to try me according to the Law and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?”** (Acts 23:3). For, **he who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to Y^ehowah** (Prov. 17:15).

“Then it will come to pass if the guilty [party] deserves to be beaten [lit., is a son of striking], then [lit., and] the one judging will cause him to lay down and he will beat him before the face of him as his offense warrants [lit., as the sufficiency of his malevolence] by number. [Deut. 25:2]

We have several pronouns here in the English. Up to this point in time, there has never been a particular person named who would perform the punishment. Therefore, this is open to the customs of that day. The person being beaten, obviously, is the guilty party and this is done before the face of the person who was wronged. Our present custom of allowing the families of the deceased to witness the execution of a criminal who has taken the life of their loved one is right in line with the spirit of this law.

We, by nature, stand in opposition to God and to law. We are to be corrected by our parents at an early age and corrected by the judicial system as we become older. The first step is the know what is right and the second is to do what is right. Apparently, these were blows delivered to the back with a cane or a stick. **On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found; but a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding** (Prov. 10:13). **Judgments are prepared for scoffers and blows for the back of fools** (Prov. 19:29). **A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools** (Prov. 26:3). This particular mode of punishment was employed by the Egyptians, as testified to by monuments which we have found where the victim lies flat on the ground, being held by the hands and feet, and they are struck in the presence of a judge²⁷⁸.

“He may be caused to strike him forty times but he may not add so you will not beat him [lit., lest to beat him] beyond these [with] more strikings and your brother is dishonored [or, degraded] in your eyes. [Deut. 25:3]

We have a limitation on the number of times a person may be struck. This is at once symbolic (judgment against the earth was brought in a flood which lasted forty days and forty nights; the Israelites were made to wander the desert for forty years due to their unbelief. It is also a number of testing—our Lord fasted for forty days. Therefore, it would be seen as a number of purification. The earth was purified of the degenerates, our Lord stood pure before God the Father, and the criminal punished here is purified from his crime—i.e., he can walk away from this without further infliction of punishment.

Notice than with whatever offense has been committed, the punishment is swift and sure, quite painful, but still limited. We have criminals who commit *minor* offenses, breaking and entering, possession of illegal drugs for

²⁷⁸ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 953.

personal use, assault, shop lifting and are gotten off often with probation. Perhaps if they were struck thirty or forty times, this might have more of an affect on them. In this context, it is a dispute between two men; one feels that he was wronged by the other. If he prevails, then he is given the satisfaction of seeing the punishment inflicted on the other. There are a lot of suits in today's courts which are brought on out of a desire for money. There are some people who look for places and people to sue in order to reap material benefits from the court process. If punishment was limited to the amount of money appropriated from them (or, say, 150% of that) and to immediate specific physical punishments, we would see fewer frivolous suits.

As confinement involves armed guards and prisons, this was a less preferred method of punishment. However, one could not execute a person for every little offense. Therefore, the barbaric practice of scourging and beating was employed. In fact, this was so barbaric that it is a punishment which we should employ today. The embarrassment, the pain, the lasting scars and pain is something that a criminal should face. We are foolish to think that probation or incarcerating certain criminals is the way to go. Almost all drug offenders on simple possession should just be beaten half to death and released. The punishment is swift and direct. Going to a jail and possibly facing beating by guards, other inmates or enduring homosexual rape are no less barbaric and they are one step removed from the crime. That is, this isn't viewed as punishment for the crime, which, for all intents and purposed, it is not. We would be much better off meting out quick, strong, painful punishment rather than jail time or probation (few if any criminal sees probation as a deterrent to crime—they just believe that they have beat the system; the same with a criminal who gets off some criminal charge due to a technicality). When they are victimized in jail, they do not view that as punishment but as being victimized by the system (which is accurate). However, this does not endear them any more to law and order nor does it move them toward rehabilitation.

In the 20+ years that I taught, I saw our school go from corporal punishment to no corporal punishment. In fact, before my time, it was common for a teacher to take a student out into the hallway and whack them once or thrice. Everyone else throughout the hallways could hear and I was told that behavior improved markedly for the next fifteen minutes or so. I recall one of our very best assistant principals, a man who gave a lot of swats, also loved his children dearly and they knew it. Their respect and love for him was apparent, and their behavior was outstanding. The behavior of the students over that period of time as corporal punishment began to be used less often became less respectful and their behavior worsened. In our striving toward a much more *humane* sort of discipline, we lost our children's respect and discipline.

Pilate misused the act of scourging. He concluded that our Lord was not guilty of the crimes with which He was charged. Since he did not have enough backbone to release Jesus Christ unconditionally as innocent, he tried to compromise what was right and wrong. There is a time for compromise, but not where justice is at stake and there is no doubt of what should be done. Had Pilate any backbone, he would have released our Lord as a free man. However, he figured that if he scourged Jesus, even though He was innocent; it is possible that he thought that might placate the irate, Jewish crowd (Matt. 27:26 John 19:1). Certainly, Pilate was a realist, but he was gutless in this situation as well. He had the backing of the Roman armies and could have dealt with an uprising of the Jews if necessary. He took the expedient way out, which, obviously, did not mollify the crowds evil lust for our Lord's crucifixion. This does not mean that Jesus Christ should not have gone to the cross. No where else to we see such a perfect example of our God taking that which was evil, corrupt and immoral and turn it into good for us. This was God's plan from eternity past. He revealed this plan, or the gist of this plan, to the Old Testament saints and through believing in Jesus Christ, they received eternal salvation, even as we. This could only be done because our Lord would die on the cross for our sins. The animal sacrifices, as we have studied, and the many shadow images spoke of this. However, this was a plan so ingenious that Satan did everything that he could to put our Lord on the cross. It was an incredible coup de gras when Satan began to find out, through the evangelization that took place in the early church, that he provided an unwilling hand which moved God's plan along for our benefit.

Some of us cringe when it comes to praying for God to discipline our enemies. There is nothing wrong with this. Pashhur, the priest, put Jeremiah in stocks after beating him, and when he released Jeremiah, Jeremiah said, ["For thus says the Lord, 'Now listen, I am going to make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and while your eyes look on, they will fall by the sword of their enemies. So I will give over all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will carry them away as exiles to Babylon and will slay them with the sword...and you, Pashhur,](#)

and all who live in your house, will go into captivity; and you will enter Babylon and there you will die and there you will be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have falsely prophesied.’ “ (Jer. 20:4, 6). One of the most satisfying things as a growing believer in Jesus Christ, is that your enemies will be dealt with by the hand of God. Now, you can't interfere, other than through prayer; but once and awhile God will even allow you to watch your enemies fall.

Paul faced beatings as a believer for proclaiming the gospel. What he wrote to the Corinthians in 2Cor. 11:24 should make more sense to you now: **Five times I have received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes.** You may be wondering why only thirty-nine lashes for Paul? If he was so hated, why not forty? The rabbis did not allow for forty lashes to be given, worried that the number of strikings may be miscounted and they would go over the prescribed number of forty. Not wanting to transgress the Law in any way, the rabbis therefore fixed the maximum number of strikings at thirty-nine.

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The Ox

“You will not muzzle an ox in his threshing. [Deut. 25:4]

An ox walks in circles while threshing grain. This uses up energy and causes the ox to become tired and hungry. What some particularly stingy owners might do is muzzle this ox so that he cannot eat up any of the profits. In the bulk of their other labors, the oxen were generally muzzled. However, here, they were not to be muzzled. Here, as a secondary meaning, God looks out for the oxen. **A righteous man has regard for the life of his animal; but the compassion of the wicked is cruel** (Prov. 12:10).

This verse, just by its context, would certainly be given wider application than merely to oxen. However, probably no one knew how this would be applied in the Church Age. Paul, in dealing with the Corinthians, who were well off financially, but corrupt spiritually, were called upon to help our the Macedonians and to participate in giving to God's work. There is a reason for this. Some people have little or no spiritual growth. They are able to figure out how to get back into fellowship, but their life as a whole is without spiritual benefit, except for the fact that they have money and they can give while they are in fellowship. Furthermore, there are some people who have been given the ability to give and give from great resources in their soul and their work counts so much more. How can I put this in a way that you can understand. You can hire an ten year old kid to paint a house and provide him with the dorp cloths, paint brush, etc., and he will endeavor, if well-motivated to paint the house. The surface won't always be properly prepared, the key to a good and lasting paint job, and there will be, certainly, a lot of spilling. But he will eventually finish. You put the same tools in the hands of an older, more experienced painter, and the results are completely different. It looks professional; spills have been cleaned up, and it lasts longer. Similar, any Christian service, whether it be giving, praying, evangelizing, etc., can be much more effective when in the hands of a spiritually mature person. There are others who will never be mature, and they can participate in limited ways—so it was with the Corinthians and their giving. Paul, in his dissertation to the Corinthians, explained to them that those who were involved in teaching the Word of God and proclaiming the gospel should be remunerated for their work. They should be able to make a living from spreading God's Word and the Corinthians should be willing to support such a ministry. Such a standpoint was accurate from a human viewpoint; therefore, it would be reasonable to suppose that supporting the gospel was similar. **Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock? I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? For it stands written in the Law of Moses, “You will not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.” God is not [just] concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher [thresh in hope of sharing in the harvest. For if we sowed spiritual things**

in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? (1Cor. 9:6–11 Deut. 24:5). Paul used the same illustration in regards to Timothy when writing him about remuneration. This was not an admonishment made to Tim, but rather one for him to use when speaking to his congregation (1Tim. 5:17–18).

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Perpetuating a Man's Name

“When brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead is not outside [the family] with regards to a stranger; her husband's brother will go in to her and he will take her to him to wife, and he will perform the duty as her husband's brother. [Deut. 25:5]

This is what is called a levirate marriage. Here is a place where we have to be very careful to note the culture of that time and the expectations of Israel. A person's name in Israel was important. The perpetuation of a family name was important. So were children and families. And so was the ownership of the land. This was already a well-established custom in the ancient world. Therefore, this law has a definite historical context. So this is how the rare situation of the early death of the brother of an Israelite was dealt with at that place and time. These were brothers who *dwell together*. I would take this to mean not that they were roommates but that they were close. That is, they were still in the same town, still closely in touch with one another. Furthermore, the use of the term *brother* in the Hebrew can mean but does not necessarily indicate a literal brother. In the case of Gen. 38 of the sons of Judah, this was a literal brother; in the case of Ruth, in Ruth 4, this was not necessarily a literal brother. A term we often use in various translations is *kinsman*. This would be the person closest to the deceased person. Although this reads *no son*, this custom need not be invoked if a daughter had been born to this union. A daughter did retain some property rights and rights to the family name (recall Num. 27:1–11) This does not mean that if your brother or roommate dies that you must marry his wife; nor is it your duty to marry the wife of your spiritual brother if he dies. However, it is not an unheard of thing for best friends, when one dies, for the other to take up with his wife. It is a matter of common interests and shared friendship.

Because this custom is so foreign to our culture, I certainly wondered why on earth was it done in the first place—did it really serve and real pragmatic purpose. And then, I wondered just why is Moses giving this law? Even in his time it was a rare situation, and it is clearly tied to the culture and customs of that day. This custom goes back at least as far as to be a custom in the times of the twelve sons of Israel. Recall that Judah had several sons, his first-born being a jerk who was taken out by the sin unto death. His wife did not have any children, so it was up to Judah to see to it that his next in line married his brother's wife, which ended up in quite a mess (Gen. 38). I mention this to show you that this custom pre-dates the Mosaic Law.

In this particular context, there were a lot of issue and even more was at stake than a gleening from the surface would indicate. The deceased had land which would be inherited. God had placed a premium on the land remaining with their respective families—recall, it even reverted back to the original family in the Year of Jubilee—so the ownership of this property was now involved. What if the woman married a person outside the original tribe? Then the land which was to remain in the family of Dan, for instance, now belonged to someone from the tribe of Simeon. Therefore, the disposition of this land must be dealt with. A son, raised up in the name of the deceased husband, would therefore be given a portion of the land. The requirement that the *brothers* lived together did not mean the same house but in the same generally vicinity, which assured that the land would remain with the proper tribe.

This custom was also a protection of the widow. It would be more difficult for her to get married again, she has the responsibility for their land, she is no longer in her father's home, she may not have any means of support, and she has just lost her husband. This custom provided recourse for her.

The perpetuation of one's name was of great importance during the ancient world, and is still today. At that time, it was not necessarily a family name but an individual's name which was perpetuated. Today, for instance, the name I would perpetuate is Kukis, the name of my father's family, but not the name of my father exclusively. That would be Howard. We often honor a favorite relative by perpetuating his name as a first or, when his name is rather archaic, with a middle name of a recently born son. My kid brother's name is Peter Howard Kukis, as a testimonial to my Dad, his brother and their father. In the ancient world often the individual's name was perpetuated. The more noteworthy had their names carried on for several generations (until today, when it is a family name which is carried on). One of the great losses is for a man's name to be cut off entirely. In one of David's imprecatory psalms, we read: **Let there be none to extend grace to him nor any to be gracious to his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, in a following generation, let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before Y^ehowah, and do not let the sin of his mother be blotted out** (Psalm 109:12–14). One of the many things which David wished upon his enemy was for his name to be cut off, blotted from the registry of the earth.

As has been previously discussed, some of the laws given in the Torah were very regional and culture-dependant. As always, I say this with some hesitation, just as the pastor who does not like to teach that being filled with the Spirit can be gotten by the simple naming of one's sins to God. That is, I don't want to give the implication that we can merely throw out whatever it is that we don't like in the Old Testament and claim that it is culturally-dependant. God took a custom from those days and made certain that there would be a specific genetic pool from whence would come David, the greatest ruler of the nation Israel²⁷⁹ (Ruth 4).

Now, let me read to you from the gospel of Mark: **And Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, came to Him [Jesus] and questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that, If a man's brother dies, and leaves heind a wife and leaves no child, has brother should take the wife and raise up offspring to his brother. There were seven brothers, and the first one took a wife, and died, leaving no offspring. And the second one took her, and died, leaving behind no offspring; and the third likewise; and so al seven left no offspring. Las of all, the woman died too. In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had her as a wife." Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistake, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven."** (Mark 12:18–25 Deut. 25:5–6). This gives you a clue as to how preposterous the religious crowd got in the time of our Lord. I read things like this and think to myself, I would have probably said, "Look, you guys are going to hell because of your negative volition, so don't bother me with this crap." This is such a ridiculous question. First of all, the premise of this situation of a brother dying without having raised up children, as has been mentioned, is rare (remember, we are dealing with young people getting married prior to the time of multifarious birth control devices). Furthermore, the set up is an hypothetical question concerning something which has probably never occurred before in human history. Finally, the Sadducees don't even believe that there is a resurrection—so such a question is moot to them. These would be your intellectual Methodists or Unitarians today. They have absolutely no interest in the answer to the question or the question itself. All they have done is sat around and thought up something clever to ask Jesus, not for the purpose of obtaining any information, but merely with the intention of attempting to trip Him up in His public ministry.

Now, if you remember Lev. 18:16, you may wonder if there is a point of confusion or contradiction here. It reads: **"You will not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness."** There was not to be any adultery or a marriage which overstepped the proper boundaries. Essentially, the context of this passage is adultery and incest, defining them clearly so that there would be no mistaking what was allowed and what was not (Lev. 18:6–20). This was clearly spelled out so that one could not rationalize adultery with his brother's wife under any circumstances (adultery could only occur while the brother was alive).

"And it will come to pass, the first born which she bears will rise for the name of his dead brother, [so] his name is not blotted out of Israel. [Deut. 25:6]

²⁷⁹ I do not include Moses in this evaluation because Israel, at the time of Moses was a people and not really a nation.

So if a son is raised up by the brother of one who is died, the first son is named after the deceased brother in order to carry on his name. This was even a concern or sorts, to the Kukis family, or at least to those of us who were in touch with one another. My grandfather, Peter (?) Kukis had three sons, Ed, Howard and Peter. Ed had three daughters and Peter had four, and no sons (in fact, I believe all of them had daughters as well). My father, on the other hand, had four sons, although we were well into our twenties or thirties before there was a male born to the Kukis family. So, for the longest time, there was some concern that our name would die out, as it is quite rare.

In the marvelous book of Ruth, Boaz said, **“Furthermore, I have acquired Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance so that the name of the deceased may not be cut off from his brothers or from the gate of his [birth] place; you are [hereby] witnesses today.”** (Ruth 4:10).

McGee had a slightly different slant on this, which I found to be interesting. *Can you imagine how this would affect a family in Israel? Suppose there was a family of four sons living on a farm in Ephraim country. Suppose that night after night one of the boys went off with the lantern and when he came back to go to bed, he would be whistling. Pretty soon the family would get into a huddle and the brothers would ask him, “Where are you going every evening? They’d do a little investigating of their own and find there was a daughter in the family that lived down the road. So the brother would admit, “I believe in the good--neighbor policy, and I have been going down there to visit that family that just moved in.” And he would admit that he was thinking of marrying the girl. Now, if those brothers didn’t care too much for that girl, can you imagine what would happen? They’d say, “Listen—before you get any notions, you go to the doctor and have a physical check-up. We want to be sure you are in good health before you marry her, because none of us want to get stuck with her.” Believe me, they got down to business. Getting married was a family affair. This was God’s way of drawing families very close together, of protecting the widows, and also of protecting the land. You see, this was the way the land would always stay in the same family. It was a very good law for them²⁸⁰.*

“And if the man does not delight to take his brother’s wife, then his brother’s wife will go up to the gate to the elders and said, ‘My husband’s brother is refusing to raise up to his brother a name in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of my husband’s brother.’ [Deut. 25:7]

The two requirements are that the two brothers dwell together and that they be brothers. One member of the family might pick up and leave their city and inheritance if he happens to be markedly different from the other members of his family. However, what often attracted a woman to one brother will sustain a good marriage with another similar brother. If this is a mutually consensual agreement, then that would be the end of it. However, if the woman chooses to make it clear that she wants her deceased husband’s brother to marry her and he does not wish to marry her, then she is to go to the elders at the gate of the city. She states her charge against him.

In the case of Ruth and Boaz, Boaz was not her nearest in-law. The man who was to *redeem* her was unable to, so Boaz purchased the estate of Ruth’s deceased husband and acquired with it all, Ruth. There is certainly a parallel to Jesus Christ, Who purchased our estate with His blood and received to Himself His wife, the church.

“Then the elders of the city will call him and speak to him and he has taken a stand and he has said, “I have no desire to take her.’ [Deut. 25:8]

Notice that this is essentially the woman’s prerogative. If the man does not want to marry her, then she can take him before the elders of the city and they will speak to him concerning this matter. What is being dealt with here is the importance of carrying on the deceased man’s name and the elders of the city will explore the options with the person’s nearest relative who would be in line to take his wife. If this man continues to stand his ground and refuses to marry her, or there are extenuating circumstances where the nearest relative cannot marry the woman (see Ruth 4:6), then the legal remedies of the woman are severely limited. They will be stated in the next verse.

²⁸⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 154.

This custom is not given by way of establishing a law to be perpetuated throughout the age of man, but it actually places well-defined limits on what could be expected in terms of legal recourse under the circumstances herein described. Keil and Delitzsch indicate that this was compulsory in ancient times²⁸¹ and Moses here allows the man who has been chosen by the woman to back out.

“Then his brother’s wife will go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull off his sandal off his foot and spit in his face and she will speak and say, ‘So will it be done to the man who does not build up his brother’s house.’ [Deut. 25:9]

I would think that the spitting in his face is a public insult because he has insulted her in not wanting to marry her. We find this gesture occurring several times in Scripture. Its earliest appearance, with respect to time, is in Job 17:6, where Job describes his plight: **“But He has made me a byword of the people and I am one at whom men spit.”** And, **“They abhor me and stand aloof from me and they do not refrain from spitting at my face.”** (Job 30:10). In Num. 12:14, Moses pleads for the life of Miriam, even though she had just gotten horsey with him because he had gotten married to an Ethiopian woman and she felt that he put on airs with respect to his spiritual connection. God said to Moses, after Moses had interceded on her behalf: **“If her fath had, in spitting, spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again.”** Our Lord is spoken of prophetically in Isa. 50:6, where his humiliation on the cross is spoken of and men spit upon Him. What God is saying is that had her own father spit in her face (which is, in essence, what occurred when God struck her with leprosy), she would have been shamed for seven days (she would have had to have committed an awful transgression for a father to do some a thing).

I should add that some Talmudists, Saalschütz and others, have attempted to diminish the insult here by claiming that the woman was to spit on the ground in front of the man—however, it is clear that she was to spit in his face.

Essentially, what this means, is that this woman, who desires to marry her kinsman, is allowed one moment of public humiliating this man. The removing of one sandal is a little on the abstruse side. So let me see if I can explain: when you placed your foot over something, this indicates your lordship, your rulership or your control over that thing. God told Abraham to walk through the land of promise, as He was giving it to him. **“Arise and walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”** (Gen. 13:17). When Joshua and his army defeated several kings of the Land of Promise, they placed their feet over their necks to indicate that they had been conquered (Joshua 10:24; see also Rev. 10:2). We see a similar meaning of the use of footstool throughout the Bible (Psalm 99:5 110:1 132:7). This was also a sign of the exchange or redemption of an estate. Here, the kinsman redeemer is renouncing all interest in the property and estate of his brother. Ruth 4:7–8 reads: **Now this was [done] in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange to confirm any matter; a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the testimony in Isrel. So the kinsman redeemer said to Boaz, “But for yourself.” And he removed his sandal.** We find a similar usage in Psalm 60:8, where our Lord renounces an interest in redeeming Edom by saying **“Over Edom, I will throw my shoe.”** See also Psalm 108:9.

“And his name is so called in Israel: ‘the house of him whose sandal is taken off.’ [Deut. 25:10]

Going barefoot indicates the most serious poverty. The lacking of just one sandal is less clear in terms of its symbology. My thought is that this represents the incompleteness of his family name. When you remove a sandal, then what remains is incomplete. This removal of a sandal means that the estate falls into the hands of the woman and it is just as though the brother never existed, as he has no progeny to come after him. Furthermore, when you spit in the brother’s face, it is an insult, as he has insulted his brother and his brother’s wife. His family will forever be incomplete, as there will not be one raised up on behalf of his brother.

It is at this point that we realize fully that this is a custom, it is not law. There are no penalties set up, not even one of uncleanness. The woman is insulted and she is allowed to insult the brother; however, no one’s hand is cut off, there are no scourgings and no other stated or implied punishment. Since this was a long-standing custom of the

²⁸¹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 954.

ancient world, God simply set some limits upon it and defined what was to occur in the event that the woman desired that this custom be adhered to, but the man did not choose to cooperate. This way, the infused and adopted custom, which was not, in of itself, sinful or immoral, was allowed to remain; and, there were now well-defined boundaries as to how far this could be pursued. This was the most restitution and legal satisfaction which a woman could receive from the courts. She could not further sue the family or have any other legal recourse. It should be noted that even under the conditions that the brother had not desire to marry his deceased brother's wife, it was not mandated that they pursue this matter even this far. The family could not sue the woman for this portion of their estate. They have renounced their willingness to assume responsibility for it. Recall that in those days, it was a man's world and the women had few legal rights. At the man's death, it could happen that the family could reclaim his property. The giving to her of the sandal indicates that they do not have an interest in this property and it belongs to her. Our inheritance laws, when a person dies intestate, favor the wife when it comes to the disposition of property. That is what is occurring here. This was just the allowed boundary of legal recourse given to the woman and to the family of the deceased.

Finally, as previously mentioned, this set the stage for the union of Ruth and Boaz, who were in the line of King David and the line of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Insuring Perpetuation of a Name

“When men fight together—a man and his brother and the wife of the one approaches her husband to rescue her husband from the hand of him who is beating him and puts out her hand and seizes his testicles; [Deut. 25:11]

The raising up of one's progeny is quite important to the nation of Israel. Here, a woman has stepped into the fight and goes for a gonad grab. This implication of this passage is that her action is inappropriate to the altercation her husband is having with the other man.

“Then [lit., and] you will cut off her hand; your eye will not pity [her]. [Deut. 25:12]

Although this, like many of the situations in Deuteronomy, is unusual and not an everyday event, what is clearly emphasized is the importance of the reproductive organs—to the point where this woman's hand is cut off if she even tries to protect her husband by attacking a man in that way. Perhaps, in a smaller way, what may be involved here is fighting fair. For this point in time, the preservation and perpetuation of a family name is of utmost importance, and that is, to a great extent, the theme of this chapter. This is how, in fact, these two passages are closely related. This does not mean, on the other hand, that a woman cannot use deadly force to protect herself in the event of rape or physical abduction nor does it mean that she cannot use deadly force if the life of her husband is in danger. This is a simple fight. Men get in fights and these fights generally do not result in death. It is the venting of testosterone. We have laws that deal with exactly this sort of thing. When you respond to an act of aggression, it is mandated in our land that it not be done with an inappropriate show of force. That is, if you are verbally insulted, then you cannot respond with physical force. If you are slapped, and that appears to be the extent of it, you cannot respond with deadly force. Here, the woman's response was inappropriate to the situation at hand.

This is the only place in the Bible where a specific mutilation for a specific crime is enjoined. This does not mean that mutilation was not required. We have already seen the penalty: “...a soul for a soul, a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise.” (Ex. 21:23b–24; see also Lev. 24:19–20). In this passage, the woman does not have a corresponding body part, so the exchange is the hand for the genitals. So there is no misunderstanding, this

punishment was not inflicted immediately but some crowd; this case went before the court system and a judge decided, as all criminal matters were handled.

In other contemporary cultures, e.g, the Babylonian and the Assyrian, the punishment for various violations of the law were lifelong slavery, substitutionary execution or rape of family and loved ones, bodily mutilation and torture.²⁸² The punishments required by God were limited to fines, corporal punishment and capital punishment. This is the only place where the cutting off of a hand is required.

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Integrity in Commerce Is Enjoined

Lev. 19:35–37

“There will not be with respect to you in your bag two differing weights [lit., a stone and a stone, a great and a small]. [Deut. 25:13]

This verse to many does not mean a thing. However, this refers to a bag used for weights for things of value. These were often stones and not metal because metal would rust and thereby lose weight, and stones would not. Here, the Israelites are told not to have a set of honest and a set of dishonest weights—one weight to buy with and the other to sell with. This is a summary of what God had told Moses in Leviticus: **“You will do no wrong in judgment, [that is] in the measurement of weight or capacity. You will have just balances, just weights, a just ephah and a just hin; I am Y^ehowah your God Who brought you out from the land of Egypt. You will in this way observe all My statutes and all My ordinances, and do them—I am Y^ehowah.”** (Lev. 19:35–37).

“There will not be with respect to you in your house an ephah and an ephah, a great and a small. [Deut. 25:14]

An ephah is a measure of capacity, approximately a bushel. This is a person who does trade out of his house and he has one sized bushel for some and a different one for others (aliens, for instance). This does not mean that there is anything morally wrong with a salesman selling one thing to person A for one price, and the same thing to person B for another. What is key is being just. When you buy a car, particularly a used one, in most dealerships, there is some leeway for bargaining and haggling. If an Israelite sold an ephah of grain, there might be some haggling over the price. However, once an agreement is made, they are not to reduce the amount of the grain given in the transaction. You do not misrepresent the product in any way. It would be difficult for a used car salesman to be a *practicing* Christian (I grimace a little when I use those two words together), as he is enjoined by God to be honest in all of his dealings. Most people, if they knew what was wrong with the used car they were interested in, they would go elsewhere until they found someone who misrepresented the car and they would purchase it from him. I recall one car which I sold; I was aware of a number of problems and disclosed everyone that I was aware of. Then the person I sold it to called me up a week or two later and said there was another problem with the vehicle. It was a major problem and I mailed him a check for \$150 or \$175. I don't recall if I was aware of the problem and did not make him aware of it or what. In fact, when selling a car of mine, I often would type up a list of all known defects and place it with the car, partially to be honest and partially so I wouldn't forget to disclose any problem to a perspective buyer.

When I was showing a house, the foundation damage was serious enough to pull a portion of the roof apart—this was not a simple sheetrock crack. I didn't allow my buyers to spend thirty seconds in that house; we immediately went elsewhere (for an investor, I would have treated the situation differently).

²⁸² Charles A. Clough, *Dawn of the Kingdom*, ©1974, p. 77.

“You will have a stone complete and just, you will have an ephah complete and just, so that they prolong your days on the land [lit., ground] which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you. [Deut. 25:15]

They prolonging your days, refers to the just stone and just ephah. It is not these things in themselves which increases the Israelites time in Israel, but the *ownership of these things*, which indicates personal integrity. Throughout Scripture, we are told to be honorable in our business dealings: **A false balance is an abomination to Y^ehowah; but a just weight is His delight** (Prov. 11:1; see also Prov. 20:23 Micah 6:11). Most of you do not own your own business. However, in whatever business you find yourself, you are to have absolute integrity. There should be no reason for a boss to come and look over your shoulder to see that you are doing what you have been contracted to do. In an office, particularly when you are paid by the hour, you do not spend your time wandering around on the internet for your own enjoyment nor do you play computer games nor do you read your Bible on the job. You have been contracted to perform certain duties and you will perform your job above and beyond the call of duty. Integrity should be an integral part of your life, whether in personal relationships or in your vocation.

“For any one doing these things, anyone doing iniquity is an abomination to Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 25:16]

The Israelites represented God to the people on this earth. God was their King, the perfect and righteous. They did not have a pantheon of gods, but lay claim on a relationship to the Creator of the Universe, and their behavior was to be a reflection of Him.

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Revenge Is to Be Exacted upon Amalek

“Remember that which Amalek did to you in the way, in your going out from Egypt; [Deut. 25:17]

Amalek is the grandson of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob (Gen. 36:12, 15–16). This would make him roughly the contemporary of Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Over 400 years have passed since that time and Ephraim and Manasseh numbered 72,700, the tribe of Amalek was probably sizable as well (although not nearly the same size). Almost immediately after exiting Egypt after the terrible plagues, Amalek struck Israel. What was happening in Egypt was noised throughout the ancient world. Egypt was a world power with trade agreements running across the two or three continents. Therefore, the infliction of the plagues upon Egypt was national news. It was not broadcast abroad as quickly as our news is, of course, but the Amalekites were aware of the opposition of the God of Israel to Egypt and they were aware of all of the signs and wonders performed by God. Israel was heading away from Egypt on a northeasterly direction, which would place them in a movement roughly toward Edom. The Amalekites met them in battle. Joshua and his men overwhelmed Amalek and God told Moses at that time to blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven (Ex. 17:8–16).

We next encountered the Amalekites in Num. 13–14, where Moses has sent out the twelve spies to walk the land and they came back with a unanimously favorable report concerning the land and the majority report was to retreat out of fear for the giants in the land. When God, through Moses, told them that they would die the sin unto death, the Israelites attacked the people of the land, which was now outside of God’s will. A coalition of Amalekites and Canaanites soundly defeated Israel and put them on the run.

“That he met you in the way and he struck down in all those feeble [lit., all the shattered ones] behind you, while [lit., and] you [were] wearied and fatigued, and he did not fear God. [Deut. 25:18]

Those anywhere in the vicinity had heard about Israel and Egypt and what God had done in Egypt. When anyone opposed Israel, they opposed the Living God, their Creator. The information given in this verse is not found in the book of Exodus. Apparently, Amalek caught Israel from the rear, striking those who were tired, exhausted, hungry and thirsty. Their attack upon Israel revealed a terrible amount of negative volition against the gospel and against the power of God. This immediate display of negative volition was an indication of their attitude which would persist throughout the ages. **Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes** (Psalm 36:1).

There are some people who have a terrifically terrible time grasping what is meant by *the fear of God*. This is a person who lives his life in opposition to God without fear of Who and What God is; without fear of the consequences of their actions. The Amalekites have heard about the destruction wrought in Egypt by God on behalf of the Israelites. Still, they attacked Israel on several occasions without fear of the consequences. Despite what they had heard of God's works in Egypt, they did not fear God enough to respect the movement of Israel. This is akin to man who looks into the sky and blasphemes God, or demands in a crowd that God strike him dead of God is real. **"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."** (Matt. 10:28).

"And it will come to pass, in Y^ehowah your God's giving rest to you, from all your enemies round about, in the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you, an inheritance to possess it. You will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens—do not forget!" [Deut. 25:19]

This was given to King Saul, the first king over Israel, to do. King Saul did wipe out all of the troops of Amalekite, but he left alive Agag, their king; and he left alive their animals. God chewed on Saul for his disobedience, and Samuel stopped advising him. Saul did go back and kill Agag, but it was too late. Recall that we have covered the **Doctrine of the Amalekites** back in Num. 24:20. There were still Amalekites alive and they troubled King David, Saul's successor, as well.

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Deuteronomy 26

Deuteronomy 26:1–19

Outline of Chapter 26:

- Vv. 1–2 **The offering of the first fruits**
- Vv. 3–11 **The affirmation given by the individual Israelite at his offering**
- Vv. 12–15 **The third year tithe and the individuals affirmation of faith**
- Vv. 16–19 **Conclusion of second message given by Moses to the Israelites**

Topics:

- v. 2 **What is Offered and When**

Introduction: Deut. 26 is a total change of pace from the previous few chapters. Moses has been covering a great many miscellaneous laws which primarily detail the relationship between men. However, they are about to enter the land and they must follow certain steps as a testimony to their relationship to the God Who led them out of Egypt. So Deut. 26 outlines the relationship between man and God. Chapter 26 also marks the end of the second dissertation by Moses.

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The Offering of the First Fruits

“And it will come to pass, when you come in to the land which Y^howah your God is giving to you [as] an inheritance, and you have possessed it and you have lived in it; [Deut. 26:1]

There is an expression here which I have been less than consistent in translating. It is translated variously as *when thou art come in unto the land* (KJV); *when you enter the land* (NASB); *when thou comest in unto the land* (*Young’s Translation*). The verb is *bôw’* (בּוּא) [pronounced *bo*] which means, in the Qal stem, *come in, go, go in*. It generally requires a direct object, as it is the subject of the verb which is being brought somewhere. Here, it is in the imperfect, indicating a process. Strong’s #935 BDB #97. This is followed by the preposition *’el* (אֶל) [pronounced *el*], which means *in, into, unto*. Strong’s #413 BDB #39. Therefore, I have translated this *to come in unto; to come in into; and to come in to*. The latter is the least correct when it comes to individual words being translated; however, it makes the most English sense, and when the two words are strung together, it is a very reasonable rendering.

This is the *if* portion of a conditional clause. The Israelites are much closer to the conquering of the land than they realize. In just seven short years from this speech, they will have conquered the land and they will be distributing it to the various families. Therefore, there must be some instructions given them.

“Then [lit., and] you will take out of the first of all the produce of the ground which you will bring in out from your land which Y^howah your God is giving you, and you will place [it] in a basket and you will go to the place which Y^howah your God has chosen to cause His name to reside [lit., tent] there;” [Deut. 26:2]

This is the offering of the first fruits and it is quite meaningful as this is the first time the Israelites will do this. Recall that early on, just as they had left Egypt, God said, “[You will not delay \[the offering of\] your harvest and your vintage...to Me.](#)” (Ex. 22:29a; see also Ex. 23:16, 19). According to the NIV Study Bible²⁸³ and Barne’s Notes²⁸⁴, this verse is not a reference to the offering of the first fruits, but this is to be done one time and one time only upon their entering and possessing the land. What occurs in this context is that the Israelites have a speech which they all memorize and say. The fact that God has delivered them into the land and that they are enjoying their first harvest in the land, they are to acknowledge before Him in their giving. This would account for why we have this speech which is found in this passage which they were all to give, yet we do not find a similar speech elsewhere when the offering of the first fruits is made or for any of the other offerings. Since it is difficult to keep all of these feasts and offerings straight, I have a chart below which distinguishes this passage from other similar offerings.

What is Offered and When				
Offering/passage	Gifts	Where offered	When offered	Other peculiarities
First Fruits (Lev. 23:9-14)	Sheaf of first barley harvest as a wave offering; a burnt offering and a grain offering.	P u b l i c offering in Jerusalem	March-April of each year	A one-year-old lamb without defect is to be offered to the Lord.
Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-21 Num. 28:26-31)	Two loaves of bread made with flour and leaven as a tribute offering; Raw produce; first fruits of wheat harvest	P u b l i c offering in Jerusalem	May-June of each year	Seven one-year-old lambs to be offered, along with other animals.
The Priests portion (Num. 18:8-19)	Prepared gifts from the produce (oil, flour, wine)	T h i s i s offered to the priests in Jerusalem.	This is a reference to any feast day or offering.	This passage outlines what portions of the offerings go directly to the priests.
Upon entering the land (Deut. 26:2-10)	Raw produce, placed into a basket; the priest retains the gift.	P r i v a t e offering to priests in Jerusalem	Upon entrance and possession of the Land of Promise. This was a one-time offering.	A speech is given, which the giver memorizes concerning the history of Israel. No animal offerings mentioned.

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Animal offerings are not a part of this offering in this context as this offering does not speak of the death of Jesus Christ but is simply an acknowledgment of God’s hand in giving them the Land of Promise. Most of the feast days celebrate the death of our Lord on our behalf. However, this is merely the Israelites saying *thank you* for bringing them into the land—therefore, it is a bloodless offering.

²⁸³ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995; p. 270.

²⁸⁴ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 319.

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The Affirmation Given by the Individual Israelite at His Offering

“And you will come in unto the priest who is in those days and you will say to him, ‘I have declared today to Y^ehowah your God that I have come in unto the land which Y^ehowah had sworn to our fathers to give to us.’ [Deut. 26:3]

In the Hebrew, this reads Y^ehowah your God; in the Greek Septuagint, it reads Y^ehowah my God, the latter making the most sense in this context. From the beginning, God promised this to Abraham and his progeny. To Isaac, He said, **“And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and I will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed; because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.”** (Gen. 26:4–5).

So they come before the priest with their firstfruits upon the first harvest of the land. Their testimony is that they recognize that this is the land which God had sworn to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and now they are here. This is a bloodless offering, as it expresses gratitude.

“And the priest will take the basket out of your hand and he will place it before the altar of Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 26:4]

The priest acknowledges their offering and he places it before the altar of God.

“And you will answer and say before Y^ehowah your God, ‘A perishing Aramæan [is] my father and he went down into Egypt and he took up temporary residence there with few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. [Deut. 26:5]

Although several Bibles translate a portion of this verse as a *wandering Aramean* (NASB, NIV, NRSV) the word found here is the adjectival use of the present active participle of *’â^bvad* (אֲבָד) [pronounced *aw^b-VAHD*] and it means *to perish* in the Qal stem (Lev. 26:38 Esther 4:16 Joel 1:11). Strong's #6 BDB #1. Aram is the general area to the direct east of Israel, and somewhat northward. This was the land from which Abraham came. Aram is the son of Shem and the father of Uz, making him the third generation from the ark (Gen. 10:22). Aram was never a great cohesive empire, but rather a loose collection of nations. All that we have which remains from Aram is Aramaic, a language used by the Chaldeans who occupied that area, and the primary language used in the books of Esther and Daniel. Now would be a good time to examine **the Doctrine of the Aramæans/Syrians—not finished yet!** Although these terms tend to be used interchangeably, they are not interchangeable terms.

Abraham is technically not an Israelite—from him came the Israelites and the Ishmaelites. Isaac was not an Israelite—he had twin sons, one of whom was the head of the Edomites and the other the head of the Israelites. Even Jacob is not an Israelite, technically speaking, although he is one of the patriarchs of the Israelites, and the father of the twelve tribes. They were all from Aramæan country and they all did a great deal of wandering.

What the Israelite is to say is fascinating. Jacob is the perishing Aramæan (see Gen. 26:5 Hos. 12:12), who spent much of his life working for his uncle Laban. Due to the time he spent there, he would be known as an Aramæan, much as our Lord was known as a Nazarene as this is where He grew up. The two women that Jacob married were Aramæan as well (Gen. 26:5 29:26, 28). It was Jacob's son, Joseph, who was originally taken to Egypt, later joined by his father and family. During the period of time which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob wandered, they were in danger of perishing. There was just Abraham—he had no children until age 99; he went for 99 years and had no children. A person like that you would think that his name was in danger of perishing. His only son, Isaac, had twins, and only one of them, Jacob, a coniving sneak, was in inheritor of his spiritual blessings. Throughout

much of Jacob's life, he was also in danger of perishing. We have this period of about two hundred years when it looks as though the spiritual seed of Abraham would stop dead in its tracks.

They all began in Egypt with about 70 Israelites (Gen. 46:27 Deut. 10:22). In the space of four hundred years, they grew to the size of two million. Having checked these figures with mathematics, such a thing is humanly possible. Also, early on, prior to their bondage, there would have been some early intermarrying and there would have been those brought into the Israelites, and an early increase in population would make such growth even easier. To get a handle on this, our nation had its seeds planted not but a few hundred years ago and, although we began with many more than an original 70, we have also become a nation of many millions, many of our individual cities exceed a million in population; and that was roughly 500 years ago. It is imperative that each individual Israelite know of his heritage, of the promises made to him by God.

“ ‘And the Egyptians were evil toward us and they afflicted us and they placed upon us harsh slavery. [Deut. 26:6]

This was the Israelite speaking to the priest as his offering lay before him. He was giving an acknowledgment of the historical context during which God brought him into the land. One of the problems with the evil gen X is that they never fully acknowledged how bad their life was under slavery, that they and their fathers had cried for deliverance; nor did they indicate that they were appreciative of the deliverance from Egypt by God. More often, they complained and remembered how wonderful life was in Egypt. Not once during the forty years the Israelites were in the desert did any of the Israelites complain, and then stop themselves and say, “But it was worse in Egypt. We cried to God for help in Egypt and He heard us.” **And the Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; And they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them (Ex. 1:13–14).**

“ ‘And we cried to Y^ehowah, God of our fathers, and Y^ehowah heard our voice and He saw our affliction and our labor and our oppression; [Deut. 26:7]

One of the weaknesses of the Exodus generation—gen X, specifically, is that they failed to recognize how horrible and harsh was their slavery under Egypt and how they cried to God for help. Here, the one bringing the offering of his firstfruits recognizes the pain and suffering of himself and his parents and grandparents. **Now it came to pass in many days that the king of Egypt died and the sons of Israel signed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of slavery rose up to God. So God heard their groaning and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 2:23–24).** When God called Moses, this is what He told him: **“And now, observe, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.” (Ex. 3:9).** When you are wrongly oppressed, God will hear your call to Him (Gen. 16:11 21:17 2Kings 13:4). Although, Scripture tells us that there are times when we won't feel God is responding quickly enough: **Why do You hide Your face and forget our affliction and our oppression? (Psalm 44:24).** I will say to God, my Rock, **“Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” (Psalm 42:9).** **God will answer our prayers. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and their blood will be precious in His sight (Psalm 72:14).**

“ ‘And Y^ehowah brought us out from Egypt with a strong hand and with a stretched-out arm, and by great fear and by signs and by wonders. [Deut. 26:8]

Here the Israelite recognizes the great and miraculous power of God. He recognizes that he did nothing to achieve his deliverance and God did it all. What had occurred had been summarized several times in the past. Moses, when petitioning to go through Edom, sent the message: **“Thus you know all the hardship that has befallen us; that our fathers went down to Egypt, and we stayed in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly. But when we cried out to Y^ehowah, He heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out from Egypt.” (Num. 20:14b–16a).** These couple sentences were a portion of the gospel at that time. This is what separated Israel God from the gods of other countries. **It is a night to be observed for Y^ehowah for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; this night is for Y^ehowah to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations (Ex. 14:42).** **And Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you went**

our from Egypt, out from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand Y^ehowah brought you out from this place (Ex. 13:3a). This was to be passed down throughout their generations. “And it will come to pass when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ then you will say to him, ‘With a powerful hand Y^ehowah brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.’” (Ex. 3:14).

“ ‘And He brought us into this place and He gave to us this land—a land flowing with milk and honey. [Deut. 26:9]

At the time of the Exodus, Israel was one of the most beautiful, prosperous and fertile areas in the world. God made this promise to Moses eighty years prior to this message: “So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Ex. 3:8). From pictures I have seen of Israel, this is hard to imagine. The key is rainfall; God has deprived that area in general of rainfall for a long time, due to their tremendous negative volition toward Him.

“ ‘And now, observe, I have brought in the first of the fruits of the ground which You have given to me, O Y^ehowah.’” Then you will place it before Y^ehowah your God and you will bow yourself before Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 26:10]

In this offering, the Israelite recognizes that God has given him the land and this produce from his ground. “And you will remember Y^ehowah your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as this day.” (Deut. 8:18). This is a very solemn occasion for a people who have not tread upon their own ground for over 400 years.

“And you will rejoice in all the good which Y^ehowah your God has given to you and to your house, you and the Levite and the immigrant who is in your midst. [Deut. 26:11]

Israel was not just for the Israelite, but for those who aligned themselves with Israel. One of the sad misconceptions taught by some excellent Bible teachers is that the mixed multitude that went up with Israel was the cause of all of their problems. Nowhere does the Bible support such a notion. Throughout, the Israel is to rejoice along with those who have gone with them. “And you will rejoice before Y^ehowah your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female slaves and the Levite who is in your town and the immigrant and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where Y^ehowah your God chooses to establish His name.” (Deut. 16:11). If you have doctrine in your soul, you are able to rejoice; you have capacity for life and capacity for blessing.

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The Third Year Tithe and the Individuals Affirmation of Faith

“When you complete to tithe all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of the tithe, then you will give [it] to the Levite, to the immigrant, to the orphan and to the widow; and they will eat within your gates and they will be satisfied. [Deut. 26:12]

The connection between this and the previous verse is that the Israelites rejoice in all that God has provided for them. Therefore, they are to share all that God has given them with those who are helpless. Nowhere else do you find a god so concerned with the helpless. This is why we know our God is concerned about us. There is nothing that we can do to get out of our condition of spiritual poverty and slavery to the old sin nature. God has provided for us a way out.

The Levites devoted themselves to spiritual service, and therefore had no other source of income. The immigrant, new to the country, suffering perhaps a language barrier, has possibly exhausted all of his means just to get there. He may have come to Israel, having very little to begin with. God required Israel to have not just an open door policy for those who wanted to immigrate, but to invite them in and feed them if necessary. Finally, God was always concerned for the helpless, which are collected under the grouping of *the orphan and the widow*. This is a reminder to these people, as Moses had already mentioned this third year tithe in Deut. 14:28–29. And, recall, even the Levites had to tithe to God from what they received: “Furthermore, you will speak to the Levites and say to them, ‘When you take a tithe from the sons of Israel, the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you will present an offering from it to Y^ehowah, a tithe of a tithe.’” (Num. 18:26). If necessary, go back and review the Doctrine of Tithing from Deut. 14.

“And you will say before the face of Y^ehowah your God, ‘I have put away the separated thing [i.e., his tithe] out of the house and also I have given it to the Levite and to the immigrant and to the orphan and to the widow, according to all of Your mandate which You have commanded me; I have not passed over from Your commands, nor have I forgotten. [Deut. 26:13]

Again, the Israelite must speak. What he is doing is supposed to be more than just a ritual. He testifies that he has not bypassed the commandments of God as delivered to him. He testifies that he has put aside the full 10% that year, which is to go to the Levite and to the poor and helpless.

The first thing that we must do with v. 14a is to get a good translation:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	I have not eaten of the tithe in my mourning [making the tithe unclean], nor have I handled any of it when I was unclean, or given any of it to the dead;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	I have not eaten in my sorrow therefrom neither have I removed therefrom when unclean, neither have I given thereof unto the dead,...
KJV	I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away <i>anything</i> thereof for <i>any</i> unclean use, nor given <i>anything</i> thereof for the dead,...
NASB	‘I have not eaten of it while in my mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor offered any of it to the dead.
NIV	I have not eaten any of the sacred portion while I was in mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	I have not eaten in mine affliction of it, nor have I put away of it for uncleanness, nor have I given of it for the dead;

The translations all begin correctly. The eating is done in the realm of 'âwen (אָוֶן) [pronounced AW-wen], although given in BDB as *trouble, sorrow, wickedness*, seems to be translated *iniquity* more often than anything else. This is only the third time this word has occurred in Scripture and it might be a good time to get a grasp of what it means. It is first found in Gen. 35:18. Rachel named her second and last son, whom giving birth to took her life, Ben-oni—son of *whatever this word means*. In context, although most of the KJV renders this word *iniquity*; there is nothing in context which would indicate that. The context is that it was a difficult labor and that she died as a result of it. This could be seen as *son of my pain*. And, on the other hand, it is possible that she was speaking of her impending death as a result of her *iniquity*, which is unspecified. In Num. 23:21, this word could go either way—it could mean *pain, misfortune* or it could mean *iniquity*. This word next occurs in 1Sam. 15:23, after Saul did not kill all of the population of the sons of Amalek and the prophet Samuel is dressing him down: “For rebellion is as the sin of divination and insubordination is as *iniquity* and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Y^ehowah, He has also rejected you from [being] king.” Other than the book of Genesis, the oldest linguistic uses of this word come from the book of Job, where this word is found several times (Job 4:8 5:6 11:11, 14 15:35 21:19 22:15 etc.). Throughout Job, the word seems to mean *iniquity*, rather than *misfortune*. The only possibly problem is Job 5:6, which could refer more to the *misfortune resulting from iniquity*. Then what about Gen. 35:18? The key to that verse is Jacob changes the son’s name. If his name had been *son of my sorrow*; then such a name would be apropos, as it would reflect his sorrow due to the loss of Rachel, his one wife of four that he loved. However, if the son was named *son of my iniquity*; then it would be human nature for Jacob to put aside his wife’s dying wishes, and rename his son *son of my right hand*. Strong’s #205 BDB #19.

This gives us, so far: **I have not eaten in my iniquity of it.** Finally, this would make much more sense. We can understand that eating from an offering demanded by God how this would be iniquity. It doesn't make as much sense that this would be sorrow or in mourning.

The next verb is *bâ'ar* (בָּעַר) [pronounced *baw-YAHR*], which, in the Qal, clearly means *to burn* (Ex. 3:5 Num. 11:1). In the Piel, the result of burning might be inferred—that is, it is completely *consumed, removed, eaten up* (Num. 24:22 Deut. 21:9 1Kings 14:10). Strong's #1197 BDB #128. Here it is found in the Piel, so it means: **and I have not removed [or, consumed] [any] of it in [the realm] of uncleanness.** The third main verb is the very common verb *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which means *give, grant, place, put, set*. Strong's #5414 BDB #678. In all three cases we have the prefixed preposition *mîn* (מִן) [pronounced *min*], a preposition which denotes separation (*away from, out from, out of from*) (Strong's #4480 BDB #577) with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix, referring back to the tithe.

For the dead is the prefixed preposition *lâmed*, which means *to, for, in regard to*; and it is followed by the Qal active participle of *mûwth* (מוֹת) [pronounced *mooth*], the simple word for *die*. In the Qal active participle, this means *the dead ones*. Strong's #4191 BDB #559.

“ I have not eaten in my iniquity from it, nor have I removed [or, consumed] [any] from it in uncleanness, nor have I given from it in regards to the dead. I have listened to the voice of Y^ehowah my God; I have done according to all that You have commanded me. [Deut. 26:14]

Lev. 7:20: **“But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of a peace offering which belongs to Y^ehowah, in his uncleanness, that person will be cut off from his people.”** This is his offering and he is affirming that the offering was not partially eaten, nor is there any reason that it might be unclean, or partially gone because it has been given to [or, for] the dead. This latter case is somewhat difficult, and neither Barne's nor NIV chose to comment on this. *The Emphasized Bible* suggests that this is a reference to a person *defiled* by the dead, as this was a concern expressed in Leviticus. What we have here is an offering which is required from which some has been taken for what would seem to the giver as legitimate reasons. In the case good being *given for the dead*, this is not the superstitious practice of putting food out on a grave but this is a reference to using the food for the traditional mourner's supper (see Jer. 16:7 Ezek. 24:17 Hos. 9:4 Tobit 4:17²⁸⁵). In other words, some of the food was used or given to those who had just experienced a death in the family. We have a similar amount of feasting when a loved one dies—we just do not have a name for it. This offering is not placed before God, per se, but given to the Levites or to the poor; for this reason, it might seem okay, in the eyes of some, to have already distributed some of this offering in some other way first. That is, what they are bringing does not constitute all of the offering, but, the giver reasons to himself, he has given it in other ways.

So we should look at application? You may feel like you have given to public radio, to some disease research foundation, or to some other good cause. This is above and beyond what your duty to God is. You still, if you are a believer with some doctrine who is maturing, you still have a responsibility to God. What you choose to give to God, from your excess, from that which He has prospered you, is still in effect. This does not mean that you give strictly 10% no matter what—we are to give to God as He has prospered. Another application: tithing was unique to Israel. It was a median ground between taxing and giving, which has since been separated into two separate entities. This also implies that we should pay all of the taxes which are due—that we are not allowed to cheat on are taxes or misrepresent any of the figures on our taxes.

This also eliminates the *great controversy*—do you pay 10% of your income to the church before or after taxes? Tithing is not for today so if you have chosen 1%, 5%, 10% or even 20% of your income as a ballpark spiritual gift, you also get to choose whether this is before or after taxes.

To go off on a tangent here: you may be concerned that your taxes are 50% of your income—a concern that I share as well—and you look at what the Israelites gave and that was 10%. When they chose a king, their kings

²⁸⁵ I quote from the Septuagint only by way of example to confirm that this custom was in existence—I don't go to it as spiritual authority.

began to tax them as well to a point that became burdensome to them. Also, the money that we make is incredible compared to what the Israelites made, even taking into account inflation. We have so much excess income that things which were considered great luxuries to the Israelites, like tv's and cars, are taken for granted by us. We have great material blessings here in the United States beyond what any country has ever enjoyed as a whole. This is because God has blessed us greatly. Now, you can always point to someone who is richer; however, you personally have a greater amount of personal property than the average Israelite every had.

“Look from Your holy habitation, from the heavens, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given to us, as You have sworn to our fathers—a land flowing with milk and honey.” [Deut. 26:15]

God is herein enjoined by the Israelite to continue to monitor their lives and to bless them, just as He has given them a stake in the Land of Promise. **O God of the armies, turn again now, we ask You, look down from heaven and see and take care of this vine** (Psalm 80:14; see also Isa. 63:15 Zech. 2:13). Such a statement reaffirms their dependance upon God.

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Conclusion of Second Message Given by Moses to the Israelites

“This day Y^ehowah your God is commanding you to do these statutes and judgments; and you will listen and do them with all your heart and with all your soul; [Deut. 26:16]

With this verse, Moses begins to draw this talk to a close, summarizing their reasonable service to God. In the land, the Israelites do not have a lot of options. They can either obey God with all their soul and all their heart, or God will throw them out of the land and He will not draw them back until they seek Him with all their soul and all their mind **“And Y^ehowah will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be few in number among the nations, where Y^ehowah will drive you. And there you will serve [other] gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek Y^ehowah your God and you will find if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days, you will return to Y^ehowah your God and listen to His voice. For Y^ehowah your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them.”** (Deut. 4:27–31; see also Deut. 28:1, 13). **“At that time I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together; indeed, I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,”** says Y^ehowah (Zeph. 3:20). Like a shepherd, He will tend His flock; in His arm, He will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing [ewes] (Isa. 40:11).

“You have been caused to declare Y^ehowah today to be to your God, and [you promise] to walk in His ways and to keep His statutes and His commandments and His judgments and to listen to His voice.” [Deut. 26:17]

As Moses has said to them before: **“If only you listen obediently to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today.”** (Deut. 15:5; see also Deut. 28:1). God had already made them a promise: **“Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you will know that I am Y^ehowah your God, Who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians (Ex. 7:6). Their fathers already made such a promise: And all the people answered together and said, “All that Y^ehowah has spoken we will do!”** (Deut. 19:8a).

At first, I didn't completely grasp whether it is a promise which they have caused God to keep and likewise they have made a similar vow to God; or whether God is keeping this promise to their generation as they are keeping His commandments. However, this will all be explained in the next verse.

“And Y^ehowah [has been caused] to promise to you today to be His people, a personal treasure, as He has spoken to you, and to keep all His commandments; [Deut. 26:18]

The Hiphil perfect used here for the word 'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MARH*] means that God is promising through the agency of Moses. By itself, 'amar merely means *to say, to utter*. Whereas this word occurs over 4000 times in Scripture (making it possibly the second most frequently occurring verb in the Hebrew), it is only found in the Hiphil here and in v. 17. Strong's #559 BDB #55. In examining these two verses and thinking of the situation involved here, the Israelites have declared through Moses their promise to God and God has declared through Moses His promise to them—Moses acts as an intermediary. Only through him are the two parties able to make such a promise or such a declaration; this is why this occurs only here in Scripture. A better translation might be: **“You have [been caused to] declared [through me] Y^ehowah today to be to your God, and [you promise] to walk in His ways and to keep His statutes and His commandments and His judgments and to listen to His voice. And Y^ehowah has [been caused to] declare(d) [through me] to you today to be His people, a personal treasure, as He has spoken to you, and to keep all His commandments.”** (Deut. 28:17–18). This is a statement that in the Hebrew jumps out at you because this is the only place in Scripture which has this particular construction. It is this construction which tells us that Moses knows what he is speaking is God's Word. The NIV Study Bible says this portion of Deuteronomy carries the terminology of a covenant or a treaty, although, as was mentioned before, we have nothing in Scripture which corresponds to this, whereas, we have several treaties and covenants mentioned in Scripture. However, what we do have here is God's promises to the people and the people's promises to God intertwined so that God is caused to promise to them and they are caused to promise to God. This is the essence of a conditional covenant.

Israel appears to the world as a people who are set apart from all else in their periphery by their wisdom and their behavior. They are to appear to others to be a people of God. **“For you are a holy people to Y^ehowah your God; Y^ehowah your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”** (Deut. 7:6).

“So as to make you uppermost above all the nations whom He has made for a praise, and for a name, and for beauty, and for your being a holy people to Y^ehowah your God, as He has spoken.”
[Deut. 26:19]

God wants to be able to tout the Jews as His people before all nations, to draw those who are open to the gospel to Him. God was able to do that in a limited way during the time of King David: **And David realized that Y^ehowah had established him as king over Israel, that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel** (1Chron. 14:2). See Psalm 148:14 Isa. 62:7. However, this is completely fulfilled in the millennium when our Lord Jesus Christ sits on the throne of Israel. **In the days to come, Jacob will take root; Israel will blossom and sprout; and they will fill the whole world with fruit** (Isa. 27:6). Thus says Y^ehowah, **“The labor of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabeans, men of stature, will come over to you and will be yours. They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains and will bow down to you. They will make supplication to you: ‘Surely God is with you, and there is none else—no other God.’”** Truly, You are a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior! **They will be put to shame and even humiliated—all of them. The manufacturers of idols will go away together in humiliation. Israel has been delivered by Y^ehowah with an everlasting salvation. You will not be put to shame or humiliated to all eternity** (Isa. 45:15–17).

Peter was probably studying this passage, when he declared to the Jews who were scattered throughout the **ancient world: But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for [God's] own possession,** that you may proclaim the virtues of Him Who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1Peter 2:9 Isa. 61:6 Deut. 7:6 26:18–19).

And this concludes the longest discourse of the book of Deuteronomy. The first talk Moses gave ran from Deut. 1:6 through 4:40 and the second from 5:1 to 26:19.

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Deuteronomy 27

Deuteronomy 27:1–26

Outline of Chapter 27:

- vv. 1–8 **The Israelites are to build an altar of stones at Mount Ebal**
- vv. 9–10 **A Levitical admonition**
- vv. 11–14 **The twelve curses: the setup**
- vv. 15–16 **The twelve curses: disobedience to the Ten Commandments**
- vv. 17–19 **The twelve curses: transgressions of the civil code**
- vv. 20–23 **The twelve curses: transgressions in the realm of sexual deviance**
- vv. 24–26 **The twelve curses: transgressions against man and conclusion**

Charts:

- v. 9 **Word-by-Word Examination of Deut. 27:9b**
- v. 12 **Examples of Blessing**
- v. 13 **Examples of Cursing**
- v. 26 **The Secretive Aspect of Transgressions**

Introduction: The third discourse of Moses occurs in Deut. 27–30. Chapter 27 is the first time for well over a dozen chapters that we will have any narrative at all. And it will be very little. In this chapter we have the command to build an altar and the famous *curses from Mount Ebal*.

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The Israelites Are to Build an Altar of Stones at Mount Ebal

Then Moses [lit., and] along with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying, “Keep all of the commandment which I command you this day. [Deut. 27:1]

Keep is in the Qal infinitive absolute, but can, as a *finite verb*, replace imperatives, participles, and the infinitive construct.²⁸⁶ Here, because of the verb *command*, this is used obviously as an imperative. *Commandment* is in the singular, as it is often found in this book; it is a reference to the entire Law, given as though one cohesive whole, from God through the agency of Moses. These commandments were a guide from God, that the people might show themselves to the outside world to be wise and guided by Him. **For this is God, our God forever and ever—He will guide us until death** (Psalm 48:14). Observing His Law is one of the consistent themes throughout Scripture. They should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. **And they are not to be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation—a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God** (Psalm 78:8).

Given the huge number of Israelites that there were (even if one assumes that the numbers given throughout the Law are incorrect, there were still a huge number of Israelites—far too many for Moses to speak to as one group),

²⁸⁶ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; p 2277.

this verse indicates that there was standing room only and that the elders were responsible to command the people as well as they learned from Moses. We do not know the nuts and bolts of this, except perhaps that Moses taught the elders and they then taught their own groups of people. Exactly how highly organized this was is not given to us. We have a very organized system of judicial prudence, as suggested by Moses' father-in-law. We likely have a very organized system of teaching. This verse literally reads: **Then Moses commanded—and the elders of Israel—the people, saying, “Keep all of the commandment which I am commanding you this day.”** Moses might teach 500-1000 elders and Levites and they might teach 500 or a 1000. This would pretty much cover the entire population of Israel who are positive toward God's Word, even if that number were an overwhelming majority. Whether all or a portion of the teaching of Moses was covered that way, we don't know. Whether some took notes and taught from their notes, we don't know. The ability to write was there, although it was certainly much less convenient than it is today. It is likely that much of this chapter and what was to follow was done in a very organized way. We aren't given any details other than the elders were somehow involved in these commands. This cannot be misinterpreted that Moses commanded the elders and the people, as the word *elders* is preceded by the conjunction *and*; and the people are preceded in the Hebrew by the untranslated word 'êth (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*]. 'Êth is the mark of a direct object (it can also be used as a preposition denoting *nearness*. And translated *with, among*. Therefore, this could possibly read: **Then Moses commanded—and the elders of Israel among the people, saying, “Keep all of the commandment which I am commanding you this day.”** *Commanded* really requires a direct object, so the second rendering is much less likely. This is a little tricky as this same word is often untranslated and used to designate a direct object. Strong's #854 BDB #85. In either case, however, the elders of Israel still function as subjects of the verb and not objects. It is a very common Hebraism for there to be a dual or a plural subject and a singular verb. The structure is: [the singular subject] [the singular verb] [a conjunction] [an additional subject or subjects] [the direct object and/or the remainder of the sentence]. It might be beneficial for you to just see how the other translators of Scripture rendered this:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying... (ditto for <i>The Emphasized Bible</i> , the KJV)
NASB	Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying...
NEB	Moses, with the elders of Israel, gave the people this charge:,...
NIV	Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people:...
NRSV	Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged all the people as follows:...
Owen's Translation	Now Moses commanded—and the elders of Israel—the people, saying, ²⁸⁷ ...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And Moses—the elders of Israel also—commanded the people, saying...

As you see, all of the major translations recognize this as a dual subject although there is a singular verb and they all render the people as the object of the verb. Now, even more importantly, is what has been ignored by commentators, insofar as I am aware, is the actual nuts and bolts of the situation. In some way, the elders of the people were involved in the commanding, but only in a secondary way. God the Holy Spirit saw fit not to give us details here, possibly because man tends to go way off the deep end when an historical event is recorded in the Bible. A detailed approach to how Moses set up the authority levels and who taught what to who would have only served to complicate our system of teaching with needless rules and regulations. People cannot distinguish sometimes between what occurred, why it occurred, and what is commanded for us to do. The book of Acts has caused all kinds of problems for some because they feel as though the essential commands of the Christian life are found in it. This is not the case. The organization and the experiences of the early church in the **pre-canon** period are historically documented by Luke. The reaction of the Jew and the process of evangelism are covered. This historical gap between the tremendous miracles of our Lord's day and the distinct lack of mention of some of the epistles is found in the book of Acts. In fact, when mentioned in the epistles, miracles and angels are as often spoken of as a sign of apostasy (2Cor. 11:14 Gal. 1:8 2Thess. 2:9) rather than a confirmation of God's Presence. What happened? The book of Acts happened, and it bridges the gap between the gospels and the epistles. However, Acts is not given as a series of commands for building and designing the church today—it is an historical survey of the church over a period of perhaps twenty or thirty years of the pre-canon period of the Church Age. The book of Acts is distorted by enough religious groups already today. If the system of organization

²⁸⁷ Punctuation has been added by me.

used by Moses and his speaking to the people were recorded in its most minute detail, imagine how much more screwed up the church would be today (although it is hard to imagine it getting much worse).

“And it will come to pass in the day that you [all] pass over the Jordan into the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you, that you will raise up for yourself great stones and you will plaster them with plaster; [Deut. 27:2]

This is one of the few monuments God required of Israel. At this point, there is no time frame given here. The Israelites are to enter into the land and to build this monument. It will be found on Mount Ebal, which is both the other side of the Jordan and the other side of Jericho from them. They will cross the Jordan in Joshua 4:1. Then the Israelites will have to first defeat Jericho in order to fulfill this charge of Moses. This will be done in Joshua 6. Then, Joshua, one of the handful of faithful people out of gen X, will fulfil this commandment: **The Joshua built an altar to Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, just as Moses, the servant of Y^ehowah, had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the Law of Moses; an altar of uncut stones, on which no man had wielded an iron [tool]; and the offered burnt offerings on it to Y^ehowah, and sacrificed peace offerings. And he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written in the presence of the sons of Israel (Joshua 8:30–32).**

We have had stones arranged and placed as monuments to various things going back to Genesis and found in 1Sam. 7:12 and elsewhere. The stones were never carved or shaped by man; and they were set up in a way to draw attention. The plastering either provided a base with which to write the Law or they would cause the Law to stand out. According to BDB, this plaster is the lime gotten by burning bones and they also render it *whitewash*. It is only found in this passage, Isa. 33:12 and Amos 2:1. Strong’s #7875 (the verb is #7874) BDB #966.

For a half a century, God has promised Abraham and his progeny that God would make them into a great nation. God took this Aramæan who appeared as though he was perishing and not only prospered him with material things, but gave him unequivocal promises about the nation to be raised from his loins and this nation has come to pass. Now, for one of the great historic moments in the life of the nation Israel, they are about ready to enter the land to take it. God requires them to make a monument to commemorate this event. God wants there to be all of these reminders of what He has done on their behalf; God wants there to be all of these things where the sons will ask, *what is this?* and their fathers will tell them of the great promises and mighty signs of their God.

“And you will write upon them all the words of this law when you pass over to enter the land which Y^ehowah your God gives you—a land flowing with milk and honey, as Y^ehowah, God of your fathers, has promised you [lit., spoke to you]. [Deut. 27:3]

This is more than just simple memorial but on this will be the words of the Law. These stones were a memorial, a testimonial to the fact that it was God and His Law which had brought them to this place. In this way, the Israelites acknowledged their obligations to keep the Law. We do not know how the law was written on these stones, whether engraved (which would have been the longest lasting method) or scratched into the plaster.²⁸⁸ If engraved, then the plaster would be painted over the stone, and that which was engraved would stand out. Barnes suggests that the plaster had a preservative affect. Since we do not know the exact makeup of this *plaster* of the ancient world, that is a distinct possibility. Obviously, Joshua by himself could not do this. Nor are we told how much of the Torah would be written down, although it sounds as though it would be the entire Torah (**ALL the words of this Law**). That sounds to me like either the entire Torah or, at the very least, all of Deuteronomy.²⁸⁹ Barnes’ suggests that these are the 613 laws, the number of laws found throughout the Torah. I reject that, as the numbering of the laws came later in the time of Israel. Rotherham suggests just the Ten Words (ie., the Ten Commandments) were written. Both of them make these suggestions because they recognize how much time this project could take. We have no indication of an edited law at this time. In fact, editing the Law down to its

²⁸⁸ I only offer this *scratching into plaster* as an alternative method. I personally do not believe that to be the case. The stones were to be a memorial to God and His Law—Moses would not direct this generation to do something which is so transitory as to scratch these words into plaster.

²⁸⁹ The latter is also suggested by the NIV Study Bible, p. 271. Keil and Delitzsch reject this.

commandments probably did not occur until much later in the history of Israel. Furthermore, Moses uses the words *this Law* (i.e., *the Law the this*). For this reason, I would have to go with either most of Deuteronomy (what Moses was teaching right then and there) or the entire Law. If you will notice, you are on about p. 200 in your Bible, so if this is the entire Torah, then this monument would have been at least 200 large stones. In terms of being time-consuming, it would not be. It would take two hundred men who could write roughly an hour or two each to write this out after the stone had been prepared, perhaps the day before. So we are talking a day and a half to write on the stones as a maximum, and perhaps another day to arrange the stones. The idea of dumping three or four stones in a pile and calling it a monument seems rather insignificant (unless you live in Houston where there are no stones). A monument of several hundred stones piled upon one another—now, that would stand out and be a testimony to our Lord.

lin Deut. 27:1 and 28:15, when the Israelites are commanded to obey all the words of the Law or all the commandment, is this a limited reference? That is, they only needed to obey an edited portion of the Law? (The obvious answer here is no, they had to obey the entire Law). What the Israelites worked from would have been Moses' writings, which would not be so edited. So this would be a rather time-consuming project which would have had to be divided up between the people who had the ability to write. In a population of two million, this must have been considerable. The word for *write* here is *kâtha^v* (כָּתַב) [pronounced *kaw-THAH^v*]. It is used for both writing the divorce decree (Deut. 24:1) or for God writing the Law on the stone tablets (Ex. 31:18). Strong's #3789 BDB #507. As has been mentioned many times, writing had been a fact of life for ancient peoples, as has been confirmed by archeology (although, early on in our archeological history, because of lack of evidence, this was first denied) and by the continual mention of writing in the Pentateuch (Ex. 24:4 Joshua 24:26). I will go into more detail on the mechanics of this in v. 8.

“And it will come to pass, in your passing over the Jordan: you will raise up these stones which I am commanding you today, in Mount Ebal;²⁹⁰ and you will plaster them with plaster. [Deut. 27:4]

Roughly 20 miles due west of their encampment was Shechem, with Mount Ebal on one side and Mount Gerizim on the other. The Israelites are to march to there and erect this monument. Between them and Shechem is Jericho. Moses made mention of this in his first discourse, but did not go into any detail. **“And it will come to pass, when Y^ehowah your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you will place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. Are they not across the Jordan, west of the way toward the sunset, in the land of the Canaanites who live in Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?”** (Deut. 11:29–30).

Now, this is both fascinating and fantastic, something which I missed my first few times through this portion of Deuteronomy. Notice where the stones bearing the Law are set: they are placed on Mount Ebal, not on Mount Gerizim; nor are they placed halfway in between the two mountains. Human viewpoint would have chosen the valley between them or Mount Gerizim, but God chose for them to be on Mount Ebal.²⁹¹ So you are thinking, *so what?* This is so what: the curses are spoken from Mount Ebal; the blessings from Mount Gerizim. The Law, from its inception, is associated with *cursing*. We are cursed by the Law; we are not justified by the Law. We don't obey and follow the Law for the entirety of our lives and God, being so totally impressed with our good behavior, takes us to be with Him in eternity because we just tried so hard and we were so good. No matter how hard we try, the Law is still in a place of cursing and it still curses us. **And behold, one came to Him {Jesus Christ} and said, “Teacher, what good thing could I do that I may obtain eternal life?” And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You will not murder; you will not commit adultery; you will not steal; you will not bear false witness; honor your father and mother; and, you will love your neighbor as yourself.” The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?” Jesus**

²⁹⁰ As a matter of interest, the Samaritan Pentateuch reads Mount Gerizim here. There was the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, so this verse was likely altered in their Scripture to give Scriptural sanction to this temple. Bear in mind that the religious types who were responsible for this change are probably burning in hell right at this moment, as this indicates that they valued their religion over and above the Word of God.

²⁹¹ The Samaritan Pentateuch was adulterated at this point and has the Law being placed on Mount Gerizim. This is strictly human viewpoint changed by a legalistic scribe.

said, to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possession and give [it] to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and follow Me.” But when the young man heard the statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property (Matt. 19:16–22 Deut. 5:17–20). This rich young ruler is just nodding his head up and down and suddenly Jesus stops with the ten commandments (right before getting to You will not covet—which the ruler did not; he was too rich to covet); and goes back to Honor your father and mother; and then to Love your neighbor as yourself. This subtlety is totally lost to most people, but it was not lost on this rich young ruler, who knew the Law. He is nodding his head up and down; he has obeyed all of these commandments; he knows our Lord is going to finally say—You will not covet—but Jesus does not. You see, he is a rich young man, and he does not have to covet. Whatever he wants, he can go out and buy. So he is waiting with glee for Jesus to say, “Do not covet” because he does not covet. However, Jesus, Who is omnipotent, goes backward in the commandments; he mentions two which this young man has not really obeyed. Now, with the last two mandates, the rich young man is not quite as enthusiastic, but he goes along and says he’s kept all these commandments. So our Lord puts him to the test on the last two: “Sell what you have and give it to the poor—show Me you love your neighbor as yourself. Furthermore, support your indigent parents.” Jesus knew which commandments he obeyed and which ones he ignored. He called him on it and showed that this rich young ruler was not willing to stand behind his word that he had kept all of those commandments. Therefore, he was condemned. The Law can only condemn us; it can never justify us. “We know that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we [who] have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified...for if righteousness [came] through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.” (Gal. 2:16, 21)²⁹².

So, how is the rich young ruler saved? Our Lord tells him: “...and follow Me.” By following our Lord—not by keeping more commandments—this man would have been saved. Why are you in pain and suffering all the time? Why are many people in pain and suffering? This is the only way for God to reach most of us. We don’t come to Him when we are rich and successful. And Jesus said to His disciples, “Point of doctrine: it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And when the disciples heard, they were very astonished and said, “Then who can be saved?” And looking upon [them], Jesus said to them, “With men, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.” Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Look, we have left everything and followed You—what then will there be for us?” And Jesus said to them, “Point of doctrine: you who have followed Me in the regeneration. When the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you will also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or fathers or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, you will receive many times as much and you will inherit eternal life.” (Matt. 19:23–29). Great wealth demands time and responsibilities, even for the worst of heathen. Some people don’t go to church and don’t listen to evangelists because they are too busy dealing with their wealth.

So that you don’t overthink this passage, let me explain: our Lord is discussing two issues—salvation, which comes through following Him in the regeneration, and the reward and blessing which comes from making decisions from the standpoint of Bible doctrine. The Law was not ignored by those who were saved in the Old Testament. The Law was then to be obeyed—not as a condition of salvation, but as a response to regeneration. When our Lord’s disciple’s believed in Him and then left their lives behind to follow Him, that resulted in great reward. When Judas followed our Lord, not ever believing in Him, he went from a miserable life on earth to eternal death and suffering²⁹³.

²⁹² This is in quotes because this is what Paul said to Peter when Peter was falling into legalism and taking others with him. Paul sweat Peter’s shadow into the wall on grace and Peter, who became a man of grace, caught on, and later recommended Paul’s epistles. That is a testimonial to Peter.

²⁹³ For some of you, you still grimace when hearing about hell, eternal torment, etc. So did Satan—particularly when he realized that it was going to be him. One of the objections which he no doubt brought forth in his appeal trial is, *you made me thus; now how can you condemn me to eternity in pain and misery? How can that be right from a God of love?* This is by no means a trivial question to be answered in a paragraph or two. Our lives and human history has been played out in order to show the justness and the righteousness of that decision. Whereas, I can name hundreds of people who may burn in hell that I don’t want to burn in hell; and any unbeliever can name at least one person they don’t want to see burn in hell—nevertheless, God will condemn all of those who do not believe in Him to eternal hellfire. Once human history, with all its misery and suffering is played out, then we will fully grasp the righteousness of God in this decision. God allows Satan, his demon forces and

And some of you know damn well why you wouldn't come to Jesus Christ originally (or, why you are refusing to come to Him now). You are afraid that you'll have to give up something. You are afraid that some form of entertainment, enjoyment, sensuality will have to go by the wayside. You are rich and successful and you don't want God to call you to the mission field. You don't want our Lord to tell you to sell everything and give it away. Don't worry—you don't have to. All you have to do is to follow Him. Believe in Jesus Christ and you are saved. If you believe in the Son, you will never die—you will have eternal life. What happens after salvation is a separate matter, but salvation only takes but a few seconds. You need to hear the gospel, understand the gospel, and then believe in Jesus Christ.

Speaking of the rich young ruler, his wealth and time, a personal problem which I have, and I am certain, one which is true for all of you, is that I tend to have so much in the way of unimportant events crowd into my time, removing me from my pursuit of God's Word and His truth. We all have duties and responsibilities—our employers should not be able to fault our work, our loved ones should not find us distant, remote or detached from them, and those with whom we are associated should find us bastions of integrity. The various laws of the land which require us to perform certain acts (keeping our automobiles legal; doing our taxes) must be followed. However, of foremost importance is God's Word. It is our lifeline, our only connection to that which is real. There is so much in our lives placed there to influence us to do wrong and to think wrong. Plato taught, in his shadows of the cave wall analogy, that the real essence of life is that which cannot be seen. Our flesh and blood is unimportant and the unseen world is the real world. As we all know, we have a thought life, emotions, memories and mental capacities, such that, if we were to record every image in our brains, every word, thought and memory that we have every had, each of us will fill a library. So there is no doubt that this unseen world just in our minds is incredibly vast. From that, Plato theorized that this unseen world is what is real. We know there is a great unseen world through divine revelation; this is where the angelic conflict takes place. Plato's take on this is that we are like men in a cave. The real world is outside the cave. All they can perceive of the real world are the shadows from the outside—the shadows on the cave wall. That is their only perception of reality, a mere shadow of what is real. For Plato, the world that we see is analogous to the shadows on the cave wall—it is only a shadow of what is real. However, we do not have to be stuck with the shadows—we have the living Word of God, which is the greatest reality which man has (Is it any wonder that much of the philosophy of the early Catholic church found as much of its roots in Plato as it did in God's Word?). However, God has not only provided us His Word, a lifeline, a connection to that which is eternal and true, but He has also given to us the time in which to assimilate it and those who will teach it to us.

God had to communicate the gospel to every person who was positive toward His Word and still have the actual means of salvation remain a mystery to Satan. So we have real, physical events which are thinly veiled reality. Let me give you an illustration. Some of you have sheers over your windows or over your French doors. In the daytime, no one can see in, but you can look out from the darkness into the light. The Israelites were able to see and understand the gospel through these sheers; however, Satan was not able to see through them, as if standing on the outside and unable to see in. A dichotomy which the Jewish religion does not like to deal with is that, on the one hand, they were blessed of God and given the Law; but, on the other hand, the Law was always associated with cursing. **“Take the book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah your God, that it may be there as a witness against you.”** (Deut. 31:26).

“And you will build there an altar to Y^ehowah your God, an altar of stones; you will not wave iron over them. [Deut. 27:5]

Moses is not losing his mind here and telling the Israelites again to build an altar of stones, repeating what he just said. The other altar of stones was actually a monument, on which was to be engraved the Word of God. This will be an altar on which sacrifices were to be offered, set up in the same vicinity.

In this verse we have the 2nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *nûwph* (נָפַח) [pronounced *noof*]. According to BDB, the technical use of this word is that priest would take an offering and lift it up toward the altar

unregenerate man to live, so to speak, on what might be termed the Devil's Island of the universe—in the Lake of Fire. That is the corner of the universe where they will go to, as they all chose against God.

and then move it away, back to himself, as it were, to represent that this is being offered to Yahweh and Yahweh has given it back to them. So, in this verse, Aaron presents the Levites to Yahweh, but then receives them back as a present to himself and his sons. Strong's #5130 BDB #631. So you should be wondering, why the hell are they not to wave iron over this altar? What is expected here is that these stones will not be shaped, carved or sculpted by man's hands into some monument which is more a testimonial to a man's artistic abilities than to God's eternal promises. Therefore, the Israelites were not to sculpt their altars. **"And if you make an altar of stone to Me, you will not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it."** (Ex. 20:25). The message which God has for us is that we cannot add any works whatsoever to Christ's work on the altar—the cross of His crucifixion. Where Christ was sacrificed on our behalf, there is to be no semblance of human works. Since we have had several types of altars, in Exodus, Leviticus and here, we ought to examine the **Doctrine of Altars—not finished yet!!**

"You will build the altar of Y^ehowah your God [from] whole stones; and you will cause burnt offerings to ascend on it to Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 27:6]

First, let's look at what kind of stones are used to build this altar. The adjective used is *shâlêm* (שָׁלֵם) [pronounced *shaw-LAME*] and it is given the meanings *complete, safe, at peace* in BDB. We first find this adjective used in Gen. 15:16 when the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet *complete*. We saw this word used just recently concerning the *perfect* and just weights that were to be used by the Israelites (Deut. 25:15). These are whole and complete stones, much like the animal sacrifice, which was to be without spot and without blemish. The altar was not to be constructed out of a portion of stone or from a broken piece of rock. Strong's #8003 (7999) BDB #1023.

This is how we escape from the cursing of Mount Ebal—through the burnt offerings which ascend to God the Father. These burnt offerings are not just more regulations to follow, but illustrate the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. These burnt offerings are offered upon another mound of stones. Jesus Christ is known as the rock in the New Testament and Jesus Christ, as Y^ehowah God, is also called the rock in the Old Testament. **Y^ehowah is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my Rock, in Whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation—my stronghold (Psalm 18:2). Incline your ear to me, rescue me quickly; be to me a rock of strength, a stronghold to deliver me. For You are my Rock and my fortress. For Your name's sake, You will lead me and guide me (Psalm 31:2–3). Y^ehowah is upright, my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him (Psalm 92:15b). And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock, which followed them; and the rock was Christ (1Cor. 10:4).** The burnt offering upon the rock or the stones speaks of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The fire and burning is the judgment of God. Our Lord ascended into heaven after dying for our sins, being raised by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit as a testimonial to the efficacy of the sacrifice of our Lord. Over and over again, God revealed His gospel to the positive of the Old Testament and Satan and his demon cadre saw sacrifice after sacrifice, witnessing thousands upon thousands of sacrifices of innocent, unblemished lambs and other animals, taking upon them the stench of their sin, being sacrificed at times upon a rock—from which Rock sprung living waters. And Satan never guessed what was to come to pass. Millions upon millions of people were saved, many through the observance of the sacrificial offerings, the truth made known to them through God the Holy Spirit—and they believed in Jesus Christ, Y^ehowah of the Old Testament. And, Satan through duplicity and sin, betrayal and evil, led our Lord to go to the cross, Satan thinking in himself that he had just executed the greatest coup d'état in history—and suddenly, he found himself blindsided by the cross, not fully grasping what had taken place until the victorious proclamation of Jesus Christ when He spoke the the spirits in hell. Then Satan realized what had happened, that our Lord paid for our sins as a lamb without spot and without blemish, suffering under the burning fire of judgment, taking upon Himself the punishment that we so richly deserved.

"And you will sacrifice peace offerings [there] and you will eat there and you will rejoice before the face of Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 27:7]

This is there equivalent of a church service and notice that they are commanded to rejoice. It is because of His sacrifice that we are able to rejoice. **"And you will rejoice before Y^ehowah your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan**

and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where Y^ehowah your God chooses to establish His name.” (Deut. 16:11). Our lives would mean nothing and our existence would be worthless without the fact that Jesus Christ died for our sins and we can appropriate His saving grace through faith.

“And you will write on the stone all the words of this Law, clearly engraved [or, clearly distinct and well-done].” [Deut. 27:8]

I have fudged on the last couple words in this verse because I was having trouble translating it. First let me show you what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...all the words of the law very plainly. (KJV as well)
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...all the words of this law doing it plainly and well.
NASB	“...all the words of this law very distinctly.”
NIV	“And you will write very clearly all the words of this law...”
NRSV	...all the words of this law very clearly.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...all the words of this law, well-engraved.

The second to the last word is the Piel infinitive absolute of *bâ'ar* (בָּאֵר) [pronounced *baw-AHR*] and it means *to make distinct, plain, to expound*. It is found only in the Piel and it is found only in Deut. 1:5 27:8 and Habak. 2:2. According to the New Englishman's Concordance it is in the Piel imperative here. Strong's #874 BDB #91. This is followed by the Hiphil infinitive absolute of *yâṭa'v* (יָטַב) [pronounced *yaw-TA^pV*], which means *to be good, well, to be pleasing*. Strong's #3190 BDB #405. Surprisingly enough, we do not have a word for *cut*, as in *engraving* the letters into the stone, although I think that is what is what occurred. The order appears as though the lime is put down first and then the law is written so perhaps Joshua would use permanent marker pens or their equivalent at that time. Although we do know of some of the methods of writing from ancient times, there are bound to be some mediums which perhaps would last several hundred years, but not long enough to make it into our world via archeology. My personal opinion is that the plaster (or the lime) provided a background on which the Law could be written in some kind of a pen or brush using a paint or “permanent” ink or sorts. Keil and Delitzsch offer the best explanation that the law was painted *upon the plastered stones, as was the custom in Egypt, where the walls of buildings, and even monumental stones, ...were first of all covered with a coating of lime or gypsum and then the figures painted upon [them]*.²⁹⁴ We do have an archeological precedence of a similar kind of medium discovered by Prokesch—in the tombs of Dashoor there were stones where a red mortar had first been laid down and hieroglyphics and a figure of Apis had been impressed on the coating. This is how Egyptians preserved some writings, covering sandstone (or granite) with a kind of stucco and then they either made impressions in the stucco or painted over the stucco. Some of these have been preserved for over two thousand years.²⁹⁵ It is my personal opinion that the exact method which was used here was probably been lost to time, although it was likely very similar to the Egyptian medium just described. Our own products from paper and pen would be difficult to intentionally preserve over a period of two millenniums; without air tight containers and without the intention of preserving these things for thousands of years, there must have been some mediums which were completely lost to us. Now might be a good time to examine a **Study of Writing—not finished yet!**

It was important to have the words of the Law to stand as a memorial where this altar was built. Recall, there was not a printing system in effect at that time, except by long hand (which would be done); so this provided a place for the Law to be read by anyone. The object of this writing of the Law was a public display and acknowledgment of the covenant between the people of Israel and God. It was there so that several generations to follow would have the Law as a witness to them and, at times, against them.

Deuteronomy 21 Deuteronomy 22 Deuteronomy 23 Deuteronomy 24 Deuteronomy 25
Deuteronomy 26 Deuteronomy 27 Deuteronomy 28 Deuteronomy 29 Deuteronomy 30

²⁹⁴ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 960.

²⁹⁵ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 116.

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A Levitical Admonition

And Moses said—and the priests the Levites [lit., the Levite], to all of Israel, saying, “[Be caused] to keep silent and hear, O Israel: this day you have become [the] [lit., to, for or in regard to] people of [lit., in regards to] Y^ehowah your God [or, you have been *changed (or, made)* to a people for Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 27:9]

This portion of God’s Word is also confusing in the Hebrew. It is fairly clear in the English because what is found here is not seen in the English. First of all, why the sudden break—why there is the command of Moses and the elders of Israel at first with regards to an altar; and now it is Moses and the priests, the Levite. Furthermore, this will only be a very short sentence or two. I don’t know if what happened was the crowd that listened to him was huge and therefore became talkative or what.

Keep silent and hear are verbs which are both in the imperative, indicating that these are clear commands (most of the Old Testament commands and instructions are not in the imperative). However, *keep silent* is in the Hiphil imperative. Therefore, we render this **be caused to keep silent**. This is the only place in the Old Testament where we find this word (it is found in Ecclesiasticus 13:23, which is part of the Apocrapha)²⁹⁶.

However, prior to the word *people* and *Y^ehowah*, we have the prefixed preposition lâmed, which means *to, for, in regards to*. We would expect to find either a definite article(s) or not, but we would not expect to find the preposition used twice here. This is why we find this preposition ignored in most translations in both instances. The key is likely the verb *to be*, which is in the Niphal (passive stem) perfect. We might could translate this **you have been made to a people for Y^ehowah your God**. Or **this day you have become for a people to Y^ehowah your God**. Rotherham suggests: **This day you have made yourself a people to Yahweh your God**.²⁹⁷ In fact, in examining what I have written, it might be best to give a word by word comparison of what is here:

Word-by-Word Examination of Deut. 27:9b					
Transliteration	hayôm ²⁹⁸	hazeh	nîh ^e yêyâth	l ^e âm	l ^e YHWH
Hebrew	הַיּוֹם	הַזֶּה	נִהְיֵיתָ	לְעַם	לַיהוָה
Pronunciation	hah-YOME	hah-ZEH	nee-hê-YE-yawth	l ^e -AWM	l ^e -y ^e -hoe-WAH
Part of speech	def. art., noun (ms)	def. art., demonstr. adj. (ms)	verb, Niphal perfect, (2 ms)	preposition, noun (ms)	preposition, proper noun
English	the day	the this	have become, has been brought to pass	to, for, in regards to; people	to, for, in regards to; Y ^e howah

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²⁹⁶ This book was written in 180 BC and survives in the Hebrew.

²⁹⁷ I modernized his translation and footnoted suggestion somewhat.

²⁹⁸ I am guessing that the y (and later the z) should not be doubled. The dagesh (the dot in the middle of the letter) usually doubles the consonant when in the middle of a word; however, here, it is at the beginning of the word, even though it is preceded by a prefixed hê, the definite article. A dagesh is found with many of the Hebrew letters at the beginning of a word and it does not double the consonant in this situation.

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“And you will listen to the voice of Y^howah your God and you will do His commands and His statutes, which I am commanding you this day.” [Deut. 27:10]

This is an example where we have a series of commands, but they are all in the Qal perfect, the Qal being the normal use of the verb and the perfect being the completed tense. In other words, although this is in the imperative insofar as we in the English are concerned, it is not, strictly speaking, in the imperative conjugation in the Hebrew. This does not, in any way, lessen or reduce the strength of the command.

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The Twelve Curses: the Setup

And Moses commanded the people in that [same] day, saying, [Deut. 27:11]

In that day is literally, *in the day the that (or, the it)*; which is the way to say *in that day* in the Hebrew.²⁹⁹ This is not the same words as we had in the previous verse. The previous verse was literally *the day the this*. There was no preposition in v. 10, and it contain the *near* demonstrative adjective as opposed to the *far* demonstrative adjective found in v. 11.

“These will take a stand to bless the people upon Mount Gerizim, in your passing over the Jordan—Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Joseph and Benjamin. [Deut. 27:12]

After they have defeated Jericho, the Israelites will split into two camps; one identified with blessing and the other with cursing. This will describe the Israelites from now to the end of human history. There will always be generations of blessed Israelites and always generations of those who are cursed. On an individual basis, there will always be a split in Israel—some will be blessed and some will be cursed.

Tribe	Examples of Blessing
Simeon	Simeon represents the principle of grace. Although all of the Exodus generation were believers, they also all died the sin unto death. Simeon’s tribe experienced an attrition rate of 50%. Saved, but worthless with regards to God’s plan. They will spend eternity in heaven and stand for the loser believer who stands on the benefit of God’s grace alone.
Levi	The tribe of Moses, Aaron and Miriam. The priesthood comes from this tribe as well as their helpers, the Levites.
Judah	Judah is the tribe of David and Solomon, two men who had great wisdom and wrote a significant portion of the Old Testament. King David was known as a man after God’s own heart.
Issachar	Tola, a judge, and Deborah and Barak, all individual bright spots (relatively speaking), come from the tribe of Issachar. In 1Chron. 12:32, it is said that the 200 heads who allied themselves with David were <i>men of understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do</i> .

²⁹⁹ BDB, p. 216.

Tribe	Examples of Blessing
Joseph	All of Joseph's brothers were degenerate or had serious character defects. Only Joseph, as we have seen, seemed to demonstrate any character at all. He became the great leader of Egypt who delivered his family. Joseph became the tribe of double blessing, splitting into the two half-tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim (here is one of the very few places they stand as one tribe). One of the reasons these two tribes are grouped here is that they stand for blessing because of Joseph and the concept of the double portion; however, individually, these tribes offered very little by way of spiritual giants (Gideon and judge Jephthah came from the tribe of Manasseh).
Benjamin	Both Benjamin and Joseph were sons of Jacob through Rachel, his right woman; concerning whom, one of the most romantic phrases in the Bible stands (Gen. 29:20). King Saul, who started well, was a Benjamite; however, he did die the sin unto death. It is from this tribe that we have the Apostle Paul, the greatest of all the Apostles, the man who wrote more books of the Bible than anyone else.

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All six of these tribes were descended from the sisters Leah and Rachel. As you will recall, Jacob fell deeply in love with Rachel, but her father, after working him for seven years, tricked him into marrying Leah instead. He worked for an additional seven years and won the hand of Rachel. Each one of them was attended to by a maidservant (a female slave), who bore additional children to Jacob (Gen. 29–30).

“And these will take a stand concerning the curse upon Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad and Asher and Zebulun and Dan and Naphtali. [Deut. 27:13]

Israel is separated into winners and losers. Also, you will notice that the tribes generally associated with super grace heroes are found in the blessing area and those who are not are found in the cursing area. With the exception of Reuben and Zebulun, the others were children of the maidservants of Leah and Rachel. Reuben and Zebulun were both born by Leah (Gen. 35:20–26). Below is a chart of those who participated in the cursing from Mount Ebal. Each of these tribes was a loser in its own way.

Tribe	Examples of Cursing
Reuben	Reuben represents lost blessing and lost opportunity. He was the first born and had the right to the double blessing. He was a loser who had the opportunity to take a stand when it came to the disposition of his baby brother Joseph. He refused to stand for what was right and attempted surreptitiously to accomplish it. Jacob called him <i>unstable as water</i> ; just as water adjusts to the shape of the container into which it is poured, Reuben took the positions and attitudes of those around him. Reuben was also guilty of incest, sleeping with his father's wife (Gen. 35:22 49:4).
Gad	Gad seemed to live in the shadows of Reuben, following Reuben's lead. Here we have the blind (Reuben) leading the blind (Gad).

Tribe	Examples of Cursing
Asher	Asher was a tribe which seemed to have a wonderful beginning, and then they went nowhere. The name means <i>blessed or happy</i> . Even though Moses said, “ Blessed above sons is Asher; let him be the favorite of his brothers and let him dip his foot in oil. ” (Deut. 33:24). They lost some of their land to outside forces and never eliminated the resident Canaanite from their personal land possession. In Fact, during the entire time from Moses to our Lord’s incarnation, there was not even a single man of the tribe of Asher of import. Only Anna, a prophetess, is mentioned in Luke 2:36, as coming of this tribe. After over a millennium of history, that is a sad comment on the Asherites.
Zebulun	Zebulun is a tribe with few, if any, individual heroes; a tribe almost completely lost in the invasion of Tiglath-pileser.
Dan	Jacob, on his death bed, said this of Dan: “ Dan will be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path that bites the horse’s heels so that his rider falls backward. ” (Gen. 49:17). Some associate Dan with the Beast or the false prophet of Revelation for this reason.
Naphtali	This tribe is probably the least known in Scripture. They did not drive out the Canaanites, as they were supposed to, but they lived among them. They fell easily into Baal worship for that reason.

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If you had to, given the perspective of history, choose the tribes who are aligned with Y^ehowah their God and choose the tribes who rebelled, and you could not have done any better than those chosen for the cursing and the blessing in this passage.

All of this will be fulfilled in Joshua 8:32–35: [And he \(Joshua\) wrote there on the stones a copy of the Law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel. And all Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah, the alien as well as the native \(Israelite\).](#)³⁰⁰ Half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of Y^ehowah had given command at first to bless the people of Israel. Then, afterward, he (Joshua) read all the words of the Law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the aliens who were living among them.

“And the Levites will answer and say to every man of Israel—a loud voice: [Deut. 27:14]

Now would be a time that we will need to examine the **Doctrine of the Levites—not finished yet!** (don’t forget Deut. 33:10). The Levites began with a specific duties and assistance which were to be given the Aaronic priesthood.

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³⁰⁰ This phrase in itself is somewhat humorous. The Israelites and the aliens had both just entered the country not but a few months (or years?) previous to this chapter of Joshua. From human viewpoint, the were all aliens or new residents. From divine viewpoint, the Israelites were occupying the land given them by God, and those who accompanied them, even though they both entered in at the same time, were aliens.

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The Twelve Curses: Disobedience to the Ten Commandments

Now we will have a listing of the twelve curses. The Levites participate in this and are spread out throughout the entire population so that every man of Israel hears them. You may wonder, *what is the deal here? We already have the Law—why do we need a listing of curses?* There are two million people that make up the nation Israel. Moses can only speak to so much of a crowd. The *shushing* by the Levites indicates that those who did come to hear Moses were getting restless. You know the population of your city—how many of those attended church the other day? Now, how many attended a church which correctly taught God’s Word? There might be a slightly higher percentage of people in Israel. However, the vast majority of people would be unable to hear Moses or wouldn’t go to hear him. So, here the Levites will be spread throughout the population of Israel, half on one mountain, half on another, where half the Israelites will hear the curses and the other half will hear the blessings. I don’t know whether there was an attempt to do this in unison, say, standing a Levite every forty yards, and an attempt is made for them to all speak at once or whether they stood a hundred or more yards apart and spoke individually to a crowd of perhaps a few hundred, where the crowd would hear what would be said and respond, *I believe it*. In any case, the tribes which were essentially negative towards God’s Word throughout their history, providing few if anyone spiritually significant in Israel’s history, heard the curses; and those who contributed to the spiritual growth of Israel heard the blessings.

“ ‘Curse the man who makes a graven and molten image—the abomination of Y^ehowah—a thing of the hands of a craftsman and he sets it up in secret.’ And all the people will answer, ‘Amen.’ [Deut. 27:15]

This is a transgression of the first and second commandments of God. **“You will have no other gods before Me. You will not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth....You will not manufacture [any god] instead of Me—you will not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.”** (Ex. 20:3–4, 23). **Those who fashion a engraved image are all of them futile and their precious things are of no profit; even their own witness fail to see or know, so that they will be put to sham** (Isa. 44:9). **And now they sin more and more and make for themselves molten images, idols skillfully made from their silver, all of them the work of craftsmen** (Hos. 13:2a). We studied idolatry back in Ex. 20:4. Here, someone is impressed with the handiwork and the craftsmanship of his own hands and he is worshiping that, not God. Those who attempt to be good enough to impress God—they are worshiping their works, not God.

The Israelites, at this point in their history, will have entered the land and will have defeated the first group of Canaanites—the armies of Jericho. You would think that this would call for a reading from the blessings of God to celebrate their successful entrance into the land. That is strictly human viewpoint. Upon their first bit of spiritual information after entering the land is cursing. The first thing that will be heard: the curses. We must be cursed in order to be saved. Man is not delivered originally into blessing but man is delivered into this world under a curse. An unbeliever is saved because he first recognized that he is inadequate and cursed before God. The same human viewpoint which would have placed the stones with the Law upon them on Mount Gerizim, would have begun with blessings from God in this ritual. We begin this life under a curse—we received the imputation of Adam’s sin at birth and we are born with an old sin nature. We are born under a curse with two strikes against us. When we commit our first act of personal sin, we are under a threefold curse.

“ ‘Cursed he who is making light of his father and his mother.’ And all the people will answer, ‘Amen.’ [Deut. 27:16]

The two commandments given were representative of the entire Ten Commandments. The first was representative of the spiritual code and the second represented the humanity code. The first four commandments deal exclusively with the relationship between man and God and the latter six deal with the relationship between man and man, defined most basically in fifth commandment, which reads: **“You will honor your father and your**

mother that your days may be prolonged in the land which Y^ehowah your God gives you.” (Ex. 20:12). This was strengthened even further in Ex. 21:17: “And the one cursing his father or his mother will definitely be executed.” (See also Lev. 19:3 20:9). The Israelites were commanded to respect their parents. When the people say, “Amen”, that means “I believe it.”

Communism, a political ideology which has its foundation in evolution and naturalism, in Romania, had the people procreate and allow the state to raise their children. Instead, what the result was was an incredibly large number of orphans totally maladjusted to life—they had no heart and no love because they were raised their first few years without same. Communism is a Satanic attempt to bring upon the millennium apart from God’s grace and God’s standards. For that reason, it will always be doomed to fail, even under the most ideal of conditions.

The Twelve Curses: Transgressions of the Civil Code

“ ‘Cursed him who is removing his neighbor’s border.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’
[Deut. 27:17]

On a strictly human level, God sets up a particular border for the tribes of Israel and they are to remain within their own lines. The changing of the borders is stealing. “You will not move your neighbor’s boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that Y^ehowah your God gives you to possess.” (Deut. 19:14). “You will not steal.” (Deut. 5:19).

On a spiritual plane, God has set particular borders for the gospel, for those who are saved and those who are not. These cannot be changed by man. This was established clearly with Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Do not move the ancient boundary which your fathers have set (Prov. 22:28). God has set up particular boundaries for living the spiritual life—these cannot be changed either.

“ ‘Cursed he who causes the blind to err in the way.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’
[Deut. 27:18]

It is this verse which causes us to realize that these two curses (vv. 17–18) can be understood on two levels. Now certainly, it is incorrect to lead the person who is blind astray; and anyone who does this is to be cursed. Anyone who makes fun of a person’s disability or mocks a person in his disability is cursed. “You will not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you will revere your God—I am Y^ehowah.” (Lev. 19:14). Those who are helpless in any way are to receive our love, our understanding and our help, not our disrespect.

However, we can also understand this verse on another level: the blind is the one who is without the gospel of God. For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord—walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8). Our Lord was called to lead man toward the light. “Behold, My Servant, whom I hold fast, My Chosen One—My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him—He will bring forth justice to the nations...I am Y^ehowah; I have called you in righteousness. I will also strengthen you by the hand and watch over you. And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.” (Isa. 42:1, 6–7). The identity of the servant in this passage from Isaiah has a three-fold connotation: (1) the servant is Jesus Christ, Who is to come. At the beginning of his public ministry, our Lord said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He anointed Me to proclaim the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free those who are downtrodden.” (Luke 4:18; Isa. 61:6; see Psalm 27:1). (2) In context, this is also a reference to the nation Israel, to whom God is speaking in this verse. This was seen symbolically in Ex. 10 when the land of Egypt was under a thick darkness, but the Israelites had light in her homes. Finally, today, (3) the responsibility rests upon our shoulders to lead others toward the light of His glorious gospel. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God, above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world (Philip. 2:14–15). Our Lord said to his disciples: “You are the light of the world—a city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” (Matt. 5:14). The light that we bring to the blind is God’s Word: The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the stupid

(Psalm 119:130). We have the responsibility to lead the spiritually blind to the gospel and fellow believers to the light of God's Word. When you lead a person away from the light, you are cursed.

“ ‘Cursed the one who is turning aside the judgment of a fatherless [person], a transient, and widow.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’ [Deut. 27:19]

The Law was to be fair to all people. No one was to receive preferential treatment because they were rich or successful. Whenever a judgment was made in favor of someone due to status, the one making the judgment was cursed. We have seen this again and again in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 1:17 10:17 16:19 24:17). The people of God were always to take care of the helpless and to be fair to the alien and to the temporary resident (Deut. 22:21 24:19). When Israel turns against the helpless and those who come to her light, God judges Israel: **“Then I will draw near to you for judgment and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan and those who turn aside the alien, and do not fear Me,”** says Y^ehowah of the armies (Mal. 3:5).

Again, this has a twofold meaning. On the surface, as discussed, this is fairness and honor directed toward the helpless. However, as spiritually dead, we are helpless. In the slave market of sin, we are helpless. There is not a damn thing we can do about our own condition. We live in the world and see countless examples of the degeneracy of man, of his utter blindness, of his total disregard for other people. This is the control of the old sin nature, and we are helpless to do anything about it. We can reform, we can whitewash it—but we all have, as Garrison Keilor put it, *a backstage view*. If we are honest with ourselves, we know our own motivations, our limitations, the evil that still lives deep within our own souls, despite our attempts to reform. It is only through regeneration and then daily guidance of God the Holy Spirit through the ministry of His Word that we can rise out of this helpless state. We are dependent upon God for the very breath that we take—we would be either naive or foolish to think that we are independent of Him in all other matters.

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The Twelve Curses: Transgressions in the Realm of Sexual Deviance

“ ‘Cursed the one lying with his father's wife, for he has uncovered his father's skirt.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’ [Deut. 27:20]

Although God's plan was for one man to marry one woman, for awhile He allowed polygamy. For that reason, you would have sons who would end up being roughly the same age as a wife of their father. Therefore, this was a significant enough problem to herein mention. I don't know that there would be much problem with perverse attraction to one's own biological mother. This command has been repeated in Lev. 18:8 20:11 and Deut. 22:30. *Uncovering a father's skirt* is a phrase meaning *intruding on his greatest area of privacy*. There must be some person wondering about dad wearing a skirt around the house. The word is kânâph (קַנָּאֵף) [pronounced *kaw-NAWF*] and it refers to the wings of birds (Gen. 1:21 Ex. 19:4 Deut. 32:11) and it refers to the extremity of a garment (Deut. 22:12, 30 Ruth 3:9). Strong's #3671 BDB #489.

“ ‘Cursed the one lying with any beast.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’ [Deut. 27:21]

As gruesome as it sounds, there would be the farm boys who were sexually frustrated enough to actually have sex with animals. To me, this ranks high on the loathsome meter; far above even homosexuality; yet, this was a problem for some in Israel. Such behavior is called perversion (Lev. 18:23) and demanded execution (Ex. 22:19).

“ ‘Cursed the one lying with his sister, daughter of his father, or daughter of his mother.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’ [Deut. 27:22]

This could be a full or half-sister. “You will not uncover the nakedness of your sister—your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether born at home or born outside.” (Lev. 18:9). Since people were brought up in households and remained there until much later in life—say, until their thirties—therefore, this would be a real temptation for some. They were cursed by God if they succumbed to this temptation. Notice, this is directed toward the male, the one responsible for such a union in 98% of the cases. However, an interesting point, they were not executed for this sin, but cut off from the rest of the people of Israel. “If a man takes his sister, his father’s daughter, or his mother’s daughter, so that he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace and they will be cut off in the sight of the sons of their people. He has uncovered his sister’s nakedness; he bears his guilt.” (Lev. 20:17).

“ ‘Cursed the one who lies with his mother-in-law.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’ [Deut. 27:23]

This is interesting. Rather than to curse a man for committing adultery—they are cursed for committing adultery with their mother-in-law. This may strike you as being singularly repulsive—probably both you and your mother-in-law, and you are wondering, *is this really a problem?* It was not unusual for the men of that day to marry women who were ten to forty years their junior. Therefore, the mother-in-law would be their age (or younger) and thus, there would be the potential for attraction. Since the man would be attracted to both physical features and the upbringing of his wife, he would normally be attracted to the more mature version of the same thing. Under these circumstances, I personally can see this as being an actual problem. Therefore, we have a similar command in Lev. 20:14: “If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is immorality—both he and they will be burned with fire that there may be no immorality in your midst.” Or, Lev. 18:17: “You will not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, nor will you take her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter, to uncover her nakedness—they are blood relatives; it is lewdness.”

Now, you have to realize that with these curses, we aren’t talking 10% of the population which goes in for each of these sins. There are enough who are susceptible to make it worth while to say. When I teach a portion of God’s Word and there is a sin involved—say, the sin of homosexuality—that doesn’t mean that fully 10% of the people who hear are affected by this in some way. In fact, it allows, say 95-99% of the people to take a breather, not to feel attacked or as though I have followed them around, and they get to understand the principle behind it and the why and the wherefore. So it was with these curses. There were a small percentage who were actually affected by these temptations and the greater portion which were not. The population of Sodom, made up largely of homosexual rapists, was a society gone totally astray. They began with sexual deviance outside the realm of God’s plan and progressed to a perversity which is almost beyond imagination. Only in prison do we see anything similar to this level of degeneracy.

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The Twelve Curses: Transgressions Against Man and Conclusion

“ ‘Cursed the one who strikes down his neighbor in secret.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’ [Deut. 27:24]

This is premeditated murder. The word found here is *nâkâh* (נָכַח) [pronounced *naw-KAWH*] and it generally means *to murder*. BDB #645 Strong #5221. A person who commits this sort of crime is cursed by God. “If anyone kills a person, the murderer will be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person will be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” (Num. 35:30). This person heard the command of Num. 35:30 and saw light at the end

of the tunnel. All he has to do is to commit murder without any witnesses. However, not every witness has to be one who directly observes the murder.

“ ‘Cursed the one who takes a bribe to strike down a person [lit., a soul] of innocent blood.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’ ” [Deut. 27:25]

So you hate someone else and you want to kill them. Option #1 is to just do it in the heat of hatred, but that would result in your execution. Option #2: murder the person in secret. The catch here is there are still witnesses can witness as to a number of different things, including your whereabouts, where they last saw you, and the arguments which you have been having with the deceased. And option #3, you can hire this murder out. You can pay someone to murder this person. One of the few good aspects of our legal system in the United States is that those who hire someone to murder or to injure another are as guilty as those who commit the act itself. Both are cursed. If there are three or four people involved in the killing of one, those three or four are all equally liable, even if only one of them pulled the trigger, so to speak. Unfortunately, not all these arrangements result in the execution of those convicted. That would be an ideal situation.

This particular verse deals with the person who really has nothing against the person that he strikes down—he just does it for money. This is rarely mentioned in Scripture. Ezek. 22:12a is the only other allusion to this that I am aware of: **“In you they have take bribes to shed blood.”** It was mentioned so that we have no problem deciding what should be done with all the parties involved in a murder.

“ ‘Cursed is the one who does not confirm [or, establish] the words of this Law—to do them.’ And all the people will say, ‘Amen.’ ” [Deut. 27:26]

One of the verbs found often throughout the Old Testament is *qûwm* (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*]. In the Qal stem, it means *to stand, to rise up* (Gen. 37:7 Ex. 33:10 Prov. 28:12). It also means *to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow* (Num. 24:17 30:4 Jer. 44:29). In the Hiphil it means, among other things, *to establish, to fulfill, to cause to stand, to perform a vow, a commandment, a promise* (Gen. 6:18 17:7 26:3 Num. 30:14). Strong’s #6965 BDB #877 We find it here in the Hiphil imperfect. It is translated variously as *support and give assent* (*The Amplified Bible*), *confirm* (KJV, NASB, Owen), *uphold* (RSV, NIV), *establish* (*The Emphasized Bible*, Young). These are all good renderings of this word. **For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it stands written,** “Cursed is every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them.” (Gal. 3:10 Deut. 27:26). The Law encompasses a lot of ground and Moses has just cursed those who do not obey the entire Law of God. This last verse is a summation of all that has gone before—a curse upon those who would not fulfill all the Law, which is every single Israelite and every single Gentile. A smart Israelite, when Moses said this, should have thrown up his hands and said, “It doesn’t matter what I do; I am cursed no matter what.” And that would be true—we are all under the curse of God and there is only one escape.

Notice that we have had twelve curses and they all have a common thread running through them—these are the kinds of things which may evade criminal Law. Look at this:

#	The Transgression	It’s Secretive Aspect
1	Making an idol or a molten image in secret.	Even though this is a capital offense, the idol can be easily hidden.
2	Dishonoring mother and father.	Even though the Law provided for the execution of incorrigible children, most parents could not bear to subject their children to execution no matter how bad they are.
3	Moving a neighbor’s boundary marker.	This would be done at night or when no one else in out in the field.

#	The Transgression	It's Secretive Aspect
4	Misleading a blind person.	The blind person cannot identify him.
5	Distortion of justice with regard to an alien, widow, or orphan.	These are the helpless people who do not have much legal recourse when faced with an unjust court system. They generally lack the resources to pursue a justice.
6	Having an incestuous affair with the wife of your father.	Affairs are carried out in secret; particularly this kind of an affair.
7	Bestiality.	Not the kind of thing that you are going to practice in public.
8	Incestuous relationship with one's sister or sister-in-law.	This is not likely to be revealed by either member of the relationship. The sister would be mortified for others to know.
9	Incest with one's mother-in-law.	Again, something which takes place in private.
10	Homicide out of public view.	Most premeditated homicides are done in secret with the intention of getting away with murder.
11	Hiring a killer to murder for you.	This is again done in secret.
12	Not confirming or obeying the whole Law.	On the outside, you may seem as moral and as lawful as can be—however, on the inside, we have all transgressed the Law.

It is possible for a person to be guilty of committing any or all of these sinful acts and yet manage to elude the prosecution of the Law. For some people, that is enough. I knew one female who, to avoid sexually transmitted diseases, particularly aids, began a sexual relationship with another woman. Furthermore, she was no longer disobeying God's Laws (in her own mind) by sleeping with men. Just because you evade the law does not mean you have evaded God's cursing. You might be able to outsmart criminal prosecution but you will not outsmart God. God sees everything that you do and you will not avoid eternal prosecution in God's court.

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Deuteronomy 28

Deuteronomy 28:1–68

Outline of Chapter 28:

- Vv. 1–6 **The blessings spoken from Mount Gerizim—personal blessings**
- Vv. 7–14 **Moses expounds on national blessings**
- Vv. 15–19 **The curses spoke to them from Mount Ebal**
- Vv. 20–37 **God promises great national discipline to Israel**
- Vv. 38–46 **The impact of God’s discipline will cause the Israelite to live in futility**
- Vv. 47–57 **Invasion by the enemy will result in unthinkable behavior in the Israelite**
- Vv. 58–68 **God will scatter the Jews throughout the nations; they will live in continual fear**

Introduction: Deut. 28 is a even longer than three times any of the previous half dozen chapters. Although we do not have the proper names Mount Gerizim or Mount Ebal in this chapter, we have a list of blessings which were to be read from Mount Gerizim and a list of cursings which would immediately follow from Mount Ebal. Actually, Deut. 27 lists those things which would be read from Mount Ebal. Then Deut. 28 begins with what would be read from Mount Gerizim (the blessings); however, Moses is quite careful as to how he communicates these blessings to Israel. Under no circumstances are they to think that everything is just going to be hunky dory and they can just sit back and enjoy what God will do for them. This is not the case. In v. 2, Moses tells them that these blessings will come upon them and overtake them **if** they listen to the voice of their God. In the middle of the blessing dissertation, Moses reminds them (v. 9) that God will establish them as a set apart people to Himself, as He has sworn, **if** they keep and guard His commandments and walk in His ways. Finally, at the end of the listing of blessings (vv. 13–14), Moses again tells the Israelites that they will be the head and not the tail **if** they listen to the commandments of God, which He placed in their responsibility that day, and **if** they do not turn aside from any of the words which he commanded them that day.

Then we will go back to Mount Ebal to read some cursings (this is again an assumption on my part). Then Moses goes into detail as to the kinds of things which will occur when Israel is under cursing. In fact, you could accuse Moses of preaching here. This is one of the most graphic passages when it comes to the horrible things which would happen to the children of Israel as a result of their negative volition toward God’s Word. What Moses will predict will be excessively tragic and it will appear as though you are reading a history book of the awful trials of the Jewish people. *The language rises in this chapter to the sublimest strains, especially in the latter part of it; and the prophecies respecting the dispersion and degradation of the Jewish nation in its later days are amongst the most remarkable in scripture. They are plain, precise, and circumstantial; and the fulfillment of them has been literal, complete, and undeniable.*³⁰¹ **“But did not My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake your fathers? Then they repented and said, ‘As Y^howah of the armies purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.’ ”** (Zech. 1:6).

Thieme has always reduced the judgment of Israel to what he refers to as five cycles of discipline, which he derives from his exegesis of Lev. 26. Barnes’s sums of the end of the chapter into five sets of judgments, not unlike Thieme’s classification. Vv. 20–26: *First series of judgments. The curse of God should rest on all they did, and should issue in manifold forms of disease, in famine, and in defeat in war.* Vv. 27–37: *Second series of judgments on the body, mind, and outward circumstances of the sinners.* Vv. 38–48: *Third series of judgments, affecting every kind of labour and enterprise until it had accomplished the total ruin of the nation, and its subjection to its enemies.* Vv. 49–58: *Four series of judgments, descriptive of the calamities and horrors which should ensue when Israel should be subjugated by its foreign foes.* Vv. 59–68: *Fifth series of judgments. The uprooting of Israel from the Promised Land, and its dispersion amongst other nations.*³⁰² I offer this as another way to outline some of

³⁰¹ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 322.

³⁰² Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 323–326.

these verses. However, the judgments in this chapter are not altogether progressive, as is Lev. 26. For instance, in the second series of judgments, we have v. 32, which reads: “Your sons and your daughters will be given to another people and your eyes are looking [and you are] completely consumed [in this] regarding them all the day and your hand is not to God.” Then, in the third series of judgments, we have v. 41, which reads: “You will sire sons and daughters but you will not have them, for they will go into captivity.” The problem is not just that these are the same judgment, as in the five cycles of discipline, the judgments continued to become more intense, but some were very similar; it is just that these belong with the fourth and fifth cycles of discipline. Furthermore, in Lev. 26, we have intervening language which indicates that the judgments are being intensified: “Yet, if in spite of this, you do not obey me, but act with hostility against me, then...” (Lev. 26:18, 21, 23, 27, 32).

Within this chapter there are three prophecies that Israel will be removed from the land and scattered among the nations. This has been fulfilled three times. There are three prophecies herein of the restoration of Israel—that has been fulfilled only twice, the third time will occur at the beginning of the Millennium.

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The Blessings Spoken from Mount Gerizim—Personal Blessings

“And it will come to pass, if you listen carefully to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to observe and³⁰³ do all His commands which I am commanding you today, that Y^ehowah your God will make you uppermost above all the nations of the earth; [Deut. 28:1]

Although this chapter has great application to us as believers in Jesus Christ, we must note the context immediately: this is spoken by Moses, while filled with and directed by God the Holy Spirit. This was spoken to the Israelites prior to entering into the land, giving them direction as to the first doctrinal orientation that they will have while in the land. We will have a large group listening to the blessings from Mount Gerizim and a very large group listening to the cursings from Mount Ebal. Therefore, what is found in this chapter applies first and foremost to Israel.

For any passage of Scripture, you must observe: (1) who is writing or speaking; (2) the occasion or the purpose of the speaker’s (writer’s) dissertation; (3) who the audience is; (4) what dispensation they are in; (5) whether the speaker is speaking by means of the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and, (6) is there any relevance of this passage to us today?

Moses has continually warned Israel of the importance of listening to His Word and has made promises which God will keep. (1) God will ally Himself with the Israelite against the enemies of the Israelite: [God is speaking to Moses words to be spoken to the people]: “But if you will truly obey his [Moses’] voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My angel will go before you and bring you in to a land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them...” (Ex. 23:22–23). (2) God will provide the Israelites with great agricultural prosperity: “If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I will give to you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its product and the trees of the field will bear fruit.” (Lev. 26:3–4). (3) If they stay with God’s Word, God will bless the Israelites in every way, including the increase of all that is theirs and He will protect them from pestilence: “Then it will come to pass because you listened to these judgments and kept and did them that Y^ehowah your God will keep with you the covenant and the grace which He swore to your forefathers. Ad He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your

³⁰³ As per the western Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate codices and the Targum of Jonathan. The Massoretic text reads: ...to observe to do.

flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give to you. You will be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle. And Y^ehowah will remove from you all sickness; and He will not place upon you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.” (Deut. 7:12–15). (4) God also promises financial prosperity to those who obey His Word: “If you only listen obediently to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today. For Y^ehowah your God will bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.” (Deut. 15:5–6). “But you will remember Y^ehowah your God, for it is He Who is giving you power to make wealth.” (Deut. 8:18a).

“And all these blessing will come upon you and over take you, because you have listened to the voice of Y^ehowah your God: [Deut. 28:2]

A portion of this chapter applies directly to us and to unbelievers as well. The believer or unbeliever who adheres to God’s Laws will be blessed. There are what Thieme calls the *Laws of Divine Establishment*; which are laws which are true for believers and unbelievers both. For instance, throughout the Torah, we are taught that our system of government and us as individuals should provide assistance to the helpless and to be fair in all legal matters toward the helpless and toward temporary residents. We are taught to have integrity in business. We are taught that murder, stealing, and adultery are wrong and that those who commit such crimes are guilty of a transgression against God and as such, should be prosecuted and, in many cases, executed. When a person and a nation follows these principles, they will be blessed, if only temporarily. That is, a nation which executes all first and second degree murderers will enjoy a greater measure of safety in society than if it did not. A nation which is taught that covetousness (lust for what someone else has) is wrong and that stealing is a moral wrong as well as a crime will enjoy a measure of protection of people’s personal possessions. In the United States, we have a huge population of young men who have not been taught and who do not realize that stealing is morally offensive and they are absolutely wrong to partake in stealing. Our weak laws in this regard go to further support this nation, causing some areas of your city to be dangerous places to drive through or to walk, as someone might covet your car or your possessions and go so far as to kill you for them. That is the antithesis of blessing.

“You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the field. [Deut. 28:3]

First we should examine the set up of the next four verses. They all begin with the Qal passive participle of the word *bârak*^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced *baw-RAHK*^e] and this verb is found early on in the Bible, occurring in Gen. 1:22, 28 where God blesses man. Although the animals were created before man and told to multiply, God did not bless them. The word means *to bless, to make happy, to prosper*. On the receiving end, when we are blessed, God makes us happy, He prospers what we have, He makes our hearts glad. Strong’s #1288 BDB #138. A participle is a verb which is used as an adjectival noun. It describes something using the action of the verb but generally functions as a substantive. I have, in my translation, retained the verbal status of the word, which other translators do as well. Since this is blessing which is to come, I translated all of these in the English future tense. Passive voice combined with the 2nd person masculine singular pronoun means that each of them will be individually blessed.

The life of Israel occurred in the two spheres: the city and the field. This is not a limitation on God’s blessing but an indication that it can be found anywhere. There is not a place in particular where we must be in order to receive God’s blessing. Some people have a notion that they must either live way out in the country or in the suburbs or in a city in order to be happy. These are but personal preferences—God is capable of blessing us no matter where we live. **It is the blessing of Y^ehowah that makes rich; and He adds no sorrow to it (Prov. 10:22).**

“Blessed will be [the] fruit of your womb and [the] produce [lit., fruit] of your ground and [the] production [lit., fruit] of your cattle, [the] increase of your oxen and [the] wealth of your flock. [Deut. 28:4]

Bârak^e is no longer has the addition of the 2nd person masculine pronoun here. The blessing is still to the individual Israelite, but the emphasis here is upon the blessing of the fruit of the womb (Gen. 22:17), the ground

and their livestock (Psalm 107:38). That is, they will have a large family, which was considered a tremendous blessing in Israel; their crops would increase tremendously and their livestock would be extremely productive. [Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house—your children will be like olive plants round your table](#) (Psalm 128:3).

Here is where we recognize that blessing involves prosperity. What they grow and what they raise will be increased by God. The concept is easy to grasp—two people can plant a tomato garden and one can be blessed and one can produce tomatoes as I have in the past, few, small and green, replaced quickly by a variety of deplorable living creatures. The other garden produces many large, firm red tomatoes with this marvelous taste—that is being blessed. Just as in Gen. 1, the blessing here is given to man—your garden is not happier and better adjusted—you are the one who is happy, having been made wealthier and more prosperous in the realm of your agricultural produce.

Today, most people are more detached from the farm; however, this blessing is placed upon the business where you work, the school where you teach. Whatever your business endeavors to do, it is made prosperous and successful. That is the sort of divine blessing indicated here.

[“Blessed will be your basket and kneading trough.](#) [Deut. 28:5]

The very things that you cook will be a source of blessing to you. Bread was stored in the basket and prepared on the kneading trough. These are metonymies. Obviously, it is not the basket and kneading trough which are blessed—even the things in them are not blessed. The Israelite is the one who is promised blessing and this would be through the abundance of the bread and grain which would be found in their basket and kneading trough. Today, God would say that your refrigerator and pantry will be blessed. I recall how my parents scraped by and I look around me and I know that I have been blessed by a great abundance of things.

[“You will be blessed in your come in and you will be blessed in your going out.](#) [Deut. 28:6]

In *your coming in and your going out* is an Old Testament expression referring to everything that you do. God blesses us in our daily activity. [Y^ehowah will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. Y^ehowah will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever](#) (Psalm 121:8).

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Moses Expounds on National Blessings

[“Y^ehowah will give \[you\] your enemies, who rise up against you—struck down before your face. In one way, they come out to you and in seven ways they flee from before you.](#) [Deut. 28:7]

Specifically, this refers to the military enemies and the national enemies of Israel. In Israel's taking over of the land given them by God, they will, in the process, make a large number of enemies. God promises them that these enemies will fall before them; those who come and attack will run from them in all directions. Keil and Delitzsch call the retreat by the enemy a *wild dispersion*. Seven is also a number of perfection, meaning that the enemies of Israel will be perfectly dispatched. [“And you will chase your enemies and they will fall before your face by the sword; five of you will chase a hundred and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword.”](#) (Lev. 26:7–8). Solomon, in his dedication prayer of the temple, prayed, [“When Your people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way You will send them, and they pray to You toward this city which You had chosen, and \[toward\] the house which I have built for You name, then hear their prayer from the heavens and their supplication and maintain their cause.”](#) (2Chron. 6:34–35). See also a portion

of David's Psalm of deliverance (2Sam. 22:38–41). God made similar promises to David as a part of the Davidic covenant: **"But I will crush his adversaries before him and I will strike down those who hate him."** (Psalm 89:23).

Having had enemies in the past and having enemies in the present, I take great comfort in this verse. Most of us, no matter what we do, end up with people who dislike us and would rejoice to see us fall. In being blessed, these enemies are struck down right in front of us. When they advance and attack, they are dispersed by God in all directions.

"With you, Y^ehowah mandates the blessing in your store-houses and in your every endeavor [lit., every putting forth of your hand] and He has blessed you in the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving to you. [Deut. 28:8]

This verse actually begins **Y^ehowah mandates with you**; however, this makes it sound as though *with you* is the object of the verb; therefore I moved it to the front of the sentence. The preposition here is *ʾeth* (אֶת) [pronounced *ayth*] and it simply means *with, among*. This is a little tricky as this same word is often untranslated and used to designate a direct object. Strong's #854 BDB #85.

We have examined the *putting forth of their hand* before. It refers to personal or business endeavors. It is something that we do (the hand often being an illustration of what we do). We all have different endeavors, business or personal objectives, plans and goals—we are promised blessing here in all that we choose to do. Now this is all *conditional*, mind you.

One of the unfortunate promises made by some evangelists is that *if you come to Christ, you will be happy and blessed*. This is not exactly true. If you are an unbeliever, you are a child of the devil and he might be treating you alright right now. God is not necessarily involved with your life whatsoever. Unbelievers do not fall under God's direct discipline—they aren't His children. However, from the second that you believe in Jesus Christ, God becomes your Father—we are placed in Christ and we share His Sonship. This means that we can fall into divine discipline. You cannot be much more miserable than being under divine discipline. Now this does not mean that at salvation, you are disciplined for each and every little transgression before you even realize that you are going against God's Laws. God gives us some slack. The things an eighteen month old child does are tolerated; however, if a seven or eight year old did the same thing, he would be disciplined. God allows us to grow. However, we grow under His nurture and discipline. Some of us who are less hard-headed and less self-willed do fine with instruction in God's Word. Others of us are so self-willed and so hard-headed that we take our stance against God our Father and we get whipped like you would not believe. What I am saying to you is that some people will believe in Jesus Christ and they will be miserable for the rest of their lives because they now experience discipline under God which they otherwise would not have received. However, at the same time, they will spend eternity in torment, pain and misery. Death is a natural process which comes upon all man. If you are a believer, death is a promotion by God to an eternity of great blessing and happiness. The unbeliever, on the other hand, should fear death with all of his soul, as the pain and suffering that he has experienced in life will be but a cake walk compared to the pain and suffering he will receive throughout all eternity.

So some of you might be thinking—I am an unbeliever; right now God is not disciplining me and I might just want to hold back on this salvation thing till my deathbed. There are two reasons why that would be a mistake: (1) God might have to encourage you to think more carefully on salvation, and sometimes the only way He can do that is through pain. There are times that you will not even consider His claims on your life until you are in deep personal or physical pain—and sometimes He keeps this pain around for the rest of your life as a reminder. (2) Look, now is **"the acceptable time,"** listen, now is **"the day of salvation."** (2Cor. 6:2b Isa. 49:8). **"Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me as in the day of trial in the wilderness."** (Heb. 3:7b–8 Psalm 95:7–8). The writer of Hebrews quotes this verse three times. If you are an unbeliever, but you actually hear what I am saying to you, then do not harden your heart.

"Y^ehowah will establish you to Himself for a holy people, as He has sworn to you when you keep the commands of Y^ehowah your God and [when] you walk in His ways; [Deut. 28:9]

Here is the conditional part: God has great blessing to pour upon the Israelites, blessing as has never been seen before in the history of man. Yet, they are to be set apart to Him, walking in His ways. Our United States was settled by (as I have read) 97% Protestants. This means that upwards from 50 to even 90% of our founding population believed in Jesus Christ and will spend eternity in heaven. It also means that our nation would receive great blessing, which it has. We are operating now perhaps on the blessing promised to our parents and their parents and we are blessed by association—but nonetheless, we are blessed. There are huge numbers of families who enjoy material blessings unheard of in perhaps 95% of the other countries of this world. However, this could be lost, and has been, on great segments of our population.

“And all the peoples of the land will see that the name of Y^ehowah is called upon you and they will be afraid of you. [Deut. 28:10]

“There will be no man able to stand before you; Y^ehowah your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you.” (Deut. 7:25). This is true at the present time in some cases; however, the time that the Israelites spent in the desert reduced the fear in the hearts of the other nations. Had Israel marched directly from Egypt to Mount Sinai and then into the land, their momentum from the defeat and deliverance from Egypt would have carried them in many battles. Many nations would have just out and out surrendered to them had they done what was expected of them. However, their reputation will be built up again for a new generation of heathen.

From the previous verse, we know that this is all conditional. “For observe, I am beginning to work calamity in this city which is called by My name, and will you be completely free from punishment? You will not be free from punishment; for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth,” declares Y^ehowah of the armies (Jer. 25:29). We have become like those whom You have never ruled; like those who were not called by Your name (Isa. 63:19). “And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sins and I will heal their land.” (2Chron. 7:14). If the Israelites obeyed God and followed His Word, then God would provide them with a blanket of national security. And if they did not, they received a great deal of discipline. This in no way minimizes the concept of grace. These Israelites are completely undeserving, as are we, in their spiritual state. We reach out to God based upon His grace and not upon our merit. “O my God, turn Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.” (Dan. 9:18).

“And Y^ehowah will make you abundant in good, in the fruit of your womb, and in the offspring [lit., fruit] of your cattle, and in the production [lit., fruit] of your ground, on the ground which Y^ehowah has sworn to your fathers to give to you. [Deut. 28:11]

This is somewhat different from the blessing of v. 4; v. 4 was in the context of personal blessing. However, these things which count as personal blessings are all blessings on a national level. A people must be healthy and prosperous and growing in order to be a national power.

“Y^ehowah will open to you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand and you will lend to many nations, and you, even you, will not borrow. [Deut. 28:12]

The word rendered storehouse is *ḥōtsâr* (חֹצֵר) [pronounced *oh-TSAWR*] and it is a *depository, a storehouse, a treasury*. It is where things are laid up in storage, whether it be grain, gold or rain; or even snow, hail (Job 38:22) or wind (Psalm 135:7b Jer. 10:13b). Strong’s #214 BDB #69. The Bible continually emphasizes the importance of the rain on the land. *And I will give the rain for your land in its seas, the autumn rain and the spring rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil* (Deut. 11:14; see also Lev. 26:4 Isa. 30:23). At that time, it was a lush, beautiful land, green as can be. You didn’t need a green thumb. A remarkable thing is that the average person writing in that day would not know why the Land of Promise was so incredibly prosperous. God the Holy Spirit, Who inspired Moses, knew exactly why the land was prosperous. Today, we have a hard time recognizing that this land was at one time so beautiful and lush. This is because God has turned off the heavenly

faucets above Israel. “And I will lay it [the land] waste. It will not be pruned or hoed, but briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it.” (Isa. 5:6). “When the heavens are shut up and their is no rain, because they have sinned against You and they pray toward this place and confess Your name and turn from their sin when You afflict them. Then you will hear in heaven and forgive the sin of Your servants and of Your people of Israel, indeed, teach them the good way in which they should walk. And send rain on Your land which You have given Your people for an inheritance.” (1Kings 8:35–36).

A great sign of success is that you have enough capital to where you do not have to borrow money for your business endeavors and, you have enough capital to where people come to you for loans. “For Y^ehowah your God will bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.” (Deut. 15:6).

“And Y^ehowah has given you for head and not for tail; and you will be only above and not beneath, for you will listen [to] the commandments of Y^ehowah your God which I am commanding you this day, to keep [them] and to do [them]. [Deut. 28:13]

This might be confusing at first, so let’s see what the other translators have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And the Lord shall make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath,...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And Yahweh will give thee to be the head and not the tail, and thou shall be only above, and shalt not be beneath,...
NRSV	The Lord will make you the head, and not the tail; you shall be only at the top, and not at the bottom—...

Being the head means that Israel will be in the lead; Israel will guide the other nations in righteousness and in wisdom, because Israel is related to God. Wherever the head goes, the tail will follow. Israel will be above all of the other nations, and not below, a symbol of rulership as versus servitude. However, the key is obeying the commandments of God.

“And you will not turn aside from all the words which I am commanding you today—[not to] the right or left—to go after other gods to serve them. [Deut. 28:14]

God was very clear on most of the pronounced Law and what was expected of the nation Israel. Several times throughout Scripture, the Israelites were enjoined not to deviate from the Law in any way (Deut. 5:32 Joshua 1:7). Moses was given very explicit instructions when it came to speaking to the rock in order to obtain water. Neither he nor the most spiritual of Israel understood what the big deal was. He struck the rock twice instead of speaking to it. Today, we know how important it was to maintain that excellent analogy to the cross, but then, the only thing that was clear was the God told Moses to do one thing and Moses did another.

Part of the reason for the Mishna and the Talmud was to circumvent the Law. These are books which were written to explain and clarify the Law. You might think of them as commentaries, but they were more than that. Even though the Israelites do not recognize these books as being divinely inspired, they follow them more carefully than they followed the Law. The Law cursed the Israelite, and, being a natural man, he rejected that which came from God. So rather than the Talmud and the Mishna being sincere commentaries on the Old Testament, they were actually ways to get around the Law, to move either to the left or to the right of it. They also were very legalistic, particularly when it came to observing the Sabbath. Finally, they turned the Law into what it was not before—a means of salvation and a means of spirituality.

You may have noticed that in the previous chapter, there were twelve cursings and in this chapter their are only six blessings; furthermore, they are immediately cursed again in the next few verses. This tended to be the case with Israel throughout their history. For all they were blessed, they continually turned against God and received far more cursing. To whom much is given, much is expected. Also, we in the Church Age, pick up the additional

blessings. Our Lord continued the readings of the blessings on the Sermon on the Mount and the Israelite rejected Him; therefore, He turned to the Gentile.

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
Deuteronomy 31	Deuteronomy 32	Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	
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The Curses Spoke to Them from Mount Ebal

And now, without specific instructions from Moses, we move back to Mount Ebal for a round of curses. Recall that this is by interpretation. The set up was given to us back in Deut. 27:12–15a: “When you cross the Jordan, these will stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. And for the curse, these will stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali. The Levites will then answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice, “Cursed...” Obviously, there will be a lot more cursing than blessing. For the rest of the chapter, Moses will give the cursing of the people. He only uses the word *cursed* six times, six being the number of man. We are cursed because we are flesh. Then Moses launches into a warning where one could just about accuse him of preaching. Although this is similar to the information given in Lev. 26, the two chapters are not parallel chapters. Lev. 26 builds in intensity with regards to the punishments which would be placed upon Israel. Deut. 28 is not a *gradual heightening of judgments*,³⁰⁴ but builds in intensity with regards to the speaking pattern of Moses, but not necessarily in subject matter.

“And it will come to pass, if you do not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, so observe to do all His commands and His statutes, which I am commanding you today, that all these revilings will come upon you and they will overtake you. [Deut. 28:15]

I just discovered a point of interest to me in the Hebrew language area. I was examining the word *k^elâlâh* (קָלַל) [pronounced *k^e-law-LAWH*], saw the pronunciation in Strong’s, which just didn’t look right to me; and then went to my *New Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance* and found a different pronunciation altogether. Although it is obvious that we do not know how these words were pronounced exactly, as the vowel points were added thousands of years later and since we have very few tape recordings or CD’s from that era, the pronunciations given by both references were quite different. The word means *cursing*. Strong’s #7045 BDB #887. God places before these people blessing and cursing, death and life—they are given the opportunity to choose. I have quoted the most marvelous quotation from Joshua in the past: “Now, therefore, fear [and revere] Y^ehowah and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve Y^ehowah. And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve Y^ehowah, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you a living; but as for me and my house, we will serve Y^ehowah.” (Joshua 24:14–15). “If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name,” says Y^ehowah of the armies, “Then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them, because you are not taking it to heart.” (Mal. 2:2). The first portion of this chapter carried the blessings which were conditionally promised to Israel. The remainder of this chapter will deal with the curses upon Israel.

“You will be cursed in the city and you will be cursed in the field. [Deut. 28:16]

This verse has the same sentence structure and morphology as v. 3. It is the flip side. You are bored out of your mind living in the country, so you try moving to the city—you are still cursed. You leave the crime of the city for a life of leisure in the country—you are still cursed. In this life, when you have an immediate relationship with Jesus Christ, then environment no longer plays that much of a part. That is, you can be cursed or blessed by God apart from where you find yourself.

³⁰⁴ A phrase stolen from Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 965.

“Your basket will be cursed as well as [lit., and] your kneading-trough. [Deut. 28:17]

This is the flip side of v. 5. What they carry their foodstuffs in and the kneading trough, where the dough was kept before it was leavened. Everything wherein is their food is cursed. Actually, I believe that this is a metonymy—that is, the things in which food is placed actually stands for the food that is in them and the very food that the people eat is cursed. We have had that in some of our foods—they have some been processed to a point to where a lot of the beneficial ingredients have been rendered useless. Although we have as of relatively recent times restored the vitamin content, enzymes and other items of nutritional value have been removed. We have seen additives placed in our food for various reasons, only to later turn out that they are having negative affects on the physical well-being of some who cannot take large quantities of these additives. This is not a call to eat natural food, *per se*, as that is not an issue—i.e., the Bible neither instructs you to or not to *eat right*; that what you eat is a non-issue—I am merely illustrating how our food has become cursed as we move further and further from our spiritual heritage.

“Cursed is [the] fruit of your body, [the] produce [lit., fruit] of your land, [the] increase of your oxen and [the] young of your flock. [Deut. 28:18]

This is a repeat of v. 4 as a curse. I don't know why God the Holy Spirit or why Moses changed the order of these two verses. As we have observed, children of that time were a great blessing. For many families today, they are still considered to be a great blessing. However, we have seen many of our children become a curse to us. They have grown up without any real values or integrity, they are lazy, immoral and amoral, with no natural affection, but, instead, laden with self-serving desires. Many people without doctrine have unwittingly raised their children to be that way. They have allowed nannies and pre-schools to raise their children and have given their own children very little real time in their very early years. As a result, the children begin to go awry somewhere around age seven or eight, and their best tactic is to either medicate the child with ritalin and/or to give their child far too many material possessions out of guilt. Some children do have the ability to turn this poor job of being raised around, just as some children have the ability to take an excellent childhood rearing and turn it around as well. England has seen cursing come with their cattle in the form of the mad cow disease; they have also had cursing come to them with their young people.

“You will be cursed when you come in and you will be cursed when you go out. [Deut. 28:19]

This is the flip side of v. 6—no matter what you do, you will be cursed. Two sets of people can live under the exact same circumstances and one is cursed by these circumstances and one is blessed by these same circumstances. In fact, it is even possible to have a family all living under the same roof and some of those with doctrine are tremendously blessed by their lives and those without doctrine find their life a chore, a bore, disheartening, frustrating and miserable. Now this is not often the case because the ones with doctrine provide blessing by association for the others of their household. Furthermore, the ones without doctrine will do whatever they can to bring those with doctrine down.

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
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God Promises Great National Discipline to Israel

What happens next in this book is hard to explain. Whereas we can likely determine that these are a list of curses sounded back from Mount Ebal, in the next verse, Moses summarizes the lives of those who are cursed and suddenly launches into a prophecy of horror for God's people. Back in Lev. 26 we also have prophecies concerning Israel's future. It is passages like these which are the real cause for scholars to doubt the authenticity of Moses' authorship. Moses will very graphically describe the discipline under which Israel will find herself; there will be times that you will feel you have picked up a history book by mistake. In fact, the horrors of this prophecy

are more graphic than their historical fulfillment written in the Old Testament. Some scholars do not like the fact that Moses prophesied the future of Israel so accurately; therefore, they looked to show that Moses could not have written this but that much of it was written after its fulfillment. The result was what is known as documentary hypothesis, the JPED theory, which we have covered earlier and debunked.

“Y^ehowah will send against you the curse, the chaos and the rebuke, in every putting forth of your hand which you do, until you are destroyed and until you perish hastily, because of the evil of your actions wherein you have forsaken me. [Deut. 28:20]

V. 20 is not the mirror of any previous verse. Although many translations have God sending the curse *on* or *upon* Israel, it is simply the bēyth prefixed preposition, which is the preposition of proximity. It is often rendered *against*, as it is here. Then we have essentially three words here that we should look at. M^oʿêrâh (מֵאֲרָח) [pronounced m^oʿay-RAWH], which is another word for *curse*, found only here and Prov. 3:33 28:27 Mal. 2:2 3:9. Strong’s #3994 BDB #76. Its verbal cognate is found throughout this and the previous chapters. Strong’s #779 BDB #76. The second word is m^ohûmâh (מִחוּמָה) [pronounced m^ohoo-MAWH], which we studied previously in Deut. 7:23, and it means *confusion, chaos*. Strong’s #4103 BDB #223. The third word is not found anywhere else in Scripture, but because of its close ties to Strong’s #1605 and 1606, we will render it *rebuke*. Keil and Delitzsch call these three words synonymous to better emphasize the point of Moses. They are similar in meaning, but not synonymous.

Being destroyed and perishing hastily are different ways of saying the sin unto death. Once a believer is under a curse long enough, he falls into the sin unto death, which is not a specific sin, but a point at which only painful discipline resulting in death can possibly turn this person around. Most of the time there is no rehabilitation to it. God just has to remove the person from the world, due to his degeneracy and impertinence. **“With reproofs You [God] chasten a man for iniquity; You consume as a moth what is precious to him; surely, every man is a mere breath.”** (Psalm 39:11).

Quickly or *hastily* is a relative term—from an historical perspective, taking into account when the land was promised to the Israelite and when it was fulfilled for the first time, they will be driven out of the land rather abruptly. God had promised Abraham over five hundred years previous that He would give him and his progeny (before Abraham had any progeny) the Land of Promise. As Moses speaks, we are in the beginning of the 14th century BC (it is 1399 BC or so) and in just a few hundred years, the Israelites will be driven out of the land, after becoming a major world power. **“When you sire children and children’s children and have remained long in the land and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of Y^ehowah your God—to provoke Him to anger; I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will certainly perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You will not live long on it, but you will be completely destroyed. And Y^ehowah will scatter you among the peoples and you will be left few in number among the nations where Y^ehowah will drive you.”** (Deut. 4:25–27).

The last word in this verse is *me* and is a marvelous figure of speech not mentioned in Bullinger’s excellent *Figures of Speech Found in the Bible*. It may be understood in two ways. One is that God the Holy Spirit, speaking through Moses, causes him to say that, in reference to God. That is, God is speaking through Moses, through the power and the person of the Holy Spirit, saying, **“...you have forsaken Me.”** However, it is best understood that the Israelites have forsaken Moses, the speaker. This is a double-metonymy. When they forsake Moses (the speaker) that is equivalent to forsaking the Law of Moses which is equivalent to forsaking God. You forsake God’s Word and you have forsaken God.

The Bible is filled with prophecies concerning what would happen to Israel. **“And it will come to pass that a great panic from Y^ehowah will fall on them and they will seize one another’s hand and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another.”** (Zech. 14:13). **“Rouse yourself! Rouse yourself! Awake, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from Y^ehowah’s hand the cup of His anger; the chalice of reeling you have drunk to the dregs. There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; nor is there one to take her by the hand among all the sons she has reared. These two things have befallen you; who will mourn for you? The devastation and destruction, famine and sword; how shall I comfort you? Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every**

street, like an antelope in a net, full of the wrath of Y^ehowah, the rebuke of your God.” (Isa. 51:17–20). “Moreover, I will make you a desolation and a reproach among the nations which surround you, in the sight of all who pass by. So it will be a reproach, a reviling, a warning and an object of horror to the nations who surround you, when I execute judgments against you in anger, wrath, and raging rebukes. I, Y^ehowah have spoken. When I send against them the deadly arrows of famine which were for the destruction of those whom I will send to destroy you, then I will also intensify the famine upon you and break the staff of bread. Moreover, I will send on you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you of children; plague and bloodshed also will pass through you, and I will bring the sword on you. I, Y^ehowah, have spoken.” (Ezek. 5:15–17). In fact, there are more prophecies written than the actual fulfillment of some recorded in Scripture. This is easy to explain. God comes to His people prior to their cursing and He gives them a chance. He speaks to them through their prophets and sometimes they listen, but most often, they ignore Him. Then God brings upon them the cursing and the discipline, during which time there is less opportunity for the recording of historical events.

A question which may have occurred to you: some of the degeneracy of Israel can be attributed to the unbelievers residing there (as many Jews are unbelievers); why does God discipline them? God deals with individual believers and God deals with nations, which are collections of believers and unbelievers. When the degeneracy level or legalism level of a group of believers reaches a saturation point, then God disciplines those believers, and those who live with them are cursed by association. When a nation is directly under God, as was Israel, or when a nation is a client nation (Thieme’s vocabulary) unto God, then it receives special blessing and prosperity because of the believers within the nation. This prosperity is shed upon the unbelievers in the land as well. By association, they share in this prosperity. You may see that your business, your school, your family or your associates are blessed due to their association with you (we should hope). Along with this great blessing by association comes cursing by association. If the unbeliever is lucky enough to receive the great blessing by association when it comes, then he also receives the cursing when it comes. The unbeliever is not being rewarded or disciplined—he just happens to first be in the right place at the right time and next, in the wrong place at the wrong time. When a bus drives over a cliff, everyone in the bus is affected. When a significant number of believers in the United States are growing or if they are retrogressing, then the United States, as a unit, receives either blessing or cursing.

There are very political believers who are extremely involved in the workings of politics, hoping to change our nation by eliminating abortion as birth control, to put prayer back in the schools, to restore morality to our country, etc. etc. They are treating the symptoms of the disease, not the cause. The cause is the lack of doctrine in them. The cause is their rebellion as believers against God. When our nation is under discipline, we as Christians have nowhere to point our fingers except at ourselves. The blessing or cursing a nation receives is tied directly to the spiritual growth of the Christian population. If the unbeliever really recognized this, he would try to legislate that all Christians go to church at least four or five times a week and that the pastor of any local church be severely fined if he did not teach the Bible verse by verse.

“Y^ehowah will cause the pestilence to cling to you till He consumes you from off the ground where you are going in to possess it. [Deut. 28:21]

One method of the sin unto death is disease. We have frightful diseases found throughout the United States—AIDS and cancer, by which God uses to take out some degenerate believers. This does not mean that every believer who dies of either of these diseases is under discipline—it just means that this is one way God takes some believers out of this world under the principle of the sin unto death. God had long promised Israel that He would discipline her with disease: “I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you will be delivered into enemy hands.” (Lev. 26:25; see also Jer. 24:10).

“Y^ehowah will strike you down with consumption and with fever, and with inflammation, and with extreme burning, and with extreme dryness,³⁰⁵ and with a burning up [of fever], and with mildew

³⁰⁵ This is generally translated *sword*; see the explanation which follows the verse.

[actually, paleness due to lack of moisture], and they will pursue you until you perish. [Deut. 28:22]

In the KJV, the NASB and in *Young's Literal Translation*, one of the causes of death is *mildew*; which has got to be, quite frankly, the worst way to die. Pretty much when a person dies of mildew, you can rest assured it was the sin unto death. Actually, the word is *yêrâkôwn* (יֵרָקוֹן) [pronounced *yay-raw-CONE*] and it means *paleness (in plants as well as in persons) for lack of moisture*. Strong's #3420 BDB #439. Pestilence (disease) and war are given as two causes of death. The sword can actually stand for war or death as the result of criminal activity. The list of seven ways that God will strike the Israelite is a mark of perfection—the discipline is ultimately from God.

It make strike you as odd to find *the sword* in this verse. It seems out of place. The word *sword* is *chereb*^{bv} (חֶרֶב) [pronounced *khe-RE^bV*] (Strong's #2719 BDB #352). However, there is a very similar word: *chôreb* (חֹרֵב) [pronounced *khoh-RE^bV*], which means *extreme dryness, drought, heat*. It is used of a physical ailment in Job 30:30. Strong's #2721 BDB #351. As you will recall, the original text was written without verbs, so these would have been the same words in the original text (*chr^{bv}*). This is also the opinion of BDB and the Vulgate and Samaritan codices that this is the proper rendering. Although the last three items on the list could apply to the crops of the Israelites, these all deal with diseases of man. This is because the verse begins with: **And Y^ehowah will strike you [masculine singular] down with...** and then we have the enumeration of what God strikes the individual Israelite with. The key to interpretation is to allow your context to guide you.

“And your heavens which are over your head will become brass, and the earth which is under you iron; [Deut. 28:23]

We have seen this come to pass. Examine the pictures of the Land of Promise today—the heaven above is like brass and the earth is like iron. This means that water would not penetrate the ground or pierce the sky.³⁰⁶ That entire area—the Land of Promise—is a huge desert. **“And I will also break down your pride of power; and I will make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze.”** (Deut. 26:19). **“The anger of Y^ehowah will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which Y^ehowah has given you.”** (Deut. 11:17). **“And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands.”** (Haggai 1:11; see also 1Kings 8:35 17:1 Isa. 5:6). When I first began working on the Old Testament, I translated the area through which the Israelites traveled as *desert*; however, I did that mostly because of my vision of Israel today. However, when they traveled through the land, the Israelites went through a great variety of topography, much of which is more properly called *wilderness*. You see, at one time, that land received so much rain that it earned the name *wilderness*, as it was lush and wild.

When I was a new Christian, the concept of the Promised Land confused me. How could you consider that hell hole called Israel a Promised Land? Is this the best that God had for Israel? And why would a people want to actually move to Israel, in the midst of all that fighting and suffering and desert? When God originally promised this land to Israel, it was a beautiful land flowing with milk and honey; and the key was rainfall. God saw to it that this land received a lot of rain so that it would prosper.

“Y^ehowah gives dust and ashes the rain of your land [lit., Y^ehowah gives (or, places) rain of your land—dust and ashes]; it comes down on you from the heavens until you are destroyed. [Deut. 28:24]

What this is saying is that instead of rain from heaven, they received dust and ashes—that is, dust and pollution. This is what God rains from heaven upon them. God gives them that until they are destroyed. One of the worst ways to die is through poverty and depression. Rather than sending them rain, which brought with it great prosperity to an agricultural society, God send dust and pollution, which brought only economic depression to their lives. **That which came as the word of Y^ehowah to Jeremiah in regard to the drought: “Judah mourns and her gates languish. They sit on the ground in mourning and the cry of Jerusalem has ascended. And their nobles**

³⁰⁶ I took this imagery from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 273.

have sent their servants for water; they have come to the cisterns and found no water. They have returned with their vessels empty. They have been put to shame and humiliated and they cover their heads. Because the ground is cracked for there has been no rain on the land. The farmers have been put to shame. They have covered their heads. For even the doe in the field has given birth only to abandon [her young]. And the wild donkey stand on the bare heights; they pant for air like jackals, their eyes fail, for there is no vegetation. Although our iniquities testify against us, O Y^ehowah, act for Your name's sake! Truly, our apostasies have been many. We have sinned against You." (Jer. 14:1–7). *When the heat is very great the atmosphere in Palestine is often filled with dust and sand; the wind is a burning sirocco, and the air comparable to the glowing heat at the mouth of a furnace*³⁰⁷.

“Y^ehowah gives to you a striking down in the face of your enemies; in one way you go out to them and in seven ways you flee from before them; and you have been made for a trembling to all the kingdoms of the earth. [Deut. 28:25]

This is the antithesis of v. 7. “Therefore, the wrath of Y^ehowah was against Judah and Jerusalem and He has made them an object of terror, or horror, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. For, observe, our fathers have fallen by the sword and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.” (2Chron. 29:8–9; see also Jer. 29:18). So the Philistines fought and Israel was struck down and every man fled to his tent, and the slaughter was tremendous; for there fell of Israel 30,000 foot soldiers (1Sam. 4:10).

The word for *trembling* here is z^evâ ʿâh (הַיָּרֵא) [pronounced zev-aw-AW] means *an object of trembling, an object of horror*. In the Hebrew, the wâw and the ayin are transposed in this verse. This is a tough call made by both BDB and Strong's.³⁰⁸ The picture here is you find someone who is entirely pathetic and you have the sense to fear, lest you be struck in a like manner. Strong's #2113 (and 2189) BDB #266.

Whereas this reads, *in one way you go out to them and in seven ways, you flee from before them*—this is more than meeting their enemies in battle and running from them. *The threat differs from that in Lev. xxvi. 33, which refers to a dispersion of the people amongst the heathen. Here it is meant that they should be tossed to and fro at the will of others, driven from one country to another without any certain settlement*³⁰⁹.

“And your corpses will be food to every bird [or, for the bird]³¹⁰ of the heavens and to the animal of the earth, and [there is] no one to frighten [them away] [lit., and nothing is causing trembling]. [Deut. 28:26]

Jeremiah was a student of the book of Deuteronomy. *And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the sky and for the beasts of the earth; and no one will frighten [them].* (Jer. 7:33). “They will die of deadly diseases; they will not be lamented or buried; they will be as dung on the surface of the ground and come to an end by sword and famine and their carcasses will become food for the birds of the sky and for the beasts of the earth.” (Jer. 16:4; see also 19:7 34:20 and Psalm 79:2). As you can see by the verses quoted, when one's body is food for the vultures and scavengers, it is the greatest degradation—generally an insult reserved for the ungodly (see also 1Kings 14:11).

The Israelites are about to go into the land and Moses is becoming increasingly morbid. When they drop dead, the animals will have no fear of them. They will go right up to the corpses and eat them. Everyone is either dead or dying the sin unto death and cannot shoo the animals away.

³⁰⁷ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 323. I found this exact same quote in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 966 attributed to Robinson, ii. 504.

³⁰⁸ The KJV, for both Strong's numbers, translates this as *a removing* or words to that effect. In this verse, the preposition preceding both z^evâ ʿâh and *all the kingdoms of the earth* is lâmed, which means *to, for, in regards to*. Although it is true that Israel would be removed from the land into all of the nations, the translation would be: *you will flee in his [the enemy's] sight and you will be for a removal to all the kingdoms of the earth*.

³⁰⁹ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 324.

³¹⁰ As per the western Samaritan, Onkolos manuscript, Septuagint and Syriac codices.

“Y^ehowah will cause you to be struck down with the boils of Egypt and with festering sores and with the scab and with the [tormenting] itch³¹¹ which you cannot heal. [Deut. 28:27]

The Israelites would be tormented with every kind of horrible illness. It is bad enough to contract a sickness and die, but those discussed here promised a miserable death. If the Israelites followed God and remained faithful to him, then “Y^ehowah will remove from you all sickness; and He will not place on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.” (Deut. 7:15). Recall that one of the plagues brought upon by Moses was when he threw the soot of a kiln into the air and it broke out as boils on the magicians and upon the other Egyptians (Ex. 9:8–11). These are four incurable diseases found in Egypt. This would be one way of administering the sin unto death. The first is *elephantiasis* differing from tubercular leprosy (Deut. 28:35 Job 2:7) only in degree. The second disease was a swelling or a rising in the anus (according to the rabbis)—that is, a tumor in the anus (or in the uterus). The Philistines were struck down with this disease in 1Sam. 5.

“Y^ehowah will cause you to be struck down in [a state of] madness and in the incapacity of blindness and in a confused [state of] mind [lit., and in a confusion of heart]; [Deut. 28:28]

The three descriptors here are as follows: (1) *shiggâ ʿôwn* (שִׁגְגָּא עֹוֹן) [pronounced *shig-gaw-YONE*] is a *wild and helpless panic* and is found in Deut. 28:28 Zech. 12:4 2Kings 9:20 (an adverb?)* Strong’s #7697 BDB #993. The related verb is *shâga ʿ* (שָׁגָא) [pronounced *shaw-GAH*] means *to rave, to act a madman*. Deut. 28:34 1Sam. 21:16 2Kings 9:11 Jer. 29:26 Hos. 9:7 Strong’s #7696 BDB #993. (2) *lvvârôwn* (לִוְוָרֹוֹן) [pronounced *iv-vaw-RONE*] means *blindness*, but it is only used in the Bible for the *incapacity of blindness*. In this context, it is not a reference to having one’s sight removed, but behaving as though your sight was removed. Found only here and in Zech. 12:4 Strong’s #5788 BDB #734. (3) *Timmâhôwn* (תִּמְמָהוֹן) [pronounced *tim-maw-HONE*] refers to *being in a state of bewilderment, stupefaction, dumbfounded astonishment*. It is found here and in Zech. 12:4. Strong’s #8541 BDB #1069. They have been put into a mental state which is beyond their ability to cope with the situation. They cannot do for themselves at this point. No matter what the crisis, no matter who needs what, they will be unable to function in any way.

Not only are their bodies falling apart in sickness, but their entire thinking process will become destroyed under penalty from God. God is not doing this to the Israelites because they would be in rebellion against Him. You have certainly been ill before where the physical illness crept over into the mental life and you felt mentally logey due to your physical state. Their illness and circumstances cause them to be in this fragile mental condition. Notice that nowhere in the Bible are we ever told to enter into therapy, to seek out a friend and talk things out. A person in this state of mind got here by their own volition. It was a natural result of the conditions of their life and their negative volition toward God’s Word. *Struck down* is in the Hiphil, or causative, stem. God has caused this to happen, but through the natural results of what will happen to them.

“And you will grope at noon as the blind gropes in darkness; and you will not cause your ways to prosper; and you will be only oppressed and robbed [or, plundered] all the days—and there is no savior. [Deut. 28:29]

This describes the Israelites under divine discipline and it describes the fate of the unbeliever of Israel as well. The unbeliever is not only blind, but he gropes like a blind person does in darkness. This analogy is overdone here—not only are they groping like a blind man, but a blind man in the dark—to emphasize how lost they are. For all their days they will enjoy no prosperity, no happiness, no joy—they will always be under oppression and in an area where they are either stolen from or under military attack where other foreign armies take from them the very few possessions that they have. Isn’t this the life of the unbeliever? Satan, his supposed ally, will set him up and plunder him again and again. And if he has not believed in the name of Jesus Christ, he can expect nothing but plundering. Isaiah aptly describes this state of separation from God: **Therefore, justice is far from us and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, but observe, darkness; for brightness, but we walk in gloom. We grope along the wall like blind men—we grope like those who have no eyes. We stumble a midday**

³¹¹ According to *The Emphasized Bible*, this is *read* “tumors” and *written* “hemorrhoids.” Just thought I’d mention it.

as in the twilight among those who are vigorous, we are like dead men. All of us growl like bears and moan sadly like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before You and our sins testify against us, because our transgressions remain with us and we know our iniquities. Transgressions and denying Y^ehowah and turning away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.” (Isa. 59:9–13).

One of the great themes of the Old Testament is the concept of a *savior*, one who will deliver Israel in a time of trouble. We find this throughout the Bible, as in Judges 3:9 2Kings 13:5 Esther 4:14 Isa. 19:20 43:11. As God said to Isaiah: “I, even I, am Y^ehowah; and there is no Savior [lit., one Who is saving] besides Me.” (Isa. 43:11). Now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the Savior in the Old Testament—not finished yet.**

“You will be engaged to a woman and another man will lie with her; you will build a house and you will not live in it; you will plant a vineyard, and you will not make it common. [Deut. 28:30]

Life for the Israelites who reject God’s laws will be nothing more than a life of unfulfilled dreams. What it listed here are the things that most people think they are entitled to just for being born. Most people have a dream of getting married, owning their own home and having a reasonable job. Some expect these things and are terribly upset when they do not get them. Entire generations will be deprived of these things. Therefore, because you impose heavy rent on the poor and exact a tribute of grain from them and you have built houses of well---hewn stone, yet you will not live in them. You have planted pleasant vineyards, yet you will not drink their wine. For I know your transgressions are many and your sins are great, you who distress the righteous accepting bribes and turn aside the poor at the gate (Amos 5:11–12). “So also I will make you sick striking you down, desolating you because of your sins. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied and your excreta will be in your midst. You will try to remove [items for safekeeping] but you will not preserve [what you possess]. And what you do preserve, I will give to the sword. You will sow, but you will not reap. You will tread the olive but you will not anoint yourself with oil; and [you will tread] the grapes, but you will not drink wine.” (Micah 6:13–15; see also Jer. 12:13 Zeph. 1:13).

These three things are, not uncoincidentally, the three items which would exempt a person from military service. If someone took a new wife, planted a vineyard or built a new house, he would be exempt from military service for a year or more (Deut. 20:5–7). So not only do we in our own minds expect these things, God wants for us to have them. Our place on this earth, our right woman (or right man), and a beginning in a business are three basic desires of adult life which God desires for us to have. When we lack these things, it is generally our fault, not God’s. These Israelites in this context do not receive these things because they are under discipline, but they are under discipline because of what they have done.

Regardless of what state your nation is in, whether you have begun the cycles of discipline or whether you are at the end of the cycles of discipline, God protects the positive believer and delivers the positive believer. We are not trapped by our environment. Furthermore, we have an eternal hope, which the Israelites had as well. Therefore, what is found in this verse is the antithesis of Isa. 65:17–25: “For behold, I will create a new heaven and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I have created, for behold, I create Jerusalem to rejoice and her people for happiness. I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be happy in My people; and there will no longer be heard in her the voice of weeping and the sound of crying. No longer will there be an child who dies prematurely [lit., an infant of days] or an old man who does not live out his full life [lit., fulfill his life]; for the youth will die at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred will be accursed. And they will build houses and inhabit [them]. They will also plant vineyards and eat of their fruit. They will not build and another inhabit. They will not plant and another eat. For as the days of a tree, the days of My people; and my chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands—they will not labor in vain or bear [children] for calamity; for they are the seed of those blessed by Y^ehowah and their descendants with them. It will come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will graze together and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpents’s food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,” says Y^ehowah.

I have mentioned evangelists before. Some indicate that once you believe in Jesus Christ, everything will just be wonderful afterwards. That isn’t true. You live in the devil’s world and you possess an old sin nature. Believing

in Jesus Christ gives you the opportunity for living a life which is more fulfilling than the life of any unbeliever, but that does not mean that you will achieve this life. If you believe in Jesus Christ and then decide to do your own thing, then you are under tremendous discipline and even the most basic ideas of getting married and owning a house are lost to you. They will be things which seem to be just out of your grasp. Doing your own thing could include becoming moral and religious. A huge number of Christians operate in this realm. They read their Bible for themselves, they haven't been in fellowship since fourteen minutes following their salvation, they go to church and they do not know what is wrong. The Israelites were to follow God's Word after salvation, and we are to do the same. That involves the minimum of quietly, or silently, naming your sins to God and growing through God's Word as taught by your right pastor teacher. Since there is a dearth of pastor teachers who actually teach God's Word, most people have access to R.B. Thieme's tapes, the best by far coming from the middle sixties to the very early seventies. There is also the late J. Vernon McGee's radio program, which seems to be broadcast everywhere. Both teach verse by verse. This spiritual growth is essential if you want anything out of life other than discipline from God and self-induced misery as a Christian.

Now, so that I don't minimize salvation, what is true is that you will have fellowship with God forever—you will go to a place of no more sorrow, no more tears, the old things have passed away, whereas the unbeliever will enter a place of cursing and gnashing of teeth (an eternity of pain and frustration).

“Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes and you will not eat of it; your ass is taken violently away from before your face and it is not given back to you; your sheep are given to your enemies and there is no savior for you. [Deut. 28:31]

You have just begun to save your money or you have just gotten out of college after several years work and all of this will be taken from you. This is equivalent to seeing everything that you have spent years working for and towards vanish overnight due to your negative volition towards God's Word. There are other believers where God is just waiting, tapping His foot, desiring to pour out blessing upon them—it is their own negative volition which is the reason that they are not blessed.

Furthermore, as believers in Jesus Christ, we have great responsibilities and those who do not acknowledge that they were bought with a price will pay the price. They are still saved and they will still spend eternity with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—but their stay on earth will be frustrating and painful. All that you work for will be stolen from you and life will seem to be incredibly and unreasonably unfair.

“Your sons and your daughters will be given to another people and your eyes are looking [and you are] completely consumed [in this] regarding them all the day and your hand is not to God. [Deut. 28:32]

The most personal possession for anyone is their children. In this life, to the believer and to the unbeliever, there is nothing more important to them than their children. They may not have a clue as to how to raise them, but they are of utmost importance to them. Right from before their eyes, their children are taken and either raised by others under the principle of adoption, or they are raised into slavery.

The last portion of this verse is more difficult to translate, so let me give you a few examples:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day; and there shall be no power in your hands to prevent it.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...thine eyes looking on and failing for them all the day, thine own hand being powerless.
KJV	...and thine eyes shall look, and fail <i>with longing</i> for them all the day long; and <i>there shall be</i> no might in thine hand.
NASB	...while your eyes shall look on and yearn for them continually; but there shall be nothing you can do [lit., in the power of your hand].
NIV	...and you will wear out your eyes watching for them day after day, powerless to life a hand.

NRSV	...you will strain your eyes looking for them all day but be powerless to do anything.
Owen's Translation	...while your eyes fail with longing all the day and it shall not be in the power of your hand.
Young's Lit. Translation	...and thine eyes are looking and consuming for them all the day, and thy hand is not to God!

Literally, from the Hebrew, we have **...and your eyes are looking and...** and then there is this adjective *kâleh* (כָּלֵה) [pronounced *kaw-LEH*] which is found nowhere else in the Bible, but it is closely tied to the noun and verb *kâlâh* (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*]; the verb means *to complete, to be finished, accomplished, spent*. The noun means *completion, complete destruction, consumption, annihilation*. The noun: Strong's #3617 BDB #478. Adjective: Strong's #3616 BDB #479. The adjective here is in the feminine plural, which are tied, along with the verb, to the subject eyes (in the feminine dual). So it is the eyes which are *completely consumed* here; however, the eyes stand for the person. Eyes are not entities in themselves with their own set of feelings and personal agenda, but a metonymy for person. The emotions expressed here are attributed in the Hebrew to the eyes but that is a figure of speech meaning the act of being *completely consumed* belongs to the reversionist Israelite. This is followed by a few words easy to translate literally, giving us: **...and your eyes are looking and completely consumed regarding them all of the day...** You may have noticed another major difference. Most translators render this *for them*; which would be apropos if the preposition was the prefixed *lâmed*, but it is *ʿel* (actually, in this case *ʿâl*) and it means *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding* (direction is a key factor). Strong's #413 BDB #39.

When the captives were led out of Judah on the death march, we have Psalm 119 record some thoughts and feelings of the believers sent into captivity. **My soul has been consumed for Your salvation and I have hoped for Your Word. My eyes have been consumed for Your Word, saying, "When will it comfort me?"** (Psalm 119:81–82).

The rest of the verse is literally **...and...your hand**. In between are two words. The first is the substantive of negation (that is, *naught, nothing*) or the particle of negation (*no, not*). The Hebrew is *ʿayin* (אֵין) [pronounced *AH-yin*] My sources disagree as to which one it is and I don't know that there is a difference. Strong's #369 BDB #34. This is followed by the *lâmed* prefixed preposition (now, that means *to, for*) and the masculine singular construct of *ʿêl* (אֵל) [pronounced *ale*], which is one of the words for *god* or *God*. The same word is found in Deut. 32:4, 12. Strong's #410 BDB #32. So, this verse ends literally, **...and your hand [is] not to God**. This has a two-fold meaning, which the translations bring out. They are powerless to do anything, as they do not have God as the strength of their arm; and they have chosen for God not to be their arm, their strength, and therefore He has delivered them over to the natural results of their degenerate, ungodly choice. It is because they have chosen not to reach out to God, but to do their own thing—they have chosen not to obey Him, but to disregard His Law—that they are under this tremendous discipline.

So, what has occurred is that their sons and daughters have been taken into captivity as slaves (this will be confirmed in v. 41) or under the principle of adoption, yet their eyes look for them daily, completely consumed by the hope that they will see them again—yet, for all this, they do not reach their hand toward God for His help or for His comfort.

This was fulfilled several times in prophecy. One recording of its fulfillment is found in a public prayer of Hezekiah in 2Chron. 29:8–10: **"Therefore, the wrath of Y^ehowah was against Judah and Jerusalem, and He has made them an object of terror, of horror, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. For behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. Now it is my heart to make a covenant with Y^ehowah, God of Israel, that His burning anger may turn away from us."**

"A people whom you have not known will eat the fruit of your ground and all your labor and you will be only oppressed and crushed all the days. [Deut. 28:33]

This is identical to the slavery which the Israelites left. They worked for the Egyptians all of their days and all that they did belonged to the Egyptians. Even in their own land, while under discipline, all that they do, all that they produce, will be consumed by another people.

Although this chapter parallel's Lev. 26 in terms of subject matter—the severe discipline of Israel—there are actually very few verses which cover the same material. However, Lev. 26:16 parallels very closely what we have been studying: “I, in turn, will do this to you; I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up.” Jeremiah makes a similar prophecy in Jer. 5:17: “And they will devour your harvest and your food; they will devour your sons and your daughters; they will devour your flocks and your herds; they will devour your vines and your fig trees; they will demolish with the sword your fortified cities in which you trust.” See also Ezek. 24:5.

This was partially fulfilled in Judges 6:1–6, except that they knew already of the Midianites and the Amalekites. However, we find this fulfilled also in Judges 13:1 by the Philistines. Finally, this was fulfilled many times in the future, particularly under Assyria and Babylon.

“And you will become mad [or, you will be driven mad] because of the sight of your eyes which you see. [Deut. 28:34]

The verb here is the Pual participle of *shâga* (שׂגַה) [pronounced *shaw-GAH*], which we looked at before; it means *to rave, to act a madman*. The Pual is the passive intensive stem. BDB offers *driven to despair* for this rendering. Strong's #7696 BDB #993. The Israelites will see everything that they have worked for taken from them—even all that they've grown and even their sons and daughters. Such a sight will drive them mad. Christians who stay out of fellowship and get under terrific discipline fall into mental illness. The holy rollers, who are almost bereft of a true spiritual life, fall into this category. You find many holy rollers who are completely off-center.

We find this verse fulfilled in the last king of independent Judah: **Then they captured the king [of Judah—Zedekiah] and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed sentence on him. And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon** (2Kings 25:6–7). Although we do not follow Zedekiah historically, no doubt that the last thing which he saw, the slaughter of his own flesh and blood, prior from being reduced from the most powerful man in Judah to a blind and helpless slave, drove him mad.

What is being described in v. 34 and in this general context is the life of the Jews in Germany during and prior to the second world war. This is the Jew during the Great Inquisition. This is the Jew when the Romans plundered Jerusalem at the fall of Masada. This is the Jew when they were dispersed by the Assyrians. What we need to examine are **Historical Examples of Jewish Persecution—not finished yet!!**

“Y^ehowah will strike you will an evil ulcer, on the knees and on the legs (of which you are unable to be healed), from the soul of your foot even to your crown. [Deut. 28:35]

This is the third or fourth time Moses tells the Israelites that God would strike them down with disease. He first told them in v. 22 that they would be struck down **with consumption and with fever, and with inflammation, and with extreme burning, and with extreme dryness, and with a burning up [of fever], and with mildew [actually, paleness due to lack of moisture], and they will pursue you until you perish**. Then in v. 27 and 28, Moses again tells them that God would strike them **with the boils of Egypt and with festering sores and with the scab and with the [tormenting] itch which you cannot heal. Y^ehowah will cause you to be struck down in [a state of] madness and in the incapacity of blindness and in a confused [state of] mind**. Moses has also told them in v. 25 that their enemies would strike them down.

The leprosy here is not join-leprosy (or, *lepra tuberosa*), as that form of leprosy can strike the lower portion of the body and the victims can recover some of their health after some of the diseased portions fall off. However, this type of leprosy affected them from head to toe. This would make it either painful or impossible to stand or to walk. Furthermore, being leprous, analogous to full control of the old sin nature, excluded one from fellowship with God.

Their misery does not end with their entire lives being taken from them, but added to this is great physical pain and misery from being covered with skin cancer. God has often disciplined with disease. It is such a natural outgrowth of our inherent sinfulness. **And the first [angel] went and poured out his bowl into the earth and it became a loathsome and malignant sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image** (Rev. 16:2). **From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is nothing sound in it—bruises welts and raw wounds—not pressed out or bandaged or softened with oil** (Isa. 1:6).

This certainly does not mean that skin cancer is a sign of divine discipline. God allowed Satan to strike Job with this disease, along with all of the other horrible things which God allowed Satan to do to Job (Job 2:7 7:5 13:28 30:30). And, in mentioning Job, I ought to point out that it is possible that Moses was quoting here from the book of Job, as the verbage is quite similar: **Then Satan went out from the presence of Y^ehowah and struck Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head** (Job 2:7). This is certainly not proof positive that Moses was aware of the book of Job, but it is a distinct possibility.

“Y^ehowah will cause you to go and your king whom you raise up over you to a nation which you have not known, you and your fathers, and you will serve there other gods—wood and stone.
[Deut. 28:36]

The loss of their spiritual life would be followed the dissolution of the contract between the Israelite and God. God, through Moses, was very clear that this was a conditional contract—recall that this is made an issue three times in this chapter alone (vv. 2, 9, and 13–14). If they wanted a relationship with another god, this was fine—but they had to take upon themselves the consequences. A person can believe in Jesus Christ and then say, “Goodbye, God, I will see you in eternity” and that is fine. However, they will have to face the consequences. This chapter gives us a listing of the consequences for the nation Israel. Today, we face those consequences as both a nation and as individuals.

Evangelists can be fools. They often promise that a person’s life will suddenly become wonderful as soon as they believe in Jesus Christ and often, just the opposite is true. Believing in Jesus Christ can result in a person’s life being miserable, depending upon their subsequent relationship with their Lord. However, do not let this dissuade you. No matter how miserable and horrible your life becomes, it is nothing in comparison to spending eternity in constant pain, completely separated from God, dwelling with Satan’s and his demon army in the Lake of Fire.

The other awful mistake made by both evangelists and pastors alike is that if we behave reasonably morally following our conversion, then we were really saved; and if we behave like immoral rounders, then that implies that the salvation didn’t take. Salvation takes the first time you believe in Jesus Christ, regardless of what you do after salvation. Some pastors don’t feel as though they are doing a good enough job unless they scare people into thinking that they are not saved if they don’t act like they were saved. This is pure and simple legalism and the fundamental mistake of Romanism and Pentecostalism—no matter what we choose to do after salvation, believing in Jesus Christ secured our salvation for all eternity; this is because He did all of the work. He died for every sin that we have ever committed or will ever commit. After salvation, we don’t suddenly think of some sins that God forgot to pour out on our Lord and lose our salvation by doing them. God can take care of his own and He will discipline His own as He sees fit. All a pastor needs to do is to step back and allow God to deal with the discipline. The problem is that the pastor has not made it clear that discipline will follow a reprobate life, so God’s discipline falls upon deaf ears, as it were. That is, what good is discipline if the person being disciplined has no idea what is going on? It is great to discipline your own children, but if you don’t make it completely clear as to why they are being disciplined, then you are doing them a great disservice and spanking them for no reason. There are some Christians that I would love to see disciplined, but, what good does it do if they don’t know why? It is a pastor’s job and an evangelist’s job to make this clear. Then when a member of their flock strays, God can discipline them and they will know what is going on. As having been on the receiving end of a great deal of discipline as a believer, I can attest to that. I do wrong, I know that I have done wrong, God disciplines me, it hurts, and I move on, having rebounded (named my sins to God).

Just why do you think that Moses is spending so much time speaking on discipline? He wants this to be clear to the Israelite that he has a choice as the chosen of God. He can either enjoy marvelous prosperity or great

discipline. Moses is making the issue clear. This generation, like their fathers, is made up of about 100% believers in Jesus Christ. What is important now is their day-by-day relationship to Him. Moses will spend a long time making it crystal clear that the contract between God and each generation of Israel is a conditional one and that they can go from blessing to discipline in just one generation. Moses makes it clear as to how they can fall into discipline and he makes it clear as to what discipline will be like. This is exactly what every pastor should explain to their congregation.

These people have not even yet gone into the land, they don't have a king, and their fathers are all dead. Moses is already telling them their future as a people, a future which real repeat itself many times as they are under severe discipline. This prophecy would be repeated many times by many different prophets. Jeremiah said: "Then I will cause your enemies to bring [your wealth and treasures] into a land you do not know; for a fire has been kindled in my anger—it will burn upon you." (Jer. 15:14). "So I will hurl you out of this land into a land which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers; and there you will serve other gods day and night, for I will give you no grace." (Jer. 16:13). "Therefore, thus says the Y^ehowah of the armies, 'Because you have not obeyed My words, observe, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares Y^ehowah, 'And to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will completely destroy them, and make them a horror, and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation...and this whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.' " (Jer. 25:8–9,11). But the king of Assyria found a conspiracy in Hoshea, who had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and had offered no tribute to the king of Assyria, as year by year; so the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. The king of Assyria invaded the whole land and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them in Halah and Habor, the rive of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes (2Kings 17:4–6). And Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, went up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. And Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came to the city, while his servants were besieging it. And Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, went out to the king of Babylon, he and his other and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of Y^ehowah, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon, king of Israel, had made in the temple of Y^ehowah, just as Y^ehowah had said. Then he led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land (2Kings 24:10–14). Now it came to pass in the ninth year of [Zedekiah's] reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came. He and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it. So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the month, the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho and all his army was scattered from him. Then they captured the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed sentence on him. And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon...and he [Nebuchadnezzar] burned the house of Y^ehowah, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great house he burned with fire. So all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem. Then the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon and the rest of the multitude, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, carried away into exile (2Kings 24:1–11; see also Jer. 39:1–10). And Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. Then the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was led away into exile from its land. There are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away into exile; in the seventh year, 3023 Jews; in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, 832 persons from Jerusalem; in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, carried into exile 745 Jewish people; there were 4,600 persons in all (Jer. 52:26–30). "Because our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, the one destroying this temple and deporting the people to Babylon." (Ezra 5:12). How lonely sits the city that was full of people! She has become like a widow who was once great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a forced

laborer! She weeps bitterly in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks—she has none to comfort her among all her lovers. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her—they have become her enemies. Judah has gone into exile under affliction and under harsh servitude. She dwells among the nations; she has found no rest. All her pursuers have overtaken her in the midst of distress (Lam. 1:1–3).

However, Israel still has a future hope, which could be the far or near future from today: “And it will come to pass just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.” (Zech. 8:13).

“And you will be for a horror, for an oracle [or, memorable recitation] and for a [sharp cutting] taunt among all the peoples where Y^ehowah leads you. [Deut. 28:37]

We should look at a few of the other translations again:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And you will become an amazement, a proverb, and a byword, among all peoples to which the Lord will lead you.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Thus shalt thou become a horror, a byword, and a mockery,—among all the peoples whither Yahweh thy God will drive thee.
KJV	And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb and a by-word among all nations to which the LORD shall lead thee.
NASB	And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people where the LORD will drive you.
NIV	You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the LORD will drive you.
NRSV	You shall become an object of horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples where the LORD will lead you.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and thou hast been for an astonishment, for a simile, and for a byword among all the peoples whither Jehovah doth lead thee.

An interesting note on the two most literal translations: in *The Emphasized Bible*, *Yahweh thy God* is probably a mistake on their part, as the phrase *thy God* is not found in the original. An interesting side note, however, is that in my Greek Septuagint, *thy God* is not found; however, right over in the next column in the English translation of the Greek, *thy God* is found. And, as you may have noticed in *Young's Literal Translation*, the tenses always seem funny. What Young was shooting for was to have a more literal and more consistent translation. However, one of the areas where he aimed to more consistency is one where one should not find consistency (I am sure that made sense to you). The Hebrew does not have a verb tense structure anything like ours; a verb in the Qal perfect, as is found here, can stand for an action which took place in the past, present or in the future. What Young does do is he often includes parts of speech ignored by other translations. Each of the descriptors found in this verse is preceded by the prefixed preposition *lamed*, which means *to, for, in regard to*.

The first descriptor is the Hebrew word *shammâh* (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced *shahm-MAWH*] and it is typically translated, in the KJV, *astonishment, waste, desolation* (2Chron. 29:8 Jer. 2:15 49:13). The related verb, *shâmêm* (שָׁמַם) [pronounced *shaw-MAIM*] has two distinct meanings: *to be desolate* and *to be appalled*. These meanings are not confined to particular stems, but can be found in all stems. Strong's #8074 BDB #1030. This noun also has two similar meanings: *waste, devastation* or *horror, appallment*. The first is used when the thing described is land or a house (Isa. 5:9 Jer. 2:15 48:9 49:17); however, this would not make any sense when referring to a person(s) or to things (e.g., Jer. 5:30 51:37). Strong's #8047 BDB #1031.

The second descriptor is the masculine noun *mâshâl* (מָשָׁל) [pronounced *maw-SHAWL*], which we first examined in Num. 23:7. It is generally translated *parable, proverb, byword*. However, the word *parable* doesn't quite get its meaning. Since it is a reference generally to something which is passed on verbally or is written down in order to be remembered, this should be rendered *oracle, memorable discourse, memorable recitation*. This is the same name of the book of Solomon called *Proverbs*. *Mâshâl* refers more to a short, often poetic, easily-remembered

point of doctrine. We have heard one descriptor of the Israelite today which falls into this category: *the wandering Jew*). Strong's #4912 BDB #605.

The third descriptor is the word *sh^o-nee-NAWH* (חַרְפָּה) [pronounced *sh^o-nee-NAWH*] and it means *sharp (cutting) word, taunt*. What Jew has not heard derogatory terms in reference to his race? Strong's #8148 BDB #1042. Notice that these things occurring is the sign of the Israelites being negative toward God's Word and being out of fellowship with Him. To hide from what is true, many Jews interpret the suffering servant of Isa. 53 is the Jewish race in general. However, notice that every time we have a description of war, destruction and dispersion where the Israelites are under great suffering, it is always in connection with discipline for their own negative volition. "And I will make them a terror—an evil for all the kingdoms of the earth, as a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places where I will scatter them." (Jer. 24:9). We find anti-Semitism throughout the world. They are cursed, taunted and reproached for the simple fact that they were born a Jew. Throughout most of the world, they do not even physically look that much different from the indigenous population. Regardless, they are still cursed and discriminated against.

At the time of Moses, this was a prophecy to be fulfilled far off into the future. However, at the time of Jeremiah, it would be fulfilled during his lifetime: "I will also make this city a desolation and something hissed at; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its disasters [lit., strikings]." (Jer. 19:8). "And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine and with pestilence; and I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and a horror, and a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, because they have not listened to My words," proclaims Y^ohowah (Jer. 29:18–19a). "And I will make them a terror—an evil for all the kingdoms of the earth, as a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places where I scatter them." (Jer. 24:9). For thus proclaims Y^ohowah of the armies, the God of Israel, "As My anger and wrath have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so My wrath will be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. And you will become a curse, an object of horror, an imprecation, and a reproach; and you will see this place no more." (Jer. 42:18; this is when Israel was going to go to Egypt for assistance). As Israel moved closer to the time of discipline, the warnings came more often: "But if you or your sons will indeed turn away from following Me and you do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you and you go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut Israel off from the land which I have given them; and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all the peoples and this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astounded and his and say, 'Why has Y^ohowah done thus to this land and to this house?' And they will say, 'Because they forsook Y^ohowah their God.'" (1Kings 9:6–9a). See also 2Chron. 7:20 Ezra 9:7 Psalm 44:13–15 Jer. 18:16 44:8 Lam. 2:15 Ezek. 5:14–15 Micah 6:16.

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The Impact of God's Discipline Will Cause the Israelite to Live in Futility

"You will take much seed out into the field and you will gather little, for the locus will consume it. [Deut. 28:38]

V. 38 begins what Barnes terms as the third series of judgments where all personal enterprises and labor result in little return; and the enemies of Israel outdistance them in these matters. This is the point where we as a client nation to God find ourselves. We have enjoyed a great prosperity up until this point in our history, and we are beginning to retrogress in our prosperity. Other nations are beginning to surpass us in areas where once we produced the best and the most.

In reference to the Israelites, no matter how much they plant and no matter how much they work, it is never enough. Something occurs that they receive little or no return on their effort. "They have sown wheat and have

reaped thorns; they have strained themselves and they do not profit. Be ashamed of your harvest because of the fierce anger of Y^ehowah.” (Jer. 12:13). “You have sown much, but you harvest little; you eat, but you are not satisfied; you drink, but do not become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm; and he who earns, earns wages for a purse with holes....you look for much, but look, little; when you bring it home, I blow it [away]. Why?” declares Y^ehowah of the armies, “Because of My house which [is] desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.” (Haggai 1:6,9). “For ten acres of vineyard will yield one bath [i.e., 12.5 gal. of wine], and a homer of seed will yield an ephraph [i.e., a bushel] of grain.” (Isa. 5:10; see also Psalm 129:7 Joel 1:4 Micah 6:15). You may lead a life like that—you work from morning to night and you have nothing to show for it. Now I don’t mean nothing in terms of less than your neighbors—I have seen Christians who are absolute fools that think their life is horrible because they know people who have more than they do or make more than they do. You are a joke if this is you. However, there are those who are under discipline that the problem is not relative to people that they know, but it is a problem of absolutes. In Israel, it was almost everyone during periods of depression and discipline and no matter how hard and long they worked, they had nothing whatsoever to show for it.

“You will plant vineyards and you will labor and you will not drink wine nor gather [the grapes], for the worm [the vine weevil] will consume it. [Deut. 28:39]

It does not matter what business these Israelites were in—everyone was under divine discipline. The answer for those living in Israel was not to try a different line of work but to turn to God. For you have forgotten the God of your salvation and have not remembered the rock of your refuge. **Therefore, you plant delightful plants and set them with vine slips of a strange [god]. In the day that you plant you carefully fence it in, and in the morning, you bring your seed to blossom; but the harvest will be a heap in the day of sickness and incurable pain (Isa. 5:10–11). “Moreover, their wealth will become plunder and their houses desolate; yes, they will build houses, but they will not inhabit [them]. And they will plant vineyards, but they will not drink the wine.” (Zeph. 1:13).**

“You will have olive trees in all of your territory [lit., border] but [lit., and] you will not anoint yourself [with] oil, for your olive will fall off. [Deut. 28:40]

Hâyâh (הַיָּאֵה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] simply means *to be*. However, we often find it with the 2nd person masculine pronoun which is prefixed with the lâmed preposition. Literally, here it means *olive trees shall be to you*; however, we may render this as *you will have olive trees*. Strong’s #1961 BDB #224. Also we have the same word for *olive trees* as we have for *olives*. It is first found in the plural so we translate that as *olive trees* and in the singular, we render it *olive*.

The means of prosperity will be there, but the reversionistic Israelite will not enjoy it. The olive tree is often used as an illustration of Israel. **Y^ehowah called your name, “A green olive tree, beautiful in fruit and form”; with the noise of a great tumult, He has kindled fire on it and its branches are worthless.” (Jer. 11:16). But if their [Israel’s] rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will acceptance be but life from the dead? And if the root is holy, the branches are also. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you [the Gentile], being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the prosperity and the root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, it is not you who supports the root, but the root [supports] you. You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” Quite right, they were broken off of their unbelief and you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but feat; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Observe then the kindness and severity of God: to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise, you will also be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural -branches] be grafted into their own olive tree? (Rom. 11:15, 16b–24).**

“You will sire sons and daughters but [lit., and] you will not have them [lit., they are not to you]; for they will go into captivity. [Deut. 28:41]

This verse has the same construction with *hâyâh* as the previous verse. Just as the Israelite is unable to enjoy the fruit of the ground, he is also unable to enjoy the fruit of his loins. At this point in time, children were seen as

a tremendous blessing. However, under discipline, all they are doing is raising children for slavery. This is similar to v. 32, which read: “Your sons and your daughters will be given to another people and your eyes are looking [and you are] completely consumed [in this] regarding them all the day and your hand is not to God.” This has been fulfilled many times—an example: Her adversaries have become her masters ; her enemies prosper, for Y^ehowah has caused her grief because of the multitude of her transgressions. Her little ones have gone away as captives before the adversary (Lam. 1:5).

“The locust [or, the buzzer] will possess all your trees and the fruit of your ground. [Deut. 28:42]

This is not the normal word for locust. It is the onomatopoetic word *tz^elâtzâl* (צֹלְצֹל) [pronounced *tz^e-law-TZAWL*] and it is given the various meanings *buzzing, whirring*. It is a reference mostly to the sound of the wings of the locusts when they are en masse. Strong’s #6767 BDB #852. It is found in 2Sam. 6:5 Job 41:7 Psalm 150:5 Isa. 18:1.* The corresponding verb is *tzâlal* (צָלַל) [pronounced *tzaw-LAHL*] and it means *to buzz, to tingle, to quiver*. Strong’s #6750 BDB #852. This word is found in 1Sam. 3:11 2Kings 21:12 Jer. 19:3 Hab. 3:16.* The grasshopper does not cause enough damage to the produce of a tree or to the ground to call him the possessor of it; so this would refer to the locust instead. Both this verse and the previous are the antithesis of v. 11: “And Y^ehowah will make you abundant in good, in the fruit of your womb, and in the offspring [lit., fruit] of your cattle, and in the production [lit., fruit] of your ground, on the ground which Y^ehowah has sworn to your fathers to give to you.” God originally gave the land to the Israelite but, because of their reversionism, God instead gives it to the locust. Better that their prosperity be laid to waste than it be given to a believer in reversionism (or, in the case of many Israelites, to an unbeliever who lives in the Land of Promise). This is quite similar to v. 38, which read: “You will take much seed out into the field and you will gather little, for the locus will consume it.” This was fulfilled several times; once in the days of Joel: What the gnawing locus has left, the swarming locust has eaten; and what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten; and what the creeping locus has left the stripping locust has eaten (Joel 1:4). This verse does not have to refer to literal locusts (nor does Deut. 28:42). For they would invade with their livestock and their tents; they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable, and they came into the land to plunder it (Judges 6:5). Now the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the sons of the east were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as numerous as the sand on the seashore (Judges 7:12). In the passage quoted by Joel, what he is actually speaking of are the successive attacks of the forces of Tiglaf-piliser, Sargon II, Sennacharib, and Esar-hadden (sp.).

“The temporary visitor who is among you will go up very high above you and you will go down very low; [Deut. 28:43]

Like much of the latter portion of this chapter, this particular verse has its contrast in v. 13: “And Y^ehowah will make you the head and not the tail, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of Y^ehowah your God, which I charge you with today, to observe them carefully.” There are many countries which have great potential for prosperity, but are not prosperous. As I write this, much of Africa and South America are considered backward, continents of third world nations, although both possess great natural resources. However, we, meaning American private enterprise, have gone into places like Venezuela, have brought great prosperity to ourselves and some prosperity to the country itself.

It isn’t a matter of the land being cursed. Often, men would be brought to the land of Israel for their own spiritual needs. Israel was to be a spiritual oasis on planet earth, in the midst of desert and despair. However, when they fell into reversionism, those who came to Israel for spiritual reasons, if they were still positive toward God and God’s Word, were prospered, and the Israelite, the object of God’s scorn, was placed under more and more discipline.

As a side note, you may find it hard to believe that someone would move hundreds of miles or more for a spiritual reason. One of the things which caused me to move to Houston from California was the teaching of my pastor R.B. Thieme. I don’t want to indicate that even for a moment that was the only consideration. However, I know without a doubt that was a part of God’s plan and that is what caused me to be moved 2000 miles away from my home. God has a plan for your life and, in some instances, this involves moving. Personally, I am a difficult

person to get to move and a year prior to my move, had anyone even suggested that I move to Houston, I would have laughed in their face. That was never really an option. It just all came together as a result of God's plan. I could have dug my feet in and opposed it, but I chose to just go along with the program, and I have been blessed exceedingly because of the move. People in the ancient world were also moved about according to God's plan.

“He will lend you and you will not lend him; he is for the head and you will be for the tail.

[Deut. 28:44]

The alien and the temporary visitor, drawn to Israel by God due to Israel's rich spiritual heritage, are on positive signals. The Israelites, under this scenario, are under negative volition. God will simply prosper the aliens over the Israelites. Just because you are a Christian and you have been a Christian for twenty or thirty years, this does not mean that you can't be placed under discipline. Again, this is in direct contrast to v. 13: **“And Y^ehowah will make you the head and not the tail, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of Y^ehowah your God, which I charge you with today, to observe them carefully.”** The key is their attitude toward Y^ehowah their God and the Word of God. The key to our own nation prosperity is the same.

“And all of these curses will come upon you and they will pursue you and they will overtake you until you are destroyed, because you have not listened to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to keep His commands and His statutes which he has commanded you. [Deut. 28:45]

So you understand just exactly what has been happening here. Moses began by listing the blessings and the curses to be spoken from the two mountains. Suddenly, he goes off on a Spirit-inspired tangent about how horrible the cursing will actually be. This is to stand forever as a witness to any Israelite who reveres the Word of God. He looks around and at what has happened to himself and his ancestors and he reads this portion of God's Word, and suddenly, it all makes sense. It all comes together, if you will. He recognizes that he, as a part of Israel, is out under divine discipline.

“And they are against you for a sign and for a wonder and against your descendants forever.

[Deut. 28:46]

No one is punished for the negative volition of their father. However, if one generation is negative, then there will be disciplinary action against them which will affect their sons and daughters. These curses stand forever as a sign and a wonder against the generations to whom Moses speaks—not only to the one before him that day, but to the hundreds of subsequent generations of Israelites. If a Jew is to read the Old Testament and open up his heart to the truth, these curses which Moses described and which God laid on the Jew many times stand as a sign and a wonder throughout all eternity.

The Israelite who is on positive signals toward God opens to this portion of Deuteronomy and recognizes that what is occurring right here is a sign and a wonder against him. **Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great, in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles (or doctrines) of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? Hell, no! Rather, let God be found true, though every man a liar** (Rom. 4:1–4a). The very curses which Moses is giving to this Generation of Promise will stand as an eternal witness against them. **“For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I, Y^ehowah, will be brought to answer him in my own person. And I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among My people, so you will know that I am Y^ehowah.”** (Ezek. 14:7–8). Similarly, the remnant of Israel stands also as a sign and a witness: **“Observe, I and the children whom Y^ehowah has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel, from Y^ehowah of the armies, Who dwells on Mount Zion.”** (Isa. 8:18). What has happened to Israel stands as a sign and a witness to us today: **“Furthermore, I will make you a desolation and a reproach among the nations which surround you, in the sight of all who pass by. So you will be a reproach, a reviling, a warning and an object of horror to the nations who surround you, when I execute judgments against you in anger, wrath, and raging rebukes. I, Y^ehowah, have spoken.”** (Ezek. 5:14–15).

It is difficult to decide how to break this chapter up in terms of outlining it. V. 15 began: “But it will come to pass, if you will not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and over take you.” This verse (and the next) sound as though they are a conclusion, as they neatly wrap up vv. 15–46; however, as we have observed, vv. 16–19 appear to be the curses from Mount Ebal, whereas what follows seems to be Moses going off on a tangent. Most Bible translations avoid this by simply lumping vv. 15–68 together as one unit. The key to following the train of thought here, is the fact that Moses began with a carefully planned list of blessings and curses and then launched off into a prophetic description of the persecution that Israel would see. In fact, even though the context is persecution of Israel while in the Land of Promise, it is not by application confined to that. This applies to the children of Israel outside of the land and it applies to us a client nation to God.

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Invasion by the Enemy Will Result in Unthinkable Behavior in the Israelite

“Because that you did not serve Y^ehowah your God with joy and with gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things; [Deut. 28:47]

Being chosen by God as the nation and the people to represent Him on earth is a blessing and something to be celebrated: “There you and your households also will eat before Y^ehowah your God and rejoice in all your undertakings in which Y^ehowah your God has blessed you.” (Deut. 12:7). This is the first portion of a sentence which is finished below:

“Therefore [lit., and] you will serve your enemies whom Y^ehowah sends against you, in hunger and in thirst and in nakedness and in lack of all things; and he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. [Deut. 28:48]

Notice the contrast between vv. 47 and 48—they should be taken together, as they are the nucleus, in some ways, of the book of Deuteronomy and of our post-salvation experience: “Because that you did not serve Y^ehowah your God with joy and with gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things therefore [lit., and] you will serve your enemies whom Y^ehowah sends against you, in hunger and in thirst and in nakedness and in lack of all things; and he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.” For all unbelievers, facing the decision of salvation, and all believers facing the decision of what to do with their lives: “See, I have placed before you today life and good, and death and evil; in that I command you today to love Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that Y^ehowah your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, [then] I declare to you today that you will certainly perish. You will not prolong days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter to possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving Y^ehowah your God, by obeying His voice and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days.” (Deut. 30:15–20a).

You will note that Moses pulls very few punches. Not only are the Jews placed into slavery, but they find themselves in slavery under great deprivation. Jeremiah described the same thing in Lamentations: The tongue of the infant cleaves to the roof of its mouth because of thirst. The little ones ask for bread—no one breaks it for them. Those who ate delicacies are desolate in the streets; those established in crimson [royalty] embrace ash pits. For the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom, which was overthrown as in a moment and no hands were turned toward her. Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk;

they were more ruddy bones than corals—their polishing like lapis lazuli.³¹² Their appearance is blacker than soot; they are not recognized in the streets. Their skin is shriveled on their bones; it is withered, it has become like wood. Better are those pierced by the sword than those pierced with hunger, for they pine away, being struck down, for lack of the fruits of the field.” (Lam. 4:4-9). “For thus says Y^ehowah of the armies, the God of Israel, ‘I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and they will serve him.’” (Jer. 28:14a).

Although this has been fulfilled many times and in many ways, this is quite similar to the position the Jews found themselves in during their time in Germany prior to and during the second world war. They were hungry and thirsty, and lacked everything, and they were naked. The yoke of iron, which usually stands for slavery, was Germany and God, through Germany, destroyed those who were negative toward Him. This in no way lets the German people of that day off the hook. God used them, but they are still responsible of their acts of murder and cruelty.

You can recognize where you are either before or after the discipline. “For our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers have not kept Your Law, or paid attention to Your commandments and Your testimonies with which You testified to them. But they, in their own kingdom, with Your great goodness which You gave them, with the broad and rich land which You had set before them, did not serve You or turn from their evil deeds. Observer, we are slaves today, and s to the land which You have given to our fathers to eat of its fruit and its bounty, observe, we are slaves on it. And its abundant product is for the kings whom You have set over us because of our sins. They also rule over our bodies and over our cattle as they please. So we are in great distress.” (Neh. 9:34–37).

The NASB, the Scofield Reference Bible, the NIV and Barnes’ Notes all indicate that v. 48 ends a paragraph and that v. 49 begins a new paragraph. I like beginning the new section with v. 47. It appears to me that vv. 47–48 are transition verses which link the previous judgments and the intensification of same, which is to follow, being closer in tenor to what follows than what precedes. However, not every public speech can be put into nice neat paragraphs and thought structures. A good public speaker will segue from one thought to another.

“Y^ehowah will lift up against you a nation, from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle it flies; a nation whose tongue you have not heard; [Deut. 28:49]

From the end of the earth is a colloquialism which stands for anywhere from the horizon out to the outer edges of the then known world. *The eagle which flies* is a reference to the strength and speed of the Assyrians (Hos. 8:1) and Babylon (Jer. 48:40–49:22). Although this reads *whose language [or tongue] you have not heard*, it means a language which they cannot understand, as we find in Jer. 5:15 Ezek. 3:6 (and possibly 1Cor. 14:2). This particular group of Israelites had no dealings with the Assyrians or the Babylonians, so their language, although philologically similar, was still not known to the average Israelite (Isa. 33:19)³¹³.

The idea that they must know the other language in order to strike a treaty is valid, as Keil and Delitzsch propose, but that is simply not the case here. In the history of Israel, her enemies spoke a language not understood by their population at large, but there were enough people who did understand it that a treaty could have been drafted and ratified by both parties, if they were so inclined. In fact, Israel and Judah both entered into treaties and contracts between themselves and their conquering nations prior to be dispersed. God warned them to adhere to the treaty; they did not, and were removed from the land.

This is not the only application of this particular verse, but what we need to do at this point is to distinguish the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians. Even though we are not dealing with these people directly, we are now dealing with them in prophecy. The general area of which we will be speaking is called Mesopotamia, which is Greek for *between the two rivers*. This is the area roughly between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. The first inhabitants that we know of through archeology of this area were the Sumerians, who

³¹² I hope that I can make some sense out of these last two phrases when I exegete them in the future.

³¹³ The information in this paragraph is from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 274.

lived in the southern portion of this area, now known as Iraq. They are not Semites nor are they Indo-Europeans. Their language is different from ancient and modern languages. Evidence of writing dates back to 3000 BC. Ur was one of the chief cities of Sumer, and it is named in the Bible as early as Gen. 11:28 as Ur of the Chaldees, where Abram was likely born. Ur was an important trading post located on the Euphrates and in the district of the Kaidu people,³¹⁴ which accounts for the Biblical references to Ur of the Chaldees.

Biblically, the first known settlers of that area date back to Nimrod, the son of Cush,³¹⁵ the son of Ham, the son of Noah. *Now Cush sired Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth...the beginning of his kingdom was Babel (or Babylon) and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went forth into Assyria and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city* (Gen. 10:8, 10–12). This does not mean that Nimrod personally founded all of these cities, although that is possible. Throughout the Old Testament, an individual is often named when it is his progeny which actually perform the action of the verb, in this case, the founding of these cities. However, one of my sources, *The Bible Almanac*, believe that *he became a mighty one on the earth* is better understood as *he was the first dictator in the earth*³¹⁶.

In Gen. 11:28, we have the mention of Ur of the Chaldeans: *And Haran died in the presence of his father, Terah, in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.* Terah took his son Abram and Abram's nephew Lot, Terah's grandson through Haran, Abram's brother (Gen. 11:29–32) out of Ur of the Chaldeans to the land of the Canaanites. Chaldea was used to designate the land and the inhabitants of southern Babylonia and later Babylonia as a whole. They began as a semi-nomadic peoples who lived in the deserts between northern Arabia and the Persian Gulf. They eventually settled into southern Babylonia, apparently retaining a distinct identity. Now, we are unsure as to the precise origins of the Chaldeans, as to when they migrated into Babylonia, where exactly they migrated from, and how and why they maintained somewhat of a separate identity in Babylonia for centuries to follow.

Northwest of the Sumerians, still in the Mesopotamian region, were the Accadians (or, Akkadians), their more civilized contemporaries. Acadia became, for awhile, a designation for the northern Babylonian area (although a dynasty established by Sargon of Agade also controlled the southern Babylonian area), and Sumerian became the designation for the southern Babylonian area.

Asshur was a son of Shem (Gen. 10:22 1Chron. 1:17), who was a son of Noah and the line of Abraham. It is believed that Asshur was the founder of the Assyrian nation. Asshur was both the name of a large nation on and north of the Euphrates river and also the name of one of its principal cities. Nineveh was the capital. Asshur was bordered by the Khabur, Tigris, and Euphrates rivers (although all of these nations changed in size and importance throughout history).

Now it is easy to get these peoples mixed up, as they began with what we would consider to be several small villages scattered up and down the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, which all individually grew into cities whose influence was felt over a much greater area. Sargon's dynasty last for perhaps 200 years and Accad fell under the influence of Ur, which had become a great commercial city of the Sumerians. Around 2000 BC, Semites invaded from the land of Canaan and the Arabian desert and took control of this area from the Elamites (who dominated Acadia immediately before Sargon of Agade and several hundred years later, after Ur's control). It is roughly this period of time that Abram and his family were leaving Ur for the land of Canaan. Soon thereafter, Hammurabi (1792–1750 BC) ruled over Mesopotamia, uniting most of the Mesopotamian cities, establishing a postal system (as had Sargon), and organizing his land under the famous laws for which he is known.

Even prior to the time of Sargon of Agade, as has been mentioned, the Assyrian peoples resided in the northwest reaches of the Mesopotamian area, the Zagros Mountains providing them some measure of protection from

³¹⁴ This is as per clay tablets found in Ur.

³¹⁵ Probably better rendered *Kish* so that he is not confused with *Cush*, the Biblical name for Ethiopia.

³¹⁶ *The Bible Almanac*, Packer, Tenney and White, Thomas Nelson Publishers, ©1980, p. 131. It is this book to which I am indebted for much of the information found on the next couple pages.

outside forces. Immediately following the rule of Hammurabi, the Kasshites, a power from the east, seized control over Babylon and engaged the Assyrians in war for over 500 years (1750–1211 BC). These wars took place during the time of Israel's subjugation to Egypt, the exodus, through the time of Joshua and the early judges. The Assyrian, Shalmaneser I (circa 1300 BC), extended Assyrian control beyond the boundaries of the Euphrates, his son Tiglath-Ninib, capturing the city of Babylon (although his son, aided by the Hittites, dividing Assyria in a civil war). The Kasshite king forced Assyria out of Babylon (1211 BC), establishing, for some time, a balance of power between the Babylonians (who ruled the southeastern portion of Mesopotamia) and the Assyrians (who ruled the Northwestern portion). Immediately thereafter, the people of Babylon drove out the Kasshite kings from their area and instituted self-rule. We are relatively familiar with the name of the sixth king that ruled over Babylonia, Nebuchadnezzar I (circa 1135 BC), who, although he lost several battles to the Assyrians, he still expanded the Babylonian area, resisting the attempts of control by the Elamites in the east.

Nebuchadnezzar I's contemporary Assyrian king was Tiglath-Pileser I (circa 1100 BC). He conquered a great deal of surrounding territory, even capturing the city of Babylon for awhile. While Babylon and Assyria fell onto hard times over the next couple centuries, torn by civil war and internal intrigue, Israel entered into her golden age under King David and his son Solomon. A new line of Assyrian kings began with Tiglath-Pileser II (circa 950 BC), Ashurbanipal II (885–860 BC) and Shalmaneser II (860–824 BC), who all began to expand the Assyria into a world power. Babylon was captured, lost and then recaptured by Tiglath-Pileser III (974–727 BC). So you see that during this time, Assyria is ruling over Babylonia as well as a number of other areas. Shalmaneser II gives us one of our earliest mentions of the Chaldeans in extra-Biblical literature. He invaded Babylonia and captured the city of Baqâni, which had belonged to Adini of the Chaldean tribe of Dakuri.³¹⁷ Tiglath-Pileser III also sent his troops into the Land of Promise, conquering Israel and Damascus in 732 BC, placing Hoshea as a puppet ruler over Israel (2Kings 15–16). Hoshea rebelled against Tiglath-Pileser III's son, Shalmaneser IV, enlisting the aid of Egypt. Shalmaneser attacked Israel, captured Hoshea and died immediately prior to the surrender of Samaria in 721 BC (2Kings 17). Sargon, Assyria's new king (722–705 BC), deported many of the people into the Assyrian Empire, and they were never to return to the Land of Promise.

We have an historical mention of the kings of the Chaldeans by the Assyrian ruler Adadnirari III (810 BC). We do not know whether these are various rulers spread throughout different nations, whether there was a separate group of entities of Chaldean city-states, or what.

During this time period, Media and Persia came on the scene, although both nations were under the control of Assyria. Also, Marduk-apla-iddina II, the chief of the Chaldean district of Bit-Yakin, seized the throne of Babylon in 712–710 BC. Concerned about the growing dominance of Assyria, Marduk-apla-iddina, went to the west to enlist aid against Assyria. In Isaiah 23:13, we have Isaiah warning Judah against allying themselves with the rebel Chaldeans, as they would be defeated. Since Babylon was therefore under a Chaldean king, Chaldea and Chaldean were used as synonyms for Babylonia and Babylonian during this time period (Isa. 13:19 47:1, 5 48:14, 20). Ezekiel used these terms to apply to the entirety of the Babylonian empire.

Israel has a fierce independence and Sargon and his successor Sennacherib³¹⁸ (705–681 BC) had to face several revolts from the nation Israel (there were still some people remaining in the land). Then Sennacherib captured the fortified cities of Judah (Judah and Israel were the two nations of the Jews at that time) and demanded for the people of Jerusalem to surrender (2Kings 17–18), but suddenly found his attention diverted by Merodach-baladan, a king of Babylon who rebelled against him. Although Merodach-baladan was defeated, during this same time period, 681 BC, Persia gained her independence from Assyria and a stronger king arose over Babylon, Nabopolassar, along with his son, Nebuchadnezzar II, and they also obtained their independence from Assyria, returning Babylon to the place of a world power once again. Nabopolassar was a native Chaldean. It was his dynasty which made the Chaldeans famous. All of his ancestors, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus and Belshazzar, ruled over Babylonia as Chaldeans. This would not be too unlike a native American Indian becoming president of the United States.

³¹⁷ The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, James Orr, editor; Hendrickson Publishers, ©1956; vol. I, p. 590.

³¹⁸ Sennacherib chronicles 75 strong cities and fortresses of Chaldea and 420 (or, possibly 800) smaller towns. This places Chaldeans in Erech, Nippur (Calneh), Kis, Hursag-kalama, Cuthah and Babylon.

When Pharaoh Necho of Egypt decided to cash in on the weakness of Assyria to claim some of its empire, his army was defeated by the Babylonians under Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II at the famous battle of Carchemish in 604 BC. In order to distract the Babylonians, the Egyptians caused the King Jehoiakim of Judah to rebel against Babylonia, by refusing to pay tribute to them. Nebuchadnezzar II captured Jerusalem and deported a portion of its population in 597 BC. Judah continued to rebel under king Zedekiah, which caused Nebuchadnezzar to attack Jerusalem again, destroyed the cities defenses and deporting the bulk of the population of Judah in 586 BC.

Shortly after gaining independence from Assyria in 681 BC, the two sons of the king, Achaemenes, split into two kingdoms. One of those kingdoms, Parsa, was absorbed by Media. The Medes were a semi-nomadic people at this time. Their king, Phraortes (675–653 BC) went to war against Assyria in 653 BC and was killed in battle. His son, Cyaxares, reorganized the Median army with better weapons, took control of Persia, and was about to defeat the Assyrians, but had to withdraw his army to defend his kingdom from eastern attacks from Scythian invaders (642 BC). However, Cyaxares returned to Assyria in 614 BC and captured a major city of Assyria, Assur. So, while Babylon and Media both began to prosper, Assyria fell into decline, and Cyaxares captured Assyria's capital, Nineveh, in 612 BC. At this point, I am a little confused: a Scythian tribe also captured Nineveh, the capital of Assyria in 606 BC. An empire began in Nineveh under the Medes, who were the tribal chieftains of Nineveh. Both Media and Babylonia advanced in parallel, conquering the land to their west, Babylonia taking control over most of the Assyrian empire.

The granddaughter of Cyaxares married Cambyses I, a Persian king of Anshan, and had a son, Cyrus II, who became known as Cyrus the Great. Cyrus was made king of Anshan in 559 BC and he defeated his grandfather, Astyages, the king over the Medes, in 550 BC. He proclaimed himself the king of the Medes, headquartering himself in Ecbatana, but he allowed Median officials to remain in office, gaining their support. Thus, Cyrus the Great, a Persian and a Mede, absorbed the Medes, and began to gain control of various areas throughout Asia Minor.

During this time period, Nabonidus, the last ruler over the Babylonian empire (555–539 BC), sought an alliance with Cyrus II of Anshan, thinking this would afford him protection from his enemies, the Medes. Therefore, he did little to build up his own military forces, relying on this alliance for protection. He instead spent his time studying literature and religion and the history of Babylon. His work, by the way, has allowed historians to set a great many dates and to obtain a great deal of historical information. Nabonidus was driven from Babylonia by priests who did not appreciate the religious reforms which he instituted. While he lived in exile in northern Arabia, beginning in 552 BC, his son Belshazzar was left as a regent over Babylonia. This is the Belshazzar under whom Daniel served. Belshazzar was a Chaldean; I am assuming that much of Babylonia was made up of Chaldeans, who apparently retained some sort of ancestral distinction; and Daniel used Chaldea as a synonym for Babylonia again (Dan. 3:8). Daniel predicted that the Babylonians would fall under Median and Persian control (Dan. 5). Belshazzar, concerned, improved Daniel's position of power, making him #3 man in Babylon, thinking that this would placate his God. The Bible records that Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain that night. So, although Nabonidus returned to Babylonia in 543 BC, it was a divided empire, the priests unhappy as Nabonidus had established Sin as the god of Babylon instead of Marduk. Gobryas, a general under Nebuchadnezzar, was made a governor over the province of Elam, which bordered Persia. He shifted his alliance to Persia. Cyrus the Great moved on Babylonia, along with Gobryas (who is probably Darius the Mede in Dan. 5:31–9:1), and easily took Babylon without a skirmish, killing Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's successor, in 539 BC. Cyrus the Great was welcomed and proclaimed king of Babylon by the people.

Cyrus the Great re-established Marduk as the god of Babylon, thus endearing himself to the priests. Instead of uprooting the people from their homelands, as did the Assyrians and the Babylonians, he kept the indigenous peoples where they were. Instead of allowing his armies to run wild and pillage and rape, he maintained strict control over his men, also gaining favor with the *conquered* populace. God would use Cyrus to return the Israelites to their homeland, as the Jews had been in exile from Israel since 723 BC and from Judah since 586 BC. That would take us to the time of Ezra.

The name Chaldean became improperly applied to the Aramaic language. There was a Chaldean language (Dan 1:4) and the term Chaldean became a designation for priests, astrologers and educated persons of Babylonia (Dan 2:10 3:8 4:7 5:7, 11).

To summarize, there were several nations which became enemies of the Israelites, just as there are many anti-Semites in this world today. Assyria was the first nation to conquer and displace the Northern Kingdom, Israel. Several hundred years later, Babylon, under the Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar, marched into Jerusalem and took Judah. They dispersed the Jewish people from there. Right at the same time, the Median-Persian empire became dominant over Babylon, thereby taking control over Judah. They would allow the Jews to return to their homeland.

One of the reasons that I went off on this tangent was the NIV Study Bible comment: *“eagle swooping down. Symbolic of the speed and power of the Assyrians (see Hos. 8:1) and Babylonians (see Jer. 48:40, 49:22). whose language you will not understand. Though related to Hebrew, the languages of Assyria and Babylonia were not understood by the average Israelite (see Isa. 28:11, 33:19...)”*³¹⁹ As well as the comment from *Barnes Notes: The description...applies undoubtedly to the Chaldeans, and in a degree to other nations also whom God raised up as ministers of vengeance upon apostate Israel (e.g., the Medes). But it only needs to read this part of the denunciation, and to compare it with the narrative of Josephus, to see that its full and exact accomplishment took place in the wars of Vespasian and Titus against the Jews, as indeed the Jews themselves generally admit.*³²⁰ And it occurred to me that these are just names to most people. Chaldeans, Babylonians, Assyrians—as well as Vespasian and Titus (Roman generals and emperors)—are words for which most people have no real frame of reference except as really old nations. The brief explanation which I provided I thought would help to clear up to a degree just who it was that we are really speaking of.

These last couple verses were literally fulfilled by the Romans in 70 AD. Israel was not an independent national entity at that time, but they were still a nation. The ensign of the Romans was the eagle. The eagle was on the standards which their flag-bearers carried when the Romans advanced against the Jews. As McGee said, a few knowledgeable Israelites saw that and must have thought, *This is it!*³²¹ The language of Rome was Latin, which our English is based in part upon. The language of the Israelite is more of an Asian-Oriental language. The two languages are quite different. Rome, the iron kingdom, annihilated the Jews, as will be more fully described in a few verses. This would be a divine response to the Jews reaction to Jesus Christ and then to the gospel as presented by the Apostles. Furthermore, the Jew was forced out of the land at that point in time.

We are still dealing with the discipline which will be administered against Israel for much of her days. The enemies and the nations with which Israel is familiar today will not be those nations which will enslaved Israel in the future. *He [God] will also lift up a standard to the nations afar off and He will whistle for it from the ends of the earth; and observe, it will come with swift speed. No one in it is weary or stumbles; none slumbers or sleeps; nor is the belt at its waist undone, nor its sandal strap broken. Its arrows are sharp and all its bows are bent. The hoofs of its horses seem like flint and its wheels like a whirlwind. Its roaring is like a lioness and it roars like young lions; it growls as it seizes the prey and carries it off with no one to deliver. And it will growl over it in that day like the roaring of the sea, if one looks to the land, observe, there is darkness, distress. Even the light is darkened by its clouds (Isa. 5:26–30). And it will come to pass in that day that Y^ehowah will whistle for the fly that is in the remotest part of the rivers of Egypt and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria and they will come and settle on the steep ravines on the ledges of the cliffs, on all the thorn bushes, and on all the watering places. In that day, Y^ehowah will shave with a razor, hired from regions beyond the Euphrates (with the king of Assyria), the head and the hair of the legs; and it will also remove the beard (Isa. 7:18–20).*

“A nation, fierce of countenance, which accepts not the face of the ages, and the young it does not favor; [Deut. 28:50]

³¹⁹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 274.

³²⁰ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, p. 325.

³²¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 169.

This is a nation which has no respect for the old and no natural love for the young. Therefore, He [God] brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans [Nebuchadnezzar], who struck down their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm. He [God] gave all into his hand (2Chron. 36:17). “Your nakedness will be uncovered; your shame also will be exposed. I will take vengeance and I will not spare a man...I was angry with My people; I profaned My heritage and gave them into your hand. You did not show mercy to them—on the aged you made your yoke very heavy.” (Isa. 47:3, 6).

“And it will eat the fruit of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; which [nation] leaves not to you corn, new wine, and oil, increase of your oxen, and the wealth of your flock, until it has destroyed you. [Deut. 28:51]

The Israelites will enjoy some prosperity, but it will be taken from them by these nations. For it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites would come up with Amalekites and the sons of the east and go against them. So they would concentrate against them and destroy the produce of the land as far as Gaza and leave no sustenance in Israel, as well as no sheep, ox or donkey. For they would invade with their livestock and their tents—they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to plunder it (Judges 6:4–5). Your land is desolate; your cities are burned with fire. Your field—strangers are devouring them in your presence; it is desolation as overthrown by strangers (Isa. 1:7). Most of the prophecies found in this chapter have been repeated several times with different invading nations.

“And it will lay siege to you in all your gates until your walls come down, the high and the fenced ones in which you are trusting, in all your land; in fact, it will lay siege to you in all your gates, in all your land, which Y^ehowah your God has given to you; [Deut. 28:52]

Now it came to pass in about the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came, he and his army, against Jerusalem. He camped against it and built a siege wall all around it. So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Aragah. However, the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho and all his army was scattered from him (2Kings. 25:1–5).

“Pick up your bundle from the ground, you who dwell under siege!” For, thus proclaims Y^ehowah, “Observe, I am slinging out the inhabitants of the land at this time and will cause them distress that they may find.” (Jer. 10:17–18).

Masada was the Jewish fortress which was built upon a huge rock, which was also called *Masada*, the Hebrew word for *mountain fortress*. The cliffs of Masada rise some 1400 feet high and the top is relatively flat, measuring approximately 1900 x 650 ft. The fortress was built sometime during the Hasmonean Revolt, which took place 167–142 BC. Herod the Great, who ruled over Judea under the Romans, reinforced this structure and built an additional two palaces on this rock. For several years, the Jews had been under the most miserable Roman imposed rulers. Caligula, wanting to unify the land via emperor worship, demanded that all cults sacrifice to his image in addition to their religious services, and required that a statue of himself be erected in the Temple. Thousands of Jews went to the governor of Syria and requested that they be killed right then and there in cold blood rather than to set up this statue in the Temple. *Caligula eased the situation by dying.*³²²

Albinus, another ruler over the Jews, according to Josephus, the ancient historian, *plundered and taxed assiduously, and made a fortune by releasing criminals from jail for a consideration.*³²³ Florus acted like an executioner and a robber more than a governor. These historical recounts must be considered in their historical context. This history was recorded by Jew, who, although relatively impartial, did record this during a continued

³²² Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: Caesar and Christ*; MJF Books, ©1971, p. 543.

³²³ Ibid.

Jewish rebellion against Roman rule, and his writings would reflect the propaganda of the times (this does not mean, necessarily, that Josephus originated these ideas, but that he merely reported what was *common knowledge* among the Jews).

One of the rebelling factions of the Jews were the Sicarii, who vowed to kill any Jew who was judged to be too loyal to the Romans, and often found their victims during street gatherings, killing them and escaping in the ensuing chaos. Florus set off a chain of events when he took seventeen talents (\$61,200) from the Temple treasury, the Israelites assembled and demanded his removal. Some, mocking him, carried baskets through the crowd and begged for alms on behalf of Florus to help with his obvious poverty. Florus dispatched an army which dispersed the crowd; these men then went into homes and killed and plundered. It is recorded that 3600 Jews were killed that day, with the more public rebels being scourged or crucified.

The Jews themselves were divided between those who were older who urged to give in to the control and expectations of the Roman imposed rule, recognizing that their revolt would result in national suicide; and the younger, who accused their parents of *selling out to the enemy*. Almost every family was split in this controversy. In 68 AD, a battle between these groups ensued, with 12,000 Jews dying as a result, the radical anti-Roman forces gaining the clear upper hand. This confined civil war emerged as a revolt against Roman rule, and they moved on Masada, occupied then by a Roman garrison. They persuaded the Romans to disarm and then slaughtered every man there. On that day, the gentiles of the Palestinian capital, Caesarea, slaughtered 20,000 Jews and sold several thousand Jews into slavery. In Damascus, on one day, 10,000 Jews had their throats cut. Civil war erupted and these revolutionists attacked several Greek cities in Palestine and Syria, burning many to the ground and slaughtering the inhabitants. Josephus wrote: *It was then common to see cities filled with dead bodies...unburied, those of old men mixed with infants, and women lying among them without any cover.*³²⁴ Recall v. 50? *A nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young.* This occurred on both sides of this war.

Surprisingly enough, the rebel Israel forces captured Jerusalem and most of Palestine, having a very large number and percentage of adherents now. Titus brought his legions to Jerusalem for its return to Roman control. Roughly 600,000 rebels gathered, men and women, to withstand the Roman advance. This resulted in a five month siege, during which the Jews refused to surrender. Thousands of Jews were captured in their forage for food and crucified to the point where the Romans ran out of crosses. Corpses littered the streets. It is said that 116,000 bodies were thrown over the walls. According to Josephus, babies were taken from their mothers and the flesh of the child was eaten. To preserve their money, some Jews swallowed gold coins. When captured by Romans or Syrians, they would be cut open in order to retrieve these coins.

Titus took half of the city and offered terms of surrender. They were rejected. He set fire to the Temple; since it was made mostly of wood, it quickly burned to the ground. Many Jews fell upon their own swords, killed one another or jumped into the flames of the fire, rather than to die at the hands of the Romans. The Romans showed no mercy, killing many, and taking 97,000 captives were sold as slaves or used as gladiators in the Roman games. Josephus estimates that during this siege, 1,197,000 Jews were killed, whereas Tacitus determined that there had been 600,000. This was 70 AD. If the dates we have can be relied upon, the Sicarii who captured Masada in 66 AD, and were under Roman siege in 73 AD, when they were persuaded by one Eleazer Ben Jair, their leader, to burn their camp and to commit suicide. When the Romans entered, there were only two women and five children who remained alive³²⁵.

A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress. A day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and blood. A day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. And I will bring distress upon men so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against Y^ehowah. And their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung. Neither will their

³²⁴ Josephus ii.18

³²⁵ This information was courtesy of *The Story of Civilization: Caesar and Christ*; Will Durant, MJF publishers, ©1971, pp. 543–545; and *The World Book Encyclopedia*; Vol. 13, ©1983, p. 204

silver nor their gold be able to deliver them. On the day of Y^ehowah's wrath (Zeph. 1:15–18a). “And then they will know that I am Y^ehowah; I have not said in vain that I would inflict this disaster on them.” (Jer. 6:10).

“And you will eat the fruit of your body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters (whom Y^ehowah your God had given to you) in the siege, and in the distress with which your enemies cause you to be distressed. [Deut. 28:53]

One of the words we should look at is *tsûq* (צִוֶּק) [pronounced *tzook*], which is a verb, when found in the Hiphil (as here), means *to cause distress, to cause to be oppressed*. We will find it in vv. 53, 55 and 57. Strong's #6693 BDB #847. In this same verse, we have the substantive cognate, *mâtsôq* (מַצִּוֶּק) [pronounced *maw-TZOKE*], which means *stress, distress*. It is found in the three aforementioned verses, as well as 1Sam. 22:2 Psalm 119:43 Jer. 19:9* Strong's #4689 BDB #848.

What is described herein is too horrible to imagine and I don't know if we will find any documentation of it, because of how horrible this is—nevertheless, this is cannibalism of the worst kind (if such a superlative could be made) where parents feed from their own children. Although this seems like a very unusual prediction, we find the same in Lev. 26:29: “Furthermore, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters.” God quotes Moses in Jer. 19:9: “And I will cause to make them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they will eat one another's flesh in the siege and in the distress with which their enemies and those who seek their life will cause them distress.” (Also see Lam. 2:20 4:10). One of the times this was fulfilled was recorded in 2Kings 6:28–29: “And the king said to her, ‘What is the matter with you?’ And she answered, ‘This woman said to me, ‘Give your son that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow. So we boiled my son and ate him; and I said to her on the next day, ‘Give your son that we may eat him;’ but she has hidden her son.’”

“The man who is tender in you and who is very delicate—his eye is evil against his brother, and against the wife of his bosom and against the remnant of his sons whom he leaves; [Deut. 28:54]

We have this adjective describing the man in this verse: *rak*^e (רַךְ) [pronounced *rahkh*], and this word means *tender, delicate, soft*. Strong's #7390 BDB #940. This refers the one of the meeker and more soft-spoken of the Israelites—a total priss, you might say. I think of Spaulding Gray in the movie “The Paper.” Totally off the scale of the prissometer. The stress will cause him to be against his brother, his wife and his children.

“Against giving to one of them of the flesh of his sons whom he eats, because he has nothing left to him, in the siege, and in the distress with which your enemy causes you to be distressed in all your gates. [Deut. 28:55]

The scene herein described is unbelievable. Not only will this man, who is generally meek and tender, will he cannibalize his own children, but he will not even share with his starving relatives. This is not presented as a matter of incredible shame, as it should be—this is simply a matter of selfishness. Such a description is just too gruesome to imagine. This was fulfilled, as we just read, with the two women in 2Kings 26.

“The tender woman in you, and the delicate, who has not tied the sole of her foot to place on the ground because of delicateness and because of tenderness—her eye is evil against the husband of her bosom and against her son and against her daughter; [Deut. 28:56]

Her sole has not been placed on the ground because she has been driven on an ass everywhere she has gone. Our equivalent today would be someone who has been chauffeured all of her life. This prophecy is as true of the woman as well as it is of the man. The hands of the compassionate women boil their own children; they became food for them because of the destruction of the daughter of my people (Lam. 4:10).

“And against her afterbirth which comes out from between her feet, even against her sons whom she bore, for she will eat them because of the lacking of all things, in secret, in the siege and in the distress with which your enemy will cause distress to you within your gates. [Deut. 28:57]

The women as well as the men will be guilty of cannibalism and of eating her own afterbirth, out of complete poverty and hunger. “Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans. For you will no longer be called tender and delicate.” (Isa. 47:1). God reserved for Israel the same as He reserved for Israel’s worst enemies.

[Deuteronomy 26](#) [Deuteronomy 27](#) [Deuteronomy 28](#) [Deuteronomy 29](#) [Deuteronomy 30](#)
[Deuteronomy 31](#) [Deuteronomy 32](#) [Deuteronomy 33](#) [Deuteronomy 34](#)
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God Will Scatter the Jews Throughout the Nations; They Will Live in Continual Fear

V. 58 marks the beginning of the fifth and last series of judgments against Israel, according to *Barnes Notes* and Keil and Delitzsch. In examining these judgments (Keil and Delitzsch call them *views*), these are more or less artificial groupings, as are my section headings. Moses essentially went on a cursing tangent, describing in great detail how horrible the curse would be against Israel. But, to remind you, Barnes Notes organizes this as vv. 20–26, 27–37, 38–48, 49–58 and 59–68; Keil and Delitzsch separate this final portion of Deut. 28 as follows: vv. 20–26, 27–34, 35–46, 47–57 and 58–68. Personally, I would break these up as vv. 20–26, 27–37, 38–46, 47–57, 58–68. God promises to Israel that He will scatter he among the other nations.

Verses	Recapitulation and Rationalization
20–26	Moses finishes with the reading of the <i>curses</i> at v. 19 and begins to go into detail with v. 20. V. 26 begins with an <i>and</i> and it leaves the bodies of the Israelites are food for buzzards, a good stopping point.
27–37	Moses begins with the striking of the body with various skin cancers and leprosies, mentions other external diseases in v. 35, and concludes with the Israelites being a horror, a proverb and a taunt among all the people where God drives them. V. 37 also begins with a conjunction, meaning this would be a temporary conclusion and breathing point.
38–46	Moses speaks of the normal daily activities that a people would find themselves involved in and how these turn out under God’s cursing. Their agricultural pursuits, their bearing of children, and their financial affairs are all examined. V. 45, the closing statement, begins with a conjunction.
47–57	V. 47 tells them up front why they are being disciplined. They did not serve Y^ehowah their God in joy, in the abundance of all things (v. 47), so they will serve their enemies in hunger, in thirst and in nakedness (v. 48). V. 57, the conclusion, again begins with a conjunction.
58–68	As in the previous section, Moses tells the Israelites why they will be under discipline (If you are not careful to observe all the words of this Law...) and continues with the curses that they will be under, concluding with a conjunction in v. 68.

I do not present this chart because I am seriously concerned that you follow the outline which I have given as opposed to that of previous scholars (although mine is correct and theirs is slightly flawed³²⁶); the very structure of the language tells us that at the end of each section, Moses pauses for a breath and then launches again into the next admonishment. This chart merely helps you to tie together the remainder of this chapter into a cohesive whole. When you examine a books verse by verse, as the Bible should be studied, there is a tendency to miss the forest for the trees. Now and again, since we might spend 15 minutes on a verse which was spoken or written in less than a minute, it would behoove us to step back for a moment to take an overall look at the structure and general content. V. 20 might have been a good place to begin a chapter.

³²⁶ The NASB and I agree right down the line except for v. 49, where they begin the second to the last section.

“If you do not observe to do all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and fearful name—Y^ehowah your God; [Deut. 28:58]

We have an obvious metonymy here (a metonymy is where one thing is used, but it stands for something else which is related to it). Here, the Israelite is not to specifically fear (or respect) the name of God—the name of God stands for His character and His person and that is what the Israelite is to fear and/or respect.

Moses is speaking to the Israelites directly. We do not know if he is holding up a scroll, whether he is reading from a scroll, which are, in essence, his notes for his teaching. In the Hebrew, this reads *the law the this*; which could have two interpretations: it sounds as though Moses is holding up a scroll or he is referring to what he has said in the power of the Holy Spirit. Since this particular discourse has only run through chapters 27–28, it would not make sense for him to refer to this particular speech as *the Law the this*, as it was far too brief. It is unreasonable and linguistically incorrect to encompass what he has said to the Israelites over the past several weeks as *the Law the this*; there would have been a better way to take in all of what he has said to them than to refer to it as *the Law the this...the book the this*. Therefore, Moses has a visual aide—the scroll of the Law. The exact contents of whatever scroll he holds up is immaterial—that is, it doesn’t matter if this is the book of Deuteronomy (which it is), or whatever other portions of the Law which has been recorded. What is important is he is drawing their attention to the Word of God. Moses here makes reference to a book, which refers to the content of his message in written form. Moses is a genius, he is guided by the Holy Spirit, and his mind is crystal clear. This does not mean that he does not use notes or speak from what he has written. Since it is obvious that he is holding up a scroll as a visual aide, it would only seem reasonable that this scroll carry on it the text of what he is speaking to them right at this moment. That is, Moses didn’t just grab some scroll from some previous book or portion of the Torah—this is the manuscript of Deuteronomy thus far; what he has used to speak to them from. To have all of the scrolls of the Law before him, to speak from here and from there, would have been cumbersome; to have his notes for this particular delivery would make perfect sense. This particular book will be completed, insofar as Moses would write in it, in Deut. 31:24: *And it came to pass, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, that Moses commanded the Levites, who carried the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah, saying, “Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you.”* And one more word on this subject: ask yourself which would make more sense—for Moses to stand up and deliver these great messages and then to go home at night and think to himself, “Now just what the hell was it that I said today? I’d better write this down.” Or would it make sense for Moses to write these things down first and then speak from them?

Now, what Moses holds up would not be the entire Law. The Torah would have been written on several scrolls and Moses, a great public speaker, would not hold up a dozen scrolls in his arms and say, “Now this is what I am talking about.” He holds up the one scroll from which he is reading. However, this stands for all of the written Law—this stand for the entire Torah and, by application, the entire Word of God. He places before their eyes the written Word of God; now I have the privilege of doing the same with the entire finished Word of God. I have the ability to hold it before you in one hand. This is what we have been left with and this is what you are to cling to.

Let’s deal with the fear name of Y^ehowah: when you come into contact with a person who is bigger and more powerful than you, you have one of two natural reactions—you have a healthy fear of him or you respect him; and often you have a little bit of both. This is what God expected of the Israelite. *For great is Y^ehowah and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods (Psalm 96:4). “Do you not fear Me?” declares Y^ehowah; “Do you not tremble in My presence? For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea—an eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it, though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail; though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it.” (Jer. 5:22).*

“Then Y^ehowah will cause to be extraordinary your beatings and the beatings of your descendants—many intense beatings—and they are certain, as well as [lit., and] evil sicknesses and they are certain. [Deut. 28:59]

In *Young’s Translation*, this verse makes little or no sense, so let’s look at the other renderings as well:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary strokes and blows, great plagues of long continuance, and grievous sickness of long duration.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...then will Yahweh make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed,—plagues great and lasting, and diseases grievous and lasting;
The Scofield KJV	Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, <i>even</i> great plagues, and of long continuance, and severe sicknesses, and of long continuance.
NASB	...then the LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses.
NIV	...the LORD will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, hash and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses.
NRSV	...then the LORD will overwhelm both you and your offspring with severe and lasting afflictions and grievous and lasting afflictions and grievous and lasting maladies.
Owen's Translation	...then Yahweh will bring extraordinary your afflictions and afflictions of your descendants—afflictions severe and lasting and sicknesses grievous and lasting.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...then hath Jehovah made wonderful thy strokes, and the strokes of thy seed—great strokes, and steadfast, and evil sicknesses, and steadfast.

Although you certainly get the gist of the verse, let's look at a few of the words which are found here. Pâla' (פָּאֵלָא) [pronounced *paw-LAW*] means *to do that which is extraordinary, to do that which is unusually difficult*. This is often used to describe God's most unusual works (Ex. 3:20 34:10 Joshua 3:5). This is in the Hiphil stem, which means God will cause the extraordinary to occur. Strong's #6381 BDB #810. This has a direct object—actually, objects. The direct object is makkâh (מַכָּה) [pronounced *mahk-KAWH*], a word we studied before. Recall that the KJV translates this word as *plague, slaughter, stroke, or wounds*. However, this is not the word found in the book of Exodus; in fact, its first use is in Lev. 26:21. The only English words which I can find which seem to be apt are *mauling, beating, striking, striking down*. In fact, this is the substantive cognate of the verb which is consistently rendered *smite* in the KJV and which I render *strike down*. However, as I mentioned in Num. 11:33, I cannot seem to lay hold of a word which would consistently work for Lev. 26:21 Num. 11:33 Deut. 25:3 Joshua 10:10 and Esther 9:5. The word *slaughter* works great in this passage and many others—it just does not work consistently. Strong's #4347 (for verb, see #5221) BDB #646. We find this word twice in the plural. Makkâh is repeated a third time with an adjectival intensifier, the word gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced *gaw-DOLE*] means *great in quantity, great in magnitude and extent, [or, vast]*. Here, we will go with *many intense* as the translation, as both concepts are in view. Strong's #1419 BDB #152.

Then we have a very unusual word that we just would not expect to find here: the Niphal participle of 'âman (אָמֵן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*], which we transliterate *amen*. Most Christians think that this is the word that you just affix to the end of a prayer; but it is equivalent to ending a prayer with the phrase *I believe it or I believe You or I am entrusting this to You*. The Niphal is generally the passive of the Qal, but it also indicates a state of being, progress or development. These beatings are in a state of arrested development—they are waiting right there to be administered to Israel, if they go against God's Word. The word itself can mean several things: *confirmed, establish, certain, lasting, faithful, steadfast, dependable, trustworthy, entrusted, reliable*; note that I am giving the English equivalents as adjectives, and not as verbs—the participle usually behaves like an adjective, however, here, I will translate it as a verb. Strong's #539 BDB #52. Finally, we have the word for *sicknesses* described by both the word for *evil* and the Niphal participle of 'âman again. The concept of an evil sickness should not be difficult to grasp. We have two which are quite prominent in our time: cancer and AIDS. These, whether contracted in the course of normal human events, or placed upon us by Satan, or given to us by God, are as evil as an affliction can be. Here, these diseases are not given to glorify God through man, but as instruments of discipline—in this context, the sin unto death.

“And He has brought upon you again all the diseases of Egypt, which [diseases] you have been afraid to face, and they have held fast to you. [Deut. 28:60]

Diseases is actually in the masculine singular in the Massoretic text, but plural in western Samaritan, the Targums of Jonathan and Onkelos, the Syriac and the Vulgate. My view here is that this is a difference of language

expression. In the Hebrew, this singular can stand for several different diseases, all belonging to the categories of diseases found in Egypt. However, this sounds stilted in our language and in the language of those translations, so we use the plural. I am not aware of any translations, other than *The Emphasized Bible*, that translates this in the singular (this includes *Young's Literal Translation*, which has this in the plural).

Egypt is representative of the world. Even though the Israelites had been taken out of the world or delivered from the world by God through their faith in Jesus Christ, here they are polluted by the world from the inside out. It is the same with our old sin nature. We can be saved, delivered from the world, but the control of our old sin nature will bring us down again. This doesn't mean we spend our lives in immorality—to the contrary, we may appear to be the most moral people around—but we are eaten up from the inside by our old sin nature and our morality is a sham, a work of the flesh. There is much more to the Christian life than reducing the number of sins that we commit or cleaning up the visible life. I realize that some pastors teach that the aim of the Christian life after salvation is to reduce the number of sins that we commit—in fact, some will become invasive of your personal life and privacy in order to keep you from sinning too much. This is a confused life. It is your free will and the control of the Holy Spirit which is the key. It is your obedience to God through the power of the Holy Spirit which is meaningful and it is your Christian life as filled with the Spirit which is meaningful.

One thing upon which you can be certain—the truth and God's properly defined procedure is what Satan attacks. Most everyone is aware that the gospel is attacked, and generally by the subtlest of means. Even though the official Catholic Church doctrine is that their members are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, apart from works and apart from personal merit, ask a Catholic whether or not they can now willfully sin and still expect to be saved. 99 times out of a 100, they will think that if their life does not continue along some path of goodness and righteousness, following the sacraments of the church, that they can either lose their salvation or take some intermediate position between heaven and hell for some indeterminable amount of time. That is, they cling to works as a part of their salvation. But even those who are closer to the doctrine of their own church view the work of the Holy Spirit as dominating and that their salvation will be borne out by their works. If that were the case, why do we see the sin unto death? There would be no need for the sin unto death if God's grace were infused and not imputed. In fact, there would be little or no reason for discipline. When you go further outside the realm of true Christian doctrine, then works are unabashedly made a part of salvation. Even some of the great churches, doctrinally based, teach that your life will automatically let our Lord shine through as a result of salvation, implying that if you don't behave, then you really weren't saved in the first place. Again, it is the subtle addition of works to faith for salvation.

When it comes to sin, Satan attacks. Most of us look upon Satan and our flesh as tempters of sin. What often results is a person gritting their teeth and appearing moral or pastors and other church members invading your privacy and making certain that you don't sin (overtly). If you do not commit a sin out of social compulsion or by intimidation, then your lack of sin is not divine good—it is not the spiritual life. People obey the law day in and day out of social compulsion. Unbelievers are moral all the time out of the threat of social retribution. Certainly not in all areas, but their behavior is modified by society and sometimes by other intrusive unbelievers and it has no spiritual impact or repercussions whatsoever. Now don't become mixed up and think that this is an encouragement to sin nor is this an encouragement to do away with law or the morality of society (what little there is). But intrusion on another's privacy is not your place nor is it mine. I could make it my business to follow you around and swat you on the back of your head every time I observed you committing a sin. Would this have some spiritual meaning? No, none whatsoever. It would be a waste of both of our lives. The key is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit and to make your own personal choices according to God's Word while being filled with the Spirit. What about the believer who falls into great and obvious immorality? Our involvement here is to not try to invade their private lives with our morality, but to do quite the opposite—we separate from the strongly immoral believer. The Corinthians were even proud to some degree that one of their members was in an overtly incestuous relationship—as though this were some testimony to grace. Paul told them to separate themselves from this person and he delivered those persons over to Satan for the administration of the sin unto death.

Another area in which the spiritual life is attacked is spirituality—that is, the Christian's life after salvation in relationship to the filling of the Holy Spirit. 95% of the believers in Jesus Christ could not tell you, if their lives depended upon it (and they do) how to come under the control of the Holy Spirit. On the one side you have those

who just start yielding like crazy and on the other side you have holy rollers who go in for demon influence and they call it the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They either fall into a trance and start speaking gibberish, or they actually yield the members of their own body, their tongues, to demon control—and they think this is spirituality. Spirituality is the filling of the Holy Spirit. We are all baptized into Christ at salvation: **For we by one Spirit were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit** (1Cor. 12:13). Our means of being filled by the Holy Spirit after salvation is simple—we silently name our sins to God (or we can do it out loud if we are alone). **If we name our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (1John 1:9). Let's leave the application to our lives today and return to the literal interpretation.

In this passage we have biological diseases which will lie dormant in the Israelites, which they brought with them from Egypt. These diseases were often painful, sudden and extremely debilitating. They were diseases, partially enumerated in v. 27, which the Israelites were afraid of, as well they should be. Perhaps you should get the picture here. If you choose to spend your life, post salvation, in complete rebellion to God, then you should fear God. He can bring upon you cancer, AIDS, and any other painful, debilitating, destructive, evil disease that you can imagine. And don't think that you can just pray your way out of it. Right now you are hearing all about it. God is speaking to you. You have the chance to ignore Him now. That is your free will. However, don't expect any special consideration after you spend the next several years in reversionism. At best, you might have the sin unto death turned into dying grace—but that is tough to do, as dying grace comes with years of spiritual growth. God give us two options: **“And Y^ehowah will removed from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt, which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.”** (Deut. 7:15; see also Ex. 15:26). The other option is this verse. We can learn the easy way by obeying His words, or that hard way through discipline. I spent too much of my youth learning things the hard way.

“Also every sickness and every beating which is not recorded [lit., written] in the book [or scroll] of this Law; Y^ehowah will cause them to climb up [or, to go up] upon you until you have been destroyed [or, until your destruction]. [Deut. 28:61]

The Massoretic text reads: **in the scroll of this Law**. In one early printed edition of the Massoretic text, and in the Samaritan, Onkelos of Jonathan, and Syriac codices, this reads **in this scroll of the Law**. If the latter is correct, we have Moses standing before them with his notes to speak from and he holds them up, calling for them to beware that **every sickness and beating not recorded in this scroll of the Law will climb upon them and destroy them**. He is holding up what he has written, calling it the scroll or the book of the Law. This would indicate that Moses knew what he was recording was God's Word.

Moses did not name in the Law every disease that was found in Egypt. They were not contextually pertinent. However, the land of Egypt was filled with disease. Why? Simple—they were persecuting God's people, the Israelites and they were under discipline because of that. One of God's methods of discipline is disease. Again, no every diseased person is under discipline and it is not our business to decide when someone is seriously ill, whether it is the result of their lame spiritual life, their negative volition toward the gospel, or what. We don't walk away, either. Some unbelievers are struck by disease and God makes it clear that everything that they have worked for all of their lives is about to be removed from them. Every pleasant thing in life and every good experience is meaningless in the face of whatever disease that they are facing and often only when they come to those realizations are they open to the gospel. Many of you know that God had to put you in a pretty tight spot before you would believe in Jesus Christ. Sometimes this is the only way God can reach some people. At the right time, with the right people, you present God's Word in the form of the gospel and then you step back and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work. You do not need to argue anyone into anything.

This particular passage borders on being creepy. These diseases essentially go up or climb up your body—including diseases which are not even known to the Israelites at this time—until they are destroyed. Actually, the final verb is in the singular, making this a very personal statement. This, therefore, does not refer to the entire destruction of all of Israel, but to individual cases of the sin unto death which will be massive in number and result in the serious decimation of the population of the Israelites. **“I call heaven and earth to witness**

against you today, that you will certainly perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You will not live long on it, but you will be utterly destroyed.” (Deut. 4:26).

Moses has made several statements concerning the Book of the Law and will make several more (Deut. 29:21 30:10 31:26), as will Joshua (Joshua 1:8 8:34 23:6 24:26). There are so many Christians who totally miss this. It is God’s Word which He left with us; and the Holy Spirit. So many Christians spend their lives in a total waste, totally disoriented to God’s plan because they do not know God’s Word. The few who do recognize the importance and authority of God’s Word often only get half of the story; they know a few Old Testament stories, but are primarily taught out of the New Testament. The New Testament was given to the church in particular, but this does not mean that God’s Word, the Old Testament, was abrogated. However, the Old Testament is not to be distorted in such a way to make us think that we are living under the Law; nor are we to confuse ourselves with who and what Israel is. We are referred to as spiritual Israel, but this does not mean that Israel and the church are equivalent. The pastor should see to it that he approaches his congregation as Jehoshaphat did in his reforms: *And they taught in Judah, the Book of the Law of Y^ehowah with them; and they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people* (2Chron. 17:9).

“And you will be left with a few men, whereas [lit., instead of which] you [all] have been as stars of the heavens in regard to multitude, because you have not listened to the voice of Y^ehowah your God. [Deut. 28:62]

We will again look at several renderings of this verse, as *Young’s Translation* is somewhat different.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And you will be left few in number, whereas you had been as the stars of the heavens for multitude; because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And ye shall be left men few in number, whereas ye had become as the stars of the heavens, for multitude,—because thou has not hearkened unto the voice of Yahweh thy God.
KJV	And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God.
NASB	“Then you shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude, because you did not obey the Lord your God.”
NIV	You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the Lord your God.
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	...and ye have been left with few men, instead of which ye have been as stars of the heavens for multitude, because thou hast not hearkened to the voice of Jehovah thy God.

We examine these verses intensely for several reasons. (1) We need to know exactly what is found here in the original so that we can best interpret what is here. (2) Even though other translations do give us a reasonable interpretation, we will feel more confident in what we believe if we know the literal rendering as well. (3) Some words we will find later in God’s Word and we will need to determine exactly what they mean in that particular context in a verse which is more abstruse. If we have examined these same words in an easier to grasp context, then we will be able to transfer that knowledge to the more difficult verses.

We begin with the conjunction and then the Niphil perfect, 2nd masculine plural of the verb *shâ`ar* (שָׂאָר) [pronounced *shaw-AHR*] and it means *to remain, to be left over*. Strong’s #7604 BDB #983. This is followed by the *vêyth* preposition (*in, by, with, against*) and the Hebrew noun *math* (מַת) [pronounced *math*], which means *male, man, male offspring*; however, there is not an emphasis here upon sex or gender. Strong’s #4962 BDB #607. This is in the construct and it is followed by the substantive *m^e ‘aṭ* (מְעַט) [pronounced *m^e-ĠAHT*], which means *a little, few, fewness*. Strong’s #4592 BDB #589.

Then we have the preposition *tachath* (תַּחַת) [pronounced *TAH-khath*] and it means *instead of*; although there is much more to this word than that. Since this is followed by the relative pronoun *which*, we will render this *whereas*. Strong’s #8478 BDB #1065.

The next couple words are **as stars of the heavens** followed by the lamed preposition and the word *multitude*. And this is completed literally with **because you did not listen at [or, in] [the] voice of Y^ehowah your God**. That last veyth preposition is difficult and rendered incorrectly by most translators as *to*.

The understanding of this verse should be easy now. It simply means that God will discipline them to a point where their population is severely decimated. The Israelites had been increased to the point that their population was huge (Deut. 1:10 10:22 Neh. 9:23); however, if they rebelled against God, it would be reduced considerably (Lev. 26:22 Deut. 4:27). Recall some passages already quoted: **And Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, went up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. And Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, came to the city, while his servants were besieging it. And Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, went out to the king of Babylon, he and his other and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of Y^ehowah, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon, king of Israel, had made in the temple of Y^ehowah, just as Y^ehowah had said. Then he led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land (2Kings 24:10–14). And Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. Then the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was led away into exile from its land. There are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away into exile; in the seventh year, 3023 Jews; in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, 832 persons from Jerusalem; in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, carried into exile 745 Jewish people; there were 4,600 persons in all (Jer. 52:26–30).**

“And it will come to pass, as Y^ehowah has rejoiced over to do you good and to multiply you, so will Y^ehowah rejoice over you to destroy you and to lay you waste; and you [all] will be pulled away from off the ground wither you are going in to possess it. [Deut. 28:63]

This is interesting. God allows them to make the choice and He has made it absolutely clear what would occur not matter what choice they make. And God will rejoice in whatever He must do as a result of whichever decision that they make. **“Y^ehowah your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body and in the fruit of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for Y^ehowah will against rejoice over you for good just as he rejoiced over your fathers.”** (Deut. 30:9). That is option A. God is perfect and His happiness if perfect. We cannot affect God's perfect happiness, no matter how badly we screw up our lives. I recall students who, because they had something against me, would not try in my class—they would purposely fail my course. It never affected my happiness one whit. It had an affect on theirs as they had to retake the course. In this life, we can screw up our lives as much as we want and stand in rebellion to God because we just don't like the way He is running the show. This is fine. We know what we will get and God will not pull any punches. And guaranteed, His happiness and perfect peace will not be affected one whit—however, we will have a great deal of personal suffering. **“Thus proclaims Y^ehowah concerning all My wicked neighbors who strike at the inheritance with which I have endowed My people Israel. Observe, I am about to uproot them from their land and I will uproot the house of Judah from among them.”** (Jer. 12:14)

God will rejoice when He brings upon us great blessing and God will rejoice when He brings upon us discipline and cursing. It is your call at this time. You want to try God? You want to call Him at His Word? Go ahead—He will rejoice as you are put through daily torment through discipline beyond what you can imagine. Or, learn the easy way. It is up to you. Natural man is capable of learning by example. Some people never try drugs because they can see how those who do totally screw up their lives and happiness. And then there are others who learn the hard way and others who can't even learn that way. That's natural man. Your life is simple. You have a few daily choices to make and you can learn by example or you can learn by discipline. You can learn by blessing or you can learn by being cursed. It's your call.

Let's deal with this verse specifically. The Israelites have found themselves removed from the land which God gave them on several occasions. Today, obviously, only a very small percentage of the world's population of Jews reside in the land. In the first century, the Roman emperor Hadrian actually issued a decree forbidding Jews to live in Judea or to even approach its borders.

“And Y^ehowah will scatter you among all the peoples from the end of the earth even unto the end of the earth; and you will serve there other gods which you have not known, you and your fathers—wood and stone. [Deut. 28:64]

This does not mean that they and their fathers will serve other gods; it means that these are gods which were unknown to them and to their fathers. This is a continued warning from Moses to the people: “And Y^ehowah will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations, where Y^ehowah will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of man’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.” (Deut. 4:27–28). Moses will write a song dealing with the future idolatry of Israel: “They sacrificed to demons, not God, whom they have not known, who came lately, whom your fathers did not dread. You neglected the Rock you sired you and forgot the God who gave you birth.” (Deut. 32:17–18). You have given us as sheep to be eaten and you have scattered us among the nations (Psalm 44:11). This will be fulfilled in 721 BC by the Assyrians, in 586 BC by the Babylonians (a Chaldean dynasty), and in 70 AD by Rome. We have already covered the Scriptural references in detail and the history which took place. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, made an image of gold...[and his] herald proclaimed, “To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and language, that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltry, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire.” (Dan. 1:1a, 4–6).

When it says here that the Israelites will be scattered among all the peoples doesn’t mean that there will be an Israelite in every household nor does it even mean an Israelite in every single nation. This figure of speech is called a synecdoché [pronounced *sin-EK-do-kee*] of the genus where the genus is put in for the species (that is all is put in for the greater part). Israel will be distributed throughout the greater portion of the earth throughout the greater portion of the nations and peoples. The point here is that you cannot go to some obscure tribe in Africa and find an Israelite. However, chances are great that you will find an Israelite in that particular nation wherein resides that tribe.

The Jews are scattered throughout the world for a couple of reasons. First of all, this is a simple fulfillment of prophecy. They were to retain their separateness, their identity, yet be scattered throughout the earth. Although there are ancient peoples who have certainly lost their original land and have been scattered, they have become totally assimilated by the surrounding populations. That is, we cannot go into a nation and find small pockets of Hittites or Chaldeans—but we can always find Jews. They are God’s people and they will not lose their identity (although certainly some individuals have). An obvious attack of Satan is to either destroy the Jew entirely or to cause them to become entirely assimilated into a nation. The second reason we find Jews scattered throughout the world is as a sign from God. They are our object lesson. Do you want to choose legalism rather than grace? Do you want to follow another God other than Jesus Christ? Examine the horrible Satanically-originated prejudice against the Jew, the national identity without a nation (save for a few square miles of a desert area) and determine do you want to remain under discipline? Thirdly, the Israelite is dispersed throughout the world because, at the rapture of the church, in the tribulation, many of the Israelites who were not believers will become believers immediately and they will make up the 144,000 evangelists who will become witnesses for Jesus Christ during those last seven years of the Age of Israel (Rev. 7). You see, at that point in time, the Church will have been removed from the earth (Unity Church will still be here, as will the Jehovah’s Witness church—the former sporting almost all of its pre-rapture membership; the latter being decimated but intact). However, a very large number of Israelites will be called by God—called by Jesus Christ—and they will evangelize the entire world as human history under the rule of man comes to a swift end. It is because they are scattered throughout the nations of the earth that they are able to be effective evangelists.

“And among those nations you will not rest—in fact, there will be no resting---place for the sole of your foot. Furthermore [lit., and] Y^ehowah will give to you there a trembling heart and failing of eyes and a grief of soul [or, a languishing soul]; [Deut. 28:65]

We have the term *wandering Jew*, which describes this exactly. My God will cast them away because they have not listened to Him; and they will be wanders among the nations (Hosea 9:17). Jeremiah confirmed this in Lamentations: Judah has gone into exile under affliction and under harsh servitude; she dwells among the nations;

she has found no rest. All her pursuers have overtaken her in the midst of distress (Lam. 1:3). Even in the Land of Promise today, there is no rest for the Jew, and he carries within himself a tremendous grief of soul for what has occurred. And for those who have faced the viciousness of anti-Semitism, they have been given a trembling heart, as it was with those who were slaughtered in Germany near War II.

“And your life will be hanging [in suspense] before your face and you will be in dread by night and by day, and you will not believe in your life. [Deut. 28:66]

This verse literally begins: **And your [singular] lives will be hanging before your face...** The word for *lives* is an plural abstract adjective used as a substantive. While most of the lexicons give this in the singular, it is probably best to give it in the plural as it is found: chayyîym (חַיִּיִּם) [pronounced *khahy-YEEM*—my trouble is with the double y’s. When a consonant in the middle of a word carries a dagesh with it, that consonant is doubled. How exactly you can end a syllable with a y, and then be able to pronounce it, I don’t exactly know. The lexicons which I have which give a pronunciation for this (Strong’s and the *New Englishman’s Concordance*) both have this word in the singular. Once we get past the pronunciation, this word is built upon the verb châyâh, which means *to live, to exist, to enjoy life*. Chayyîym means *being alive, being vigorous, having life, sustaining life, living prosperously*—it is life as opposed to death. Strong’s #2416 BDB #313. All the things which pertain to life of each person hangs before their face. We have a similar expression—a male might leave a female *hanging* (or vice versa). It means that their life is put on hold; they don’t really function completely until something has been resolved. With what is occurring before the Israelite, their lives—everything pertaining to what is alive—just remains hanging before their face. The horrors of their lives make it impossible to experience life. Every moment of their lives will be in dread, throughout the night and throughout the day. This describes the horrors which the Jewish people have had to experience throughout their history.

We have the same verb `âman (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*], which we had in v. 59. This time it is in the Hiphil imperfect. With the negative, it means that they will be caused not to believe. This is followed by the vêyth prefixed preposition and the word chayyîym again. I have followed the lead of other translators and have rendered this in the singular, but it has to do with everything pertaining to one’s living. The continual horror and dread that they experience goes on day and night to where all that pertains to life is left hanging to the point that they no longer believe in that which has to do with life. When we read about the six million Jews who were slaughtered in Germany and we have a hard time comprehending how this many could just be slaughtered without an organized resistance, Moses explains it here in this verse. They were in continual horror and they could not believe in anything which pertained to living. All that pertained to living just hung before their faces. You have heard someone describe their life to a point where they were almost like an observer themselves, standing on the outside watching on. There’s a detachment. That’s what this is.

There are actually several reasonable interpretations to this verse, which is not unusual. God is able to inspire more than just one meaning at the hand of a prophet. *Barnes’ Notes* writes: *i.e., [your life] shall be hanging as it were on a thread, and that before thine own eyes.*³²⁷ That is, their lives will be in peril, in a precarious position, and they will fully recognize this fact. However, there is another interpretation of this verse, also prophetic. Their life is Jesus Christ—He will hang before them on the cross—and because they do not believe in Him, their lives will be unspeakable horror.

“In the morning you will say, ‘O, that it were evening!’ And in the evening you will say, ‘O that it were morning!’; on account of the fear of your heart, with which you are afraid, and from the sight of your eyes, which you see. [Deut. 28:67]

There is no time when they are not afraid. They spend their entire day in fear, desiring that it be night. At night, they lie awake in fear, wishing it were day. There is no time for rest, no time for relief. They cannot stop the continual fear in their souls, considering everything which they observe.

³²⁷ *Barnes’ Notes*, Vol. II, p. 326.

The application is easy. Most of us are believers in Jesus Christ. The same God Who gave them the Land of Promise will be the same God Who will allow them to experience this life of horror. The key is your attitude toward God, which is found in your attitude toward His Word. Because of many spiritual factors, we in the United States have only seen a small amount of the suffering and despair which is found throughout the world. These things are God's last resort to reach us. Sometimes, He must do that in order to reach us. Sometimes, such things are experienced as a matter of divine discipline. In any case, if you are still alive, that means that God still has a plan for your life.

“And Y^ehowah will cause you to return to Egypt with ships, by a way of which I promised you, ‘You will caused never again to see it’, and you [all] [will be caused to be put up with the intention of being] sold [or, you will place yourselves up to be sold] there to your enemies, for male and female slaves, and there is no buyer.” [Deut. 28:68]

This last verse is a little difficult to unravel, so let me give you a few other translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And the Lord shall bring you into Egypt again with ships, by the way about which I said to you, You shall never see it again; and there you shall be sold to your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And Yahweh will take thee back again to Egypt in ships, by the way whereof I said unto thee, Thou shalt not again anymore see it. And ye will offer yourselves there for sale unto thine enemies as servants and as handmaids with no one to buy.
Scotfield's KJV	And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spoke unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again; and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for male and female slaves, and no man shall buy <i>you</i> .
NASB	“And the LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships, by the way about which I spoke to you, ‘You will never see it again!’ And there you shall offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer.”
NIV	The LORD will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	‘And Jehovah hath brought thee back to Egypt with ships, by a way of which I said to thee, Thou dost not add any more to see it, and ye have sold yourselves there to thine enemies, for men-servants and for maid-servants, and there is no buyer.’

The verb which begins this verse is the Hiphil imperfect of *shûw^bv* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*] which means *return*, and it often refers to a man's possession being returned to him. In the Hiphil (the causative) stem, it means *to be caused to return* (2Sam. 19:11 2Chron. 6:25), *to bring* (Gen. 14:16 28:15), or *to return something, to restore, to make restitution*. (Neh. 5:11 Prov. 24:12 Lam. 3:64). Strong's #7725 BDB #996. This is followed literally by *...Egypt in ships in the...* and then we have the word *derek^e* (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced *DEH-rek^e*] and it means *way, distance, road, journey, manner*. These various definitions explain the differences in the translations. Strong's 1870 BDB #202. This is followed by the relative pronoun for *which* or *that*. Then we have the Qal perfect of *to speak, to promise* in the 1st person singular with a 2nd person singular suffix. This gives us **And Y^ehowah caused you to return to Egypt in the manner which I promised you,...**

In his promise, Moses used the negative and the Hiphil imperfect of the verb *yâçaph* (יָצַח) [pronounced *yaw-SAHPH*] and it is a primitive verb which means *to add, to augment*; and as an adverb it means *to continue to do a thing, again*. With the lamed preposition and the infinitive of the verb for *to see*, they are continuing not to see the land of Egypt so this portion of the verse should be rendered: **you will be caused never again to see it**. Strong's #3254 BDB #414

The verb for *sell* is in the Hiphil (causative stem) and is tempered by the phrase **but no man will buy you**. Therefore, it is idiomatic for being *put up for sale*. The Hiphil of this verb allows for one to be *caused to be sold* or for a person *to sell himself* into slavery even though there is no 2nd person suffix (compare Lev. 25:39, 47, 48, 50 Deut. 15:10).

Their lives are in such misery, that they would be willing to bring themselves back to Egypt and sell themselves to Egypt as slaves—this life would be an improvement over their own. Yet, no one in Egypt would buy them. “And You brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and with wonders, and with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror. You gave them this land, which You swore [to give] to their forefathers to give them—a land flowing with milk and honey. And they came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey Your voice or walk in Your law; they have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore, You have made all this calamity come upon them. Look, the siege mounds have reached the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword, the famine, and the pestilence; and what You have spoken has come to pass; and, observe, You see it. (Jer. 32:21–24). “Open shame belongs to us, O Y^ehowah, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To Y^ehowah our God belong compassion and forgiveness for we have rebelled against Him; nor have we obeyed the voice of Y^ehowah our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. Indeed, all Israel has transgressed Your Law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice, so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. Thus, He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring upon us great calamity, for under the whole heaven there has not been done [anything] like what was done to Jerusalem. As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us, yet we have not sought the grace of Y^ehowah our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. Therefore, Y^ehowah has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for Y^ehowah our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.” (Dan. 9:8–14). Y^ehowah has done what He purposed; He has accomplished His word which He commanded from days of old. He has thrown down without sparing and He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you; He has exalted the might [lit., the horn] of your adversaries (Lam. 2:17).

What about “Furthermore, he [all] king] will not multiply horses for himself, nor will he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since Y^ehowah has said to you, ‘You will never again return that way.’” (Deut. 17:16)? What we find in the imperfect and in the perfect are often commands, not statements of fact. The Israelites were being commanded not to go to Egypt—they are not being told that they will never go to Egypt. None of the Ten Commandments, if you will recall, are written in the imperative.

As for My sacrificial gifts, they sacrifice the flesh and eat [it]. Y^ehowah has taken no delight in them. Now He will remember their iniquity and punish them for their sins—they will return to Egypt... They will not remain in Y^ehowah’s land, but Ephraim will return to Egypt and in Assyria, they will eat unclean [food] (Hos. 8:13 9:3). So Johanan ben Kareah and all the commanders of the forces and all the people did not obey the voice of Y^ehowah, so as to remain in the land of Judah. But Johanan ben Kareah and all the commanders of the forces took the entire remnant of Judah who had returned from all the nations to which they had been driven away, in order to reside in the land of Judah—the men, the women, the children—and they entered the land of Egypt (for they did not obey the voice of Y^ehowah) and went in as far as Tahpanhes (Jer. 43:4–6a, 7).

Barnes’ Notes: This is the climax. As the Exodus from Egypt was as it were the birth of the nation into its Covenant relationship with God, so the return to the house of bondage is in like manner the death of it. The mode of conveyance, “in ships” is added to heighten the contrast. They cross the sea from Egypt with a high hand, the water being parted before them. They should go back again cooped up in slave ships³²⁸.

Being sold into slavery to Egypt occurred on several occasions: under by Titus (40–81 AD), the Roman general and ruler, who sent 17,000 adult Israelites to Egypt to work as direction of the Roman government and those who were under 17 years of age were sold as slaves. The Roman emperor Hadrian (76–138 AD) also sold a huge number of Jews into slavery. The final statement, **you will be sold to your enemies for male and female slaves and no man will buy you** is illustrative of the most ultimate degradation. It means that the Jew will be shunned in all things. As we have seen, this has been the case in many countries under many different circumstances. Personally, I can understand many prejudices based upon race, not because they have merit, but because they have different physical characteristics which set them apart, and a different culture which results from being set apart. However, in many situations, Jews blend right into a population, except for their religious practices. It is

³²⁸ *Barnes’ Notes*, Vol. II, p. 326.

not apparent who is Jew and who is not. In order for some to exercise prejudice against Jews, they sometimes have to carefully examine the person or their name or their history to determine that they are Jewish. This is a matter of God's prediction through Moses and a matter of the workings of Satan. As we have discussed in the **Historical Persecution of the Jews**, the acts of prejudice are motivated by Satan, as the wiping out of the Jews as a people (or even as a distinct group apart from all other peoples of the earth), would contradict the many prophecies of the Bible which have a future planned for the Jews, God's people.

We have been called by God's Word out of this world. Now we can try to return to it, but even as slaves, we will not be bought. The choice to leave this world is irrevocable. That is, you cannot just believe in Jesus Christ and then walk back into your old life. Now certainly you can try, but even as a slave, there will be no buyer. You may be used by Satan but there will be no security and no reward—just pain and discipline.

McGee: Why did all this happen to them? It was because of their disobedience. God had given them the "if's." God said, "If you obey, you will be blessed. If you disobey, you will be put out of the land."³²⁹

The Jew is a great object lesson for us. God had given them everything and they rejected Him. All the blessings which they had are gone. 3000 years ago, Moses spoke these words in prophecy, giving them the choice of blessing or cursing. They chose cursing. Today, they have no real nation of their own and they are unjustly persecuted and discriminated against throughout history. The best they can do is cling to some torn up, desert area filled with strife and killing. This is what you get when you reject God's blessing and when you reject God's Son—you cling to what you can in this world, which is precious little, and then you spend your eternity in the Lake of Fire. Or, for those of you who are saved and reject His life after your salvation, then the best you can cling to is a parched, desert area filled with strife and persecution, killing and death. ["I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have placed before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants."](#)

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³²⁹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 168.

Deuteronomy 29

Deuteronomy 29:1–29

Outline of Chapter 29:

- Vv. 1–8 **Introduction/limitations of the spiritual perception of the Israelites/faithfulness of God**
- Vv. 9–13 **Moses enjoins the people of Israel to keep this agreement with God**
- Vv. 14–21 **The tremendous cursing which will come upon Israel if they turn away from God**
- Vv. 22–28 **The observation of others of the cursing of Israel**
- V. 29 **Conclusion (continued into the next chapter)**

Charts:

- v. 5 **Why believers have ears but cannot hear, eyes but cannot see and a heart, but cannot perceive**

Introduction: Most commentators include Deut. 29 with the third message from Moses to the people. Recall that he spoke to them from Deut. 1:6 through 4:40; then he addresses them in what appears to be one very long message between 5:1–26:19. In Deut. 27, we began with a short command to the elders of Israel, which was passed on to all of the people (Deut. 27:1–8); and then Moses launches into a tremendous message which was apparently relayed by all of the Levitical priests as well concerning the blessings and the curses (27:9–28:68). Although we spent a great deal of time on this, realize that the message was relatively short. This chapter begins with a very short narrative (a verse and a half) and launches into another short dissertation which runs through chapter 30. Another lecture will begin in Deut. 31, followed by a song which he wrote in chapter 32. Some commentators lump all of this together as his third address to the people; others place a break between chapters 30 and 31. In any case, Deut. 27–32 is a series of relatively short dissertations, each lasting perhaps between 5 and 20 minutes each.

I have an interest in the nuts and bolts of all of this. For several reasons, particularly because of Moses' statement in Deut. 28:58 ("If you do not observe to do all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and fearful name—Y^ehowah your God"), I believe that Moses had written the bulk of Deuteronomy (actually, all of it up until that point) and held up before them his notes for that particular discourse. For some reason, he is giving shorter and shorter presentations. My educated guess here, having spoken to small groups of young people as a teacher, particularly near the end of a school year, is that I find that I have not addressed this issue or that issue and I must cover those short individual topics in a more disjointed manner. Moses has spent forty years with these people, who were his young people at the beginning of the Exodus. This is the company which will enter into the Land of Promise. Moses, in his addresses believes that he has covered everything. He knows this is the end for him—he is about ready to enter eternity and they are ready to enter the land. So he speaks to them; then he goes away and thinks and decides that he needs to say this. So he summons them together or he speaks to the elders or to the Levitical priests and tells them to pass these things on to the people. Then he goes away and thinks again, "I need to say this as well." So he gathers them together again. This is the end of a forty year ministry. Moses has been teaching these people doctrine for the last third of his life, for forty years. He has seen all of their parents die the sin unto death and he knows he will never see them again except in eternity. He leaves them with the Word of God. It is difficult to sum up a ministry and a relationship of forty years. Imagine yourself with your family—say a wife and young sons. You know without a doubt that you will die in a couple of days. Your mind is absolutely clear and you want to speak to them—say your last words to them. If you love your family, you will have a lot to say to them. For the boys, you will have advice which must last them for the rest of their lives. You speak for awhile—they go away—and you realize that you should have say this or that. This is what is occurring at the end of this fantastic book and this is why we have these short bursts of narrative. So, what we are looking at in what is termed as Moses' third (and sometimes third

and fourth) address is the last two to five days of his life where he realizes that he must also say this to his people before he dies.

As a personal note—after finishing almost the entire Torah, it was in this chapter (actually, at the end of the previous chapter) where I decided that I needed to examine these verses in a different way. It is so difficult giving a decent rendering to God's Word, as I was always torn with the literal translation and with what I believed Moses was saying as we would understand it today. Every translator who believed that he was dealing with the Word of God would feel similarly. He wants God's Word to make sense and to be understandable. On the other hand, no translator with any integrity wants to insert his own interpretation or views intentionally. An unbeliever does not realize this; but for those of us who work with God's Word, the last thing we want to do is to insert ideas and concepts which are not there or remove those which are by a lame translation. Therefore, we are always torn between being absolutely literal and absolutely readable. Why no translator or translators ever thought to do this before surprises me. In splitting up the translation between a very literal translation and a very free translation, you are able to see for yourself where I have taken liberties with the translation of the verse. I have often maintained the word order of the Hebrew even when it made no English sense at all, so that the emphasis could be seen (see v. 3 below, as a for instance). This freed me to translating *for your [two] eyes as for your benefit* in the same verse. I would have never taken that liberty before, even if I felt it more accurately gave the sense of what Moses was saying because it is such a departure from the literal rendering. In breaking each verse into a literal translation and a smooth, but less-literal translation, this has resulted in giving me a great deal of freedom—I can be absolutely literal on the one hand, and quite idiomatic on the other. I am hoping that the combined result will increase your understanding of what has been said.

To get an even broader overview, this begins what is known theologically as the Palestinian Covenant, or the Palestine Contract between God and Israel. In the first 8 verses, Moses will give Israel a justification for their allegiance to God and justification for them to keep their portion of the contract—God was faithful to them and miraculously provided for them not only food but also tremendous prosperity in war. Because God has been faithful to Israel, Israel can safely enter into a contract with God and expect Him to fulfill his portion of the contract. In v. 9, Moses begins the actual Palestinian Covenant. Therefore, an **alternate outline** would be:

Deut. 29:1–8 **God has been faithful to Israel**
Deut. 29:9–30:20 **The Palestinian Covenant**

You may want to review your notes on the Doctrine of a Covenant (Deut. 5:3). However, there is an immediate problem. Prior to delving into God's Word solo, with the intention of eventually, in some way, presenting this, my concept of the Palestinian Covenant was essentially a land contract. This is not the case, as we will see. Also, as we move through the next few chapters, it is easy to lose track of the big picture. So we need to look at an in-depth summary of the next could chapters (no, I am not related to Yogi Bera). Therefore, let's examine the **Palestinian Covenant—almost finished !**

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
Deuteronomy 31	Deuteronomy 32	Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

Introduction; the Limitations of the Spiritual Perception of the Israelites; the Faithfulness of God

Literally:

These words of the covenant which Y^ehowah commanded Moses to cut with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab besides the covenant which He had cut with them in Horeb.

Deut. 29:1
[Deut. 28:69 in
the Hebrew]

Smoothen English rendering:

These are the words of the contract which Y^ehowah commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel besides the contract which He had made with them in Horeb.

It is difficult to determine if this verse is the conclusion of the previous chapter or whether it introduces this next section. Obviously this has been a point of disagreement for sometime as this is listed as the end of Deut. 28 in the Hebrew Bible and the beginning of Deut. 29 in the English Bibles. We do not have any sort of reference to time in the verbs of the Hebrew, nor are there any indicators in this verse as to which this speaks of. I am going to take the middle ground. Moses has just finished the previous incredible message, which was a contract between God and the people of Israel. He thinks of something else to write. If you write, you understand this—it might be two in the morning, you have been asleep for five hours and suddenly something jumps in your mind which you need to write down. A writer will have a note pad right there at bedside; or a portable PC. You will notice that the messages are getting shorter and shorter. Moses keeps thinking of things to say. He has said most of what he wants, but something else comes to mind after he is through speaking. So Moses writes this short verse and a half, referring to what has just been said and what he is about to say—so I look upon this verse as a transitional verse referring to both what has come before and what is to come.

Moses and the people are not in Moab—not exactly, anyway; nor are they in Horeb at this time. Moab is southeast of the Dead Sea. They traveled north through Moab, through the midst of Ammon and the land recently taken by the Amorites and then they quickly conquered from the border of Moab on up north, taking the land of the Amorites and the areas known as Gilead and Bashan. The point being made is that Moses is not coming to the Israelites with brand new, fresh doctrine which God had only the day before revealed to Moses. This information is based upon what God had already revealed to Moses and Moses had already given to Israel. This was repetition and confirmation. See Lev. 26:46 27:34 Deut. 5:2–3

The Amorites appear to be more a people than a nation; like the Chaldeans. They governed Assyria and Babylonia in the eighteenth century BC, spreading their influence and power toward the west. By the time of the exodus, they had taken over much of the area east of the Jordan (Sihon and Og, king of Bashan, and Mamre were all Amorites) and had recently carved out a slice of area between the Dead Sea, Ammon and Moab. In fact, this was so recent, with respect to the time of Moses, that the area was still called the plains of Moab. **And they journeyed from the mountains of Abarim, and camped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan-Jericho...then Y^ehowah spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan-Jericho, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you will drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you and you will destroy all their figured stones and destroy all their molten images and you will demolish all of their high places. And you will take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it.'**" (Num. 33:48, 50–53).

Mount Horeb is Mount Sinai, where God first revealed Himself to Moses (Ex. 3:1). Mount Horeb was where information had been given to Moses, along with the Ten Commandments, which Moses revealed to the generation X, who enthusiastically ratified the contract and then violated the terms of the contract again and again until God finally took all of them out under the sin unto death.

Then Moses called to all of Israel then said to them “You [all], [even] you, have seen all that Y^ehowah has done for your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all of his servants, and to all of his land;

Deut. 29:2
[Deut. 29:1 in
the Hebrew]

Then Moses summoned all of Israel and said to them, “You [all] have seen all that Y^ehowah had done for your benefit in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all of his servants, and to all of his land;

There is a great deal of difference between one portion of the literal translation and what we generally find. In the NASB, we have the translation “You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt... Before your eyes was the choice of Owen, Young, Rotherham, the KJV and the NRSV. The prefixed preposition found in this verse is *lâmed*, which generally means *to, for, in regards to*. However, we have seen it used with the Hebrew word for face to mean *in your presence* or, *in the sight of*. When *face* was used with the *mîn* prefixed preposition, it could be rendered *from before your face*. The use of the *vêyth* preposition (*in*) tends to refer to a more adversarial position—*in your face*. With eyes, we have a similar situation. Whereas, we might use the phrase *in your eyes*; this would not be the correct renderings of *vêyth* + eyes; which is literally *in your eyes*. *Vêyth* would possibly indicate opposition and possibly opinion. We do not have the preposition *with* which would be another way to look at what has occurred. Moses could be exclaiming, “You have just seen all of this **with** your own eyes!” But that is not his emphasis; in using *lâmed*, his emphasis is *for them*; or, if you will, *for their benefit* (even though the word *benefit* does not occur in this verse). This is the first generation to enter the land. God has given them both great signs and wonders and He has given them His Word. These things were done for their benefit so that they could make the right choices in the land.

Gen X had no excuse. They were all believers in Jesus Christ and they had seen miracle after miracle performed by God. “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will in obeying, obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you will be My own special treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine.” (Ex. 19:4–5). “You will therefore love Y^ehowah your God and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances and His commandments...[you who have known and seen]...His greatness, His mighty hand and His outstretched arm, and His signs and His works which He did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt and to all his land; and what He did to Egypt’s army, to its horses and its chariots, when He made the water of the Sea of Reeds flow over their faces while they were pursuing you, and Y^ehowah to this day destroyed them; and what He did to you in the wilderness until you came to this place; and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, among Israel—your eyes have seen all the great works of Y^ehowah which He did. You will therefore keep every commandment which I am commanding you today, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land into which you are about to cross to possess it; and so that you may prolong days in the land which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Deut. 11:1, 3–9).

“The great trials which your [two] eyes saw—the signs and the wonders—the great—the those.

Deut. 29:3
[v. 2 in Hebrew]

“The great trials which you saw with your own eyes—the signs and those great wonders!

The Hebrew has a near and a far demonstrative, as we do in the English. The near demonstrative we observed in Deut. 28:58—*this*. That was the word *zeh* (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*], which means *here, this*. In Texan, that is *this here*. Here Moses was holding up the scroll of God’s Word which he had been working on and said “You had damn well better be careful to do what is commanded in this here—the Word of God!” Strong’s #2063, 2088 BDB #260. In this verse, we have the far demonstrative—*hîy’* (הִיא) [pronounced *hee*] and this word is used as a pronoun, as an emphatic *he, she* or *it*; and it is used, particularly with the definite article, for *that, those*. Strong’s #1931 BDB #214.

The great trials could also be rendered *the great testings*. The Egyptians were tested and found wanting. This looks back to what God did to Egypt and did on behalf of Israel in the wilderness. “**And ask now concerning the**

former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on this earth, and [ask] from one end of the heavens to the other: ‘Has anything been done like this great thing, or has [anything] been heard like it? Has a people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire as you have heard, and survived? Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within a nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors’, as Y^ehowah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?” (Deut. 4:32–34; see Deut. 7:19).

So there is no confusion. The first census took place in Num. 1–2 and Moses numbered the people who were twenty years and older (Num. 1:3). They had escaped the bondage of Egypt and had spent between one and two years out of Egypt. Therefore, those who were two years or older at that time had observed these signs and wonders. At this point in time it is roughly thirty-eight years later. With the exception of Moses, Joshua and Caleb, there was not one person alive from the first census (Num. 26:64–65). Therefore, those who were between the ages of 2 and 19.9 years at the first census and between the ages of 40 and 59.9 years at this point in time, had seen these things.³³⁰ However, this is the bulk of Moses’ listening audience. He is not speaking to two million people. At most, Moses is speaking to a few thousand. I came from a city of a million and there were hundreds of churches, all sporting congregations of ten on up to thousands. However, very few, if any of those, actually taught God’s Word verse by verse. I attended perhaps a dozen and found one church that did when their pastor was away, one which did it very lightly and only occasionally, and one, which sported a membership of 10–15, which did it every time that they met. My point is that if God’s Word attracted such a small audience in a city of a million, even here, Moses is not going to have in attendance the entire population of Israel. This crowd would have been made up primarily of the elders (no one is older than 60 years, with the three noted exceptions); and these are the ones who viewed these events.

“And Y^ehowah has not given to you a heart to know, and [two] eyes to see, and [two] ears to hear, until the day the this;

Deut. 29:4
[v. 3 in Hebrew]

“However, Y^ehowah had not give you a heart to know, or eyes to see or ears to hear until this very day;

Moses just doctrinally tied everything together over the past few days in his presentations to the Israelites. There were some signs and wonders which they never even recognized. One of the several significant differences between our spiritual life and theirs is that the Israelites, although they had been regenerated, did not have the Holy Spirit. A very small number of them at salvation, or later in their lives, were given the Holy Spirit by which to function. I see this all the time. I grimace when I lease a house to someone who points out early in our relationship that he is a Christian. One couple missed a full month’s rent, moved out with a week’s notice (30 day notice was required by contract), left the place dirty and unrentable with tears and stains in carpet which was less than three years old, left with most of the light fixtures removed, and when I told them I would send them a bill for the damage and what it would cost me to fix the place up, they totally blew a gasket, citing all of the *work* that they had done to the place (totally amateurish *work* which would have cost me well over a \$1000 to undo and re-do correctly). I recall a less blatant situation where another Christian couple moved out two or three months prior to the end of the lease, and did not pay the last month’s rent prior to moving out because, even though they had signed a contract which strictly forbid these things, the husband just did not like me “holding all the cards”, as he put it. That is, he just disagreed with the contract which he and his wife had signed. Such behavior is easy to explain. These are Christians who either have no clue as to how to be filled with the Holy Spirit (naming their sins to God after they have sinned) or were out of fellowship for an extended period of time. Without the leading of the Holy Spirit, and without some doctrinal orientation, we are renegade Christians—we make our own rules and our own laws and disgrace the name of Jesus Christ. I had a potential tenant who told me he was a Christian and how God had found him and his family this house (my house) and so much wanted to move in. I called his previous landlord and listened for almost five minutes straight to what a crook this guy was and the damage which had been done to his house and the money which was owed him from back rent. It makes me sad to think of all the unbelievers who have had business dealings with Christians and end up getting screwed in the end. If you are a Christian and you plan to violate some contract which you have signed, don’t tell them you are a Christian! Keep that a secret! Do you think that witnessing to everyone about Jesus Christ and then disregarding legal,

³³⁰ Obviously, only those between the ages of, say, 44 and 59.9, have a recollection of these things.

binding contracts which you sign is a real witness for Jesus Christ? You embarrass Him! Tell them you are an ambassador for Satan!

This Generation of Promise, although great when compared to their parents, were still lacking in the Holy Spirit. They could not perceive all of the truth which had been entrusted to them. **Just as it stands written, God gave them a spirit of stupor—eyes to see not and ears to hear not down to this very day.**” (Rom. 11:8 Deut. 29:4 Isa. 29:10a). **For Y^ehowah has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep—he has shut your eyes, prophets; and He has covered your heads, seers** (Isa. 29:10; Isaiah is the expert on widespread negative volition: Isa. 6:9–10 32:3 48:8 63:17). This spirit of stupor is a combination of the soul of man without the Holy Spirit and their negative volition toward His Word. God does not reveal truth to their prophets because they are corrupt and the people are not interested in His Word anyway. And, because of their negative volition, they are out of fellowship. Furthermore, the Old Testament saint did not have the Holy Spirit to guide and teach him. **For to us, God has revealed [spiritual truth] through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows [the thoughts] of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so, [the thoughts] of God no one knows except [by] the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual [information] to a spiritual apparatus. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man** (1Cor. 2:10–15).

However, later what will occur is that complete generations of Israelites will reject Jesus Christ as their Savior. **Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but they do not see; ears to hear, but they do not hear—for they are a rebellious house.**” (Ezek. 21:2). **But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart. But whenever a man turns away to the Lord, the veil is taken away** (2Cor. 3:14–16 Ex. 34:34). **“Why do you not understand what I am saying? Because you cannot hear My Word.”** (John 8:43). **“I told you and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give to them eternal life and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”** (John 10:25b–28). **All unbelievers, like the Pharaoh of Egypt, suffer from this: Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart** (Eph. 4:18).

Lastly, why has Moses said this? Why does he say, “Y^ehowah had not give you a heart to know, or eyes to see or ears to hear until this very day”? He is not excusing their failures of the past (many of those listening no doubt failed when their parents failed). Keil and Delitzsch explain: *Moses does not intend to excuse the previous want of susceptibility on the part of the nation to the manifestations of grace on the part of the Lord, but simply to explain the necessity for the repeated allusion to the gracious acts of God, and to urge the people to lay them truly to heart.* And then they quote Calvin: *By reproving the dulness of the past, he would stimulate them to a desire to understand: just as if he had said, that for a long time they had been insensible to so many miracles, and therefore they ought not to delay any longer, but to arouse themselves to hearken better unto God.*³³¹ So far, the Israelites had simply done what they had to do and they took much of what happened to them for granted. In entering the land, their behavior and thought had to be correct in order to remain in the land.

“So I have caused you to go forty years in the wilderness—your clothes have not become worn out [and completely used up] and your sandals have not become worn out from off your foot.

Deut. 29:5
[v. 4 in Hebrew]

“Inasmuch as I have led you forty years in the wilderness and your clothes have not worn out nor have your sandals worn out from off your foot.

³³¹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 972.

Hâlak^e means *to go, to come, to walk*. It is one of the more common verbs in the Old Testament, being found about 500 times in just about every stem. Here, it is in the Hiphil—Moses has caused these people to walk or to go through the wilderness; our rendering of this word in the Hiphil would be *to lead*. Strong's #1980 (and 3212) BDB #229. However, this is God the Holy Spirit speaking through Moses. There has got to be a theological term for this or a figure of speech which describes this, but I can't find it. Moses is not having delusions of grandeur. He does not think that he is God. But he, as filled with God the Holy Spirit, is speaking in God's stead in the first person. *The address of Moses passes imperceptibly into an address from the Lord.*³³² We know this because of the next verse: **I am Y^ehowah your God**. Moses does not think that he is divine or that he has become part of the godhead. He cannot even enter the land. He disobeyed God's explicit instructions and will not go into the land for that reason. However, so powerful is the control of God the Holy Spirit, that he is speaking God's Word directly to the Israelites and dramatically refers to God in the first person.

Bâlâh (בָּלָה) [pronounced *baw-LAW*] means *to become completely and fully used up*. It is used here for the sandals and the clothing worn by the Israelites over the forty years—it never really occurred to them until that day that their clothing did not become old and worn out. BDB cites Job 21:13 as this verb standing for having lived a full and complete life, however, I believe that was a matter of an improper translation which has simply been with us for a long time. See Gen. 18:12 Isa. 50:9 51:6 65:22 Lam. 3:4. Strong's #1086 BDB #1154.

So the Israelites in the audience of Moses are thinking: *how are we blind? What is it that we cannot hear?* Moses gives them a for instance: these Israelites have trudged through the wilderness, camped for several years, and never noticed that God had preserved their clothes and their sandals. Your sandals would not last 40 years of continual wear. You wonder how can the Jew be this close to Jesus Christ and yet go for many a generation with very few believers? How can they have the rich spiritual heritage that they do and still reject our Lord? It tells us right here—sometimes we are so close to something that we do not recognize it. These are the sandals and clothing which these people had worn for forty years; it never occurred to them that it never wore out. They were too close to recognize all of God's many miraculous provisions.

However, there are other important reasons why man does not perceive the truth. God allowed mankind to go for several millennia without giving each man the Holy Spirit. God allowed every man to hear the truth—in fact, God even made the gospel clear to every person on positive volition, and then allowed man to choose how he would deal with the truth. It is man's own evil nature which kept Israel in great periods of rebellion and negative volition toward God. In our dispensation, every single believer is given the Holy Spirit, but not even one in ten Christians is filled with the Holy Spirit but a handful of times in their lives (and many Christians are never filled with the Spirit beyond the first few minutes of their salvation experience). There are simple beginning spiritual truths: believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved and, after salvation, name your sins to God and you are cleansed from all unrighteousness. From there, it is a matter of learning what is in God's Word. However, listen to any evangelist and the gospel is either filled with legalism, infused (not imputed) grace, and with such meaningless, non-Scriptural phrases as *ask Jesus into your heart*. Similarly, basic spirituality is not taught in 90% of the churches, so you have a group of believers trying through legalism and the power of the flesh to lead the Christian life, building up great storehouses of wood, hay and stubble—their worthless human good—which will be burned at the last judgment. This might be best expressed in a chart.

³³² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 972. See also Deut. 11:14.

Why Believers Have Ears but Cannot Hear, Eyes but Cannot See and a Heart, but Cannot Perceive		
Old Testament	Both Dispensations	New Testament
The average believer did not have the Holy Spirit. Paul summed this up 1500 years later: For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the Law of God, for it is not even able [to do so]; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:6–8).	Negative volition after believing in Jesus Christ. This often takes the form of strong legalism. Believers substitute their own ideas for what is Scriptural. There are certain things which we choose to do and to believe which have natural results. Just like touching a hot stove naturally results in a burnt hand, choosing that which is in opposition to God results in a thought pattern which becomes more and more at enmity with God.	Believers either choose not to name their sins privately to God or they do not realize that this will provide them spirituality. Too often believers distort the ministry of the Holy Spirit into some kind of a circus, calling upon demon-influence to give them great emotional catharsis.

- [Deuteronomy 26](#)
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With an unbeliever it is different. An unbeliever, who has absolutely no interest in God as God really is, does not obligate God in any way. God provides anyone, regardless of geographical location and linguistic barriers, the gospel, if they are on positive signals. However, God has no such obligation to the unbeliever on negative signals for all of his life. To this person, the gospel will seem as foolishness. **For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God...we proclaim Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling black and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God** (1Cor. 1:18, 23–24).

“Bread you did not eat and wine and strong drink you did not drink to the purpose [or, intent] that you will know that I [am] Y^ehowah your God.

Deut. 29:6
[v. 5 in Hebrew]

“You have not eaten bread nor have you drunk wine or strong drink so that you would all know that I am Y^ehowah your God.

Moses continues with dramatic license, saying, So that you will all know that **“I am Y^ehowah your God!”** He did the same thing in Deut. 11:14–15. On the sides of that verse, Moses speaks of God properly in the third person; however, in vv. 14–15 he speaks as though God is speaking directly to the people. It’s interesting to see God’s Word spoken through a prophet. God the Holy Spirit does not filled the mouth of Moses with certain, precise words all the time (except when Moses quotes God directly; which is the bulk of the books of Leviticus and Numbers); God instead speaks through Moses, communicates His Word exactly, however God allows for the vocabulary of Moses, the logical thought progression under which Moses operates and for the personality of Moses to come through his words. It is the perfect meld of God’s Word and man’s word, of God and man, which God did so that we would be able to grasp the significance of God becoming flesh and walking among us. **In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into existence by Him; and apart from Him nothing came into existence that has come in existence. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we behold His glory—glory as of the only begotten from the Father, filled with grace and truth** (John 1:1–3, 15).

One of the miracles which the Israelites had come to take for granted—particularly the Generation of Promise—was manna. They received it almost all of their lives. The fact that it was a miracle for them to receive

it had also been lost upon them. “And He humbled you and let you be hungry and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Y^ehowah.” (Deut. 8:3). They had no idea that millenniums later, theologians would argue about what manna was, attempting to de-miraculize it in some way. However, to feed even the smallest imagined population of Israel daily would have been miraculous. God brought them quail in the evening and manna in the morning. And Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, saying, “I have heard the grumbling of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you will eat meat and in the morning, you will be filled with bread [i.e., manna]; and you will know that I am Y^ehowah your God.’ “ So it came to pass at evening, the quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning, there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew evaporated, [they observed] on the surface of the wilderness, there was a fine, flake-like thing, fine as the hoarfrost on the ground. And when the sons of Israel saw, they said to one another, “What is it?” [i.e., “Manna?”] For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread which Y^ehowah has give you to eat.” (Ex. 16:11–15).

During the time that the Israelites wandered, they were obviously unable to cultivate anything. Therefore, they did not plant grain or wine. During their stay at Kadesh Barnea, people died at such a tremendous rate, that they had no time to do much besides tend to the dead. There were so many laws about uncleanness due to contact with the dead as they faces this constantly. Furthermore, my guess would be that, although the Land of Promise was well-watered and easy to cultivate, the area where they found themselves camped was barely adequate to sustain them. However, God saw to it that they continued to receive manna from heaven.

“And then you came [or, entered] into the place the this; and then Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of the Bashan, came out to meet us to war, and then we were caused to strike them down.

Deut. 29:7
[v. 6 in Hebrew]

“Afterward, you entered into this area. Then Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of the Bashan, advanced to launch an offensive against us, but we were caused to strike them down.

This verse is strung together with waw consecutives, which are translated *so, then, and then*. Primarily, this tells us that we are in a chronological listing of events. BDB #251. There is no definite article before Heshbon, meaning that this was the accepted name of an area; however, the Bashan could specifically refer to a people.

Yâtsâ' (אָצַא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH] and it means *to go out, to come out*; in this context it means *to advance* as one would advance against an enemy. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. We also have a fascinating verb here in the infinitive used in a completely different environment than our previous association with it. Qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW] means *call, proclaim, read, to name* and is found approximately 800 times in the Bible. This word also means *to assemble, to encounter, to befall, to meet, to set oneself up opposite*. In the context of Num. 24:1, it meant *to assemble for the purpose of encountering God in order to exegete His Word and understand His will*. However, here, the two kings assembled against the Israelites for the purpose of war. Strong's #7121, 7122 & 7125 BDB #894 & 896.

To remind you what took place: Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying, “Let me pass through your land. We will not turn off into field or vineyard; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the king’s highway until we have passed through your border.” But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his border. So Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. Then Israel struck him down with the edge of the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon [was] Jazer. And Israel took all these cities and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all her villages (for Heshbon was the city of Siphon, king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon)...Thus Israel lived in the land of the Amorites. And Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who were there. Then they turned and went up by way of Bashan, and Og, the king of Bashan, went out with all his People, for battle at Edrei. But Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have give him into your hand, and all his people and his land; and you will do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.” So they struck

him down and his sons and all his people, until there was no remnant left to him; and they possessed the land (Num. 21:21–26, 32–35; see also Deut. 2:26–3:11 Psalm 78:55 135:10–11 136:17–22).

“And then we took their land and then we gave it for an inheritance to Reuben and to Gad and to the half-tribe of the Manassite. Deut. 29:8 [v. 7 in Hebrew]

“So we took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Reuben, Gad and Manasseh are all in the Gentilic, which means that even though they are in the singular, they stand for their progeny (which is pretty obvious in context). It’s interesting that to smooth this out in the English, I dropped the definite article on Manasseh yet added it to Reuben and Gad.

As you will recall, once this area had been conquered, the tribes of Reuben and Gad looked it over pretty carefully and decided that this was fine with them—they liked this area—and they requested Moses to give them this land. This caused quite a stir. How was this to be handled? Could they just settle in and the remaining ten tribes go into the land (Manasseh later decided to join them). This meant that every time a land was conquered, that it was up for grabs and there would be fewer and fewer Israelites to battle against the indigenous population as they continued to take the land. This was untenable, so Moses required them to give their word that, immediately after settling their women and children in the land that they would rejoin the rest of Israel to take the Land of Promise (Num. 32 Deut. 3:12–20).

What we have seen in the previous couple verses is that Y^ehowah is powerful (v. 2–3) and that He can be trusted as He is faithful (vv. 5–6). As party of the first part, this makes Him the ideal person with whom to make a contract. God is both able to keep his part of the contract and He will be faithful in fulfilling the conditions which are upon Him.

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Moses Enjoins the People of Israel to Keep This Agreement with God

“And you [must] keep the word of the covenant the this to do them to the intent that you may be caused to behave wisely [as one properly instructed] in all that you do. Deut. 29:9 [v. 8 in Hebrew]

“And you must take personal responsibility concerning the words of this contract, to do them so that you will be caused to behave wisely [as one who has been properly instructed] in all that you do.

The substantive ma ‘an (אָנַן) [pronounced MAH-‘ahn] means *purpose, intent*. It is found in Scripture only with the prefixed lâmed. Together, they mean *to the intent, to the purpose that, for the sake of, in order that, on account of*. Strong’s #4616 BDB #775. This is followed by the Hiphil imperfect of the verb sâkal (סָכַל) [pronounced shaw-KAHL], and, although there are problems with determining its exact meaning, it does not mean *to prosper* as it is found in the KJV, the NASB and the NIV. The first time this word is found is in Gen. 3:6 where the woman sees the Tree of Knowledge in the midst of the garden and sees that it would be a tree **to be desired to make wise**. We find this word as a part of the title of several Psalms (Psalm 32, 41, 42, 44, 47, etc.). It is often transliterated Maschil, but it means *giving instruction, to give instructions*. Moses uses this word again in Deut. 32:29 and it is translated *to understand*. All of these examples come from the Hiphil of this verb. What has happened is *they behave wisely as those who have been properly instructed*. It is the word of God which will give them the proper instruction to act wisely. Strong’s #7919 BDB #968. Now, just because this word does not mean *to prosper*, that does not mean that prospering as a result of following God’s Word is a false concept. This is

taught clearly in the Bible. Even unbelievers can follow the principles found in the Word of God and prosper. However, that is just not what is being taught in this verse.

Part of the contract between God and the Israelite was conditional. Obedience resulted in prosperity; disobedience resulted in discipline, even to the point of being remove from the Land of Promise. **“Observe, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as Y^ehowah my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where to are entering to possess it. So keep and do [these statutes], for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Certainly this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ “ (Deut. 4:5–6).**

Some people put a lot of stock in a person’s last words. Most people have a hard time accepting their own death so they rarely have a clue that they are giving their last words. Of those people, few have anything all that meaningful to say. One of the few exceptions is David, who, in dying, quoted this verse to his son Solomon: **As David’s time to die drew near, he charged Solomon, his son, saying, “I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and become a man. And keep the charge of Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, ‘that you may behave wisely [as one properly instructed] in all that you do and wherever you turn.’ “ (1Kings 2:1–3).**

“You [all] are standing today [or, this day]—all of you—before the faces of Y^ehowah your God—your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers—all the men of Israel;

Deut. 29:10
[v. 9 in Hebrew]

“You, even all of you, are stationed this day before the person of Y^ehowah your God—even your authorities, your tribes, your elders and your officers—all the men of Israel;

This does not refer to the people listening to Moses but rather to the people who are camped there at that time. As has been discussed, Moses is not speaking to 100% of the people; he is not even speaking to 100% of the male population. Even though Israel is about 100% believers (our nation was close to that), just like any other group of believers, a much smaller portion was actually interested in God’s Word. I recall when I was first saved and I spent a great deal of time reading over the material of Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Armstrong cult, J. Vernon McGee, Duane Spencer, etc. Pretty much anything which I could find which had a religious bend to it and had something to do with Jesus Christ, I read. With so many different groups claiming to be correct, I was quite concerned that I be correct in who I listened to and what I read. After months of study, I noticed that J. Vernon McGee, Duane Spencer and R.B. Thieme all taught essentially the same thing, although they all varied widely in personality and were not members of the same group or cult. Furthermore, Thieme and McGee approached Scripture verse by verse and all three approached it from the standpoint of the original languages—that is, what does God’s Word mean in the original language? Once I realized that, I began devouring the tapes of R.B. Thieme, and I was quite enthusiastic about it. However, in talking to the Christians that I knew during those years, none of them had much of an interest. Now, they didn’t mind getting together to meet and to give their individual viewpoints of what this verse means to them; or getting together and giving their personal testimonies. But to study daily under someone teaching the Bible verse by verse—they had no interest whatsoever. This blew my mind and it took me years before I was unable to grasp it. The very Bible which told them of Jesus Christ, their only Savior, became, at best, a tool of their own imaginations. The idea of spending one’s life ascertaining what was there was beyond their limited spiritual interests. This is always the case. Those who believe in Jesus Christ might make up a small percentage of the world’s population, but the percentage of those who are positive toward God’s Word make up a much smaller percentage—even though, God’s Word is what God has left to us, along with God the Holy Spirit and those with the gift of pastor-teacher to teach it to us.

“Your little one, your wives and your immigrants who [are] in [the] midst of your camp—both he, the one cutting your wood and the one drawing your water;

Deut. 29:11
[v. 10 in
Hebrew]

“Your little ones, your wives, and your immigrants who are in your camp—from the one who cuts wood to the one who draws your water;

The one cutting wood and drawing the water refers to the immigrant. Every society has the jobs which it perceives as being the lowest on the totem pole. These jobs are those which require hard labor, very little instruction, and are repetitious. These jobs are generally given to immigrants and slaves; in our culture, these are the jobs given to documented and undocumented aliens, and to high school and college students. For the Israelites, these jobs were the bringing in of water into the camp and the cutting of wood. We find this in Joshua 9, where the Gibeonites beguile Joshua into a treaty (see in particular Joshua 9:23). What is important is that these who have the lowest jobs in this society are still a part of this covenant. From the youngest to the oldest, from the most prominent to the last little shovel of coal, all of them are a part of this covenant with God. The gospel is for all mankind. **And Peter to them, “Change your minds and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.”** (Acts 2:38–39).

I have mentioned in the past concerning the slaves which were brought to the United States. Even though those who sold them from Africa, those who transported them and those who bought them here all meant it for evil, just as Joseph’s brothers in their dealings with him meant it for evil. However, God’s blessing outranks our cursing and the slaves brought here from Africa and their ancestors have been blessed for the most part with eternal life, something which a much smaller percentage of their brothers in Africa share. And what should send chills down your spine is that God personally hand-picked those to come over to the United States, with a clear view to their ancestors down to this very day.

Unfortunately, these verses are split apart almost according to size so that what is there is often lost in the verse-by-verse examination. Vv. 10–13 are one sentence and should be taken together, which we will after we have finished with v. 13.

“To pass over into the covenant of Y^ehowah your God and into His oath which Y^ehowah your God makes with you today [or, this day].

Deut. 29:12
[v. 11 in
Hebrew]

“To enter into the contract of Y^ehowah your God and to enter into His oath which Y^ehowah your God makes with you today.

Today is literally *the day*; it is reasonable to render it as *this day*. There is no *the day the this*, however. The first verb is the Qal infinitive construct of ^ʿâ^bvar (אָבַר) [pronounced *ġaw^b-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over*. This is somewhat of a play on words, as this same word is used for passing over the Jordan river into the Land of Promise (Deut. 27:3, 4, 12). Strong’s #5674 BDB #716.

All those who are to enter into this agreement with God are there this day. The concept of an oath and a covenant are closely related but they are not synonymous. The oath is the verbal reassurance that a covenant, or contract, will be adhered to. In Gen. 26:28, we read: **And they said, “We see plainly that Y^ehowah has been with you; so we said, ‘Let there now be an oath between us, between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you.’”**

“In order that He may cause you to stand today to Himself for a people and He will [continually] be your God as that which He—[even] he—has promised to you and swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

Deut. 29:13
[v. 12 in
Hebrew]

“In order that He may establish you from this day forward as His people and He will continue to be your God as He has promised you and as He has sworn to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

The first word in this verse is the preposition ^lma ʿan (לְמַעַן) [pronounced *l^e-MAH-ġahn*], which means *for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, in order that*. This is used as a substantive, a proposition and as a conjunction. In the Old Testament, it is always found with the lamed prefixed preposition. What is stressed is the cause or purpose of the action. Strong’s #4616 BDB #775. Next we have the word *qûwm* (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which is in the Hiphil infinitive construct. The infinitive can be translated as our infinitive when preceded by the inseparable lamed preposition; however, this is not the case here. The infinitive is rarely translated strictly

as a verb with a subject and an object, but that is how it is used here, which gives its used great emphasis. In the Hiphil it means, among other things, *to establish, to fulfill, to cause to stand, to perform* a vow, a commandment, a promise (Gen. 6:18 17:7 26:3 Num. 30:14). Strong's #6965 BDB #877.

Dâ^bvar (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw^b-VAHR*] is the verb which means *to speak*. In the Piel, it is stronger and it can be translated *to promise*. Strong's #1696 BDB #180. Shâ^bva' (שָׁוּא) [pronounced *shaw-VAH*] means *to swear, to take a solemn oath*, and often *to extract an oath (from someone else)*. Here it is found in the Niphil perfect. Strong's #7650 BDB #989.

Roughly six hundred years prior to this passage, God came to a faithful man, Abraham, a man without heirs, and circumcised him, saying, “[And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to you descendants after you.](#)” (Gen. 17:7). God cut away from Abraham some excess skin from around a dead member of his body, just as our hearts, dead to Him, are circumcised at salvation. With this circumcision of the heart comes a guarantee from God that He will make an everlasting covenant with us—and you can only make everlasting covenants with those who have eternal life. A lifetime guarantee with a company which goes out of business after three years is worthless. An eternal guarantee is worthless to one who is not eternal. Therefore, God has given to us His life.

Because of what God did to Egypt, Israel knows that she belongs to God. “[And I also have established My covenant with them, to give to them the land of Canaan, the land in which they temporarily lived...then I will take you for My people and I will be your God; and you will know that I am Y^ehowah your God, Who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and I will give it to you—a possession; I am Y^ehowah.](#)” (Ex. 6:4, 7–8).

As I mentioned, these verses have been sliced and diced and it is difficult after spending this time studying these almost word by word, to grasp that this is one cohesive whole, spoken by Moses in less than a minute.

Deut. 29:10–13, literally:

“You [all] are standing today [or, this day]—all of you—before the faces of Y^ehowah your God—your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers—all the men of Israel; your little one, your wives and your immigrants who [are] in [the] midst of your camp—both he, the one cutting your wood and the one drawing your water—to pass over into the covenant of Y^ehowah your God and into His oath which Y^ehowah your God makes with you today in order that He may cause you to stand today to Himself for a people and He will [continually] be your God as that which He—[even] he—has promised to you and swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. “

Deut. 29:10–13, the smoother English version:

“You, even all of you, are stationed this day before the person of Y^ehowah your God—even your authorities, your tribes, your elders and your officers—all the men of Israel; and your little ones, your wives, and your immigrants who are in your camp—from the one who cuts wood to the one who draws your water—all of you are stationed here this day to enter into the contract of Y^ehowah your God and to enter into His oath which Y^ehowah your God makes with you this day in order that He may establish you from this day forward as His people. Furthermore, He will continue to be your God as He has promised you and as He has sworn to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.”

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The Tremendous Cursing Which Will Come upon Israel If They Turn Away from God

“And not with you [all] by yourselves [alone] am I making the covenant the this and the oath the this;

Deut. 29:14
[v. 13 in Heb.]

“And not only am I making this contract and this oath with you [all];

Without Young and Rotherham, I would have been lost at translating these first couple of words. This verse begins with a conjunction, *and*, a negative, the preposition *with* and the 2nd masculine plural suffix. So far, it is easy: **And not with you (all)**. Then we have the lamed preposition (*to, for, in regard to*), and the masculine singular substantive bad (בד) [pronounced *bahd*] and it means *separation, by itself, alone*. Strong's #905 BDB #94. So this literally is **And not with you [all] in regard to by yourselves**. Most translators ignore the lamed preposition, as it is difficult to translate into something which makes sense in the English (see Num. 11:14 Deut. 1:9 8:3 2Sam. 10:8).

This verse actually is the beginning of what is theologically-known as the Palestinian Covenant, which is, as we have seen, somewhat of a misnomer, as this covenant deals more with behavior and allegiance than it does with land. The land is just a tenet of this contract and in this context there are no specifics are given. It would have been more correct to call this the Israelite Covenant or the Israelite Contract.

“For with [him] who being here standing this day to the faces of Y^ehowah our God and with [him] who [is] not here with us this day

Deut. 29:15
[v. 14 in Heb.]

“For [I am making this contract] with the one who is standing here this day in the sight of Y^ehowah our God and [I am making this contract] with the one who is not here with us this day.

I must admit that this verse is even more rugged that the previous verse to translate literally. Let's first see how other translators have dealt with this in the past:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But with future Israelites who do not stand here with us today before the Lord our God, as well as with those who are here with us this day.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...but with him who is here, with us, standing to-day before Yahweh our God,—and with him who is not here, with us to-day.
KJV	But with <i>him</i> that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with <i>him</i> that is not here with us this day;
NASB	...but both with those who stand here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God and with those who are not with us here today...
NIV	...who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...but with him who is here with us, standing to-day before Jehovah our God, and with him who is not here with us to-day.

The verse looks simple enough, doesn't it, from the standpoint of the English? It begins with the conjunction *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for, because*. By itself, that is difficult to translate and have it make sense. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. This is followed by the word 'êth (אִתְּךָ) [pronounced *ayth*] and it simply means *with, among*. Strong's #854 BDB #85. Unfortunately, for those who depend entirely upon the work of someone else in this field, Owen's does not even mention the word 'êth. Then we have the relative pronoun 'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], which I generally translate *which, when* or *who*. Strong's #834 BDB #81. The key to making this make sense is to carry over the verb from the previous verse. In the making of this contract, Moses does not want to in any way exclude the people who are there in order to make a point. So he says, **“Because I am making this contract with you who are here and you who are not here.”**

We then have the substantive *yêsh* (יֵשׁ) [pronounced *yaysh*], which means *being, substance, existence*. Strong's #3426 BDB #441. With the next few words, this would be, literally, **because with who being here with**

us standing this day in the sight³³³ of Y^ehowah our God... Obviously, this verse needs to be smoothed out considerably. Then we have **and with [the one] who not here with us this day**. In the English translations, all of this is already worked out for you—however, I would just like you to see why it got translated the way it did. It is possible that I will not find anything in this explanation to help you; however, down the road, someone may pick this up, catch a few key phrases and suddenly have a brainstorm. The simple explanation of this verse is that the covenant being made now between God and Israel includes all of Israel's posterity (until the New Contract with Israel is made). When God makes a contract, it often extends to members of the human race not born or not in attendance when this contract is made. **And Peter said to them, "Change you minds and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."** (Acts 2:38–39).

"For you [all] know how we remained in the land of Egypt and how we passed through [the] midst of the nations which you passed through.

Deut. 29:16
[v. 15 in Heb.]

"For you [all] know how we lived (temporarily) in the land of Egypt and how we passed through the midst of the various nations.

The relative pronoun 'āsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], can also be translated *the fact that = how*.³³⁴ Strong's #834 BDB #81. All of the believers who were there at that time knew how they began in Egypt, the hardship under which their parents had served, and how God led them through the midst of some very hostile nations. Recall back in v. 12 the word 'āvar (אָוַר) [pronounced *gaw^b-VAHR*], which means *to pass over, to pass through, to pass, to go over?* This word is found twice in this verse, both times in the Qal perfect. Strong's #5674 BDB #716. The pertinent travelogue spoken of here is found in Num. 33 as well as previous chapters of Numbers.

"And so you have seen their detestable things and their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold which [were] with them.

Deut. 29:17
[v. 16 in Heb.]

"And you had seen their detestable things, even their idols of wood and stone and of silver and gold which were in their possession.

Egypt is their object lesson—each Egyptian household contained a considerable number of idols and these idols did them absolutely no good against the living God. God forbade the Israelites any sort of idol. **"You will not make for yourself an engraved image, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth...you will not make gods to take the place of Me; you will not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold."** (Ex. 20:4, 23). In fact, a great sign of their loss of their spiritual compass is that they will be ruled by other nations and that they will serve other gods: **"Y^ehowah will bring you and your king, whom you will place over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you will serve other gods—[gods of] wood and stone."** (Deut. 28:36).

"Lest there [be] among you a man or a woman or a family or a tribe which their heart is turning away the day away from Y^ehowah our God to go to serve the gods of the nations the those; and lest there [be] among you a root bearing gall (poppies) and absinthium (wormwood).

Deut. 29:18
[v. 17 in Heb.]

"So that there will not be among you a man or woman or a family or tribe whose heart turns away today from Y^ehowah our God to go and serve the gods of those nations; and so that there is not among you a root bearing both poisonous and bitter fruit.

The Qal active participle of pârâh (פָּרָה) [pronounced *paw-RAW*] means *to bear fruit, to be fruitful*. Strong's #6500 (6509) BDB #826. What is produced is rô`sh (רוֹשׁ) [pronounced *rohsh*] and it is translated *gall* in the KJV. It is a bitter and poisonous herb. Let me give you Barnes' description: *It is the name of a plant of intense bitterness,*

³³³ We have previously discussed this rendering in Deut. 27:9.

³³⁴ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, p. 83.

and of quick growth; and is therefore repeatedly used in conjunction with “wormwood” (cp, Jer. ix. 15; Lam. iii. 19; Amos vi. 12), to express figuratively the nature and effects of sin...The herb is probably the poppy. Hence the “water” (i.e., juice) “of gall” (Jer. Viii. 14, xxiii. 15) would be opium. This would explain its employment in the stupefying drink given to criminals at the time of execution (cp. Ps. lxix. 21; Matt. xxvii. 34), and the use of the word as synonymous with poison (cp. xxxii. 33; Job xx. 16).³³⁵ Strong’s #7219 BDB #912. Barnes’ Notes continues: wormwood is the plant “absinthium.” It is used to denote metaphorically the distress and trouble which result from sin.³³⁶ The problem with understanding this as strictly a poison produced from poppies is that it is associated with snakes in Deut. 32:33 and Job 20:16. We might understand it as simply an organically produced poison.

Those who worshipped idols were a root which bore poisonous and bitter fruit. It was poisonous as it caused their death of their souls in relationship to God; and bitter, because its end was death and separation from God.

There are several types of separation found in the Bible. Accordingly, most Christians become totally confused about this issue. They avoid unbelievers who are, for instance, homosexuals, and then they go and marry religious unbelievers. We are to separate from legalistic believers, as they will infect us with their legalism, and the Israelites were to be careful about intermarriage with women from other nations. The problem was never one of race, something which the Bible does not even recognize—the problem was with influence and idolatry. If you are a single male or female, Satan will see to it that you have planted in your path very attractive unbelievers or heathen of the opposite sex (or of the same sex, if your old sin nature leans toward homosexuality). God’s instructions to the Israelites was firm and uncompromising: “If your brother, your mother’s sons, or your son or daughter, or the wife of your heart, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ ([gods] whom neither you nor your fathers have known, of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end); you will not yield to him or listen to him; and you eye will not pity him nor will you spare or conceal him. But you will certainly have him executed; your hand will be first against him to put him to death and afterwards, the hand of all the people. So you will stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from Y^ehowah your God Who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves.” (Deut. 13:6–10)³³⁷.

One of the recurring symbolic themes of the Bible is the effect of the root. “For their vine is from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison, their clusters bitter.” (Deut. 32:32). In fact, it would be a good time to examine **the Doctrine of the Root—not finished yet!!**

“And it will come to pass, in his hearing of words of the guarantee the this, in his heart he blesses himself, saying, ‘I am prosperous [and at peace] because [possibly, though] I walk in the stubbornness of my heart’; to join [to] the saturation the state of being thirsty.

Deut. 29:19
[v. 18 in Heb.]

“And it will come to pass, when he hears the words of this guarantee, he will silently reassure himself, saying, ‘I am prosperous even though [or, because] I walk in the stubbornness of my heart’; to join [to] the saturation the state of being thirsty.

The last phrase is a bit difficult. We will examine what others have done with this:

The Amplified Bible

...I shall have peace and safety, though I walk in the stubbornness of my [mind and] heart [bringing down a hurricane of destruction] and sweep away the watered land with the dry.

The Emphasized Bible

Prosperity shall I have, although in the stubbornness of my heart I go on,—so that the drunkenness addeth to the thirst;

³³⁵ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 328.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ As has been discussed before, this is not a call for vigilantism—this applied only to Israel during the time of her independent sovereignty during that dispensation; and it was only the result of correct judicial procedure. There are people who proclaim that we must do what our judicial system does not, and they quote the Old Testament. There is not a verse in the Old Testament which calls individuals without the proper vested authority to act as judge and jury.

KJV	I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:
NASB	'I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered <i>land</i> with the dry.'
NEB	"All will be well with me even if I follow the promptings of my stubborn heart"; but this will bring everything to ruin.
NIV	"I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way." This will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry.
NRSV	"We are safe even though we go our own stubborn ways" (thus bringing disaster on moist and dry alike)—
Owen's Translation	...safe I shall be though in the stubbornness of my heart I walk; this would lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.
Young's Lit. Translation	...I have peace, though in the stubbornness of my heart I go on, in order to end the fullness with the thirst.

As you can see, the translation of this verse is rather difficult. When you look at those carefully, its hard to realize that we are speaking of the same verse. And how some translators (NRSV) decided on a plural here is beyond me. They apparently are trying to impress upon us that this is the entire thought process of the entire listening congregation of Moses. I don't know that this is the case. There would be a pivot which is faithful to God's Word and they would be there; and a few would be saying this in their hearts, but not all of them. The thoughts of this person's heart begin with the word *shâlôwm* (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], a word for *peace and prosperity*. This word refers to prosperity, as in prosperity from God and to peace with God. Insofar as they are concerned, they think that all is right with God because all is right with their own life. Strong's #7965 BDB #1022. The preposition is *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*], which means *when, that, for, because*. Occasionally, this word has a concessive force and can be rendered *though*.³³⁸ Strong's #3588 BDB #471. *Walk* is the common Hebrew word for *walk*; and the next couple words are also fairly common. This gives us: "**And it will come to pass, in his hearing of words of this guarantee, in his heart he blesses himself, saying, 'I am prosperous [and at peace] though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart'**"

Then we have the problem of where do we stop this person's thoughts? There are no marks of punctuation in the original. We have *walk* in the 1st person, Qal imperfect immediately followed by the lamed preposition (*to, for*) and the Qal infinitive construct of the verb *Çâphâh* (חָפַח) [pronounced *saw-PHAWH*], which appears to have two distinct meanings. The first is *to snatch away, to sweep away*; the implication being that the object of the verb is consumed or destroyed (Gen. 18:23–24 19:15, 17 Num. 16:26 Psalm 40:14 1Sam. 26:10). This word also means *to join, to add, to augment, to attach to*, as seen in Num. 32:14 Isa. 13:15 30:1 Jer. 7:21. Strong's #5595 BDB #705. This is followed by the definite article and the adjective *râwâh* (רָוַח) [pronounced *raw-WAWH* or *raw-VAWH*]. Here is BDB's take on this: "apparently of herbage, in proverbial expression for *everything*." This adjective is found only in Deut. 29:19 Isa. 58:11 and Jer. 31:12*, and in the latter two verses, it is used in a good sense. It is used to mean a *watered* garden, in the sense of blessing and fruitful prosperity. Therefore, I am going to go with *saturation* here, rather than something like *drunkenness*. Strong's #7302 BDB #924. What is not seen in this phrase is the word denoting a direct object, the untranslated word *`eth* (אֵת) [pronounced *ayth*], which is the mark of a direct object. Strong's #853 BDB #84. This is followed by the word *tzâmê'* (צָמָא) [pronounced *tzaw-MAY*], which is the adjective *thirsty*; however, it is preceded by the definite article and by the sign of a direct object, thereby changing it into a substantive making it *the state of being thirsty*. Strong's #6771 BDB #854. This state of thirst following the mark of the direct object means that this is the object of the previous verb, *Çâphâh*. Therefore, this would read: **to snatch away the state of being thirsty the saturation**. Or it could read: **to join [to] the saturation the state of being thirsty**. Although both renderings are difficult, I will go with the latter, as it seems to make more sense, in a grammatical way.

As for the understanding of this, that is a tougher problem. God has saturated them with prosperity and by their own mental attitude, they will add to this prosperity a thirst. God is able to bless them with everything; God is able to pour into their cup a saturation of blessings; yet, through their negative volition, they have joined to this saturation of blessing a thirst.

³³⁸ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, p. 473.

There will be blessing by association. In this great country of ours, there is a tremendous amount of prosperity. Some people are prosperous just because they are related to someone who is a mature and growing believer; or they happen to be in the same geographical location; or they are friends with such a one. Israel is God's nation and there will be times of great prosperity to all in that nation because of the actions of a few.

Since I am not 100% satisfied with my rendering or with the explanation, although it is better than anything which I have read, let me give the related verses as others see them, without comment: "And it will be a tassel for you to look at and to remember all the commandments of Y^ehowah, so as to do them and not seek after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot." (Num. 15:39). For it flatters him in his own eyes concerning the discovery of his iniquity; the hatred (Psalm 36:2). May his name endure forever; may his name increase as long as the sun; and let those bless themselves by Him; let all nations call Him blessed (Psalm 72:17). And they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence; for I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning. If I had said, "I will speak thus"; then look, I should have betrayed the generation of Your children. When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight, until I came into the sanctuary of God; and I perceived their end. Surely You will set them in slippery places; You will cast them down to destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment! They are swept away by sudden terrors! Like a dream when one awakes, Y^ehowah, when aroused, You will despise their form (Psalm 73:11–20). Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things (Ecc. 11:9). "Woe to be rebellious [or, headstrong] children," declares Y^ehowah, "Who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not from My Spirit in order to add sin to sin." (Isa. 30:1). "At that time they will call Jerusalem, 'The Throne of Y^ehowah,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, for the name of Y^ehowah in Jerusalem; nor will they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart." (Jer. 3:17). "Because he who is blessed in the earth will be blessed by the God of truth; and he who swears in the earth will swear by the Go of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from My sight!" (Isa. 65:16). "Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walk in counsels in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward." (Jer. 7:24). "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'Y^ehowah has aid, "You will have Peace." ' And as for every one who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, they say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.' " (Jer. 23:17). Even if most of these verses have nothing to do with the passage at hand, it doesn't hurt to read a little Scripture now and again. However, the verse which follows indicates that Psalm 73:11–20 is the closest passage in parallel thought. V. 19 presents the arrogance of the wicked, thinking that everything is just great, even though the only contribution to his own prosperity is thirst. V. 20 describes his end:

"Y^ehowah is not willing to forgive [or, pardon] to him for at that time the anger of Y^ehowah would smoke [or, fume] and His passion against man the that; and would settle against him all the oath written in the scroll the this and Y^ehowah will blot out his name from under heaven.

Deut. 29:20
[v. 19 in Heb.]

"Y^ehowah is not willing to forgive [or, pardon] him because at that time the anger of Y^ehowah, as well as His passion, would smoulder [or, fume] against that man. Furthermore, not only will the entirety of the verbal guarantee written in this scroll [or, document] settle upon him but Y^ehowah will blot out his name from under heaven.

The first word in this verse is the verb of volition, 'ā^bvâh (אָבַח) [pronounced aw-^BVAWH] and almost always found with a negative (except in Job 1:19 39:9). In the Qal perfect, it means *would*; in the Qal imperfect it means *consent, yield, willing*. Strong's #14 BDB #2. What Y^ehowah is not willing to do is the Qal infinitive construct of çâlach (חָלַח) [pronounced saw-LAHKH], which means *to forgive, to pardon*. Strong's #5545 BDB #699. A lâmed precedes the pronoun *him* and I think that this is more the usage of the language rather than anything significant. *Young's Literal Translation* handles the lâmed by translating this verse as *Yahweh is not willing to be propitious to him...*

Then we have the temporal adverb 'âz (אָז) [pronounced *awz*], which means *then, at that time*. Strong's #227 BDB #23. The verb is the rare 'âshên (אֲשֵׁן) [pronounced *aw-SHANE*], which means *to smoke*; it is found in Ex. 19:18 Psalm 74:1 80:4 104:32 144:5.* It figuratively means *to fume, to be wroth, to smoulder*. Strong's #6225 BDB #798. What is smoldering, besides the anger of God, is His *zeal or jealousy*. The word is qin-âh (קִין-אֵה) [pronounced *kin-AWH*], and this word is generally translated *zeal, jealousy, ardour, envy*. Allow me to suggest the rendering *passion*. As long as this is understood in more of the legal sense (e.g., a crime of passion) as opposed the sexual connotation, this would be a very accurate translation which could replace these other terms. Strong's #7068 BDB #888.

The final verb we will look at in this verse is râbats (רָבַט) [pronounced *raw^b-VAHTS*], which means *to stretch oneself out, to lie down, to recline, to settle upon*. We first saw this verb in Gen. 4:7, when God told Cain that sin was laying at his door. This verb is mostly use for animals lying down and making their lair (Job 11:19 Isa. 13:21 17:2 Ezek. 19:2). In Num. 22:27, it appears in the English if the mule suddenly falls over; however, it suddenly *settles in to rest*. Strong's #7257 BDB #918.

Again, in this verse, we have the word çêpher (כֶּפֶר) [pronounced *SAY-fur*] and it means *book, document, writing, scroll*; occurring in the Bible as early as Genesis (Gen. 5:1). Again, this is modified with *the...the this*. Moses is holding up the scroll from which he is reading before the people. Strong's #5612 BDB #706.

Moses is speaking directly to those in his audience at that point in time and in the far future, telling them that they may hear these Words from God and think that everything is alright and that they have nothing about which to be concerned, because their life is going fine—however, Moses explains in this verse that everything which is guaranteed in this book—that is, all these curses, particularly of the previous chapter—will settle right down upon that man or that generation. Furthermore, Moses is speaking to a man who has seen all of these sacrifices and has been exposed to God's Word, yet, he thinks to himself that things are going pretty well and I really don't need to be concerned about my relationship to God.

Application is easy. The is the easy way and the hard way. Do you have to be threatened by some deadly, painful disease in order for God to get your attention? Do you hear God's Word speaking to you and you think to yourself, *you know, things are going quite well; this stuff just doesn't concern me*. **Neither will their silver nor their gold be able to deliver them no the day of Y^ehowah's wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His passion, for He will make a complete end—indeed a terrifying one—of all the inhabitants of the earth (Zeph. 1:18).**

In v. 20, as elsewhere, we have the phrase: **and Y^ehowah will blot out his name from under heaven**. One of the signs of blessing is for a family name to be prospered and to experience growth. A symbol of cursing is for one's family name to end in a generation. In Deut. 9:14, Moses conveyed the willingness of God to blot out the name of the entire Jewish race and begin anew with Moses alone. This merely is a continuation of God's cursing of this self-willed person.

“And Y^ehowah will cause him to be separated for evil [or, distress] out from all the tribes of Israel that all of the guarantees of the contract the written in a book of the law the this;

Deut. 29:21
[v. 20 in Heb.]

“And Y^ehowah will cause him to be singled out for personal distress [and calamity] out from all the tribes of Israel that all of the guarantees of the contract, which stands written in the book of this law;

Evil in this verse is in the feminine, which is the softer version of evil. This is personal calamity and distress rather than the evil workings of Satan. God will single out the tribe, the family or the individual and pour upon him all of the curses written in this book. We stand before the same promise of God. We reject him as unbelievers or we reject Him as believers, and He will settle upon us all of the curses, verbally guaranteed in this book. Separation is a key theme of Scripture, our Lord performing the final act of separation. **“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while the men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident as well.**

And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ And the slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, otherwise while you are gathering up the tares, you might root up the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’ “ (Matt. 13:24b–30).

Like many other portions of God’s Word, we sometimes lose the forest for the trees; so again, I would like to pull these last few verses together as one cohesive whole, therefore, in looking at this as one thought (which actually continues into v. 22 and following), the troublesome v. 19 is less troublesome.

Deut. 29:19–21, literally:

“And it will come to pass, in his hearing of words of the guarantee the this, in his heart he blesses himself, saying, ‘I am prosperous [and at peace] because [possibly, though] I walk in the stubbornness of my heart’; to join [to] the saturation the state of being thirsty. Y^ehowah is not willing to forgive [or, pardon] to him for at that time the anger of Y^ehowah would smoke [or, fume] and His passion against man the that; and would settle against him all the oath written in the scroll the this and Y^ehowah will blot out his name from under heaven. And Y^ehowah will cause him to be separated for evil [or, distress] out from all the tribes of Israel that all of the guarantees of the contract the written in a book of the law the this;”

The freer English rendering:

“And it will come to pass, when he hears the words of this guarantee, he will silently reassure himself, saying, ‘I am prosperous even though [or, because] I walk in the stubbornness of my heart’; to join [to] the saturation the state of being thirsty. Y^ehowah is not willing to forgive [or, pardon] him because at that time the anger of Y^ehowah, as well as His passion, would smoulder [or, fume] against that man. Furthermore, not only will the entirety of the verbal guarantee written in this scroll [or, document] settle upon him but Y^ehowah will blot out his name from under heaven. And Y^ehowah will cause him to be singled out for personal distress [and calamity] out from all the tribes of Israel that all of the guarantees of the contract, which stands written in the book of this law;”

- [Deuteronomy 26](#)
- [Deuteronomy 27](#)
- [Deuteronomy 28](#)
- [Deuteronomy 29](#)
- [Deuteronomy 30](#)
- [Deuteronomy 31](#)
- [Deuteronomy 32](#)
- [Deuteronomy 33](#)
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- [Pentateuch](#)

The Observation of Others of the Cursing of Israel

“And the following generation will say—[even] your sons who rise up after you and the immigrant who comes in from a far-off land—and they see the scourgings of the land the that and her diseases which Y^ehowah had made her diseased;

Deut. 29:22
[v. 21 in Heb.]

“And the following generation will say—even your sons who rise up after you and the immigrant who comes in from a far-away land—and they see the scourgings of that land and her diseases which Y^ehowah had made her diseased;

One of the words difficult for me to translate consistently is makkâh (מַכָּה) [pronounced *mahk-KAWH*]. It means *plague, slaughter, stroke, mauling, beating, striking, striking down scourging*. Strong's #4347 BDB #646.

We are in the midst of a sentence here. We can see this in the English, if we read vv. 22–24 together; however, it is even easier in the Hebrew. Moses repeats the verb *to say* along with the *wâw* conjunction in both v. 22 and v. 24. This is a linguistic rhetoric—the observer of the future is about to comment on the land; and Moses stops for a second to describe what this observer sees. Moses is saying, to some degree, that the observers of the future will be totally dumbfounded at first, staring at the area with gaping mouths and then finally saying, “Why has

God done this to this land?” The generation which comes on the scene after this cursing, even their sons, and the foreigners, will see how this land has been ravaged—in fact, Moses does not even call it *this* land, but he calls it *that* land. Moses is not talking just about the land across the Jordan, as they occupied part of the Land of Promise where they were. The connotation here is more the thought that the land would be so radically transformed that it will not appear at all to the next generation or to the foreigner as it appears to Moses and the sons of Israel on that day. Jeremiah prophesied the same thing: “I will also make this city a desolation and an object of hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its beatings.” (Jer. 19:8). This has been fulfilled literally. Any objective person to walk through the Land of Promise today, to observe the dry, desert area and the violence and the hatred, cannot help but think that what happened to make this land so deplorable? God’s Word, no less than three thousand years ago, tells us.

“Brimstone [i.e., sulphur] and salt—scorched—all her land not being sown and nothing is caused to grow and all the vegetation cannot sprout in it, as the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which Y^ehowah overthrew in His anger and in His fury;

Deut. 29:23
[v. 22 in Heb.]

“Sulphur and salt—[all her land] scorched—all her land not being sown and nothing can grow and all the vegetation cannot sprout in it, just like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which Y^ehowah overthrew in His anger and in His fury;

The mention of Admah and Zeboim is interesting here. Although the destruction of the cities with Sodom and Gomorrah could be inferred from this verse, these are not mentioned by name back in Gen. 19. Both cities are mentioned, however, back in Gen. 14, during the famous war between four kings and five kings, wherein bystander Lot, who lived in the valley of Sodom and Gomorrah, was taken as a prisoner by the four kings. [How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboim? My heart is turned over within Me; all My compassions are kindled](#) (Hosea 11:8).

The description found here has been taken from the locally observed features of the Dead Sea and its surrounding area. At one time, the area of Sodom and Gomorrah was fertile, receiving an abundant rainfall (Gen. 13:10). However, due to their degenerate behavior, God judged this area, raining down upon them fire and brimstone, wiping out this area and turning it into a waste land (Gen. 19). This was known to the people to whom Moses was speaking. The destruction of Israel was spoken of in a similar fashion, however, the emphasis is not upon fire and brimstone raining from the heavens but more upon the devastation of the land, which is in accord with similar Biblical prophecies concerning the Land of Promise (Lev. 26:31–32 Psalm 107:34 Jer. 44:2, 6 Zeph. 2:9). [“Many shepherds have ruined My vineyard; they have trampled down My field; they have made My pleasant field a desolate wilderness. It has been made a desolation—desolate, it mourns before Me—the whole land has been made desolate, because no man lays it to heart.”](#) (Jer. 12:10–11).

Brimstone is sulphur, a yellowish nonmetallic substance with the very low melting point of 113° C. It burns with a blue flame and gives off, through a chemical reaction, sulphur dioxide gas, which is noxious. Brimstone is generally found in (1) the cap rock of salt domes; e.g. the Gulf Coast region of the United States; (2) sedimentary beds, e.g. those found in S. Central Sicily; and, (3) areas of volcanic activity, where it can be *found in the craters and crevices of extinct volcanoes, having been deposited by gasses of volcanic origin in the fumarolic stage of decadent vulcanism. Such a volcanic environment existed in recent geological times near Lake Tiberias, and in Syria, where Mount Hebron was a prominent volcano, and a thick pile of plateau basalt lavas form the Hauran Plain. Radiocarbon analysis of carbonized organic matter indicates that one of the youngest basalt flows is only 4,000 years old, i.e. must have occurred during human occupation of the region.*³³⁹ Sulphur did exist in the Palestine area and was known to the peoples of that day as a flammable substance. Furthermore, volcanic or earthquake activity, combined with the flowing lava igniting the sulphur was not unknown during those times in that area.³⁴⁰ ZPEB suggests that this is from whence the writers of Scripture got the imagery of [a lake burning with fire and brimstone sulphur](#) (Rev. 21:8) or [a stream of brimstone](#) (Isa. 30:33). Raining fire and brimstone

³³⁹ *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. I, p. 655, where the bulk of this information came from.

³⁴⁰ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; Hendrickson Publishers, ©1956, Vol. I, p. 522.

(Gen. 19:24 Psalm 11:6) may be related to volcanic activity. The raining down of brimstone is not a bad ancient world description of the devastation of artillery, bombs, and nuclear weapons of modern warfare. **For Y^ehowah has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. Furthermore, its streams will be burned into pitch and its loose earth into brimstone, and its land will become burning pitch. It will not be quenched night or day. Its smoke will go up forever from generation to generation it will be desolate. None will pass through it forever and ever** (Isa. 34:8–10; a description of Edom).

Moses is besides himself in this verse. He stopped mid-sentence prior to this—he was about to tell us what others would say about this land in the future—and then he begins giving a more detailed description of what would happen to the Land of Promise. Has this been literally fulfilled? Has this come to pass? It is just as though Moses took a walk out in the midst of Israel today and described what he saw. How could such a land every be thought of as a Land of Promise? For the unbeliever who give this any thought, it appears absurd. However, we know what has happened—Israel pursued another god and the God of the Universe, Jesus Christ, has placed Israel under tremendous discipline. Israel pursued the god of her own self-righteousness.

“And all of the nations will say, ‘Upon what has Y^ehowah done thus to the land the this? Why the heat of the anger the great the this?’

Deut. 29:24
[v. 23 in Heb.]

“And all of the nations will say, ‘For what reason has Y^ehowah done this to this land? What is the reason for the intensity of His great anger?’

The question begins with the interrogative *mâh* (מַה) [pronounced *maw*] and it means *what, how*. When, as at the beginning of the quote, *mâh* is preceded by the preposition 'al (אֶל) [pronounced *al*], it means *upon what, upon what ground, wherefore, why, for what reason?* The second time *mâh* is found, there is no preceding preposition. Strong's #4100 BDB #552. If you look at these two translations, you can see why it is so important to have a very literal and a not so literal translation. You get to see just exactly what liberties that I have taken to give you a clearer English rendition.

This is the quote which Moses had begun to give back in v. 22, but was temporarily detained for literary emphasis. Subsequent generations and surrounding nations will look upon this land and wonder, knowing that this is the land of promise, what on earth could have caused Jehovah to be so intensely angry as to so severely degrade the land. This is one of the most beautiful lands in the ancient world, with a beautiful climate and rich green foliage and now it *looks* as though it has been burned to the ground, its soil interred with salt to keep anything from ever growing again. Dan. 9:9–14: **“To Y^ehowah our God belongs compassion and forgiveness for we have rebelled against Him; and we have not obeyed the voice of Y^ehowah our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. Certainly all of Israel has transgressed Your law and has turned aside, no obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled over us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. As it stands written in the law of Moses: all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the grace of Y^ehowah our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. Therefore, Y^ehowah has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for Y^ehowah our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done; but we have not obeyed His voice.”**

“And they would say, ‘Upon which they have forsaken the covenant of Y^ehowah the God of their fathers, which He made with them in His bringing them out of the land of Egypt.

Deut. 29:25
[v. 24 in Heb.]

“Then others would answer, ‘Because they abandoned the contract of Y^ehowah, the God of their fathers—which contract He had made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.

^hʾĀza^bv (אֲזַבּוּ) [pronounced *aw-ZA^bV*] means *to leave, to forsake*. Strong's #5800 BDB #736. This is the contract which Moses is reading from at this time—that is, the message he is delivering to the people.

1Kings 9:8–9: “And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, ‘Why has Y^ehowah done thus to this land and to this house?’ And they will say, ‘Because they forsook Y^ehowah their God, Who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them—therefore, Y^ehowah has brought all this adversity on them.’ “ (See also Jer. 16:10–13 22:8–9).

“ ‘And so they went and so they served other gods and so they [made themselves] bowed] to them—gods whom they did not know and whom He had not apportioned to them.

Deut. 29:26
[v. 25 in Heb.]

“Subsequently, they went and they served other gods, doing obeisance to them—gods whom they did not know and gods whom He had not apportioned them.

We have a repetition of the wâw consecutive, which gives great emphasis to the things which occurred and to the order in which they occurred. The first they did is they *went*; this is Qal imperfect of *hâlak*^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^e*], which means *to go, to come, to walk*. What is indicated here is an act of volition. They are not walking anywhere and they are not going anywhere; their volition makes a choice. Strong’s #1980 (and 3212) BDB #229. The second verb found here is there Qal imperfect of *ʿâvad* (עָבַד) [pronounced *ġawb^b-VAHD*]; which means *to work, to serve, to labor*. Strong’s #5647 BDB #712. The third wâw consecutive is followed by the Hithpael imperfect of *shâchah* (שָׁחָה) [pronounced *shaw-KHAH*], which means *to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to*. The Hithpael is the reflexive stem. Strong’s #7812 BDB #1005.

The final verb in this verse is *châlaq* (חָלַק) [pronounced *chaw-LAHK*], which means *to divide, to apportion, to allot, to share*. Strong’s #2505 BDB #323.

2Kings 17:7–23: Now it came to pass, because the sons of Israel had sinned against Y^ehowah they God, Who had brought them up fro the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had given respect to other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom Y^ehowah had driven out from before the sons of Israel and [in the customs] of the kings of Israel which they had introduced. And the sons of Israel did things secretly which were not right, against Y^ehowah their God. Furthermore, they built for themselves high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city. And they set for themselves sacred pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, and there they burned incense on all the high places as the nations did which Y^ehowah had carried away to exile before them; and they did evil things, provoking Y^ehowah. And they served idols, concerning which Y^ehowah had said to the, “You will not do this thing.” Yet, Y^ehowah warned Israel and Judah, through all His prophets, through every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets.” However, they did not listen, but they stiffened their neck, like their fathers, who did not believe in Y^ehowah their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers, and His warnings with which He warned them. And they followed emptiness and became empty, and [pursued] other nations which surrounded them, concerning which Y^ehowah had commanded them not to do like them. And they forsook all the commandments of Y^ehowah their God and made for themselves molten images, two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. Then they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and they practiced divination and enchantments, and they sold themselves to do evil in the sight of Y^ehowah, provoking Him. So Y^ehowah was very angry with Israel and He removed them from His sight; none was left except the tribe of Judah. Furthermore, Judah did not keep the commandments of Y^ehowah , their God, but she walked in the customs which Israel had introduced. And Y^ehowah rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them out of His sight. When He had torn Israel from the house of David, they made Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel away from following Y^ehowah, and made them commit a great sin. The sons of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam, which he did; they did not depart from them until Y^ehowah removed Israel from His sight, as He spoke through all His servants, the prophets. So Israel was carried away into exile from their own land to Assyrian until this day.

“ ‘And so the anger of Y^ehowah burned against the land to bring [the] entirety of the curse written in this scroll upon her.

Deut. 29:27
[v. 26 in Heb.]

“ ‘Consequently, the anger of Y^ehowah burned against this land bringing all of the curses recorded in this scroll upon it.

Just as the Hebrew mind saw the Book of the Land as the commandment (singular) of God; it similarly can take all of the curses found in this book and refer to them in the singular.

2Chron. 36:15–21a: And Y^ehowah, the God of their fathers, sent [word] to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; however, they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of Y^ehowah arose against His people, until there was no remedy. Therefore, He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who struck down their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and he had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave all into his hand. And all the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of Y^ehowah, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought [all this] to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its fortified building with fire, and destroyed its valuable articles. And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were slaves to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia—[all this] to fulfill the word of Y^ehowah by the mouth of Jeremiah. (See also Jer. 52:12–17).

McGee: *Years ago I heard the late Dr. George Gill tell about a trip he made by train, going down through Asia Minor and into Palestine. Late in the afternoon they were leaving Jerusalem and dropping down into the Dead Sea area. As they did, he was standing out on the black vestibule of the train with a very wealthy American. The American said, “I always heard this was the land of milk and honey. Why, I’ve never seen a land that is as bad as this. I’ve never seen anything like it.” Dr. Gill said, “You know, it is interesting that you said that.” Then he opened his Bible and showed the American in verse 22 that strangers shall come from a far land and ask that very question, “Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?” And Dr. Gill told him the exact reason that Moses had given 3500 years ago. “Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers.”³⁴¹*

McGee: *The land and the people go together. Actually, the whole Mosaic system is geared for that land. It is not only for the people, but also for that land. That is important to see. In our Lord’s day, the Mount of Olives was covered with trees. It was a real wooded area. The enemies who came to conquer cut out all the timber and left the land desolate. God’s judgment does not fall only on the people. It also has fallen on the land³⁴².*

“ ‘And so Y^ehowah uprooted them from upon their land in anger and in fury and in great wrath; and so He cast them into another land as the day the this.’

Deut. 29:28
[v. 27 in Heb.]

“ ‘Furthermore, Y^ehowah uprooted them from upon their land in anger and in fury and in great wrath; and so He cast them into another land as this day.’

1Kings 14:15: “For Y^ehowah will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and He will scatter them beyond the [Euphrates] River, because they have made their Asherim, provoking Y^ehowah to anger.” Ezek. 19:12–14: “But it was plucked up in fury; it was cast down to the ground and the east wind dried up its fruit. Its strong branch was torn off so that it withered and fire consumed it. And now it is planted in the wilderness in a dry and thirsty land. And fire has gone out from its branch ; it has consumed its shoots and fruit, so that there is not in it a strong branch, a scepter to rule.” Psalm 52:5–7: But God will break you down forever; He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent and uproot you from the land of the living. Furthermore, the righteous will see and fear and they will laugh at him, “Observe, the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and was strong in his desire.”

³⁴¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 174–175.

³⁴² J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 175.

My main problem with this verse is the last phrase, and so He cast them into another land **as this day**.

NASB	'...and the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger and in fury and in great wrath, and cast them into another land, as <i>it is</i> this day.'
NEB	"The LORD uprooted them from their soil in anger, in wrath and great fury, and banished them to another land, where they are to this day."
NIV	"In furious anger and in great wrath, the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now."
NRSV	"The LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, fury, and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as is now the case."
Young's Lit. Translation	...and Jehovah doth pluck them from off their ground in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath, and doth cast them unto another land, as <i>at</i> this day.

Our problem is not the translation, but the full context. This is not Moses speaking talking about what was occurring on that very day. This is Moses quoting someone from the future who observes the condition of the land and the dispersion of Israel and *in that day* is relative to the future speaker whom Moses is *quoting*. The future speaker is telling why the Israelites were cast out of the land and why God's anger was so fierce, and essentially tells them that this is how things stand on this very day. Sort of like a newscaster signing off, saying, "And that's the world today, Thursday, May 29, 1997."

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Conclusion (Continued into the next Chapter)

"The hidden things [are] to Y^ehowah our God, and the revealed things [are] to us and to our sons until antiquity to do all of [the] words of the Law the this."

Deut. 29:29
[v. 28 in Heb.]

"The hidden things belong to Y^ehowah our God, and the revealed things [are] for us and for our sons until antiquity [for us] to do all of the words of this Law."

So there is a reality that we do not perceive in this world. However, what we need to know has been revealed to us, no matter what dispensation that we live in. However, this is not the sense of this particular verse. In face, we will see that the meaning of this verse is changed quite a bit when we eliminate a phrase which was wrongly placed here.

"The hidden things [are] and the revealed things [are] to us and to our sons until antiquity to do all of [the] words of the Law the this."

Alternate reading of Deut. 29:29

"The hidden things and the revealed things [are] for us and for our sons until antiquity [for us] to do all of the words of this Law."

Let me give you Rotherham's footnote here:³⁴³ *A very ancient official document, the oldest form of which is found in the Siphri on Num. ix. 10, has dots (denoting spuriousness) upon the words "unto Yahweh our God." "When these are canceled," said Dr. Ginsburg, "we obtain the sense—"The secret things and the revealed things belong to us and to our children for ever if we do all the words of this Law.' That is, the secret things, or the doctrines which have not as yet been revealed (comp. Deut. xxx. 11–14), belong to us and our children, or will be disclosed to us, if we do all the words of this Law which have been revealed to us. It is remarkable that Rashi already expresses the opinion that the words L'YHWH 'ELOHENU, to the Lord our God, ought to have been pointed, but that the reverence for the Divine name*

³⁴³ *The Emphasized Bible*; Joseph Rotherham, reprinted 1971; p. 229.

prevented its being done.”—G. Intro., pp. 318–321, 330. In the Massorah, there are fifteen times where certain phrases were not in the original and are indicated by the placing of dots around those words and this is one of those fifteen times.

In other words, God has a revealed truth given to the Israelites and there is truth to which they have not yet been made privy. What has been given and what will be given has been entrusted to the care of the sons of Israel until antiquity. The Word of God, until shortly after the time of the crucifixion, remained in the care of the nation Israel, at which point, those who believed in Jesus Christ, became the custodians of the Word. This is because the nation Israel no longer was a nation and that area no longer had an indigenous population of believing Israelites.

Therefore when Barnes' Notes gives the explanation: *This verse seems to be added as a solemn admonition on the part of Moses, in order to close the series of blessings and curses which he has delivered. The sense seems to be this: "The future, when and how these good and evil things will take effect, it lies with the Lord our God to determine; it pertains not to man's sphere an duty. God's revealed will is that which we must carry out."*³⁴⁴ However, what they meant to write was: This verse was added as a solemn admonition on the part of Moses, in order to close this series of blessings and curses which he has delivered. The sense seems to be this: "The future, when and how these good and evil things will take effect, has been given by God to the nation Israel and they are now responsible for what they have been given." The NIV Study Bible rightly points out that this applies not just to prophecy but to the entire Word of God.

The hidden things is the Niphal participle of *çâthar* (סָתַר) [pronounced *saw-THAHR*] and it means *to hide, to conceal*. The Niphal is the passive stem, meaning that these words received *hiding*. This is information from the future and information which has not been revealed to the hoi polloi. Strong's #5641 BDB #711 The revealed things of God are revealed to all mankind. **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them (for God made it evident to them).** For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For when they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, but they became futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools (Rom. 1:18–22).

Not all things are revealed to all believers. Although Paul was the great man of grace and the Church Age, the other Apostles were not immediately given this information. **And so when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; however, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will become My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."** (Acts 1:6–8). In other words, the disciples, for the most part, acted as evangelists, and the most difficult of Church Age doctrine was left to Paul. All an evangelist has to do is to get a couple of points of doctrine straight and that's it. Unfortunately, very few of them even fully grasp the gospel.

One last word: most of what we have seen in this chapter was conditional—that is, the obedience of the Israelite resulted in prosperity in the land. However, they rebelled against God, and God has thrown them out of the land. Does this mean that God has a new plan with another people for that land? Certainly not! The land was given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to their descendants unconditionally. We will go into that further in the next chapter.

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³⁴⁴ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 329.

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Deuteronomy 30

Deuteronomy 30:1–20

Outline of Chapter 30:

- vv. 1–9 **The final restoration**
- vv. 10–14 **God's commands are accessible to Israel**
- vv. 15–20 **Moses enjoins his audience to choose life over death**

Charts:

- v. 6 **Our Active Role in Salvation**
- v. 6 **Our Passive Role in Salvation**
- v. 6 **Temporal and Ultimate Sanctification**
- v. 10 **The Nine Great Promises to Israel in this Chapter**

Introduction: Deut. 30 ranks along side Lev. 26 and Deut. 27–28 as one of the great prophetic chapters in the books of Moses. As we found in those books, the Israelites had not even entered into the land and Moses had already told them how they would be tossed out of the land due to disobedience; in this chapter, he spends time discussing their restoration to the land after they have been removed. As has been mentioned many times in the past, there are some theologians who did not like the idea of prophecy. The prophecies of Moses are so clear and concise, you would think that he was right there observing them. Therefore, these theologians believed that the Torah was put together by several sets of authors, some of whom wrote as recently as 400 BC. This is known as documentary hypothesis or the JEPD theory. This has already been covered and refuted. Moses did write these messages and he was able to foretell Israel's future because he was led by God the Holy Spirit, for Whom there are no boundaries of time. Like many of the prophecies found in Scripture, this passage has a double-fulfillment, the near fulfillment and the far fulfillment. The latter fulfillment is what is in primary view here, and it will occur in the millennium, still future from today. There will come a time when God will gather His people from the ends of the earth and return them to Israel; and at that time, they will obey Him. The near fulfillment was covered in Lev. 26:40–46.

One of the problems today with those Jews who believe that the Old Testament is more than just inspired writings of religious men is that they are unable to distinguish between the historic fulfillment of God's restoration of the Land of Promise to Israel and the still-future fulfillment of their restoration. You may recall our study of the Feast Days of Israel. There were three feasts where all of the males of Israel were to be gathered into Jerusalem. This corresponds to the three times which God brings Israel into the land. The first time is a month or so future from the time of this passage. The messages of Moses to this people are almost completed; God is about to call for Moses. Then the people will enter into the land and take it for the first time. Then God will remove Israel and Judah, the two Jewish client nations, from the land and then He will restore Judah to the land. Finally, in the millennium, God will bring back all of Israel into the land. Their are three times God brings all of the males into the Land of Promise and three feasts where God brings all of the Israelites into Jerusalem.

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The Final Restoration

Literally:

“And it will come to pass when all of the words the these will come upon you—the blessing and the curse which I have set for your faces and you are caused to return to your mind in all of the nations where Y^ehowah your God has caused you to be banished there;

Deut. 30:1

Smoother English rendering:

“And it will come to pass when all of these words come upon you—both the blessings and the cursings which I have set before you—and you recall these things to mind while in the nations where Y^ehowah your God has banished you;

As we have seen before, lâmed plus pâniym (פָּנֵיךָ) [pronounced *paw-NEEN*] means *before your face*. Pâniym is in the plural, although it refers to *one* face, as we have the singular possessive pronoun *your*. Strong’s #6440 BDB #815.

You would expect that with the Hiphil perfect of shûw^bv (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*]; we would be speaking of the Israelites being *caused to return* to the land. However, here it means *to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce* (as in Num. 11:4). This is the key verb in this chapter. We will find it used about a half dozen times. Strong’s #7725 BDB #996.

In this context, we know that shûw^bv means to return mentally because along with the verb we have the ʿel (עַל) [pronounced *al*] preposition (*in, into, unto, regarding*) along with the 2nd person personal pronoun and the word lê^bva^bv (לֵבָבְךָ) [pronounced *lay^b-V^bAHV*], which obviously come from the Hebrew word lê^bv (*heart*). Although the KJV translates both of these words as *heart*, this word means *mind, inner man*. It is found infrequently throughout most of the Torah (Gen. 20:5–6 Ex. 14:5 Lev. 19:17 26:36, 41 Num. 15:39), except for the book of Deuteronomy where it is found over forty times (1:28 2:30 4:9, 29, 39, etc.). Strong’s #3824 BDB #523.

Finally, take note of the phrase *all of the nations*. Moses did not foretell of just one nation coming in and exiling Israel into another area but Israel will be banished the many nations. At the time of the Great Tribulation, Israelites will be found in every nation wherein there is some positive volition, as they will be the evangelists of the Tribulation period.

Several times throughout the book of Deuteronomy, Moses places before the Israelite blessing and cursing. **“Observe, I am placing before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of Y^ehowah your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of Y^ehowah your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, be following other gods which you have not known.”** (Deut. 11:26–28; see also Deut. 30:15).

The Israelite first must return to God in his mind and then God will return him to the land. The key to the spiritual life is what we think. The Israelite will return to his mind while he is living in the nations where God banished him. Solomon, a man who tottered between greatness and the lust of his flesh, said, in his address to the people of Israel: **“If they take though in the land where they have been taken captive and change their minds and make supplication to You in the land of those who have taken them captive, saying, ‘We have sinned and have committed iniquity; we have acted wickedly.’ If they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who have taken them captive, and pray to You toward their land which You have given to their fathers, the city which You had chosen, and the house which I have built for Your name; then hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven, Your dwelling place, and maintain their judgment, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You and all their transgressions which they have transgress against You, and make them a people of your compassion before those who have taken them captive, that they may have compassion upon them.”** (1Kings 8:47–50).

God is not through with Israel. This chapter will be filled with prophecies which must still come to pass. What will bring this information to the mind of the dispersed Israelite will be the rapture. There will be enough of a push in evangelism and enough knowledge of the Old Testament to where the Jews of the future will suddenly put it all together; they will suddenly realize that they have been rejecting Y^ehowah their God, the God of the Universe, Jesus Christ. The rapture and the subsequent events will cause them to return to God in their minds.

“And you will return even to Y^ehowah your God and you will listen [and obey] in [the proximity of] His voice according to all that I am commanding you today—you and your children—with all of your mind and with all of your soul.

Deut. 30:2

“And you will return to Y^ehowah your God and you will listen and obey in the proximity of His voice according to all that I command you today—you and your children—with all of your mind and with all of your soul.

There were prepositions and connectives in this verse that I would have stated differently. Most translators already did. There are some translators who treat almost every preposition alike. Whatever it is they want to preposition to mean, that is what it means. We have the word *shûw^v* (שׁוּׁוּ) [pronounced *shoo^v*] again—this time it is in the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect—and it means *to return, to turn back, to turn around*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. Y^ehowah your God is preceded by the preposition *ad* (אֲד) [pronounced *g^{ad}*] and it means *as far as, even to, up to, until*. Strong's #5704 BDB #723 (I would have expected the preposition *to*).

The following verb is the 2nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *shâma* (שָׁמָע) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*] is the simple word for *listen, to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to* (Gen. 3:17 39:10 Ex. 3:18). It is by the context that we can determine whether it is the simple act of listening or the act of listening attentively to and obeying. Unfortunately, the very best single word for the latter meaning is the archaic *hearken*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. This is followed by the *bêyth* preposition, *b^e* (בְּ) [pronounced *b'*] which denotes proximity. It is translated *in, among, into, against, with, at, through*. The word *while* is the *bêyth* preposition, generally translated *in, into*; proximity is the key to understanding this preposition. No Strong's # BDB #88. This is followed by His voice (a word which also means *sound*). Again, we want to see the simple preposition *to*, but it is not there.

The comes the *kaph* preposition; *k^e* (כֶּ) [pronounced *k^e*] and it means *like, as, and, occasionally, according to*. Their obedience is to involve all their mind and all their soul. This Israelite will return to God while out of the land, as Moses has already told his people. **“And Y^ehowah will scatter you among the peoples and you will be left few in number among the nations, where Y^ehowah will drive you. And there you will serve other gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. But from there you will seek Y^ehowah your God and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days, you will return to Y^ehowah your God and listen to His voice.”** (Deut. 4:27–30). Nehemiah will call God upon His promises concerning this dispersion. **“We have acted very corruptly against You and we have not kept the commandments nor the statutes nor the ordinances which You commanded You servant Moses. Remember the word which You did command Your servant Moses, saying, “If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and I will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.”** (Neh. 1:7–9). As God will command through Isaiah, **“Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to Y^ehowah and He will have compassion on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”** (Isa. 55:7).

“And Y^ehowah your God will turn around your captivity [or, return your captive] and He will have compassion upon you and He will return and He will gather you out from all the peoples where Y^ehowah your God has scattered you there.

Deut. 30:3

“And Y^ehowah your God will turn about your captivity and He will have compassion on you and He will change His mind [lit., turn back] and He will gather you out from all the peoples from whence Y^ehowah your God has distributed you.

In the previous two verses, the Israelite will return in his mind, then he will return to Y^ehowah and then God will return him to the land. We have the same verb used four times. This third time it could read: **And Y^ehowah your God will turn around your captivity.** According to Keil and Delitzsch, this would not mean *to return captives*, as it might in the Hiphil, but *to turn about, to turn back, to turn around* their captivity, as *shûw^bv* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*] is found here in the Qal stem.³⁴⁵ The noun here is the direct object, feminine singular of the word *shib^eyâh* (שִׁבְיָהּ) [pronounced *shib^e-YAWH*], which means *exile, captivity, captive* and not *fortunes*, as it is found in the KJV and the NIV. Strong's #7633 BDB #986. With this direct object, we have a 2nd person masculine singular suffix, rendered *your*.

There are some cults and even some denominations which totally spiritualize Israel and consider that the church began in Abraham's tent. Now, it is true that all Israel is not Israel—that is, only those who have believed in Jesus Christ are a part of the true Israel—however, the church and Israel are not to be intermixed, confused or one substituted for the other. From these past few chapters and from the many quotations which have been taken from other books of the Bible, it should be clear that these prophecies lose a lot of their bite if they do not apply to the dispersed population of Jews. Although there might be a place in this world for some denominations, and even though their compatibility with Scripture can be debated, their chief weakness is they have set up a theological structure which often removes the pastor from digging through all of Scripture for the truth. One of the results of this has been Covenant theology where Israel and the church are not clearly demarcated. One cannot spend hours in the Old Testament exegeting it verse by verse and confuse Israel with the church—that just cannot be done. There are just too many passages in Scripture like Jer. 31:35–37, which reads: **Thus proclaims Jehovah, Who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night; Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—Jehovah of hosts is His name. “If this fixed order departs from before Me,” declares Jehovah, “Then the descendants of Israel will also cease from being a nation before Me forever.” Thus said Jehovah, “If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the descendants of Israel for all that they have done,” declares Jehovah.** Even if one carefully exegetes Rom. 11 (among other passages), it is impossible to conclude that the church is what Israel evolved into.

One more thing which I should touch on at this point is the present nation Israel. God has not gone and regathered all of Israel from all the four corners of the earth and from every nation and people and brought them into this land in victory. This movement back to the land represents a very small percentage of the world population of Jews and this will always be the case. What I am saying is that the fact that there is a nation Israel right now is not in fulfillment of any prophecy which we have studied nor will it be a fulfillment of any prophecy which we will study. There could be an atomic war in that area and turn it into even more of a wasteland than it is. The Israelites could remain there for the next thousand years. The Israelites might be pushed out of that area and never return for a thousand years. What I am saying to you is that there are no prophecies that I am familiar with which deal with this particular return of a small number of Jews to the Land of Promise. This means that there is no prophetic domino affect occurring today. That is, we are not necessarily in the end times, and the small nation Israel is not some sort of sign that we are. That is the wishful thinking of (1) some people who do not want to face death (they are expecting—or, rather, hoping to be raptured); (2) people who want to hawk their books; (3) rabid, wide-eyed sensationalists who derive some sort of a perverse pleasure in predicting the imminent wrath of God; and, (4) religious types who take a passage from here or there and base their theology upon, say, 50 or 100 verses pulled from here or there.

³⁴⁵ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 975.

“If your outcast are in the uttermost part of the heavens, out from there, Y^ehowah your God will gather you; and out from there, He will take you.

Deut. 30:4

“Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there Y^ehowah your God will gather you and from there He will take you.

For those who follow along in Owen’s *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, they have inadvertently left out the Hebrew word for heavens (Strong’s #8064 BDB #1029) here (along with its definite article). This expression should be explained. Here, we are not speaking of the Israelites being out in the third heaven or anything like that, but this is an expression which describes the horizon, as far as the eye can see—where the heaven appears to touch the earth. A similar expression is found in Deut. 4:32 Neh. 1:9 Isa. 13:5 Matt. 24:31.

This verse then has two verbs which are synonyms. The first is the Piel perfect of qâbats (קָבַט) [pronounced *kaw-BATS*], which means *to gather, to grasp with the hand, to seize, to collect* and this is the common word used for the gathering of God’s dispersed people. Interestingly enough, unlike one of its synonyms, qâhal, this is not a call to gather; i.e., David, for instance, did not summon his men, they were attracted to him (1Kings 11:24). Strong’s #6908 BDB #867. The second is the Qal imperfect of lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced *law-KAHKH*] means, among other things, *to take, to take from*. Strong’s #3947 BDB #542.

No matter how far the Israelite is scattered, God will take him from there and bring him back to the land. It is from the implication of this verse that we know that Moses is primarily speaking of what would occur during the Tribulation. This does not mean that Moses had a full grasp of eschatology. He certainly knew that Israel would be scattered and then gathered again, but he did not necessarily know that there would be a divided kingdom, nor did he necessarily realize that in one instance he was prophesying the near future (several hundred years into the future) as opposed to the far future, which was at least four millenniums from the time that he spoke. Isaiah prophesied of the same time period: **“Since you are precious in My sight; [since] you are honored and I love you, I will give men in your place and peoples in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘Give [them] up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not hold [them] back.’ Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth, everyone who is called by My name and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made. Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, and the deaf, even though they have ears.”** (Isa. 43:4–8; see also Isa. 40:11 49:5 56:8). Obviously, the regathering of Israel was a major concern of Isaiah, as it was with Ezekiel (see Ezek. 20:34, 41 34:13). In fact, the gathering of Israel is likened to the shaking of an olive tree for its fruit: **For thus it will be in the midst of the earth among the peoples; as the shaking of an olive tree, as the gleanings when the grape harvest is over. They raise their voices, they should for joy, they cry out from the west concerning the majesty of Y^ehowah** (Isa. 24:13–14; see also Isa. 27:12–13).

“And Y^ehowah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed and you will possess it and He will cause you to do well and He will cause you to be increased [or, multiplied] above your fathers.

Deut. 30:5

“And Y^ehowah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers once possessed and you will possess this land; furthermore, He will cause you to do well and He will cause you to be multiplied beyond your fathers.

At the end of this verse we have two Hiphil perfects: yâṭa^bv (יָטַב) [pronounced *yaw-TAH^bV*] means (in the Hiphil) *to do good, to deal well, to make glad, to make a thing good*. Strong’s #3190 BDB #405. The second verb is râ^bvâh (רָבַח) [pronounced *raw^b-VAWH*] and it means *to become much, to become many, to multiply, to increase in population and in whatever else*. Strong’s #7235 BDB #915.

Our problem word is the mîn (מִן) [pronounced *min*] preposition which precedes *your fathers*. It is the mîn preposition, which usually denotes separation. Therefore, it is translated *out, out from, off, away from*; however, it can also be rendered *on account of, since, above, than, so that not*. In this context, it is used in its *comparative* sense: *above, beyond, more than*. Strong’s #4480 BDB #577.

Although the restoration promised here and in Lev. 26 sound very similar, they are not parallel passages. In Lev. 26, the emphasis was upon the first two dispersions of Israel (i.e., the dispersion of the nation Israel and then the dispersion of the southern kingdom, Judah) and the restoration of Judah to the Land of Promise. However, the focus of restitution in this chapter is the restoration of Israel in the end times; that is, the end of the Tribulation and the Millennium which follows. One obvious key to this interpretation is the great blessing which is promised here, along with that promised in v. 9. The population being greater here than in their fathers was not fulfilled when the nation of Judah was restored. The great blessing promised in v. 9 was arguably not fulfilled when the nation of Judah was restored. So, although to the Israelite, it may have sounded as though this passage and Lev. 26 were parallel passages which spoke of the same restoration, there were actually two different fulfillments. We will encounter the same situation when it comes to the coming of their Messiah. He will come as a suffering servant (Isa. 53) and He will come as a conquering hero. Whereas we recognize that there are two advents of Jesus Christ, the average Israelite did not grasp that, as he likely did not realize that there were to be two restorations predicted throughout Scripture—one near and one far.

Some of the listeners to Moses must wonder what is going on. If they suddenly have tuned in after being tuned out for awhile, Moses is talking about their fathers possessing the land and they will be brought back into the land. Well, their fathers never possessed the land. Their fathers died in the desert. Obviously, Moses is looking far down the road into the future and speaking to generations of Israelites who will come later. **“Observe, I am bringing them from the north country, and I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth. Among them, the blind and the lame, the woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; a great company, they will return here. With weeping they will come and by supplication, I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters on a straight path in which they will not stumble. For I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is My first-born.”** (Jer. 31:8–10).

I have spoken of the *near* fulfillment, which was several hundred years off and the far fulfillment, which was several millenniums off. How do we know which is which? One difference is, in the far fulfillment, God gathers Israel from out of all the peoples or out of all the countries or out of the north, east, south and west. Note this is not how every prophecy about regathering sounds: **“Thus says Y^ehowah of the armies, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.’ ”** (Jer. 29:4, 10b). Just as the first and second advent of Jesus Christ are often spoken of in consecutive verses, as though there was one advent (as the Church Age was not prophesied in the Old Testament), sometimes the first and second regathering of Israel are spoken of together in the same context. Further along in Jeremiah, we read: **“And I will be found by you,” declares Y^ehowah, “And I will restore you fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,” declares Y^ehowah, “And I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.”** (Jer. 29:14).

“And Y^ehowah your God will circumcise your heart and [the] heart of your offspring [or, seed] to love Y^ehowah your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul

Deut. 30:6

“And Y^ehowah your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your descendants with the result that you will love Y^ehowah your God with all of your heart and all of your soul.

The verb *love* is in the infinitive construct, which, when combined with b^eyth or kaph, *it serves as a temporal marker denoting respectively an event occurring simultaneously with the action of the main verb and an event that follows the time of the main verb.* *With the inseparable preposition lamedh it may denote purpose, result, explanation, or an imminent event.*³⁴⁶ Here, purpose and result are noted, with the emphasis upon result.

You might be having a problem with this verse, which clearly says that god will circumcise the heart of Israel and v. 2, where they are to return to Y^ehowah their God (or Deut. 10:16, which reads: **“Circumcise you heart; stiffen your neck no more.”**). There is an active and a passive role which a person plays in salvation. Geisler and Nix give the following illustrations: *The one rescued is active in receiving the lifeline, nonetheless, he is passive in*

³⁴⁶ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; p 2277.

being rescued by the rescuer who pulls in the rope. Likewise, we actively submit to the life-saving operation, but we are passive in receiving the physician's skillful surgery that saves our life.³⁴⁷ Geisler and Howe give the following chart to explain this in relationship to salvation³⁴⁸.

Our Active Role in Salvation:	Our Passive Role in Salvation:
Reception of the gift Submitting to salvation Believing (a non-meritorious act) Accepting salvation	Giving of the gift Being Saved Being redeemed Accomplishing salvation

- [Deuteronomy 26](#)
- [Deuteronomy 27](#)
- [Deuteronomy 28](#)
- [Deuteronomy 29](#)
- [Deuteronomy 30](#)
- [Deuteronomy 31](#)
- [Deuteronomy 32](#)
- [Deuteronomy 33](#)
- [Deuteronomy 34](#)
- [Introduction](#)
- [Kukis Homepage](#)
- [Exegesis](#)
- [Doctrines](#)
- [Pentateuch](#)

Because of the fundamental nature of man, man must be changed. From the very beginning, the Bible speaks of the circumcision of man's heart; that is, the cutting away of the dead tissue—the old sin nature. At first, Israel is commanded to circumcise her own heart (Deut. 10:16); here, it is promised. Although this is clearly taught in several passages, I have rarely if ever heard this issue addressed. God will separate the Israelite from his old sin nature, as He will do for all believers. This is what is known as ultimate sanctification. We are sanctified at salvation—that is, cleansed and set apart to God. From that point on, we are involved with temporal sanctification—i.e., our lives begin to reflect the person of Jesus Christ (understand that this concept is purely theoretical in some circles and based upon spiritual growth). When we are brought face to face with our Lord, we will be cleansed of our old sin natures and separated from our human good. This will be given to all believers, regardless of the dispensation from whence we came. [“And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good, and for \[the good of their\] children after them.”](#) (Jer. 32:39; see 31:33 also). [“And I will give to them one heart and I will place a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh.”](#) (Ezek. 11:19; see also Ezek. 36:26).

Again, another chart which covers temporal and ultimate sanctification, which occur after salvation:

Temporal Sanctification	Ultimate Sanctification
This takes place during our lifetime We are to rebound and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ	This takes place in eternity The old sin nature is removed We share eternal life with God

- [Deuteronomy 26](#)
- [Deuteronomy 27](#)
- [Deuteronomy 28](#)
- [Deuteronomy 29](#)
- [Deuteronomy 30](#)
- [Deuteronomy 31](#)
- [Deuteronomy 32](#)
- [Deuteronomy 33](#)
- [Deuteronomy 34](#)
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A thought you might have is that your old sin nature is an integral part of you. Remove it and you have lost an integral part of you. Obviously, in some cases, a person's personality is tied directly to his old sin nature and many of the things that they pride themselves in are a result of their old sin nature and volition working in conjunction with one another. A person may pride himself in the fact that he is cold, cruel, or verbally insulting. This will be removed and we will be happy to have it removed. Part of what our history will tell us, among other things, is the

³⁴⁷ *When Critics Ask*; Geisler and Howe, ©1992, Victor Books, p. 130.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

incredibly destructive and evil nature of our old sin nature. It is the full reign given to this nature which kept Israel from receiving God's full blessing.

“And Y^ehowah your God will place all of the solemn promises the these upon [or, against] those being at enmity with you [or, your enemies] and those hating you who have pursued you (with hostile intent).

Deut. 30:7

“And Y^ehowah your God will place all of these curses upon your enemies even those who hate you and have persecuted you.

ʿâlâh (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *aw-LAW*], commonly translated *oath*, *curse*, or *execration*. We might also think to translate this as *attestation*, *solemn oath*, *statement under oath*, *vow*, *guarantee*, *pledge*, *judicial oath*, *solemn declaration*, *solemn promise*. The speaker lays out the pact and the listener agrees to it. Now, ʿâlâh can mean *a cursing* (see Deut. 30:7 Psalm 10:7 59:12);³⁴⁹ but *cursing* is a short-cut for saying that a solemn promise has been made which involves the cursing to whomever this promise is made. That is, Yahweh makes a solemn promise and this solemn promise includes His wrath to fall upon someone. Strong's #423 BDB #46.

Those who are at enmity with Israel are described by two Qal active participles: the first is ʿâya^{bv} (אֵיבֹוֹת) [pronounced *aw-YA^BV*] and it means *to be at enmity*, *to be hostile*. As a participle, it can be reasonably rendered *enemy*, but it is more literally, *the one being at enmity with you*. Strong's #340 BDB #33. The second is sâneh' (שׂוֹנְאִים) [pronounced *saw-NAY*] and this verb means *to hate*; in the participle, it is *the ones hating*. The explicit desire is to have no relationship with the other. Strong's #8130 BDB #971.

The final verb is the Qal perfect of rādaph (רָדַף) [pronounced *raw-DAHf*], which means *to pursue*, *to follow after*, *to chase with hostile intent*. It is occasionally translated *persecute* because that indicates the mental attitude of those doing the pursuing. Strong's #7291 BDB #922.

There is a solemn agreement set between God and Israel; as a part of that agreement, if Israel fails, then God will cause them a great deal of pain and misery. That is God's solemn oath to Israel. However, at the point at which God circumcises the heart of Israel, then He will place these cursings upon all of their enemies. God promised this to Abraham centuries previous: **“And I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you, I will curse.”** (Gen. 12:3). Moses gave Israel a similar promise in Deut. 7:15: **“And Y^ehowah will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.”** Our Lord said to Isaiah: **“If anyone fiercely assails [you], it will not be from Me. Whoever assails you will fall because of you. Observe, I Myself have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and brings out a weapon for its work; and I have created the destroyer to ruin. No weapon that is formed against you will prosper and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Y^ehowah and their vindication is from Me,”** declares Y^ehowah (Isa. 54:15–17; see also Jer. 30:16, 20).

“And you will return and you will listen [and obey] at the voice of Y^ehowah your God and you will do [the] entirety of His command which I have commanded you this day.

Deut. 30:8

“And you will return to the voice of Y^ehowah and you will listen [and obey] the voice of Y^ehowah your God and you will do all of His mandates which I have commanded you this day.

Your God is not found in the Massoretic text. It is found, however, in the Western Samaritan, the Onkelos, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate codices.

Again, we have the word for *return*, which has occurred four times previously. They are returning to the voice of God. **“At that time I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together. In face, I will give you renown**

³⁴⁹ Also examine in particular Deut. 29:12, 14, 19, 20, and 21—Yahweh goes back and forth between the meanings *giving a verbal guarantee* and *cursing*.

and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says Y^ehowah (Zeph. 3:20). Their obedience to the commands of God in this context is a statement of fact, not an order. This verse is akin to v. 6 where God promises to place within them a new heart.

“And Y^ehowah your God will cause you to have excess in all of [the] work of your hands,³⁵⁰ in the fruit of your body and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your soil for good, as Y^ehowah will turn back [or, return] to rejoice in you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers.

Deut. 30:9

“And Y^ehowah your God will cause you to be blessed with excess in all of the work of your hands, in your descendants, and in the offspring of your cattle and in the production of your soil, for prosperity, as Y^ehowah will now return to rejoice in you for prosperity as He rejoiced over your fathers.

The fathers spoken of in this verse are not the same *fathers* as spoken of previously as those who were removed from the land, but these are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom the land was originally given. God rejoiced over their salvation and He will rejoice over the opportunity to bless the Israelites as He was able to bless Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God has watched over Israel during two alternating portions of Israel's history: during the times that Israel was operating under a pivot and during the times when Israel was in great degeneracy. "Behold the days are coming," declares Y^ehowah, "When I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast. And it will come to pass what as I have watched over them to pluck them up, to break them down, to overthrow, to destroy, and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant." declares Y^ehowah (Jer. 31:27–28). "And I will make an eternal covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, that I will do them good; and that I will place the fear [and respect] of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. And I will rejoice over them to do them good and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul." For this is what Y^ehowah says: "Just as I brought all this calamity on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them." (Jer. 32:40–42; see also Jer. 24:6 42:10 45:4). Notice that ultimate sanctification will be the only way that God will be able to enjoy an eternal relationship with all of Israel. We may see that as being ultimately cruel or arbitrary on the part of God. I have one friend who does not like the God of the Old Testament, not fully realizing that this is the same Jesus Christ Who died for our sins in the New. There is much more to our life than we actually see. The unseen reality of our life is tremendous. Our participation in God's plan, whether as His servant or as His enemy, is far beyond what we realize. While we worry and fret about meaningless day-to-day things—or whether we show total lack of integrity when it comes to discharging our obligations under the guise of focusing on what is eternal, we are God's enemies and our lives are an attempt to serve Satan. However, God has a tremendous plan for our lives, the results of many of our decisions are pretty much as eternal as anything we could imagine. There is an entire realm of created beings, angels and demons as we call them in the English, who watch us intently, as our actions, both our mistakes and our victories, our integrity and our self-serving degeneracy, vindicate the justice of God. Every one of us has the opportunity to choose the good or to choose the evil, just as every citizen of Israel has had. God has given us free will and we must take responsibility for our actions. Maybe this will help: no loving parent enjoys spanking their child. In fact, some have such a hard time with this that they have become over-indulgent and self-righteous crusaders when it comes to not disciplining their children. However, the good parent, when it is required, will spank the child that they love and it is for the child's own good. It is one of the legitimate influences which we may place over the child's volition (presenting spiritual truth, giving the child love, education, proper training, etc., are some of the others). A parent does this for the child's good. My mother told me that I got spanked a great deal. I don't know that I remember even a single one, but I do recall my behavior and my hard-headedness and I am certain that, if anything, I probably received too few spankings. My parents loved me and spanked me for my own good; and they took precious little joy in the act of spanking me. It was a necessary part of my training and upbringing. God, as our parent, as the God of Israel, must treat us and Israel in the same way. When we have

³⁵⁰ With the exception of three early printed editions of the Massoretic text, *hand* is in the singular in the Hebrew. However, it is found in the plural in the Samaritan, Onkolos, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate codices.

transgressed His mandates, we are to be spanked. It is as simple as that. Israel had seen the power and provision of God. We have also seen those things and we have even a more intimate picture of God's love for us through Jesus Christ, doing for us far more than we have a right to ask for.

When Israel was disciplined, it was after sending prophet after prophet, sign after sign, and having them rejected, that God was forced to discipline Israel. Recall the parable of our Lord: **And He [Jesus] began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to tenant farmers and then he went on a journey for a long time. And at the harvest, he sent a slave to the tenant farmers in order that they might give him from the produce of the vineyard; however, the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. So he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and threw him out [of the vineyard]. And the owner of the vineyard said, 'What should I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.' And they threw him out of the vineyard and they killed him. What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy these tenant-farmers and he will give the vineyard to others." And when they heard it, they said, "This should not happen!" But He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: The stone which the builders rejected—this became the chief cornerstone? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."** (Luke 20:9–18 Psalm 118:22). Do you now have a better grasp of this parable and of God's relationship to Israel? At the end of this epoch of human history, both we and the entire angelic and demonic populations will fully understand the depraved evil of the old sin nature and we will have a much clearer understanding of God's love and God's justice. **For now we see in a clouded mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known** (1Cor. 13:12). Furthermore, we must understand that what God expects of us is reasonable and clear. We believe in Jesus Christ, we rebound when necessary, and we take in our spiritual food, our manna from heaven, which is God's Word. What God expected of Israel was absolutely clear. This is what Moses was telling them at this time.

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God's Commands Are Accessible to Israel

"For you will listen at [and obey] [the] voice of Y^ehowah your God to keep His command and His statutes, the ones written in a scroll of the law the this; for you will return to Y^ehowah your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul;

Deut. 30:10

"For you will listen to and obey the voice of Y^ehowah your God and if you keep His commandments and His statutes, these ones written in a scroll of the law; for you will return to Y^ehowah your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul;

This verse is mistakenly rendered as the apodosis of a conditional clause in the KJV, the NIV and even *The Emphasized Bible*, but this is incorrect. The hypothetical article is 'im (דן) [pronounced *eem*], and it means *if*. Strong's #518 BDB #49. However, this verse begins with the conjunction kîy (כי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for, because*. It is used as an explicative, an explanatory, a justificatory or a causal conjunction. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. BDB #474.

Although just about every translation renders bêyth + the voice of God as *to the voice of God*; that is not listed as one of the renderings in the 3½ pages devoted to bêyth in BDB. Proximity is the key word with the preposition bêyth, so *to the voice of God* is acceptable **if** one bears in mind that there is proximity involved. This would refer to a teacher—in their case, it has been Moses—along with the guidance of God the Holy Spirit in whatever ministry He had in the Old Testament.

What we have in this verse is a statement of fact, not something which the Israelites must do in order to gain God’s grace or approval. This brings us quite naturally to the **New Covenant Between God and Israel-not finished yet!!**

The Nine Great Promises to Israel

Partially borrowed from McGee,³⁵¹ here are nine great promises to Israel contained by the first nine verses:

1. Israel will be taken out of the land and dispersed throughout the nations of the earth (“...in all the nations where Y^ehowah your God has banished you.” v. 1b)
2. The Israelites will return to God (“And you will return to Y^ehowah your god and you will listen to his voice with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons.” v. 2)
3. God will gather the Israelites from out of the nations where they have been distributed (“And Y^ehowah your God will turn around your captivity and He will have compassion on you and He will return and He will gather you again from all the peoples where Y^ehowah your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the heavens, from there Y^ehowah your God will gather you and from there He will return you” vv. 3–4).
4. Their Messiah will return (“...and He will return...” v. 3b). As McGee points out, this is the first mention of the return of their Messiah in Scripture.
5. God will restore Israel to the land (“And Y^ehowah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you will possess it.” v. 5a).
6. God will prosper them in their return to the land (“And He will prosper you and He will multiply you more than your fathers...And Y^ehowah your God will prosper you abundantly in all of the work of your hand, and in the fruit of your body and in the fruit of your cattle and in the produce of your ground.” vv. 5b, 9a)
7. The entire nation Israel will turn to God (“Furthermore, Y^ehowah yo7ur Go will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love Y^ehowah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live...and you will against listen to the voice of Y^ehowah; to observe all His commandments which I command you today” vv. 6, 8).
8. The enemies of Israel will become the enemies of God and God will inflict them with punishment (“And Y^ehowah your God will place all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you and who persecuted you.” v. 7).
9. God will rejoice over them (“For God will rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers.” v. 9b).

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“For the command the this which I am commanding you today is not too extraordinary from you and it is not afar off;

Deut. 30:11

“For these commandments which I am commanding you today are not too extraordinary [or difficult] [to expect] from you; neither are they afar off;

³⁵¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, pp. 177–179.

There is no word for *hard* or *difficult* here; not exactly, anyway. It is the Niphal perfect of *pâlâ'* (אָ לָּ אָ) [pronounced *paw-LAW*] which is usually used in the Niphal in conjunction with God performing or doing marvelous and miraculous things (e.g., Ex. 3:20 34:10). Here, this is an expectation given to man, so it means *to do that which is extraordinary, to do that which is unusually difficult*. This is often used to describe God's most unusual works (Ex. 3:20 34:10 Joshua 3:5). Strong's #6381 BDB #810

The text does not read **too extraordinary [or difficult] for you**; but it reads *from* you. It is the *mîn* preposition, not the *lâmed* preposition. *Min* (יָ מִן) [pronounced *min*] is generally a preposition of separation; however, here, it represents origin and can be rendered *from, out of*.

The commandments given by Moses, taken as one command of obedience, are not considered too difficult or too extraordinary to proceed from his audience or to be performed by his audience. Furthermore, these commands are not afar off. In speaking to a Hindu, much of their Holy Scripture is abstruse and when spoken in the original tongue, is supposed to have a some soothing, divine effect upon the listener. That is, they have no idea what it is they are hearing, but it is thought (by some) that the effect is beneficial in some spiritual way. However, there is no such ambiguity or hocus pocus with the commandments of the Old Testament. Generally speaking, what is expected from the Israelites is quite clear and within their ability to perform these works. **"I have not spoken in secret in some dark land. I did not say to the descendants of Jacob, 'Seek Me in a place of a land of darkness.' I, Y^ehowah, speak righteousness, declaring things that are correct."** (Isa. 45:19). **"You will not do at all what we are doing here today, every man [doing] whatever is right in his own eyes."** (Deut. 12:8). The law of Y^ehowah is perfect, restoring the soul. The testimony of Y^ehowah is certain, making wise the simple. The precepts of Y^ehowah are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of Y^ehowah is pure, enlightening the eyes (Psalm 19:7–8).

"It [is] not in the heavens to say, 'Who will go up for us to the heavens and bring it to us and we will [be caused to] hear it and we will do it?'

Deut. 30:12

"It is not in the heavens so that you will say, 'Who will go up into the heavens on our behalf and bring them to us so that we will be caused to hear them and consequently, we will be able do them?'

The commandments of God are not in some far off place such as heaven with God, but they have been brought directly to the Israelite. Barnes' Notes: *Ignorance of the requirements of the law cannot be pleaded (vv. 10–14); hence, (vv. 15–20) life and death, good and evil, are solemnly set before the people for their own choice; and an earnest exhortation to choose the better part concludes the address.*³⁵² **Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all then ends of the earth? What is His name or His Son's name? Surely you know!** (Prov. 30:4).

"And it [is] not beyond the sea to say, 'Who will go over for us into a region beyond [the] sea and bring it to us and we will [be caused to] hear it and we will do it?'

Deut. 30:13

"And it is not beyond the sea causing us to say, 'Who will go over for us into a region which is beyond the sea and then bring them [the commandments of God] to us so that we will be able to hear them and consequentially, we will be able do them?'

At that point in time, 1400 BC, crossing the ocean to another land was unfathomable.³⁵³ Don't you think that it is interesting that here Moses should speak of land which is on the other side of the sea? God's Word cannot be broken. It is clear that the directives of God were not in some far off place. *The paraphrase of this verse in the Jerusalem Targum is noteworthy, and in Rom. x. 7: "Neither is the law beyond the great sea, that thou shouldst*

³⁵² Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 330.

³⁵³ Pun intended.

say, who could descend into the depths of the sea and bring it to us!”³⁵⁴ There are religions which prescribe a walk into the mountains, a time spent alone in a cave, or a visit to a desert or to a religious area. “But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its value nor is it found in the land of the living. The deep says, ‘It is not in me’; and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’” (Job 28:12–14). The prophet often taught God’s Word at the gate of the city. Does not wisdom call and understanding lift up her voice? On top of the heights beside the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gates at the opening to the city, at the entrance of the doors she cries out: “To you, O men, I call. And my voice is to the sons of men.” (Prov. 8:1–4).

“But the word is very near unto you—in your mouth and in your heart to do it.

Deut. 30:14

“But God’s Word is very near to you—as near as your mouth and as near as your heart, so that you are able to do it.

For those following along in Owen’s *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, this verse does not end with the Qal imperfect of *to do* but the Qal infinitive construct. Otherwise, translating the last phrase with the lamed preposition and the pronominal suffix would have been rather convoluted.

How is it in their mouth? The will stand up on either of the two mountains and utter either the cursings or the blessings. How is it in their heart? Moses is inculcating them with God’s Word—they are hearing it again and again. There are several passages in Scripture which command them to study and recall God’s Word (see Ex. 12:14 13:9 Deut. 6:6–9 11:18–20). God has done everything on behalf of Israel in order for them to function as a client nation to Him. What God expect of Israel is not too difficult to grasp, nor are they unintelligible, nor are the inaccessible. God has made his commandments understandable; they have been communicated by one of the greatest orators of all time, Moses; they will be written on a large stone within their borders; God brought the commandments to them. It is just as though God had come to Israel and had said, “Just what can I do in order for you to perform My will?” And then a committee puts together a list of things. The commandments must be easily assessable, presented well, and comprehensible. There must be some indication that these commandments are from God and not just some set of ideas of a great leader, like Moses. As you will recall from Exodus, God was prepared to give the entire Law verbally to the entire populace of Israel, which scared them half to death. They requested that Moses receive the Law specifically and then relate it to them. Although God alluded to the heart of man many times and his relationship to God, the greatest majority of the commandments were simple and were a matter of volition. For instance, **you will not commit adultery**. There is little or no confusion about such a commandment and the reaction of man to such a commandment would simply be a matter of volition. God said don’t do it, and now you make the choice. **Do not murder**. Again, a commandment which is simple to understand and easy to carry out. The only problems which we have today are more academic—did Moses mean this or that; does the text actually say this, or that. For the Israelite of that day, it was clear as to what was expected by God.

This brings me to an open question—we have God the Holy Spirit to teach us God’s Word; we have some of the greatest resources for pastors to teach God’s Word; we have the filling of the Holy Spirit, as do they. Still, given all of these things, the number of *spiritual giants* is absolutely minuscule. The only area where we see a spectacular difference is in the lives of the unspectacular believer—the one who’s gift is that of prayer or of translations or of giving. There are many unseen and unsung heroes in this day and time, whose names will not be known to us until eternity.

We find this entire passage quoted by Paul in the book of Romans. **For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based upon law must live by that righteousness. But the righteousness which is based upon faith speaks thus: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’—that is, to bring Christ down. Or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’—that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.” But what does Scripture say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.”—that is the word of faith which we are proclaiming; that if you confess with your mouth Jesus Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, then you will be saved** (Rom. 10:5–10). And although most Bibles reference this passage, they fail to reference

³⁵⁴ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 330.

John 3:11–13: Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and you do not understand these things? Point of doctrine: we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe [me], how will you believe [me] if I tell you heavenly things? And no one has ascended into heaven, but He Who descended from heaven—the Son of Man.” God brought the Word of God down from heaven to Israel through His chosen one, Moses. Jesus was God’s Chosen One, the Word of God to come down from heaven.

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Moses Enjoins His Audience to Choose Life over Death

“Look, I have placed to your faces the day, the life and the good and the death and the evil;

Deut. 30:15

“Look here, today I have placed before you the life and the good and the death and the evil;

Moses grabs them by the shirt collar and yanks them up with the Qal imperative of *râ`âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means *to see*. Strong’s #7200 BDB #906. There are not a lot of imperatives found in the Pentateuch. Moses is telling them, “**Look up here; get your mind off your girl friend and pay attention. Stop thinking about what you are going to do after the service, and listen! Look up here at me and listen, dammit!**” In Owen’s *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, he has mistakenly listed *day* as being a direct object; but life, good, death and evil are the direct objects; *day* is simply preceded by the definite article (which means *today*).

Moses has put before them the blessing and the cursing, life and death, good and evil. These are the fundamental issues of life, much deeper than any superficial thing which is running through the mind of his audience. They are hearing the most important information that they will ever hear. There is nothing more important than God’s Word. For them, as it is for us, it is the difference between life and death, good and evil. 95% of all Christians today live lives of consummate evil. They have spent 99.9% of their lives out of fellowship; they are trapped in the worst forms of legalism; they are an embarrassment to God with their gossiping, with the way they sign contracts and then disregard them, with their hatred and bitterness, with their lies, with the evil way they raise their children. Why do you think Jesus Christ so many times would heal someone and then tell them to go their way and not to tell anyone. Aren’t we supposed to be some sort of a witness for him? Aren’t we to tell 20 people every day about what God has done in our lives? Listen here: give the unbeliever some credit. He isn’t blind and stupid. He knows what you are like—he sees you all the time and he is appalled by your stuffy self-righteousness and your hypocritical behavior. God’s Word and the filling of the Holy Spirit is the difference between good and evil for us. God’s Word is the difference between life and death.

Moses continually placed this before the people, as directed by God the Holy Spirit. “Look, I am placing before you today a blessing and a curse; the blessing if you listen to the mandates of Y^ehowah your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of Y^ehowah your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today.” (Deut. 11:26–28a). The first time that man had ever faced good and evil was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:15). God placed that choice before Adam and Eve, and since they chose to have knowledge of good and evil, Moses has given the Israelites a delineation of the good and the evil. My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for they will add to you length of days and years of life and peace (Prov. 3:1–2). Jeremiah, who ministered for over forty years, his life overlapping the dispersion of Judah. It was at this point that the response of the people was critical. “You will also say to this people, ‘Thus proclaims Y^ehowah, “Observe, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.” ‘ “ (Jer. 21:8). God’s Word is alive and powerful, so it only makes sense that when faced with God’s Word, we must choose between life and death (this is for the unbeliever), blessing and cursing (the believer).

“[If you will listen to the commandments of Y^ehowah your God] which I command you today, to love Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and his statutes and His judgments—and you will live and you will multiply and Y^ehowah your God will bless you in the land which you are entering there to possess it.

Deut. 30:16

“If you will listen to the commandments of Y^ehowah your God which I command you today, the commands to love Y^ehowah your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and his statutes and His judgments—then you will live and you will multiply and Y^ehowah your God will bless you in the land that you are entering in to possess.

In the Massoretic text, this verse begins *which I command you today*. However, if you look back to v. 15, there is nothing for *which* to attach itself to. The word *which* would imply some sort of subordination to a previous clause, or some sort of explanatory sense. However, v. 15 is not parenthetical, it is emphatic. So we don't go looking back four or five verses to find to what subject *which* belongs to. In the Septuagint, there are some additional words in the text; it reads *If you will listen to the commands of the Lord your God, which I command you this day*. Likely, the omission of these words is the result of a copyist's error. The Massoretic text was actually not even begun until around 500 AD. They were the ones to add vowel points to the Hebrew text, which was all consonants. This is from whence we derive our translations. The manuscripts which we have don't even date back that far, but perhaps to the eighth century AD. This is because when they would make a careful copy, they would destroy the original, as it would be cracked and difficult to read. Considering that our New Testament manuscripts date within a century of the originals, this means that there has been some span of time between the Old Testament manuscripts which we use the translate from. Throughout the ages, the Old Testament, being God's Word, has been translated into several different languages; these are called codices, and we have codices which are much older than the Massoretic text. We use them as secondary tools when determining what our translation should be. It is obvious that errors should creep into copies of the original text, which accounts for some of the differences between the codices and the Massoretic text. However, other differences which are found are simply a matter of translation; anytime you go from one language to another, there will be slight differences. It is just about impossible to go from one language to another in a word-for-word translation. For your edification, I will show you how the better translations handled this problem:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which] I command you today,...
<i>Brenton's Septuagint</i>	<i>If thou wilt hearken to the commands of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day,...</i>
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	For you must keep the commandments of Yahweh thy God which I am commanding thee to-day,...
KJV	In that I command thee this day...
NASB	...in that I command you today...
NEB	If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I give you this day,...
NIV	For I command you today...
NRSV	If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today...
Owen's Translation	...which I command you this day..
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...in that I am commanding thee to-day...

As you see, it is a matter of judgment. Some of these translations, e.g. the KJV, the NASB, and NIV, *Young's Literal Translation* tend to go with the Massoretic text. Several others recognize the problem and go with the text of the Septuagint at this point.

Interestingly enough, *you will multiply* is not in the passive stem, but in the common stem of the verb, the Qal stem. They will in their own deeds multiply their families and their produce and their wealth.

“And if your heart is turned away and you will not listen but you are drawn away and you [are caused to] do obeisance unto other gods and you serve them;

Deut. 30:17

“And if your heart is turned away and you no longer listen [to My Word] but you are drawn away [from Me] and you [are caused to] do obeisance to other gods and you serve them;

As has been dealt with, there are all kinds of idolatry. During the time of Moses, this was more overt with physical statues and idols being crafted; however, with the questionable exceptions today of plastic statues of Mary and pictures of a long-haired Jesus, this does not appear to be the form which idolatry has taken today. Today, people often cling to the idols of God which they were brought up with or, the most common human action, is they make God in their own image and perform what amounts to self-worship. What comes immediately to mind is a letter which I read many years ago in the editorial section of a newspaper where the writer stated that if Jesus Christ were around today (if he only knew!), He would be involved with world peace and animal rights. This is an extreme example and might seem even humorous to some, but this is the way that people make God in their own image. They take their own personal beliefs and value system, reckon this as absolute truth, and then attribute them to Jesus Christ or to God the Father. That is idolatry and self-worship combined. It is self-deification. The Israelite today has been turned away from the True God of the Universe. That God is their Creator and the One who led their ancestors through the desert—Jesus Christ.³⁵⁵ Today, the Israelite is idolatrous, some clinging to the traditions of their ancestors and others clinging to self-worship and still others ignoring their relationship to God altogether, being unable to philosophically piece together their chosen state with their history. We have spent enough time in God’s Word, particularly in the last few chapters, to where we can easily understand the chosen people and their relationship to God—the curses of Deut. 28 clearly map these out for us. Philosophically, we would have problems if the Jews had become entirely assimilated into today’s society; if the majority of them were in the Land of Promise; if they were peacefully co-existing in the Land of Promise; or if they had not faced severe persecutions and prejudice (followed by severe judgment upon those who persecuted them). If these things had not all been the case, we would have a serious theological problem. However, what has happened to the Jew is exactly as God has promised and exactly as we can project through the examination of Scripture.

“I [unequivocally] declare to you today that perishing, you will perish; you will not prolong [your] days upon the ground—which you are going over the Jordan to enter there to possess it;

Deut. 30:18

“I unequivocally declare to you today that you will perish—that is, you will not prolong your days upon the ground; the ground which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess;

This verse begins with the 1st person singular, Hiphil perfect of the verb *nâgad* (נָגַד) [pronounced *naw-GAHD*], which means *to make conspicuous* and also means *told, shew, professed, declared, expounded*. In all of these cases, something is being revealed to someone else, usually verbally. Since it is a clear, unequivocal revelation, that is how I have rendered it here. Strong’s #5046 BDB #616. The verb for perishing occurs in the Qal infinitive absolute and then in the Qal imperfect, indicating great emphasis. Remember, Moses has set before them life and death. **“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will certainly perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You will not live long on it, but you will be completely destroyed.”** (Deut. 4:26).

³⁵⁵ As a side note; Jehovah Witnesses used to make a big deal out of using the name Jehovah to refer to God. Obviously, this was a big deal, as this is how God wanted Himself to be known. He gave us a name by which to address Him in the Old Testament (it was certainly not Jehovah, exactly; and Yahweh and Y^ehowah are educated guesses). Why, when the Jews legalistically removed this name from the Old Testament and systematically replaced it with Adonai—why was the true name of God not a pillar of the teaching of Jesus Christ or of any of the Apostles? Why did they not restore the name of God? The answer is simple: the name of the God to Israel had become Christ Jesus.

“I caused to witness against you today the heavens and the earth—the life and the death I have placed to your face—the blessing and the cursing—and you will choose in the life to the purpose that you may live, you and your descendants;

Deut. 30:19

“I cause to witness against you today the heavens and the earth—life and death I have placed before you—blessing and cursing as well—therefore you must choose the life so that you may live, you and your descendants;

The verb for the word *to witness* is the word *ʿêd* (עָד) [pronounced *gaide*] and it is a word used outside the courtroom (Gen. 31:44 Ex. 22:13) as in (Deut. 17:6–7, 19:18). It is a statement given as truth, a solemn testimony or something which stands as a testimony or memorial to a fact (e.g., Gen. 31:48 Deut. 31:19). This is found in the Hiphil perfect and, the causative stem. Strong's #5707 BDB #729. In the ancient world, outside of Israel, the provisions of a contract were often solemnized by calling for the witness of their gods, whose names would be read off. Moses solemnizes this occasion by calling upon heaven and earth to stand as a witness of this contract. This would include all of mankind, all of the angels and demons and the Trinity.

Although the word for *choose* is followed by the *vêyth* preposition (it is usually found with a preposition), it is difficult to give that an English translation. We might write: **and you will place your choice in the life to the purpose that you will live, you and your descendants.**

“[You are] to love Y^ehowah your God; to listen [and obey] in His voice; and to cling to Him (for He [is] your life and length of your days) to live upon the ground which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob—to give to them.”

Deut. 30:20

“You are to love Y^ehowah your God; to listen [and obey] His voice; and your are to cling to Him for He is your life and the and He is the length of time given you to live upon the ground which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that He would give this land to them.”

The final verse is a string of Qal infinitive constructs, all preceded by the *lâmed* preposition. In the midst of the verse, they are reminded again why they are to live and to cling to and to listen to their God—because He is their life and He is the One Who determines the amount of time that they will spend in the land.

This is the verse of life. In the first half of this verse, Moses states the clear, abbreviated instructions of what God expects from them. **“For this is not some idle word to you; indeed, it is your life. And by this word, you will prolong your days in the land to where you are going to possess.”** (Deut. 32:47). **Y^ehowah is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear? Y^ehowah is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?** (Psalm 27:1). As Jesus said to Martha: **“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live, even if he dies.”** (John 11:25). **“I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”** (John 14:6).

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Deuteronomy 31

Deuteronomy 31:1–30

Outline of Chapter 31:

- vv. 1–8 **Moses encourages and says goodbye to the people**
- vv. 9–13 **Moses gives the Law to the priests and speaks to them**
- vv. 14–22 **God speaks to Moses and Joshua in the tent of meeting**
- vv. 22–29 **A summation of the last day of Moses and his final warning to the elders**
- v. 30 **Preface to Deuteronomy 32**

Introduction: In Deut. 29–30, Moses gave the contract which would stand between Israel and God. In Deut. 31, he has one more message, which will be brief. He will see that God’s Word is recorded and then God will speak to Moses one last time. Finally, Moses will commission Joshua to lead all of Israel. Moses also writes a song, the text of which is found in Deut. 32. There are four mentions of this song in this chapter (vv. 19, 21–22 and 30—which belongs with chapter 32) and one indirect allusion to it (v. 28). Finally, Moses gives a blessing to the twelve tribes in Deut. 33. His death will be recorded in Deut. 34. Somewhere in the last couple chapters, Moses will no longer be the one writing the Scripture, but Joshua will take over. It is my opinion, at this time, that Joshua began writing Scripture sometime in this chapter. Moses had a couple of items left—the song and the blessing—and Joshua wove these into their historical context in the last few chapters. This is not an opinion written in stone.

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
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Moses Encourages and Says Goodbye to the People

Literally:

Then Moses went and then he announced all of³⁵⁶ the words the these unto all of Israel;

Deut. 31:1

Smoother English rendering:

Then Moses went and made this announcement to all of Israel;

At first, because of the wâw consecutive, I thought that this was a continuation—a postscript—to the message of Moses from the previous two chapters. However, after the wâw consecutive, we have the word hâlak^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced *haw-LAHK^e*] which means *to go, to come, to walk*. It occurs about 500 times in the Old Testament in just about every stem. Here, it is in the Qal imperfect. The wâw consecutive sets up a time frame—first Moses did this and then he did that; and this verb indicates that he *went out* to speak to Israel. After his last oratory before the people, then Moses went and did something. This word does not mean that we returned to his tent, but there is a break of some sort here. That is, Moses stopped, as he had known for awhile what he had to say, thought for a moment, and then said it. Keil and Delitzsch describe the use of this verb as *he prepared himself*.³⁵⁷ You must understand that this is his last message to the people as a whole and even if he has remained standing in front of them, there is certainly some mental and emotional preparation for what he is about to say. Strong’s #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229. This verb seems to indicate a purpose, as the infinitive is not used, but the Piel imperfect of the verb dâ^bvar (דַּבַּר) [pronounced *daw^b-VAHR*], which means *to speak*. In the Piel, it is stronger and it can be translated *to promise, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. Strong’s #1696 BDB #180.

³⁵⁶ *All of is* found in the targum of Onkelos, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate.

³⁵⁷ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 978.

Then he spoke to them, “I [am] a son of 120 years old today; I am no longer able to go out and to come in; and Y^ehowah has said to me, ‘You will not go over the Jordan the this.’”

Deut. 31:2

Then he spoke to them, “I am 120 years old today; I am no longer able to go out and to come in; furthermore, Y^ehowah has said to me, ‘You will not go over this Jordan River’”

Although this will not be the last time that Moses speaks before the people, he is giving them his farewell, his swan song. We have seen the phrase *to go out and to come in* before (Num. 27:17 1Kings 3:7). The problem with Moses was not his strength or his capabilities. The meaning here is that he will no longer be able to discharge his duties among the Israelites.³⁵⁸ *Although Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim nor was his vigor abated* (Deut. 34:7). The problem was that the Israelites were going over into the land and he did not have the authority to lead them there. *But Y^ehowah had said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore, you will not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”* (Num. 20:12). *”Y^ehowah was angry with me also on your account, saying, ‘Not even you will enter there.’”* (Deut. 1:37). Recall fourth curse from Mount Ebal: *“Curse is he who misleads a blind person on the road.”* (Deut. 27:18a). The striking of the rock the first time was the judgment of Jesus Christ on the cross. The next time, Moses merely had to speak to the rock to receive the streams of living water. This was the gospel. This was the way of truth to the blind and Moses, by his actions, had obscured the gospel message.

Moses had three well-defined periods of time of his life, each roughly forty years long. The first forty years were spent in the palace of Egyptian royalty, where we was groomed to become the next pharaoh (Ex. 2:1–14 Acts 7:20–29 Heb. 11:23–27). Let me give you the last passage: *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s edict. By faith, Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, having concluded the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, because he kept seeing Him Who is unseen.* I emphasize this so that you know that Jesus Christ was Y^ehowah of the Old Testament. This is why our Lord never made any big deal out of the pronunciation of His Old Testament name—He had taken on a new name, which reflected His dual nature—Savior Messiah.

Back to the outline: Moses spent the next forty years in the Midian territory married to Zipporah and living with her family (Ex. 2:15–4:26 Acts 7:30–34 Heb. 11:23–24; see Ex. 7:7). His final forty years was spent leading the Israelites out of Egypt and up to the Land of Promise (Ex. 4:27–Deut. 31:2 Acts 7:34–44).

“Y^ehowah your God, He passing over before your faces; He will destroy all the nations the these from before your faces and you will dispossess them. Joshua—he will go over before your faces, as Y^ehowah has spoken.

Deut. 31:3

“Y^ehowah your God Himself—the One passing over before you—He will destroy all these nations from before you and you will dispossess them. Joshua—he will go over before you, as Y^ehowah has spoken.

Twice in this verse, Moses adds in the additional personal pronoun, *hûw’* (הוּא) [pronounced *hoo*], in reference to God. It is like saying God *Himself*, or it is analogous to our use of *Thee* and *Thou* in a way. That is, the sentence structure is just fine without the use of a personal pronoun; however, Moses often includes it when referring to God as a matter of linguistic reverence and respect. Moses also adds in this pronoun when referring to Joshua, which, again, is a matter of linguistic respect shown to Joshua. Strong’s #1931 BDB #214.

Yârash (יָרַשׁ) [pronounced *yaw-RAHSH*] means *to possess, to take possession of, to occupy [all] geographical area—by driving out the previous occupants, to inherit, to dispossess*. Strong’s #3423 BDB #439. It is found

³⁵⁸ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 331.

in the Qal perfect in this verse. A parallel passage is found in Deut. 7:1: “For Y^ehowah your God will bring you into the land where you are entering to possess it, and He will clear away many nations before you—the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites—seven nations greater and stronger than you.”

Moses is not going into the land. Moses is the only leader the people have known and one cannot overemphasize the importance of a great leader. Moses is the great man of the Old Testament, something which this generation probably did not recognize, but which historical perspective reveals. Moses here confers his rank as the leader of nation Israel upon Joshua. It is here that Joshua receives his public commission from Moses.

God was the one who chose Joshua; Moses did not. Moses may have wanted one of his sons, or perhaps a younger person than Joshua, or Caleb or one of Aaron’s sons, to succeed him. Moses had a few great men to choose from and it would have been a difficult choice to make. However, he did not need to make the choice; God made it for him. We may think that we are indispensable to God’s plan, but that is never the case. Moses, the great person of the Old Testament, a man without peer, still was replaced and God’s plan still went on just as God had planned it to.

“And Y^ehowah will do to them as that He did to Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorite—and to the land of them—whom He [caused to be] destroyed them.

Deut. 31:4

“And Y^ehowah will do the same to them as that He did to the kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og (and as He did to their land)—He caused them to be destroyed.

God has given the Israelite something very concrete to hold to. When moving to the Land of Promise, they defeated the two great kings, Sihon and Og, and took over their land, which was east of the Jordan and north-east of the Dead Sea. This was covered in Num. 21:21–26, 33–35.

“And Y^ehowah will place them before your faces and you will do to them as all of the commandment which I have commanded you.

Deut. 31:5

“And Y^ehowah will place them before you and you will do to them according to the entirety of the directive which I have given to you.

Nāthan (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*] means *give, place, put, set*; context should guide us. I generally prefer to stay with the last three words, as they tend to be its most common meaning. Strong’s #5414 BDB #678.

The sense here is that God will give these people over to Israel; He will place them before the faces of Israel and that it will be required of the Israelite to do exactly what God has commanded them to do—to destroy these degenerate peoples. “And when Y^ehowah your God delivers them before you then you will utterly destroy them. You will make no covenant with them and you will show them no grace.” (Deut. 7:2; see Deut. 20:10–20 for more detail). As has been mentioned several times in previous portions of the Torah, these people were a cancer. They had come to the point of maximum degeneracy. Their only function in life would be to rape, kill, manipulate and pull the Jews over to their dark side of degeneracy. The prisoner who rapes another male inmate is the sort of degenerate we are speaking of. The gang of fifteen-year-old kids who would kill a weaker person for a little dope—these are the kind of degenerates we are speaking of. Those whose religious life consists of sexual relations with a temple prostitute—these are the people of the Land of Promise. They are at the point of no return. No one, when cancer has invaded the body and the doctor has chosen to cut it out, pleads with the doctor to save as much tissue as possible which is living and might be good. The cancer patient wants every bit of cancerous tissue removed, if at all possible. Leaving this analogy, from our standpoint of human viewpoint, we may wonder what if there is just that one person who would be saved if he only had a chance to hear the truth. He has been in an environment of degeneracy and does not know there is another way. Not to worry. God can handle the one person, or the two or three exceptions to the mass degeneracy of the present people of the land. We will see that in the second chapter of Joshua—Rahab the prostitute.

“Be strong and be courageous; you [all] will not fear and you [all] will not be in dread from them because Y^ehowah your God, He—the one going with you—He will not [lose interest in you and] abandon you and He will not forsake you.”

Deut. 31:6

“Be strong and be courageous; you should not fear and you should not be in dread from them because Y^ehowah your God—the one going with you—He will not abandon you out of disinterest nor will He forsake you.”

God’s command to the Old Testament hero was to be strong and to be courageous. This was the command from Moses to the people of Israel (Deut. 1:29); to Joshua (Deut. 31:7, 23 and Joshua 1:6–7, 9, 18); to Solomon (1Chron. 22:13 28:20); and to the military officers of Hezekiah (2Chron. 32:7). It is not that difficult—all we have to do is to trust God that He has not lied to us and that He is right—then we lead our lives according to His guidance, which is gotten through the Word, not through some foolish experience. On the flip side of being ordered to be strong and courageous is being ordered not to be in fear and not to be in dread of those who are your enemies—even if they are inspired by Satan. God expected this lack of fear in Jeremiah (Jer. 8, 17) and Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:6 3:9). They are mentioned specifically because both of them lived in times of great social and political instability. The times that it would be natural to fear man would be those times of incredible unrest. Lawlessness exists to such a degree that your enemies feel little or no restraint with regards to attacks upon you. You have heard the saying, “Don’t kill me; I’m only the messenger.” Jeremiah and Ezekiel both had very unpopular things to say at a time of great political upheaval. It is human nature to blame and attack them as messengers rather than to take responsibility for the wrong that exists.

How can God command us to be strong and to be courageous? How can He command us not to fear our enemies? It is simple: God—Jesus Christ, the Creator of the Universe—**will never leave us nor will He forsake us—He is always with us, even unto the end of the Age** (Heb. 13:5 John 28:20). Throughout every step of the way in the wilderness, God was always with the Israelites. **Y^ehowah continually went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they may travel by day and by night. He did not remove the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people** (Ex. 13:31–32). **In God I have put my trust, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?** (Psalm 56:11). **For Y^ehowah will no abandon His people; nor will He forsake His inheritance** (Psalm 94:14).

A verb which is a little difficult here is the Hiphil imperfect of *râphâh* (רָפַח) [pronounced *raw-FAW*], a verb which means *to sink, to relax, to loosen and let drop* in the Qal. In the Niphal, it means *to be idle*. In the Hiphil it means *to loose interest in a project or a person and then abandon it (him), to forsake* (it means *leave me alone* in the Hiphil imperative). Here, the difference of the stems makes a difference in the meaning of the verb. Strong’s #7503 BDB #951. This verb has a synonym in the word *ʿâzaḅ* (אָזַב) [pronounced *ʿaw-ZA^BV*] which means *to leave, to forsake* in the Qal. Strong’s #5800 BDB #736. The first verb means that God has become bored, disinterested, distracted and abandons Israel for that reason. The second verb means that God deserts Israel in her time of need. This means to let Israel down when she needs God’s help the most. God has given His solemn promise not to forget about Israel or to loose interest in her; nor will be abandon her when she places her faith in Him. To the modern Jew, this is difficult to grasp, given all of the pain and suffering the Jewish race has gone through. To the person who believes in covenant theology (that is that the church is the true *spiritual* Israel and that God no longer deals with a nation or a people Israel) does not understand the strength and power of this verse. God has never abandoned Israel and never will. Israel has been put aside as a national entity and as a people temporarily, but God has not forgotten her and God has not abandoned her. The use of these two verbs in conjunction emphasizes this. God did not scrap His plans with Israel, having decided that this was just not working out with this nation of hard-headed people and it was just time to try a new plan. You have read Heb. 13:5, have you not? **Let your character be free from the love of money; keep on being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never not ever desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.”** How can you cling to that verse and think that God has abandoned the Jew? God has set Israel aside, but He has not abandoned her. Furthermore, any Jew who places his faith in Jesus Christ, the God of Israel, will receive greater spiritual blessing than any of his ancestors enjoyed.

One side-note: you will notice who is speaking in Deut. 31:5—it is Moses. He is speaking to the people of Israel (v. 1). But note the context of Heb. 13:5; there is no mention of Moses in the previous four verses; it is God who is mentioned in v. 4. In v. 5, we have the phrase, *He Himself has said*. This is the author of the book of Hebrews recognizing the full extent of the inspiration of the Old Testament.

Then Moses called for Joshua then he said to him before the eyes of all Israel, “Be strong and be courageous because you will go with the people the this into the land which Y^ehowah has sworn to their fathers to give to them and you, [even] you, will cause them to possess it.

Deut. 31:7

Then Moses summoned Joshua then he said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and be courageous because you will go with this people into the land which Y^ehowah has sworn to their fathers to give to them and you, will cause them to possess it.

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*] which simply means *call, proclaim, read*. By this verb, Joshua may or may not be in the audience. I would think that he would be in the front row and Moses has called him to stand up front before the people. Strong's #7121 BDB #894.

Several of the codices, the Samaritan, the Syriac and the Vulgate, rather than having *you will go with this people into the land*, read instead: *you will bring this people into the land*.

“And Y^ehowah, the one going before your faces, He will be with you; He will not abandon you and He will not forsake you. You will not fear and you will not be dismayed.”

Deut. 31:8

“And Y^ehowah is the one Who goes before you; He will be with you. He will not abandon you and He will not forsake you. You should not fear and you should not be dismayed.”

The command of Moses to Joshua was quite similar to the command from Moses to the people of Israel. It is very similar to what God told Jacob in his dream: **“And observe, I am with you and I will keep you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have said to you.”** (Gen. 28:15). No matter what situation you find yourself in, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you will not fear and you will not be dismayed. God will never abandon you and He will never forsake you. I don't pretend to know the reason for every human pain and crisis. Since everyone of us goes through periods of time where we are under great pressure, great pain, great emotional distress, and we often cry out to God to make it stop hurting, to take it away, to give us a better place. Let me list the reasons for whatever pain, pressure or distress you might have: (1) Discipline is the number one reason why most Christians suffer. They have been out of fellowship since three minutes after salvation—God has reached out to them in every way possible and they refuse to name their sins to Him to regain the filling of the Holy Spirit. (2) We are disciplined for doing wrong. We may be filled with the Holy Spirit on a regular basis, but we do something which is undeniably and clearly wrong and God begins to discipline us before we name our sin. (3) We name our sin to God, but the pain continues—this is suffering for blessing. (4) We might be under great pain and distress due to natural causes. The simple example: you touch a hot stove and your burn your hand. Right now, pick up a heavy object and drop it on your foot from a height of, say, five feet. It hurt, didn't it? You weren't being disciplined; it is a natural reaction. There are hundreds upon hundreds of human actions which bring upon a natural reaction which has nothing to do with discipline (although discipline may be included as a part of the package). A silly example: you find someone who is much bigger than you with a surly disposition and you slap them. There will be painful repercussions. Let's deal with the realistic examples: you are involved in pre-marital sex. Some natural repercussions are the blurring of your ability to determine who your right man or right woman is. This does not matter whether the person with whom you are having the pre-marital affair is your right person or not. A sexual involvement will cause you to be drawn much more closely emotionally to the person you are having sex with, even though they are the farthest thing in the world from your right person. You may be in the situation where God has brought your right person to you during that time period and you are too busy sleeping around to notice her (or him). You may be sleeping with your right person,

but so intent on find your right person, that your radar signals are always out there and you do not remain faithful to that person. The abuse of drugs and alcohol has a natural reaction apart from discipline. There are some people who should never drink a drop of alcohol and no one should partake in the use of drugs, unless prescribed by a doctor for a real physical illness. It is very possible for a Christian to become an alcoholic or a drug addict. All that is tied to those states goes with drug and alcohol usage. You might lose your family, your job, many of your brain cells; you might become arrested, physically debilitated, and suffer the exact things which an unbeliever suffers who does the same thing. All this happens apart from divine discipline. In life there are natural reactions to every action. Quite simply put, a Christian, even if God does not discipline him, will be under pain, pressure and distress if he, for instance, gets drunk every weekend. This pain and distress will increase as he increases his alcohol consumption. (5) Pain and suffering is sometimes the only way that God can reach the unbeliever. You might be an unsaved Catholic, an unsaved Methodist, or an unsaved Pentecostal (even an unsaved Baptist)—often the only way God can reach you is through intense pain and suffering. God has had to take some people out of this life under extremely painful diseases because it was the only way that they would turn toward Jesus Christ and believe in Him. (6) Sometimes you know so little doctrine and so little of an impact in your life, that only through your suffering and your simple faith in God can you glorify God in your life. This might be your only contribution toward the plan of God. (7) You might have great internal doctrinal resources and God is removing you in a painful way in this life as blessing or as a lesson to others. (8) Finally, the only time we can ever enjoy blessing in the midst of suffering and heartache is here on this earth. After death, there is no more sorrow, no more tears, the old things have passed away. Many of us have been under tremendous suffering and have been blessed by God in the midst of this and we know what this is all about. This suffering may have begun as discipline and it may have been totally undeserved suffering.

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Moses Gives the Law to the Priests and Speaks to Them

Then Moses wrote the Law the this and then gave it unto the priests, sons of Levi, the ones carrying the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah and unto all elders of Israel.

Deut. 31:9

So Moses recorded this Law and then he gave it to the priests, sons of Levi, the ones carrying the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah and unto all elders of Israel.

In this verse we have the verb *nâthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*] again, which means *to give, place, put, set*. The preposition which follows *nâthan* has a strong bearing on the way it should be understood. Strong's #5414 BDB #678. The preposition *ʿel* (עַל) [pronounced *el*] denotes direction and is often rendered *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding*. It makes little sense to say the Law was *placed* or *put into, unto* or *toward* the priests; so in this context, it would mean *to give*. Strong's #413 BDB #39.

We have the priests and the sons of Levi together here. Because of this close association, the priesthood has been called the Levitical priesthood. However, as we have seen, all priests are sons of Levi, but not all Levites are priests, in the technical sense. The verse is rendered quite literally, with the preposition *unto* occurring only prior to *the priests* and prior to *all of (the) elders of Israel*. The ones who carried the ark of the covenant were specifically the sons of Kohath. To remind you, Levi had three sons: Gershom, Kohath and Merari. Moses and Aaron, and therefore, the entire priesthood, were descended from the Kohathites. What it appears to me is that we have a relatively non-technical use of the word *priest* here as a person involved in God's specific work. These would be sons of Levi through Kohath, the family which carried the ark of the covenant (Num. 4:15 1Chron. 15:15). The tribe of Levi has always had a slightly different relationship God than did the rest of the tribes of Israel. **At that time, Y^ehowah set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah, to stand before Y^ehowah to serve Him and to bless in His name until this day** (Deut. 10:8). We would have several scrolls which make up the Law and it sounds as though various ones were entrusted to various people.

What I wanted to see here was Moses writing the Law in the Hiphil stem, which would have implied that Moses caused the Law to be written down. However, the word is *kâtha^{bv}* (כָּתַב) [pronounced *kaw-THAH^{bv}V*] and it means *to write, to write down, to chronicle, to record, to document*. Surprisingly enough, this is never found in the Old Testament in the Hiphil (causative) stem. Strong's #3789 BDB #507. Because of this, it is possible that Moses directed this to be recorded, but he most likely did it himself. It doesn't mean that he spoke before the people, confirmed Joshua, and then went back to his tent and wrote the whole doggone Law. We have already had other passages of Scripture indicating that he had written portions of the Law. Since *kâtha^{bv}* is in the Qal imperfect, the imperfect tense indicates that this was a process and not a completed action. As I will later make a case for, this is possibly the last portion of the Law written entirely by Moses. He probably finished with his last message to Israel from vv. 2–8 or he finished writing his last few words to the Levites (vv. 10b–13). Now, after that, Moses wrote a song and he wrote a blessing for each of the tribes of Jacob and this was possibly appended to Deuteronomy almost immediately by Joshua, along with some limited narrative.

The Law, which Moses gave to the Levites, was tied directly to the ark of God, which represented the work of Jesus Christ. They were to be the custodians of the Word of God, which few if anyone realized at that point that it had not been completed. Because the Word of God continued throughout the Age of Israel and was also written during the first portion of the Church Age, there are some who wrongly believe that God's direct revelation to man continues. Although the Bible records a great many miraculous occurrences and many direct confrontations with God, the majority of man's history has been without miraculous occurrences and without direct contact between man and God, apart from prayer and apart from God the Holy Spirit through God's Word. The Bible, being God's Word, will certainly be the record of God's dealings with mankind—therefore, there will be a greater preponderance of direct revelation from God to man and a greater preponderance of historically recorded miracles. However, this in no way implied that God is still giving divine revelation to us today. The canon was officially closed with the book of Revelation and the statement: **I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book** (Rev. 22:18–19). The additional revelations claimed by the charismatics are at times humorous, bordering on science fiction and tragic as to their drawing God's people away from His Word. For the kinds of experiences people have claimed to have had, please read the extremely informative *Charismatic Chaos* by John MacArthur, Jr.; Zondervan Publishing House, © 1992. Having only studied this material from a Scriptural standpoint, I was amazed and fascinated by the historical view of the charismatic movement.

Then Moses commanded them, to say, "Out of [or, from] the end of seven years in the pre-determined time of the year of release in a Feast of the Tabernacles;

Deut. 31:10

Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At of the end of seven years at the pre-determined time of the year of release during the Feast of the Tents;

Môw'êd (מוֹעֵד) [pronounced *moh-GADE*] means *a specific time, a pre-determined time, an appointed time* (Gen. 1:14 17:21 18:14 21:2). Strong's #4150 BDB #417.

Here begins a startling statement! Moses is at the end of his life; he only has a few more things to say to this people, and suddenly, one of the last things which he says involves the Sabbath Year, the year of release. **"At the end of every seven years you will release those indebted to you. And this is the manner of this release: every creditor will release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he will not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because Y^ehowah's release has been proclaimed."** (Deut. 15:1–2). Can you imagine that? Everyone who owes you money starts with a clean slate every seven years. The Jews did not keep this commandment of God. They would not release the debts of those who owed them. God will cite this as one of the reasons that Judah was removed from the land—for every Sabbath Year that they did not observe, that was one year which they spent outside of the land. And here, in this passage, one of the very last things which Moses says to the people concerns this year of release. **And those who had escaped from the sword, he [Nebuchadnezzar] carried away to Babylon; and they were slaves to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the Word of Y^ehowah by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept**

Sabbath until seventy years were completed (2Chron. 36:20–21). “For thus says Y^ehowah, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.’” (Jer. 29:10).

The Sabbath Year occurred every seven years, and during that year, there were all the feast days. What Moses would command concerned the Feast of Tabernacles. This is one of the three feasts where the males of Israel gathered in Jerusalem and lived in tents—temporary shelters. This called attention to the fact that we all inhabit bodies which are temporary shelters and that this portion of our existence is not the end-all, be-all of life. With the release of his debtors, the Israelite acknowledged that his ties to this world were less important than his ties to God. In the Feast of Tents, he further acknowledged the temporary character of his life on this earth.

“In a coming of all of Israel to appear [before the] faces of Y^ehowah your God [or, to see the faces of Y^ehowah your God] in the place which He chooses. You will read the Law the this in front of all of Israel in their [two] ears.

Deut. 31:11

“When all Israel comes to appear before Y^ehowah your God [or, to see the face of Y^ehowah your God] in the place of His choosing. You will read this Law in front of all Israel in their hearing.

This verse begins with the bêyth preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of bôw’ (בּוֹא) [pronounced *bo*] which means *to come in, to go, to go in*. Strong's #935 BDB #97. The bêyth preposition has the sense of proximity again, but here the proximity refers to time, as opposed to place. Proximity of time does not mean within a few minutes or a few hours. If the event spoken of, such as the exodus, took a long period of time (forty years), that period of time is treated as a block of time and proximity of time is relative to the length of time referred to (Deut. 4:25 23:5 Joshua 5:4 2Kings 2:1).³⁵⁹ Therefore, we could render this *when, during, while*. BDB #88. The next verb is the Niphal infinitive construct of râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-GAWH*] (which means *to see*). The Niphal is the passive stem, so râ`âh plus the lâmed preposition means *to appear*. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. According to *Ginsburg's Notes to the Hebrew Bible*, there is a mistake in the placing of the vowel points and this should be the active, not the passive of râ`âh, thus reading: *In a coming of all of Israel to see the face of Y^ehowah...* One reason for this is that *face* is not preceded by a preposition, as we usually find. It is preceded by the untranslated Hebrew word which indicates it is a direct object. A passive voice does not conjure up much of a direct object. Therefore, Ginsburg is probably correct here.

The last phrase gives us a feel for the difference between the way we would say something in Hebrew and how the equivalent phrase would be rendered in English. *Ears* is in the dual, but it carries with it the 3rd person masculine plural suffix. So we are talking about two ears and all of Israel. This is why most translations render this *in their hearing*.

This is the reason Moses gave a copy of the Law to the priests, the sons of Levi and to the elders. They were to read to Law to all of Israel. This fulfills the promise of Moses in Deut. 30:9–14 that the Law is very near to the Israelite. The place which He will choose is to be Jerusalem.

Barnes' Notes are instructive at this point: *It is not to be supposed that the whole of the Pentateuch was read, nor does the letter of the command require that it should be so. This reading could not be primarily designed for the information and instruction of the people since it only took place once in seven years; but was evidently a symbolic transaction, intended, as were so many others, to impress on the people the conditions on which they held possession of their privileges and blessings.*³⁶⁰ In other words, this was not the only time during which they heard the reading of the Law, just as when the gospel is given in the average church on Christmas and on Easter, that is not the only time the gospel is given. In this historical context, this was the contract which the Israelites were under. It was read in its entirety during the Feast of Tents during the Sabbath Year in order for them to be reminded of the contract which they had with God. Now and again, we need to hear the gospel again, especially soon after our salvation, so that we have a fuller grasp of what God has done on our behalf. No one fully

³⁵⁹ BDB, pp. 90–91. I didn't look up the references.

³⁶⁰ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, p. 331.

understands or appreciates the gospel at the first hearing, even if they believe in Jesus Christ at the first hearing. Spiritual growth increases our understanding and appreciation of the very foundation of our faith. Sometimes, we become oriented to the spiritual life by holding onto those most fundamental truths.

“Assemble the people—the men and the women and the little ones and your temporary visitor who [is] in your gates—so that they may hear and so that they may learn and they may fear [and respect] Y^ehowah your God; and they take responsibility to do all of [the] words of the Law the this.

Deut. 31:12

“Cause the people to assemble—the men and the women and the little ones and your temporary visitor in your towns—so that they may hear and so that they may learn and they may fear and respect Y^ehowah your God; and that they take responsibility to do all the words of this Law.

Assemble is the Hiphil imperative of qâhal (קָהַל) [pronounced *kaw-HAHL*] which means *to assemble*. Strong’s #6950 BDB #874. The imperative means this is an order to those to whom Moses gave the scrolls of the Law to. The Law was not just for racial Israel, but again it was to be read to all those who live in the Land of Promise.

In this verse and the next, there are a couple of codices which read *Y^ehowah their God*. This is found in v. 13 in the Samaritan, the Syriac and the Vulgate (as well as an early printed edition) and in v. 12 it is found that way in some individual codices and in four early printed editions (these were Hebrew Bibles printed between 1482 and 1525).

“And their sons who have not known may hear and may learn to fear [and respect] Y^ehowah your God all the days which you [all] are living upon the ground that you are passing over the Jordan there to possess it.”

Deut. 31:13

“And so that their children who have not known [Y^ehowah or the Law] may hear it and may learn to fear and respect Y^ehowah your God during all the time while you are living on the ground that you are passing over the Jordan to possess.”

At some point in time, God would become less and less visible to the people of Israel. What God did for Israel during the period of the exodus and what immediately followed was quite demonstrative. This generation and their fathers had seen miracles which were an everyday occurrence (e.g., the manna from heaven). It had gotten to a point where they had no appreciation for the unusual personal care under which they had been placed. However, their children would not have the same miracles. For particularly special periods of time—e.g. the calling out of a nation from the world; e.g., the incarnation of Jesus Christ—during these periods of time, mankind was exposed to extensive supernatural activity. It never made any real difference. That is, there were not tremendous believers during these periods of time and during the periods of time when there were fewer miracles do we have a lack of super-grace heroes.³⁶¹ Recall, it was those believers who were between the ages of twenty and forty who had seen some of the most spectacular miracles. **“And you will know this day that I am not speaking with your sons who have not known and who have not seen the instruction of Y^ehowah your God—His greatness, His might hand and His outstretch arm, and His signs and His works which He did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land.”** (Deut. 12:2–3). This indicates that the miraculous activity of God in the everyday lives of the Israelites would come to a halt. **Then Gideon said to him, “Oh dear sir, if Y^ehowah is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers wrote to us about, saying, ‘Did not Y^ehowah bring us up from Egypt?’ But now Y^ehowah has abandoned us and He has given us into the hands of Midian.”** (Judges 6:13). Why is this? Why does God continue with the incredible miracles? It is because His Word is more powerful and greater than His miracles. **We will not conceal them from their children but we will tell to the generation to come the praises of Y^ehowah and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.**

³⁶¹ A term borrowed from R.B. Thieme, which refers to mature believers in Jesus Christ.

For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel which He commanded our fathers, that they should teach them to their children that the generation to come might know, the children not yet born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and nor forget the works of God, but keep His commandments (Psalm 78:4–7).

What is the most incredible miracle of all is that all that occurs falls within the realm of God's plan. That is, in eternity past, God looked at every thought and every action and every motivation of every person who would ever live on this earth; He factored into this equation the meddling of Satan and his demon forces; He added into this plan every prayer that we would pray, and out of this came God's perfect plan. That is, whether we fail or succeed, whether we lead a life of great spiritual power or whether we are taken out of this life under the sin unto death, whether we take a left turn or a right turn the next time we drive down the road—all of that has been incorporated into God's perfect plan. **And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His pre-determined plan** (Rom. 8:28). Most of you have played chess where each piece has a different ability and you must keep track not only of 16 of your own men, but of 16 of the other player's men, along with all of the possible strategies of your opponent. And you are not allowed to just take out the king; you have to place him in a spot where he cannot move anywhere else. I have examined a few chess games from the newspapers and one game I recall replaying had the winner determined well over the moves prior to the end of the game. That is, what he did allowed his opponent no other choices for well over ten pairs of moves. To me, this is incredible genius to have all of this played out in one's head so far in advance. The chessboard of the world is far more complicated than that where people change sides periodically and half of the players are unseen. God has a genius beyond our capabilities of even having a tiny grasp that He has taken this chessboard and has played out this until Satan will have no options and no objections. We will fully understand why some people will be cast into the Lake of Fire and why some will be given eternal life, apart from any merit. At this point in time, there are very few Christians who are really comfortable with the Lake of Fire and eternal judgment. I have no problem understanding why a criminal should die for his crimes; but it would be much tougher for me to relegate someone to the Lake of Fire, no matter how evil. At the culmination of God's plan, all of this will come into clear focus and we will have no objections.

One of the many factors which allowed me to spend a great deal of time in the study of God's Word was my first computer and the availability of a marvelous word processing program, Word Perfect.³⁶² As the saying goes, sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. It was for me a daily miracle to be able to study and to record what I had learned. Prior to this, the information which I had studied and gathered was scattered in two or three boxes of notebooks, with no way to cross-reference and no way to easily edit or expand what I had already written down. Word Perfect allowed me to have a keyboard which would write in Greek, another which would write in Hebrew, and a third which not only wrote in English, but contained dozens of macros which have become indispensable to me when it comes to the study of God's Word. The point is that this Generation of Promise had seen great and tremendous miracles; they had observed first-hand the power of God. Their descendants would not have that same experience; however, they would have the Word of God, which is far greater.

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
Deuteronomy 31	Deuteronomy 32	Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

³⁶² Early on, I was probably more evangelistic about this word-processing program than I was about the gospel.

God Speaks to Moses and Joshua in the Tent of Meeting

And then Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Behold your days have come near to die. Call Joshua and station yourselves in the tent of meeting and I will commission him.” So Moses went and [he and] Joshua then stationed themselves in the tent of meeting.

Deut. 31:14

And then Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Look, the time of your death is approaching, so call Joshua and wait in the tent of meeting and I will commission him.” So Moses went and then he and Joshua waited in the tent of meeting

Yâtsa^bv (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TSAHB^v] means *to set oneself or to station oneself, to take a stand*. And it occurs twice in this verse; first in the Hithpael imperative and then in the Hithpael imperfect. Strong’s #3320 BDB #426. The Hithpael is the reflexive of the Piel (intensive) stem. What God planned to do to Joshua was the first person masculine singular, Piel imperfect (plus a 3rd person masculine singular suffix) of tsâwâh (צָוָה) [pronounced tsaw-WAW] and BDB lists its meanings as *to lay charge upon, give charge to, charge, command, order, commission, mandate*. Strong’s #6680 BDB #845.

And Y^ehowah appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud. Also, a pillar of cloud stood by the door of the tent.

Deut. 31:15

And Y^ehowah appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud. Also, a pillar of cloud stood by the door of the tent.

At the end of the verse, we have the preposition ‘al (עַל) [pronounced ah/], which generally means *upon, beyond, against*. However, with the verbs ‘amad (עָמַד) [pronounced ġaw-MAHD] [Strong’s #5975 BDB #763] and nitsa^bv (נִצָּח) [pronounced ni-TSAH^bV] [Strong’s #5324 BDB #662], it means *by*. Strong’s #5920, 5921 BDB #750. Here it is used with the former verb, which means *to stand*.

The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire were both visual apparitions of God’s Presence with Israel. *And it came to pass, whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and He would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of the tent. Thus, Y^ehowah used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When he returned to the camp, his servant, Joshua ben Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent (Ex. 33:9–11). Speaking of whom, Joshua was an incredible man, playing a role of second or third in charge for so long, yet doing so without the greed for power, without jealousy of Moses, in perfect humility. And just as great is Caleb, a man who stood in the minority with Joshua, telling Moses and all of Israel that, forty years ago, they were able to enter into the land and take it.*

Note that throughout the Old Testament, there are several references to God in the plural in several ways. The word for *God*, ‘ēlōhîm (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM] is plural and is rendered both as *God* and as *gods* as context determines. Strong’s #430 BDB #43. In the beginning of the book of Genesis, we had phrases such as, *Let us make man in our own image*. Here we have the manifestation of God inside the tent as well as outside the tent, standing by the door. The book of Isaiah is filled with what the unbeliever would call a dichotomy. *Thus says Y^ehowah, the Holy One of Israel, and His Fashioner (Isa. 45:11a) along with For thus proclaims Y^ehowah, Who created the heavens, “I am Y^ehowah and there is none else...there is no other God besides Me—a Righteous God and a Savior. There is none except Me.” (Isa. 45:18a, 18c, 21b). “I declared the former things long ago and they went forth from My mouth and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass...Certainly, My hand founded the earth and My right hand spread out the heavens...Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret. From the time it took place, I was there. And now Y^ehowah God has sent Me and His Spirit.” Thus proclaims Y^ehowah, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; “I am Y^ehowah your god, who teaches you to propheet, Who leads you in the way you should go.” (Isa. 43:3, 13a, 16–17). Revelation in the Old Testament was progressive; it was fulfilled and finished with the New Testament (notwithstanding the many personal revelations of various holy rollers who claim to have been taken up to heaven and have seen that flowers*

did not have water in them because Jesus is the living water;³⁶³ the three storage rooms, roughly 500-600 yards from the Throne Room of God, filled with spare human body parts just waiting for someone on earth to ask for them,³⁶⁴ and the beautiful horses in the heavens which hang out praising God³⁶⁵—however, all of that is utter nonsense and the fruit of an overactive imagination at best and the work of demonism at worst).

And Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Behold, you are laying down with your fathers. And the people the this will rise up and fornicate after gods of foreignness of the land where he is going there in his midst. And he will forsake Me and he will break My covenant which I have made with him.

Deut. 31:16

And Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Listen to Me, you are about to lay down with your fathers. While this people will rise up and fornicate with foreign gods of the land where they will go there among them [i.e., the foreign gods]. And they will forsake Me and break the contract which I made with them.

Moses *lying down* with his fathers is a euphemism for dying, as is *being gathered to your fathers* (Gen. 15:5 Deut. 32:50 2Sam. 7:12). What the people will do is *qûwm* (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means, in the Qal stem, *to stand, to rise up*. Strong’s #6965 BDB #877. This is in direct opposition with what Moses will do. Moses will lie down and they will rise up (again, notice 2Sam. 7:12). Once the people rise up, they will *zânâh* (זָנָה) [pronounced *zaw-NAW*], which means generally *to commit adultery* and less often *to commit fornication*. The key is the subject and the object. When the subject is married, they are committing adultery (Judges 19:4) and when they are not married, they are fornicating (which is committing adultery prior to marriage). This is clearly illustrated by Hos. 4:13: **Therefore, your daughters fornicate and your daughters-in-law commit adultery** (a different word than *zânâh*). This word is most often used of Israel going to other gods besides Yahweh (Ex. 34:15 Lev. 20:5 Judges 6:33). Strong’s #2181 BDB #275. What follows *zânâh* is the preposition *’achar* (אַחַר) [pronounced *ahkh-AHR*] and it means *behind, after*. The verb *fornicate* and the preposition *after* do not sound correct together; what is involved here is they will chase after the foreign gods with the intention of fornicating with them. This is where the Jews are now—in spiritual adultery. They are chasing after gods other than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; they are chasing after religious legalism as opposed to Jesus Christ or they have rejected God altogether, being confused by their history and the world itself. That is the long-term view. The Israelites began almost immediately pursuing false gods. As soon as Joshua had died and they had been in the land for a few years, we read: **Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of Y^ehowah and worshipped the Baals; and they forsook Y^ehowah, the God of their fathers, Who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from the gods of the peoples who were around them, and they bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked Y^ehowah to anger. So they forsook Y^ehowah and served Baal and the Ashtaroth** (Judges 2:11–13; see Judges 2:17 10:6, 13 1Kings 18:18 as well). The Israelites trust in gods who are empty and can hold nothing. **“For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to fashion for themselves cisterns—broken cisterns, that cannot hold water** (Jer. 2:13).

What I would have expected here is *râphâh* (רָפָה) [pronounced *raw-FAW*], a verb which means, in the Hiphal, *to lose interest in a person or a project and therefore abandon that person or project, to forsake*. Strong’s #7503 BDB #951. What we have instead is *’âza^v* (אַזָּא) [pronounced *aw-ZA^v*] means *to leave, to forsake*. Strong’s #5800 BDB #736.

You will notice throughout this verse and most of the next that God speaks of the Israelite as one person, rather than as a nation of people. This singular that is found literally in this verse refers back to the noun *people*, which is in the masculine singular. In the English, we tend to refer to Israel as a group of people and use the third person plural.

³⁶³ Dr. Richard Eby on an April 11, 1977 charismatic television program originating in Los Angeles.

³⁶⁴ Roberts Liardon from his book *I Saw Heaven*, Tulsa, Harrison House, 1983, pp. 6, 19.

³⁶⁵ Mary Stewart Relfe, “Interview with Dr. Percy Collett”, *Relfe’s Review* (Report #55, August 1984), p. 7.

God says this with Joshua present, because idolatry will be one of the greatest temptations to Israel and Joshua is to be fully aware of their predilections. Joshua will remain on the straight and narrow, and will warn of this himself at his own swan song (Joshua 23:15–16 24:31).

“And in that day, my anger will be kindled against him and I will forsake them and I will hide My faces away from them and it will come to pass to devour and many evils and troubles will find him and he will say in the day the that, ‘[Is] it not because that my God [is] not in my midst, the evils the these have found me?’

Deut. 31:17

“And in that day, my anger will be kindled against him and I will forsake them and I will hide My face away from them and they will be consumed and many evils and troubles will find him and he will say in that day, ‘Is it not because that my God is not in my midst that these evils have found me?’

You no doubt noticed the difference in the person, the first verb being followed by a preposition with a masculine singular suffix, but the next two suffixes being masculine plural. I do not know the reason for that. Next, when God turns His face away from them, what will happen is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] simply means *to be*. Without a specific subject and object, it often means *and it will come to pass*. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. This is followed by the lamed prefixed preposition and the Qal infinitive construct of *ʿâkal* (אָכַל) [pronounced *aw-KAHL*], which means *to eat*. However, it is often found used figuratively for *devour, consume, destroy*. Strong's #398 BDB #37. These two together sound a little stilted, so let me give you what others have translated:

- The Amplified Bible* ...and I will...hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured...
- The Emphasized Bible* ...and I will...hide my face from them and they shall be consumed... (= KJV = NASB)
- NEB They will be an easy prey...
- NIV ...I will hide my face from the, and they will be destroyed.
- NRSV ...I will...hide my face from them; they will become easy prey.
- Owen's Translation ...and hide my face from them and they will be devoured...
- Young's Lit. Translation* ...and I have...hidden My face from them, and it hath been for consumption...

Either the translation is a bit strained, or the translators ignored the masculine singular subject, the prefixed preposition and the Qal infinitive and gave their own take on this verse.

One of the verbs found twice in this verse is *mâtsâʿ* (מָצָא) [pronounced *maw-TSAW*] and it means *to attain to, to find, to detect*. Strong's #4672 BDB #592. We first find this verb in the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix. Both of these previous verses are difficult to unravel. Some translations tend to go quite free-form here and others are quite literal. Let me give you a few examples of both camps:

- The Amplified Bible* And the Lord said to Moses, Behold, you shall sleep with your fathers and this people will rise up, and play the harlot after the strange gods of the land where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me, and break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?
- The Emphasized Bible* The said Yahweh unto Moses, Lo! Thou art about to sleep with thy fathers,—and this people will rise up, and go away unchastely after the gods of the foreigners of the land into the midst of whom they are entering, and I will forsake me and break my covenant which I solemnized with them. Then will mine anger kindle upon them in that day and I will forsake them and will hide my face from them, and they shall be consumed, and many calamities and misfortunes shall find them

	out,—and they will say, in that day, Is is not because my god is not in my midst, that these calamities have found me out?
NASB	And the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they shall be consumed, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them; so that they will say in that day, ‘Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?’”
NEB	The Lord said to Moses, ‘You are about to die like your forefathers and this people, when they come into the land and live among foreigners, will go wantonly after their gods; they will abandon me and break the covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger will be roused against them, and I will abandon them and hide my face from them. They will be an easy prey, and many terrible disasters will come upon them. They will say on that day, “These disasters have come because our god is not among us.”’
NIV	And the Lord said to Moses: “You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, ‘Have not these disasters come upon us because our god is not with us?’”
Young's Lit. Translation	And Jehovah saith unto Moses, ‘Lo, thou art lying down with thy fathers, and this people hath risen, and gone a-whoring after the gods of the stranger of the land into the midst of which it hath entered, and forsaken Me and broken My covenant which I made with it; and Mine anger hath burned against it in that day, and I have forsaken them, and hidden My face from them, and it hath been for consumption, and many evils and distresses have found it, and it hath said in that day, Is it not because that my God Is not in my midst—these evils have found me?’

As you can see, *Young's Translation* and *The Emphasized Bible* are both quite literal, whereas the *New English Bible* is the furthest from the literal meaning, and the other translations fall in between somewhere. The key to the disposition of Israel is their positive or their negative volition. “Y^ehowah is with you when you are with Him; and if you seek Him, He will allow you to find Him. However, if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.” (2Chron. 15:2b). “As for you, my sons Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for Y^ehowah searches all hearts and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; however, if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.” (1Chron. 28:9). “Surely as a woman treacherously departs from his right man, so you have dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel,” declares Y^ehowah (Jer. 3:20). God hiding His face from Israel is equivalent to forsaking them (Psalm 13:1 27:9 Ezek. 39:23, 29).

“And, in hiding, I will hide My faces [from them] in the day the that on account of all the evil which he has done; because he has faced toward other gods.

Deut. 31:18

“And I will certainly hide My face [from them] in that day on account of all the evil which he has done; because he has turned toward other gods.

We have a play on words here, something which we often find when God is the speaker. This play on words is generally lost in most English translations. God hides His face, the word face being pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEN*]. Strong's #6440 BDB #815. God hides His face because the Israelite has turned his face toward other gods. We find the prepositional phrase *from them* not in the Massoretic text but in the Samaritan, the Syriac, the Septuagint, the targum of Onkelos and the targum of Jonathan.

The verb is pânâh (פָּנָה) [pronounced *paw-NAWH*], which means *turn, to turn away from, to turn toward*. The key to this verb is what occurs with the face; *it turns away, it turns toward*. Strong's #6437 BDB #815.

“And, therefore, [you all] write for yourselves the song the this and [you] teach it [to] the sons of Israel. Put it in their mouths in order that the song the this becomes for Me a witness against the sons of Israel.

Deut. 31:19

“Now, therefore, write this song for you [all] and teach it to the sons of Israel. Teach them to sing it so that this song becomes for Me a witness against the sons of Israel.

Again, there is a playful use of the language. The song is written *to or for all of Israel* (this is the prefixed lâmed preposition plus the 2nd person masculine plural suffix). Once Israel learns how to sing the song, then the song becomes *to or for God* (lâmed plus the 1st person singular suffix). Moses writes this song *to Israel and it is for Israel*. When Israel learns the song, it is *to God or for God*.

With this verse, we have the first mention of this song of Moses, which will take up the lion’s share of the next chapter. It will also be mentioned in vv. 21–22, 30. Speaking of which, although most of the Bible attributes this song to Moses, apparently Joshua had some hand in it. The imperative *write* is in the 2nd masculine plural; however, the verbs *teach* and *put* are both in the 2nd person, masculine singular. Therefore, both Moses and Joshua will have a hand in writing the song and Moses will be the one to teach it to the sons of Israel. Possibly Joshua wrote the music, long long to us, and Moses wrote the words. A case could be made for Moses being the sole author, as Joshua was only commanded to write the song with Moses—there is no indication that he did. It is much easier to learn a song than it is to learn, for instance, Scripture which is in prose. A song will have a melody and a rhythm of words. God did not expect many in Israel to flock to His Law, to study it or to do it. However, as the Israelites learned and sang this song, it rolled off their tongue as a witness against them. Paul himself wrote of the importance of this: **Let the Word of Christ saturate you, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God** (Col. 3:16).

It is important that we recognize our shortcomings, that there is this witness against us. This is mentioned in the Bible several times. **Because since the creation of the world, God’s invisible attributes, His eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse** (Rom. 1:20). On a human scale, this is easy to understand. When you discipline a child, it means nothing to discipline them without an explanation. If they are not told in clear terms what it was that they have done wrong, then the discipline is cruelty. Now, of course, there are times when a child recognizes what they have done wrong and this is not as imperative; however, even then, it is better to have their wrongs reiterated rather than assumed as known.

“Because I brought him into the land which I swore to his fathers—[a land] flowing with milk and honey—and he will eat and he will be satiated and he will grow fat and he will turn [to face] other gods and he will serve them and he will despise Me and he will break my covenant.

Deut. 31:20

“Because I brought them into the land which I solemnly promised to their fathers—a land which flowed with milk and honey—and they will eat until they are satiated and then they will grow fat and they will turn [to face] other gods—consequently, they will serve them and they will despise Me and they will break my contract.

Again, a primary difference between the English and the Hebrew is that God refers to each and every individual Israelite in the singular and we tend to group them together and refer to them in the plural.

Thieme taught a cycle which a people will go through—something which was not original with him. A people begin in slavery, they place their faith in God and fight to gain their independence. The strength of character and courage involved in fighting for one’s independence carries over into character in business and a strong work ethic and a strength of family. This leads to prosperity and wealth, which is passed down to their children, who are kept

from the hardships which they faced. Their children become indolent, proud, arrogant, rebellious, morally corrupt, greedy, godless, unable to endure hardship. This leads to degeneracy and weakness until they are conquered by another people who desire their wealth, plunging them into slavery again. **They became satiated in their pasture; and being satiated, their heart became proud; therefore, they forgot Me** (Hos. 13:6). **“So their sons entered and possessed the land. And You subdued the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, before them. And You gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, to do with them as they desired. And they captured fortified cities and a fertile land. They took possession of houses full of every good thing, hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive groves, fruit trees in abundance. So they ate, and were filled and grew fat. Then they reveled in Your great goodness. But they became disobedient and rebelled against You and cast Your Law behind their backs; and they killed Your prophets who had admonished them so that they might return to You. And they committed great blasphemies. Therefore, You delivered them into the hand of their oppressors who oppressed them.”** (Neh. 9:24–27a; and then Nehemiah repeats the cycle again in vv. 27–29). These are the classic cycles of history which the Israelites went through several times. Therefore, Moses warned them: **“Then it will come to pass when Y^ehowah your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give to you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses filled with good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you will eat and become satiated. Then watch yourself, so that you do not forget Y^ehowah Who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves.”** (Deut. 6:10–12). **“And it will come to pass if you ever forget Y^ehowah your God, and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish—just like the nations that Y^ehowah makes to perish before you, so you will perish, because you would not listen to the voice of Y^ehowah your God.”** (Deut. 8:19–20).

“And it will come to pass when many evils and troubles find him and the song the this will testify to his faces for a witness, because it [the song] is not forgotten out of [the] mouth of his seed—because I know the purpose which he is forming today before I bring him into the land that I have promised [unto their fathers].”

Deut. 31:21

“And it will come to pass when many evils and troubles find them that this song will testify against them as a witness, because this song will still be sung by their descendants. You see, I already know the plans they are forming today even before I bring them into the land that I have promised to their fathers.”

We have a conjunction used thrice in this verse: *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for, because*. It is used as an explicative, an explanatory, a justificatory or a causal conjunction. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. We have the 3rd person feminine singular (referring to the song), Qal perfect of *ʿânâh* (אָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*] and the official BDB definition is *to answer, to respond*. It can often refer to *words which stand as a witness against someone* (Deut. 31:21 Ruth 1:21 2Sam. 1:16). It can also mean testimony given in a court of law. In this case, it is a song which stands as a witness against them. The song is a witness against them in the appeal trial of Satan. Strong's #6030 BDB #772.

We have a direct object, substantive noun here: *yêtsér* (יָצַר) [pronounced *YAY-tser*], which is generally translated *imaginings* in the KJV. It refers substantively to pottery shaped and formed by a potter. More ethereally, it means *purpose*. Strong's #3336 BDB #428. The verb which goes with this is the Qal active participle of exactly the verb you would expect: *ʿâsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*], which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. God knows the heart of man. **But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He** knew all men; and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man (John 2:24–25). **The heart is more deceitful than all else and it is desperately sick; who can understand it? I, Y^ehowah, search the heart and I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the production of his deeds** (Jer. 17:9–10).

The last phrase, *to their fathers*, is found in the Samaritan, the Septuagint and the Syriac; the Massoretic text lacks this phrase. It is the opinion of Ginsburg that the phrase be retained (to which I will concur).

The Israelites do not even necessarily know their future plans, but God does. God knows exactly what they will do upon the death of Moses. Some people are quite confused about the Book of Judges because there is all this evil in it. We keep looking for all of these marvelous heroes like Abraham, Moses, Joshua or Caleb and we are faced with men like Gideon and Sampson whose spiritual growth exploits are less than exemplary. There will be seven years of conquering of the Land of Promise; the land will be divided up between the tribes; Joshua will die; and then the Israelites will go into this great time of apostasy wherein no one does anything right. Things get so bad in one area that the only person man enough to be a leader is a woman. This is not a slam against women; what this means is that when there are no males in an area with enough spiritual guidance and growth to take a position of authority and the greatest leaders are female—that is a sign of great apostasy. God's order of authority places the man over the woman; however, there are periods of time in man's history where the best man for the job is a woman. This means that there are millions of men among whom there cannot be found even one man strong enough to lead and to inspire and to motivate as well as a woman in power. This does not denigrate great women of leadership, such as Margaret Thatcher or Golda Meier—women can be great leaders. It just means that they had to lead because there are no men with their equivalent capabilities.

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A Summation of the Last Day of Moses and His Final Warning to the Elders

So Moses wrote the song the this in the day the that and then he taught it [to] the sons of Israel.

Deut. 31:22

So Moses wrote this song that very day and then he taught it to the people of Israel.

This song will be the bulk of the next chapter. There was an oral tradition in Israel, but it was not the memorization of the entire Law so that it did not have to be written down. We have had many references to the writing down of the Law by Moses. This would be a song that the people would learn from their youth and they would sing it often. This song, if they learned nothing more of the Law, would stand as an eternal witness against them.

Then He commissioned Joshua ben Nun and then He said, “Be strong and be courageous because you will bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them. And I—[even] I—will be with you.”

Deut. 31:23

Then He commissioned Joshua ben Nun and said, “Be strong and courageous because you will bring the sons of Israel into the land which I have promised to them. Consequently, I will be with you.”

This still refers to Moses and Joshua in the tent of meeting where God has been speaking to them both (vv. 16b–21); and this is what God had said to Joshua.

Then it came to pass as a finishing of Moses to a writing of [the] words of the Law the this upon a scroll even to their completion;

Deut. 31:24

Then it came to pass as Moses finished writing the words of this Law on a scroll to their completion;

This verse begins with the wâw consecutive and the Qal imperfect of hâyâh (הַיָּאֵה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] which means, without a specific subject and object, *then it came to pass*. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. This is immediately followed by the Piel infinitive construct of the verb kâlâh (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which means *to complete, to bring an end to, to finish*. Strong's #3615 BDB #477. This verb is preceded by the prefixed preposition kaph, which means *like, as, according to*. BDB #453. After the proper noun for Moses, we have the

verb *to write* in the Qal infinitive construct, preceded by the lamed preposition. The literal translation of all this is moderately cumbersome: **Then it came to pass as a finishing of Moses to a writing of.**

Then Moses wrote this Law and then he gave it to the priests the sons of Levi, the ones bearing the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah, and to all the elders of Israel...then it came to pass as Moses finished writing the words of this Law on a scroll until they were completed that Moses commanded the Levites—those carrying the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah—saying, “Take a scroll of this Law and place it out along the side of the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah, your God, and it will be there against you for a witness.” (Deut. 31:9, 24–26). Although Rotherham believes that Moses first spoke the words of the Law and then wrote them down, I would think that a careful reading of this would indicate that both verses refer to the same action. More of a case could be made more for Joshua picking up the writing chores at this point in time (at v. 24), accounting for the repetition of the action. I would think that some editing occurred in these final chapters. Not editing out, but adding in a comment or two to the writing which Moses did. In other words, I would think it likely that Joshua finished up the final few chapters of this book, although the bulk of the writing, i.e., the song and the blessing, came directly from the hand of Moses.

In a comment concerning v. 27, *Barnes Notes* writes: *Hence, v. 24 and the rest of the book (with the exception of the song, v. 19) must be regarded as a kind of appendix added after Moses' death by another hand; though the Blessing (xxxiii.) is of course to be regarded as a composition of Moses.*³⁶⁶

Keil and Delitzsch wrote: *...if Moses finished the writing of the law after he had received instructions from the Lord to compose the ode, what he wrote will reach to v. 23; and what follows from v. 24 onwards will form the appendix to his work by a different hand. The supposition that Moses himself inserted his instructions concerning the preservation of the book of the law, and the ode which follows, is certainly possible, but not probable. The decision as to the place where it should be kept was not of such important as to need insertion in the book of the law, since sufficient provision for its safe keeping had been made by the directions in vv. 9ff.; and although God had commanded him to write the ode, it was not for the purpose of inserting it on the Torah as an essential portion of it, but to let the people learn it, to put it in the mouth of the people...For all that follows with certainty ...is that Moses himself handed over the ode to the priests with the complete book of the law, as a supplement to the law, and that this ode was then inserted by the writer of the appendix in the appendix itself.*³⁶⁷

For some reason, neither Keil and Delitzsch nor Barnes refers to Joshua as the author at this point. However, we read in Joshua 24:26a: **And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God.** We will see a similar, but shorter, addendum to the book of Joshua when we get to that book.

**Then Moses commanded the Levites—
those carrying [the] ark of [the] covenant
of Y^ehowah, to say,** Deut. 31:25

**Then Moses commanded the Levites who
carried the ark of the covenant of
Y^ehowah, saying,**

Levites are modified by the masculine plural construct, Qal active participle of the verb *nâsâ* (נָסָא) [pronounced *naw-SAW*], which means *to lift, to take, to bear, to carry*. Strong #5375 BDB #669. The verb is used as a plural noun to describe this branch of the Levites by their duties. This is generally the family of Kohath. However, we need to be careful at this point. The priests were the true guardians and bearers of the ark of the covenant and of all the holy vessels. In fact, the priests from the line of Aaron themselves would carry the ark from time to time during a time of greater spiritual import. For instance, when all of Israel crossed over the Jordan River for the first time, the priests carried the ark (Joshua 3:3 4:9–10); when the soldiers of Israel circled around Jericho (Joshua 6:6, 12 8:33); and when Solomon's temple was dedicated (1 Kings 8:3). Recall that the people of Israel and the ark were on the move a great deal previously, spending a few years in constant transit. So, during that period of time, the Kohathites had the duty of carrying the ark. However, this was only after the priests carefully

³⁶⁶ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. II, p. 333. Although I have no emotional need that any expositor of the past concurs with my exegesis, it is always nice to know when someone, after careful exegesis, has come up with the same conclusions as I have when it comes to matters which are not directly stated.

³⁶⁷ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 983.

prepared all of the holy vessels and the ark so that there would be no way for the Kohathites to directly touch any of these things. The Kohathites were not even allowed to put the ark onto the poles or to slide the poles into the ark as any contact between a man and the ark would result in death (Num. 4:6, 15). The priests wrapped up all of the holy items and then delivered them to the Kohathites to carry. What we need to do at this time is to examine the **Doctrine of the Levites—not finished yet!!**

“Taking a scroll of the Law the this and you [all] will place it out along the side of [the] ark of [the] covenant of Y^ehowah, your God, and it will be there against you for a witness.

Deut. 31:26

“Take a scroll of this Law and place it out along the side of the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah, your God, and it will be there as a witness against you.

Here you might fall prey to some confusion. We have already been told to place the tablets of the Law inside the ark. However, here the book of the Law is placed outside and along side the ark. The words used are the *min* (מִן) [pronounced *min*], preposition which denotes separation (*away from, out from, out of from*) (Strong's #4480 BDB #577) and the masculine singular construct of *tsad* (צֶדַח) [pronounced *tzahd*], which means *side*. Strong's #6654 BDB #841. With both of these words used together, there is no possibility that this means anything but outside the ark.

Also, worthy of note, the first verb *take* is not in the Qal imperative but in the Qal infinitive absolute. That is, it is not a command. The verb *place* is in the Qal perfect; it is not a command either. The two tablets of the Law, those received on Mount Sinai, the Ten Commandments, will be placed inside the ark (1Kings 8:9). Those are two copies of the same thing. One is for God and one is for man, as a contract should be. When a contract between two parties has been agreed to and signed, each party receives a copy or an original of what they have signed. So those two tablets represent the contract of Law between God and man, ratified by both parties and kept inside the ark of the covenant. What Moses had placed along side the ark was the Law which he had written. Because of the restrictions as to who could go near the ark, this would have been taken care of by the priests—more than one, as there were probably several scrolls. It had been specified that the king of Israel, who did not exist at that time, would make a copy of the Law for himself to study. We don't know whether the Torah was placed in rolls inside earthen jars or in a chest, as *Barnes' Notes* suggests. We do know that at some point in time, in their history, the Torah got misplaced, forgotten, or some such, as it was rediscovered in 2Kings 22:8: **Then Hilkiah, the high priest, said to Shaphan, the scribe, “I have found the book of the Law in the house of Y^ehowah.” And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan who read it.**

Since we have the mention of Moses giving the responsibility of placing these scrolls next to the ark, this means that he did the physical writing of these scrolls himself (or had a *scribe* do that—whatever their equivalent would be); but I would expect, as such a person is never mentioned in all of the Torah, that Moses wrote the entirety of the Law himself, copying what had already been collected as the book of Genesis, and Joshua finishing the last four chapters of Deuteronomy, weaving a small amount of narrative between the song of Moses and the blessing of Moses. Now Moses handed the book over to the priests from the line of Aaron, who are Kohathites, and who are Levites. Furthermore, there was more to this than Moses handing the book of the Law to several men to place it next to the ark. He is handing off the Word of God to them to preserve it and to teach it. He could have given it to Eleazar and told him to place it next to the ark. The sense to be taken here is that he has given them the Law to trust into their care. What Moses said in vv. 10–13 indicates that giving the Law to this group of Levites was for more than just carrying over into the Holy of Holies and placing it next to the ark. What is recorded in vv. 10–13 should not be understood as a limitation or as the only thing that Moses said to this group. It is all that is recorded.

“For I, [even] I, know your rebellion and your stiffness of the neck. Behold, in being yet alive with you [all] today, rebelling you [all] have been against Y^ehowah—and also indeed after my death.

Deut. 31:27

“For I certainly know about your rebellious nature and your stubborn inflexibility. Listen, while alive with you, you have been in continual rebellion against Y^ehowah—and this will be even more pronounced after my death.

Since the Hebrew verbs have a person and number with them, it is unnecessary to add in an additional pronoun to indicate number or person. When that is done, as it is here, emphasis is indicated. Moses makes the point that while he has been alive, the Israelites have been rebellious and stiff-necked (negative toward God’s Word and God’s plan). This is with his excellent leadership through the guidance of Y^ehowah the God of Israel. They received a regular influx of divine viewpoint. How much worse will they become after his imminent death?

In this verse we have one unusual factor: three consecutive conjunctions. After the name of God, we have the wâw conjunction, which is a simple *and*. This is followed by `aph (אֶפֶס) [pronounced *ahf*] and it means *also, yea, even, indeed*. Strong’s #637 BDB #64. Then we have kiy (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong’s #3588 BDB #471.

Moses testified to the stubbornness of the Israelites several times: **“It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations Y^ehowah your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which Y^ehowah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Know, then, not because of your righteousness Y^ehowah your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people. Remember, do not forget how you provoked Y^ehowah your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against Y^ehowah.”** (Deut. 9:5–7; see also Ex. 32:9 Deut. 9:13 10:16 32:20 2Kings 17:14 Neh. 9:26)

“[Cause to] assemble unto me all of [the] elders of your tribes and your officers and I, [even] I will speak in their ears [all]³⁶⁸ the words the these and I will cause to witness against them the heavens and the earth.

Deut. 31:28

“Assemble before me all the elders of your tribes and your officers and I will speak these words of this song in their hearing and I will cause the heavens and the earth to witness against them.

This verse begins with the 2nd person plural, Hiphil imperative of qâhal (קָהַל) [pronounced *kaw-HAHL*] which means to *assemble*. Somewherer between this chapter and Deut. 34, the authorship of this book changes. Moses has written the song already, which is the next chapter. It is possible that he has written the blessing already, which is Deut. 33. It might be that at this point in time, Joshua is beginning to record these things, inserting the writing of Moses where they belong. It is possible that the blessings spoken from Moses in Deut. 33 are spoken extemporaneously, and recorded by Joshua (even being that long, if Moses spoke slowly and the one recording his words is writing only in Hebrew consonants, it would be possible to get it in one take). I call your attention to the possible change of authorship somewhere around here so that we might possibly even pinpoint it. The easy call is that Deut. 34 begins with a new author writing the postscript to the life of Moses prior to beginning the chapter of his own life.

So Moses has just finished the scroll of the Law (there would be several scrolls) and he calls upon the Levites to place this next to the ark of the covenant. Then he asks for them to assemble the elders and the officials to cause the heavens and the earth to testify against them. We have already been told that the song which he will teach them will be a witness against Israel (Deut. 31:19), so this is what Moses intended to teach them. As Moses has already told this people, **“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will certainly perish quickly from the land where you are going over to Jordan to possess it. You will not live long on it, but you will be utterly**

³⁶⁸ *All* is found in one early printed edition of the Hebrew Bible and in the targum of Onkelos and the targum of Jonathan.

destroyed.” (Deut. 4:26; see also 30:19). As a side note, related to authorship: Moses has used this phrase three times. It would seem that if another author had written this book, then we would find these Mosisms in other books. The closest we come is Gen. 31:50 Job 20:27 Psalm 50:4 Isa. 1:2 26:21 34:1. In these passages, we have a place where an author, so disposed, could have written something along the lines of *calling heaven and earth to witness against* the Israelite—but they did not! This indicates that the author of Deuteronomy was not the author of any of the other subsequent books of the Bible, although it would seem as though a phrase like this one would have found its way into many of the books, particularly if written by the same author. We already know that Moses wrote the last four books of the Torah and that other authors wrote the remainder of the Old Testament; this just gives us additional linguistic proof.

“For I know [that] after my death that in spiritual corruption you [all] will be caused to become spiritually corrupt and you will depart from the way which I have commanded you and the evil will befall you in [the] latter end of the days for you will do the evil in the eyes of Y^howah to provoke Him to anger in the work of your hands.”

Deut. 31:29

“For I know that after I have died that you will undoubtedly become spiritually corrupt and you will depart from the teaching which I have commanded you and that evil will come upon you in the latter days for you will do the evil in the eyes of Y^howah provoking Him to anger because of the work of your hands.”

We have a great deal to work with in this verse: *shâchath* (שַׁחַתַּת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*] means *to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt*. In the Hiphil, it means to cause themselves to fall into spiritual corruption. We find this first in this verse in the Hiphil infinitive absolute and then in the 2nd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect. Together, there is an emphasis upon their severe spiritual and moral decay. Strong's #7843 BDB #1007.

The verb *sûr* (סוּר) [pronounced *soor*], which means *to turn aside, to turn away, to depart*. Here it is in the 2nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect. This is the turning aside or the turning away from of the legal system devised by God. Strong's #5493 BDB #693. There is something about these verb forms that you should notice. When imploring, bracing and teaching the Israelite, Moses and God both speak to them in the 2nd person singular. However, here, when predicting the outcome of their negative volition, Moses speaks of all of them in the 2nd person plural.

We have a rather difficult verb which appears to have three very different meanings. *Qârâ`* (קָרָא) [pronounced *kaw-RAW*] generally means *to call, to proclaim, to read*. This word is found approximately 800 times in God's Word. It is used *to name* something (Gen. 21:31 25:30) or *to call something into being*. Strong's #7121 BDB #894 A second meaning of this word is *to assemble for the purpose of encountering God for the purpose of exegeting His Word, or learning His will*. Here, evil is the subject of the verb and evil *encounters* or *befalls* them. Strong's #7122 & 7125 BDB #896.

The words *the days* are preceded by *âchârîyth* (אַחֲרַיִת) [pronounced *ahkh-ar-EETH*], which is the feminine substantive that means *after-part, end, latter*. Strong's #319 BDB #31.

Moses knows for a fact that the Israelites will depart from his outstanding teaching and pursue that which is evil. Not only will they pursue evil, but evil will pursue them. In this historical context, the work of their hands will be not simply evil in general, but the specific evil of producing idols. It was common for Israel, having lost a leader, to pursue idolatry. **But it came to pass when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways** (Judges 2:19). In fact, Satan always moves in following the guidance of a super-grace hero to ravage the flock; Paul said to the Ephesians: **“I know that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”** (Acts 20:29).

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Preface to Deuteronomy 32

Then Moses spoke in the [two] ears of all the assembly of Israel [the] words of the song the this until they were completed:

Deut. 31:30

Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the entirety of the words of this song:

Why the Hebrew and the English Bible both placed this verse here, I don't know; it is the preface to the next chapter.

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
Deuteronomy 31	Deuteronomy 32	Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	
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Deuteronomy 32

Deuteronomy 32:1–52

Outline of Chapter 32:

- vv. 1–4 **The song of Moses: God’s character**
- vv. 5–19 **The song of Moses: Israel’s rebellion vs. God’s provision**
- vv. 20–35 **The song of Moses: God speaks of His severe discipline of Israel**
- vv. 36–43 **The song of Moses: The restoration of Israel**
- vv. 44–47 **Moses impresses upon Israel the importance of this song**
- vv. 48–52 **God’s final instructions to Moses**

Charts:

- v 10 **BiG DucK FaT**

Introduction: Deut. 32 contains the song which God had ordered Moses to write in the previous chapter. This song essentially outlines Israel’s future. Moses is not writing this song about his contemporaries, but to a generation (or, generations) to come who will be prosperous and negative toward God’s Word. Moses begins with impressing the importance of this song upon the people in vv. 1–2 and ascribes perfection to Y^ehowah, the God of Israel in vv. 3–4. From there, he expounds on the degeneracy and the rebellion of Israel throughout the bulk of the rest of the chapter. At v. 19, Moses begins to tell of the discipline under which Israel will be. Israel will fall under the attack of her enemies and then God will come and deliver her, atoning for the land and the people of Israel. Although there have been some who have charged that this was all written long after the days of Moses, the gist of this song is prophetic; there is nothing which would imply that Israel was under the attack of Chaldea or Babylon. It falls into the neatly into the time period that traditionalists give to the writings of Moses. That Moses is the author has already been attested to several times in the previous chapter. There is no reason to think differently. Keil and Delitzsch make a case for Mosaic authorship on the basis of style and vocabulary in Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 986. Some people do not understand the importance of this having been written by Moses. Remove Mosaic authorship and you automatically remove divine authorship—if you cannot trust God’s Word to reveal to us the correct author of this song, then the Bible is not God’s Word.

One of the things which is striking about this chapter, due to much of it being poetry, are the number of idioms and figures of speech. In Bullinger’s fantastic *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, for Deut. 29, he lists two references, for Deut. 30, five references, and Deut. 31, three references; in this book, there are about twenty-five different references listed.

Following the song, there is a bit of narrative at the end, a portion of which vv. 48–52 was probably written by Moses, even though he had assumed that he was finished writing the Law. When a person writes for much of their life, particularly in the case of Moses where he carefully recorded the words of God, it would only make sense for him to record his second to the last meeting with God (his last meeting would be his death). Joshua no doubt was given this short document, or he found it, and weaved it into the end of this chapter.

I have given you one outline below. Barnes’ notes gives the following outline: vv. 4–18, *the faithfulness of God, the faithlessness of Israel*; (2) vv. 19–33, *the chastisement and the nee of its infliction by God*; (3) vv. 34–42, *God’s compassion upon the low and humbled state of His people*.³⁶⁹ One of the reasons which I give this alternate

³⁶⁹ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 333.

outline is that it is closer in poetic division to the NASB and the NIV than mine is. The general progression is very much the same.

With regards to the vocabulary and structure of the song of Moses, Barnes writes: *The Song differs signally in diction and idiom from the preceding chapters; just as a lyrical passage is conceived in modes of thought wholly unlike those which belong to narrative or exhortation, and is uttered in different phraseology.*³⁷⁰ However, Barnes is quick to point out, as will be obvious, the theme of this song is completely in line with what has gone before. In fact, although what is prophesied in this song did not come to pass until centuries after the time of Moses, it is the framework for all the ensuing prophesies of the many prophets God sent to Israel.

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Preface to Deuteronomy 32

Then Moses spoke in the [two] ears of all the assembly of Israel [the] words of the song the this until they were completed:

Deut. 31:30

Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the entirety of the words of this song:

This verse belongs properly with chapter 32, as it is the preface to the song:

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
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The Song of Moses: God’s Character

Literally:

Smoothen English rendering:

“Give ear, the [two] heavens, and I [even I] [will keep] proclaim [ing]; and you will hear; the earth, words of my mouth.

Deut. 32:1

“Give ear, O heavens, and I will keep proclaiming; and you will hear; O earth, the words I have to say

The verb *give ear* is the Hiphil imperative of ʾâzan (אָזַן) [pronounced *aw-ZAHN*], which means *to broaden out the ear with the hand in order to hear*. It is used primarily in poetry. Strong’s #238 BDB #24. This is in the 2nd person masculine plural and *heavens* is in the dual masculine, so *heavens* is the object of this imperative. Our problem is the next verb. Here we have the Qal imperfect of *shâma* (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced *shaw-MAH*], the simple word for *listen*. Strong’s #8085 BDB #1033. However, this verb is in the 2nd masculine singular and *earth* is a feminine singular. My guess here is that there is a certain amount artistic license and that *earth* would be the one which would *hear*.

With this verse, we have the poetical side of Deut. 4:26: **“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will certainly perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You will not live long on it, but you will be utterly destroyed. And Y^ehowah will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations, where Y^ehowah will drive you.”** The great prophet and poet Isaiah borrowed

³⁷⁰ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 333.

from Moses when he wrote: [Listen, O heavens and earth; for Y^ehowah speaks: “Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me.”](#) (Isa. 1:2). Much of what Moses will write about in his song will be the future of Israel, which will be bleak if they are turned against God (which they will be). Isaiah begins his book the same way, as Isaiah spoke roughly a hundred years prior to Goid administering the 5th cycle of discipline to Judah.

One of the most important aspects of our life and one which is mentioned only once and awhile by particular theologians is the fact that we stand before a great cloud of witnesses; what we do with our life has meaning to the angels and to the demons. We have been placed on this earth to resolve the angelic conflict and our every decision impacts this; our every move is observed. For some of us, our actions are recorded and our names are brought before God in court, as was Job’s in Job 1 and 2. This call by Moses and Isaiah to the heavens and the earth is a call to angelic creation to observe and for mankind to observe.

**“As the rain drops, my teaching;
as the dew trickles (or, distills), my
speech;
as the gentle rain upon the tender grass
and as the showers upon the herb.**

Deut. 32:2

**“As drops the rain, my instruction;
As the dew invisibly collects, my
speech.
[My instruction is] as the storm upon
the tender grass
and [my speech is] as the showers
upon the herb**

ʿĀraph (אָרַף) [pronounced *aw-RAHF*] has two very distinct meanings: (1) *to break the neck of an animal* (Ex. 13:13 34:20) and, (2) *to drip, to drop, to ladle out water* (Deut. 33:28). The primitive root of this verb means *to slope down, to droop down, to bend downwards*. It just diverged to two different meanings. Strong’s #791 BDB #6201 & 6202. *Teaching* is the noun *leqach* (לֵקַח) [pronounced *le-KAHKH*], which properly means *something received*; by application, it is *learning, teaching, doctrine*. Strong’s #3948 BDB #544.

Nâzal (נָזַל) [pronounced *naw-ZAHL*] means *to drip, to distill, to flow, to trickle*. Strong’s #5140 BDB #633. The subject of this verb is *dew*. Dew tends to appear out of nowhere and gather into larger droplets. For the most part, each individual sentence that Moses spoke was not necessarily a great revelation; but taken together, it gathers into larger drops until the ground and the plants upon the ground are covered with this dew.

Then we have this word *speech*. It is not quite that simple. There is the masculine form and the feminine form. The masculine form is *ʾômer* (אָמַר) [pronounced *OH-mer*] (Strong’s #562) or *ʾêmer* (אֵמַר) [pronounced *AY-mer*] (Strong’s #561) and it means *speech, word, utterance, that which came from the mouth*. BDB #56. The feminine of this word is *ʾim^erâh* (אִמְרָה) [pronounced *im^e-RAWH*] and it means *speech, word, utterance*. The two words seem to be distinguished primarily by useage and form. The masculine is generally found in the plural (Gen. 49:21 Deut. 32:1) and generally in prose writing (Num. 24:4 Joshua 24:27). The feminine form is generally in the singular and generally found in poetry (Gen. 4:33 Psalm 18:30 119:11, 38). The masculine form is found in poetical writings (Job 22:28 Psalm 5:1 19:14) and the feminine is occasionally found in prose and in the plural (2Sam. 22:31). The feminine seems to be used most often as a singular collective—that is, a word in the singular which would take a singular verb, yet refers to more than just one word (Prov. 30:5 Ia. 5:24). I do not see a distinction in meaning between these two (actually three) basic forms. BDB #57.

This is a marvelous picture. Thieme used the illustration [and I may not remember this exactly right] that his teaching was like bringing a bucket of water and he would reach in there with his hand and throw out a little later over the congregation—some would get wet, some would not; some got more water than others. However, after a continual flinging of this water, the entire congregation would be covered by this teaching. Every time a pastor teacher teaches, some of the congregation gets wet and some do not; there is no equality here—some receive more doctrine than others. However, after remaining under his teaching for a consistent amount of time, we all receive enough to saturate us.

The second two verses in this stanza are parallel verses. We do not have the same word for rain, however. However, since it only occurs in this verse, we're left with the various translations of others: *gentle rain* (Owens, NRSV), *storms* (Young), *copious rains* (Rotherham), *droplets* (NASB), *small rain* (KJV), *showers* (NIV), *light rain* (*The Amplified Bible*). So, for almost every Bible, there is a different translation of this word. The only related word is indicative of a storm as opposed to a gentle rain. The whole point of the last two verses is that the grass and the herbs require rain in order to grow. We are the same way—we require spiritual instruction to grow spiritually. There is no such thing as spiritual growth apart from God's Word. In listening to many different speakers on various Christian radio programs—if these men are indicative of what is being taught in churches, then there is little teaching and hence minimal spiritual growth occurring in this country. There is very little time spent in God's Word and a great deal of time spent on nice little messages which are slightly related to God's Word; however, a motivational speaker could do just as much, if not more.

Isaiah certainly learned the song of Moses and used several of his analogies: *For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there without watering the earth,³⁷¹ and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My Word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty without accomplishing My will and without succeeding in that which I sent it.*" (Isa. 55:10–11). Paul used a similar analogy in 1Cor. 3:6–8: *I planted, Apollos waters, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*

We have a similar phrase in Psalm 72:6: *He comes down as rain on mown grass; as showers, sprinkling the earth.* McGee comments: *I love that statement. A dear saint in Dallas, Texas, lost her husband whom she loved dearly. She told her pastor that now she understood the meaning of that verse in the Psalms. She was the mown grass, but God came to her through His Word like the gentle rain. That is the way the Word of God should come down in our lives³⁷².*

**“For the name of Y^ehowah I will
proclaim;
you all ascribe greatness to our God.**

Deut. 32:3

**“For the name of Y^ehowah will I
proclaim;
And you will ascribe greatness to our
God .**

And men will speak of the power of Your awesome acts and I will tell of Your greatness (Psalm 145:6). David said, “Blessed You are, O Y^ehowah God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O Y^ehowah, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion O Y^ehowah, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. Both riches and honor are from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. Now, therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name.” (1Chron. 29:10b–13). There is no new doctrine in this song; the vocabulary and sentence structure is different, however, this song is just another medium of teaching. Moses has already said, “O Y^ehowah God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours?” (Deut. 3:24). The name is representative of the character and person of God. However, what should be important to us? *I will bow down toward Your holy temple and I will give thanks to Your name because Your grace and Your truth. Because You have magnified Your Word above all Your name* (Psalm 138:2).

With the next verse, we get our first taste of rock music.

³⁷¹ As an aside, note that we find in this portion of Isaiah the principle of evaporation.

³⁷² J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 190.

**“The Rock! Perfect [or, faultless]
His Work! For all of His ways justice!
A God of dependability and without
unrighteousness!
[Perfectly] righteousness and correct
He!**

Deut. 32:4

**“The Rock! His work is faultless!
For all of his ways are just!
He is a God of dependability and He is
without unrighteousness!
He is perfectly righteous and without
contradiction!**

There are no verbs in this verse. *Perfect* is the adjective *tâmîym* (תָּמִיִּם) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*] means *faultless, complete, whole, entire*. This adjective is used most often when referring to a sacrificial animal being *without blemish* (Ex. 12:5 29:1 Lev. 1:3, 10 3:1, 9 4:3). It is an adjective used of Noah (Gen. 6:9) and God ordered this of Abram (Gen. 17:1). This word refers to the *completion* of seven sabbaths in Lev. 23:15. When spoken of a man, it means a man who operates on the basis of spiritual integrity; i.e., they are spiritually mature and in fellowship. When spoken of God, it is a reference to His character or His works being perfect integrity, which means perfect justice and perfect righteousness are key to what is being examined. Strong's #8549 BDB #1071.

Mîsh^epâṭ (מִשְׁפָּט) [pronounced *mish^e-PAWT* or *meesh^e-PAWT*] is very consistently translated *judgement* throughout the KJV, with a several notable exceptions, one of them being when this word is used as an attribute of God (Job 40:8 Isa. 30:18), in which case, this word should be rendered *just, justice, right, rightness*. Strong's #4941 BDB #1048.

The next descriptor of God is *'ēmûwnâh* (הֶעֱמֹונָה) [pronounced *em-oo-NAWH*] and it means *firmness, steadiness*. This is how you would like the hands of your surgeon to be described (Ex. 17:12). As an attribute of God, this is generally rendered *faithfulness*, however, I would lean more toward *dependable*. In using this word, I think of a principal that I worked under, one with whom I did not always get along. Generally speaking, you always knew where he stood and you always knew where you stood in relationship to him. This is *'ēmûnâh*. Strong's #530 BDB #53.

Next, we have the substantive of negation (that is, *naught, nothing*) or the particle of negation (*no, not*). The Hebrew is *'ayin* (אֵין) [pronounced *AH-yin*]. It can mean *in the condition of being not = without*. Strong's #369 BDB #34. Not only is God dependable, He is also *without 'âvel* (or *'âwel*) (אֵין) [pronounced *AW-vel* or *AW-we*] and it means *unrighteousness, injustice, unjust*. This is the masculine singular of Strong's #5766 & 5765 BDB #732.

Finally, God is *tsaddîyq* (צַדִּיק) [pronounced *tsahd-DEEK*], an adjective which means *just, righteous, justified*. I use the latter English translation when referring to man, as it is a reference to someone who has been saved or justified (Gen. 6:9 18:23). This word can also refer to a nation with a pivot of believers (Gen. 20:4). It can also refer to a state which is not absolute, but relative, meaning someone who is spiritually mature or more correct or more righteous (Gen. 9:6 1Kings 2:32). When used of God, this means *absolute or perfect righteousness*. Strong's #6662 BDB #843. The second adjective used of God is *yâshâr* (יָשָׁר) [pronounced *yaw-SHAWR*] and it means *right, correct, upright, straight, uniform, even*. When teaching non-Euclidian geometry to my students, I taught them the concept of internal uniformity—that is, there could be no internal contradictions. When used of God, *yâshâr* means *no internal contradictions*. Strong's #3477 BDB #449.

People have a lot of unusual ideas as to Who and What God is, chiefly because they tend to make God in their own image. This means that their God frowns upon anything wrong that other people do, but understands the wrong which they do and overlooks this wrong. That is, they devise of god who is without true justice, a god who is partial, a god who will overlook whatever they have done in their lives and yet condemn to death those who have done less. Or their god is completely and totally without justice or righteousness. Its doesn't matter who you are, what you do, *it's all good*, as the saying goes. This is not God; this is weaker tripe than relativism. This is not the God Who created the universe nor is this the God Who paid for my sins with His own body on the tree. My God is perfectly just and apart from Jesus Christ, I am wretched before Him. I know my own person—I have no confusion about the corruption which is within me. I know I desire to do the evil; I know that I have every lust from

approbation to materialism to sexual lust; I know that there are times when I desire to manipulate people; and I know that deep inside, I want to get away with my wrongdoing and yet see others punished for theirs. I don't want a god like me. I am not a fool. Even more importantly, you do not want a god like me. We don't have to worry—most writers of Scripture have continually testified to God's perfect righteousness, His perfect justice, and His perfect love. We are blessed to be related to such a God and totally undeserving. Only blind arrogance would make a person think that it would be better if God were just a little more like him rather than vice versa. In fact, this would be an outstanding place to examine the **essence of God as taught in the Old Testament—not finished yet!!**

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The Song of Moses: Israel's Rebellion vs. God's Provision

**“He has corrupted in regards to Him;
not His sons!
Their defect!
A generation twisted and crooked.**

Deut. 32:5

**“He has corrupted Him;
They are not His sons!
They have a defect;
A generation which is twisted and
crooked!**

We begin with the masculine singular, Piel perfect of *shâchath* (שָׁחַת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*], which means *to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt*. In the Piel, it means *to corrupt*. Strong's #7843 BDB #1007. The Israelites have corrupted the person of God. *Him* is not a direct object but a object of the lamed preposition—God Himself cannot be corrupted—however, the image or character of God is corrupted in the minds of the Israelites. **For since the creation of the world, His essence, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being undertood through what has been made, so that they are without an excuse. For, when they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks; in fact, they became futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to an immoral status, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Wo is blessed forever; amen (Rom. 1:20–25).**³⁷³ **“For I know that after my death, you will become corrupt and turn from the way which I have commanded you—and evil will come upon you in the later days.”** (Deut. 31:29a; see also 4:25). Israel was to be a light to the goyim (the Gentiles), just as we believers are to be light to the world. **Do all things without acting pissy and without dispute; so that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, concentrating on the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain** (Philip. 2:14–16).

Môm (מוֹם) [pronounced *moom*] means *blemish, defect, corruption, disfigurement*. Strong's #3971 BDB #548 (pp. 657 & 671 in *The New Englishman's Concordance*). Idolators used to place marks on their forehead; in fact, you may have seen these marks on Indian women. It is thought that this was in onor of one of their deities.³⁷⁴ In regards to the Israelite, this blemish or disfigurement is not believing in Jesus Christ as their Savior—in the Old Testament, it was not believing in Y^{ehowah} their God and Savior, Who is Jesus Christ. As you may have seen with some blemishes, they might tend to get larger over time. With the person negative toward Jesus Christ, their defect will often grow and manifest itself with increased degeneracy. **But these, who are just like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, berating where they have no knowledge, will, in**

³⁷³ Although the context of Rom. 1:20–25 is Gentile degeneracy, it applies equally well to the Hebrew.

³⁷⁴ There is more information on this custom in *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 116.

the destruction of those creatures, also be destroyed, suffering wrong as the wages of their doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to party in the daytime. They are stains and they are blemishes, engaging in great celebration in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, having eyes filled with adultery and that never cease from sin; enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children, forsaking the right way, they have been deluded (2Peter 2:12–15a).

These two phrases are in grammatical apposition to one another: **Not His children; their defect**. They are not His children because of their defect and they are defective because they are not His children. The concepts go hand-in-hand. Rather than being His sons, they are defective, a shame and a disgrace, twisted and crooked.

A description of the generation includes the word 'iqqêsh (יִקְשֵׁשׁ) [pronounced *ik-KAYSH*], which is translated *perverse* and *froward*; but means *twisted*. Strong's #6141 BDB #786. The second descriptor is found only here and we will go with the word *crooked*. Surprisingly enough, this was not a description found throughout the Old Testament. However, it is found the New. **And Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how much longer must I be with you and put up with you?"** (Luke 9:41a). Recall what we just read in Philip. 2:14–16: **Do all things without acting pissy and without dispute; so that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, concentrating on the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain**

**“Thus you [all] recompense to
Y^ehowah? A people foolish and not
wise;
Not He your Father?
He purchased you!
Did he not make you and then establish
you?**

Deut. 32:6

**“Is this how you repay Y^ehowah,
O people who are spiritually foolish and
lacking in wisdom
Is he not your Father?
He purchased you!
Did He not build you and then establish
you?**

This verse begins with the interrogative particle hă (הֲ) [pronounced *ha* as in *haf*]. A one-word translation would be difficult; we have seen it in **“Am I my brother's keeper?”** (Gen. 4:9) and **“Did a people every hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire?”** (Deut. 20:20:19); and **“Shall I hide from Abraham that which I am about to do?”** (Gen. 18:17). No Strong's # BDB #209. This is followed by the prefixed preposition lâmed and the proper name for God, Y^ehowah.

This is followed by the 2nd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of gâmal (גָּמַל) [pronounced *gaw-MAHL*] and BDB gives the meanings *deal fully or adequately, wean, ripen*. The KJV version gives the renderings *did, weaned, rewarded, dealt bountifully, have regarded, hath bestowed, yielded, requite, recompense*; and this word occurs only 37 times in the Bible! This word definitely means *weaned*, as we see in Gen. 21:8 Psalm 131:2 Isa. 28:9). I think that we could render this word *recompense* in all other cases and not lose its meaning. Strong's #1580 BDB #168. This is followed by the demonstrative pronoun zeh (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*], which means *this, thus, here*. Strong's #2063, 2088 BDB #260.

What is described in this portion of this song is the faithfulness and perfection of God and how the Israelite has corrupted Who and What God is. This is the way that they pay back God? This is the way they recompense God? This is said in anticipation of what is to come in this song. This Israelite is already supposed to know his own history and all that God has done. We would, in our way of thinking, first list everything which God has done on behalf of Israel, and then say, **“Is this how you pay back God? After everything which He has done for you?”** However, this question will be posed first, and then the benefits of their special relationship with God will be covered. **What will I render to Y^ehowah, for all His benefits toward me?** (Psalm 116:12).

These people are then described. They are nâ^bvâl (נָבִיל) [pronounced *na^b-VAL*], which is reasonably translated *foolish* as long as this is understood in the sense of *having no spiritual understanding*. This is being *foolish in all matters related to spirituality*. The completely lack spiritual discernment. This is such an insult to the Israelite,

who has been entrusted with God's Word and has seen the great acts of God. This is being bitch-slapped by God. It is a terrific insult. Strong's #5036 BDB #614. The second descriptor is the adjective *châkâm* (חָכָם) [pronounced *khah-KAWM*], which means *wise*. Strong's #2450 BDB #314. With this we have the negative. Here we have what is called pleonasm [pronounced *PLEE-uh-NAZ-im*] or a redundancy. The first descriptor is in the positive and the second is in the negative. Together, they are redundant, the intention of which is to emphasize the point.

Notice how Moses does not say, "You are a people who are foolish and without wisdom." Why is that? This is a song he is teaching them to sing. They will be the ones singing the song. Therefore, they do not need to sing "You are a people who are foolish and lacking in wisdom" because they are this people.

Then we pick up with the interrogative again. This portion literally reads: [Is] He not your [singular] Father? Moses can go to the second person now because the Israelite knows that God is their *father*. This is the first question where an answer in the affirmative is expected. "Y^ehowah your God, Who goes before you, will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness, where you saw how Y^ehowah your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked, until you came to this place." (Deut. 1:30–31). "Then you will say to Pharaoh, 'Thus proclaims Y^ehowah, "Israel is My son, My first-born." ' " (Ex. 4:22). For You are our Father, although Abraham did not know us and Israel did not recognize us; You, O Y^ehowah, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is Your name (Isa. 63:16).

We ought now to look at some other translations, as I am going to veer from them:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Do you thus repay the Lord, you foolish and senseless people? Is not He your Father Who acquired you for His own? Who made and established you [as a nation]?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Is it Yahweh ye thus requite, O impious people and unwise? Is not he thy father who begat thee? He that made thee and established thee?
KJV	Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? <i>Is not he thy father who hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?</i>
NASB	Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you.
NIV	Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?
NEB	...is this how yo repay the LORD, you brutish and stupid people? Is he not your father who formed you? Did he not make you and establish you?
NRSV	Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?
Owen's Translation	Yahweh do you thus requite? A people foolish and senseless. Is not he your father who created you who made you and established you?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	To Jehovah do ye act thus, O people foolish and not wise? Is not He thy father—thy possessor? He made thee, and doth establish thee.

If ou will notice back in the KJV that the word *who* is in italics. That means it is not there in the original. The NASB usually puts the nonexistent words in italics. We have a complete statement, albeit short. We have the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect (with a 2nd person masculine singular suffix) of *qânâh* (קָנָה) [pronounced *kaw-NAWH*] and this means *purchase, redeem, buy*. In Gen. 1:19, when God is called a *possessor* of heaven and earth (the Qal participle of *qânâh*), He possesses these because He bought them. This adds new meaning to the verse "I have *gotten* a man [from] the Lord." (Gen. 4:1b), which is totally incorrect. It should read: "I have *purchased* a man—the Lord." There was blood, there was pain—she endured the first labor and no one knew exactly what was occurring. She felt as though she had brought forth the Redeemer in all her pain and blood. Although the woman was wrong in what had occurred, she did understand that there was a purchasing which took place with blood and pain which was related to the Redeemer, Who would come through her. Strong's #7069 BDB #888. This should read: He has purchased you. Psalm 74:2a: Remember Your congregation which You had purchased of old; which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your inheritance.

Now we return to the negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect, with a 2nd person masculine singular suffix of ʿāsāh (אָסָה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. **Has He not formed you? Or: Did He not build you?** This is followed by the wāw consecutive and the Polel (an irregular verb form identified as the Piel) imperfect of kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced *koon*] and it appears to mean *erect (to stand up perpendicular)* and by application, *to establish, to prepare*. Strong's #3559 BDB #465. The wāw consecutive ties these two verbs together with the interrogative + the negative. We again have a question which demands to be answered in the affirmative.

The Israelites began as a promise to Abraham. From Abraham, through one child, came the great nation Israel. From Abraham until the entrance into the land, God built Israel. From the entrance into the land until Israel subdued most of the indigenous peoples, God established Israel as a world power. So, it is: **Israel, how can you repay Y^ehowah your God in this way? Isn't He your father! Hell, yes, He purchased you! Didn't he build you up from nothing? Didn't he establish you as a world power?** Moses taught this song to Israel. There was no confusion as to who this song spoke to.

**“[You] remember days of old;
[you] consider years of generations and
generations;
[you] ask your father and he, [even] he
will tell you;
[ask] your elders and they will say to
you:**

Deut. 32:7

**“Remember days of old;
Examine years of many generations.
Ask your father and he—even he—will
tell you;
Ask your elders and they will say to
you:**

The first three verbs of this verse are all in the Qal imperative. The children of Israel will sing this, but at the same time, they will hear it. It is addressed directly to them. The first verb mandates them to **remember days of long ago**, as Rotherham gives as an alternate translation. The second verb is bîyn (בִּיַן) [pronounced *bean*] and it means *discern, perceive, consider, understand*; in the imperative, it could mean *examine*. Strong's #995 BDB #106. The individual Israelite is told to examine his history. He is told to ask of those who have a past, who have learned of their history. Find out what has occurred in their past. Recall, not everyone had a Bible in their household as is now the case. This didn't necessarily affect their relative understanding of their history, as most people have but a bare-bones historical concept of the Jew and his relationship to Jesus Christ. I include in this generalization the Jew himself.

There are two phrases here which relate to time: **days of old** and **years of generation and generation**. Moses knew that there would be quite a time factor involved. The time here would go far beyond grandfather and great grandfather. He was not describing events only one or two hundred years into the future. It was nearly a thousand years before many of these things were fully come to pass.

They are ordered in this verse to call back to their minds what had happened in their history. God always holds the history of the Israelite as a matter of great importance. **O, God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, the work that You did in their days, in the days of old** (Psalm 44:1). **I will remember the deeds of Y^ehowah; certainly, I will remember You wonders of old** (Psalm 77:11). Furthermore, the parents and grandparents were to teach the children about the things which had occurred: **“And it will come to pass when you son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘what is this?’ Then yo will say to him, ‘With a powerful heand, Y^ehowah brought us out of Egypt, from the ouse of slaves. (Ex. 13:14).** The Psalmist even asks God to remember Israel as well: **O god, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture? Recall You congregation, the congregation which you purchased of old, the congregation which You had redeemed to be the tribe of Your inheritance** (Psalm 74:1–2a). In regards to this, also see Ex. 10:2 Job 8:8 15:18 Psalm 78:4 Isa. 51:9 63:9.

One of the most important Biblical concepts is the relationship between a father and his son; or a grandfather and his grandson. The importance of guidance and spiritual teaching cannot be overemphasized. **“And it will come to pass when your children will say to you, ‘What does this rite mean?’ And you will say, ‘It is a Passover sacrifice**

to Y^ehowah, Who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He struck down the Egyptians and spaired our homes.’ “ (Ex. 12:26–27a). For He establish a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should teach them to their children; that the generation to come might know, the children still to be born, so they may arise and tell these things to their children, with the result that they should place their confidence and trust in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments, and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart, and whose spirit was not faithful to God (Psalm 78:5–8).

“ **In a giving of a possession of [the] Most High nations in a dividing of the sons of man [or, Adam], He set up boundaries of peoples to a number[ing] of sons of Israel [possibly, sons of God]**

Deut. 32:8

“ **When the Most High gave the nations an inheritance When He divided up of the sons of Adam; He set up boundaries of peoples according to the number of sons of God**

With regards to the final phrase of this verse, see Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 262.

The v^eyth preposition is used twice here with two Hiphil infinitive constructs; the first verb is n^achal (נָחַל) [pronounced *naw-KHAHL*], which means, in the Hiphil, *to give as a possession*; in the Qal it means *to get or to take as a possession*. Strong's #5157 BDB #635. Following this we simply have the word for *Most High*, which is found only here in all of Deuteronomy; the emphasis, when this word is used, is upon God's sovereignty. And we have the word for *nations*. The next verb is the Hiphil infinitive construct of ph^arar (פָּרַר) [pronounced *paw-RAHD*], which refers to *dividing, parting, separating*. Strong's #6504 BDB #825.

Both of these verbs are preceded by the prefixed preposition b^e (בְּ) [pronounced *b^e*], which generally means *in*. However, with the infinitive construct, b^e acts as a temporal conjunction; that is, *in their being created* = *when they were created* (Gen. 2:4); *in their being in the field* = *when they were in the field* (Gen. 4:8).³⁷⁵ This gives us a better idea as to what is really being said. There is a direct relationship between the boundaries of the Gentile nations, the inheritance or the possession which God gave to all mankind, the boundaries of all these nations, and the number is Israelites on the earth. The fact that God gave these boundaries to the various nations is noted in Acts 17:26: **“And He made from one every nation of mankind, to live on all the face of the earth, giving determined appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation.”**

In the United States, when we enlarged our borders from one ocean to the next, we called it manifest destiny, and that is exactly what it was. God had determined that the most beautiful and temperate area of the Northern American continent to be given to us, the people of the United States. Now, certainly, their was sin and cruelty involved at times in this expansion, as well as bravery and self-sacrifice. We are now speaking of the history of a people, so don't be so naive to think that the history of any people will somehow take place without the operation of a lot of old sin natures. What occurred here, the American experience, is of great import and clearly reveals the providence of God. As a nation, we began with 97% Protestants, which means we may have been populated with upwards to 80% believers. The number of believers in our population was so significant, that God decreed in eternity past to give us an incredible land and government which reflected His care and His grace which He rendered toward us. What took place in the United States was no accident, no set of random occurrences which resulted in a pretty good country and a pretty good government; it was manifest destiny—it was God's careful control over our boundaries within our appointed time. Now, of course there were those who felt that our manifest destiny was to rule over the entirety of North America, but God in eternity past determined our borders and the limitations of our expansion.

³⁷⁵ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, pp. 90–91.

The next verb is the main verb: the Hiphil imperfect of *nâtsa^bv* (נָצַח) [pronounced *naw-TSAH^BV*], which means *to stand up, to set something upright, to erect*. Strong's #5324 BDB #662. The *setting up* of the boundaries of mankind is in the imperfect tense, meaning that this is an ongoing process. However, it is directly related to the number of Israelites. The relationship between the boundaries of the nations and Israel is twofold: (1) those nations who treat the Jew with respect and acceptance have their borders enlarged and their nation is prospered; and, (2) in the end times, after the Church Age has been completed and the Age of Israel then is drawn to a close, the Jews will be scattered throughout all of the nations of the earth and 144,000 of them will be evangelists in the last days of the Age of Israel.

An addendum to this verse: the Septuagint ends this verse with *according to the number of angels of God [i.e., sons of God]*. According to Barnes,³⁷⁶ the thought here was that there were to be seventy nations on the earth, as per Gen. 10 (Gen. 10 does not, by the way, say this) and that each nation had a guardian angel ruling over it. Keil and Delitzsch write: *The Septuagint rendering...is of no critical value,—in fact, is nothing more than an arbitrary interpretation found upon the later Jewish notion of guardian angels of the different nations (Sir. 17:14) (sic), which probably originated in a misunderstanding of ch. 4:19 as compared with Dan. 10:13 20:21, and 12:1.*³⁷⁷ Ecclesiasticus³⁷⁸ 17:17, which is a part of the Apocrypha, **not** a part of the Bible, reads: *For in the division of the nations of the whole earth he set a ruler over every people; but Israel is the Lord's portion*. Charles Clough ties together the 70 nations of Gen. 10 with the 70 members of Jacob's family in Gen. 46:27. This, while a more intriguing theory, is still not what was meant here.

**“For the portion of Y^ehowah [is] his
people;
Jacob a measured portion of his
heritage.**

Deut. 32:9

**“For the portion of Y^ehowah [is] his
people;
For Jacob is a measured portion of His
heritage.**

There is one particularly difficult word in this verse: *che^bvel* (כַּוֵּל) [pronounced *KHE^B-vel*] and we find this word translated in the KJV as *region, country, lot, cord, portion, line, sorrow, rope, bands, tacklings, destruction, coast*. *Che^bvel* occurs fewer than sixty times and is given twelve different translations. That this refers to a *cord* or a *rope* is undeniable in Joshua 2:15 Jer. 38:6 (in both cases, men are lowered with a *rope*). It is used for the rope or cord which is used to drag a stone (2Sam. 17:13); the *rope* or *cord* for a tent (Isa. 33:20); and a *rope* used to bind (Esther 1:6 Job 40:25 Ezek 27:24). *Che^bvel* is used for a *measuring rope* or a *measuring line* (2Sam. 8:2 Zech. 2:5). Therefore, this word can figuratively be used for a *portion* or *lot* of land which has been measured out (1Kings 4:13 1Chron. 16:18). Strong's #2256 BDB #286.

This verse means that for God, He receives His people—that is what has been allotted to Him. For Jacob, a figurative name for the nation Israel, he has been given out a measured portion of land as his. **“They [the Israelites] are Your people and You inheritance which You have brought forth from Egypt from out of the midst of the iron furnace. For You have separated them from all the peoples of the earth as You inheritance, as You spoke through Moses, Your servant, when You brought our fathers forth from Egypt, O Y^ehowah God.”** (1Kings 8:51, 53; see also Psalm 78:71 Jer. 10:16). Conversely, for some growing believers, Y^ehowah is their portion (Psalm 16:5 73:26 119:57).

³⁷⁶ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 334.

³⁷⁷ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 989.

³⁷⁸ The book of Ecclesiasticus is also called *Sirach*.

**“In a land of wilderness He found him
and in a waste-place of a howling of a
desert.**

**He encircled him [protectively],
He carefully examined him;
He watched over him,
as a pupil of his eye.**

Deut. 32:10

**“He found him in a land of wilderness
and in a waste-place of a howling
desert**

**He enveloped him protectively,
He carefully examined him;
He watched over him,
as a pupil of his eye.**

Ideally, from the very literal side, you would notice an idiom called an epistrophe [pronounced *eh-PIS-tro-fee*]; each sentence ends in the same word—in this case, the suffixed pronoun *him*. This refers to Israel and God’s great care and love which he bestowed upon Israel. You wouldn’t catch this in most versions of Scripture, as the word order is often changed in order to better follow the patterns of sentence structure which we use.

Wilderness is the word *mid°bâr* (מִדְבָּר) [pronounced *mid°-BAWR*]. Let me mention something about the dagesh [pronounced *DAW-geesh*] found here and elsewhere. When found with the letters ב, ג, ד, כ, פ, ת, it sometimes has an affect on the pronunciation. There is not universal agreement on this, although this does affect the pronunciation in modern Hebrew. This table might help:

BiG Duck FaT			
Without	With	Without	With
ב = ^b v	ב = b	כ = kh	כ = k
ג = g	ג = g	פ = f	פ = p
ד = d	ד = d	ת = the	ת = t

This is called a dagesh lene [pronounced *LEN-nee?*]. These letters can be memorized with the words *BiG Duck FaT*. We also have what is called a dagesh forte [pronounced *four-TAY?*]. This doubles a consonant when used with any other consonant (it is never found with א, ה, ח, ע, or ר). The rules are as follows: (1) a dagesh found in any letter other than ב, ג, ד, כ, פ, ת is a dagesh forte. (2) If a dagesh is found in one of those six letters **and** it is **not** preceded by a vowel, it is a dagesh lene. (3) When any of the six letters from BiG Duck FaT have a dagesh and are preceded by a vowel, it is a dagesh forte.³⁷⁹ Here, because the bēyth is preceded by a silent sheva, it acts as a dagesh lene. The word itself does not mean *desert* because it is a place where sheep are grazed (Joshua 2:22 Psalm 65:13). The only way it may be thought of as a desert is it often an *uninhabited* (or *deserted*) land (Job 38:26 Jer. 9:1). Strong’s #4057 BDB #184.

- [Deuteronomy 26](#)
- [Deuteronomy 27](#)
- [Deuteronomy 28](#)
- [Deuteronomy 29](#)
- [Deuteronomy 30](#)
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In this verse we have its synonym: *y°shīymôn* (יְשִׁימוֹן) [pronounced *y°-shee-MOAN*] and this is the word which should be rendered *desert*; it is a *waste-place*. It is found in Num. 21:20 23:28 Deut. 32:10 1Sam. 23:19, 24 26:1, 3 Psalm 68:7 78:40 106:14 107:4 Isa. 43:19–20.* Strong’s #3452 BDB #445. Prior to this word for desert, we have two masculine singular constructs: *Tôhû* (תְּהוֹ) [pronounced *TOE-hoo*] is the word used in Gen. 1:2—and the earth became³⁸⁰ a *waste-place*; this word could be rendered *desolate, an empty waste, chaos,*

³⁷⁹ *Biblical Hebrew, an Introduction Grammar*; Page H. Kelley; Eerdmans Publishing; ©1992; pp. 3, 12–13.

³⁸⁰ I used the word *become* as God did not create the world *tôhû* (Isa. 45:18). God does not create some mess or some trashed out area.

trashed. When a nuclear weapon is detonated, the immediate area becomes tōhû. Strong's #8414 BDB #1062. The second masculine singular construct is the word for *howling*.

Like much of Scripture, we have a double meaning here. God met Jacob as he was leaving his family and fleeing Esau in Gen. 28. However, this verse also speaks collectively of Israel when God met them in the desert as a cloud in Ex. 13 and led them away from Pharaoh to Mount Sinai. *Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. And Y^ehowah was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people* (Ex. 13:20–22).

The immediate area in which God found Israel, as a nation, was a spiritual wilderness. Right off the Nile, it was a fertile area, and civilized, but in the midst of the heathen Egyptians (who were civilized heathen). This little portion of wilderness was in the midst of a larger desert area, a desolate waste-place of howling. *“I cared for you in the wilderness, in the land of drought.”* (Hosea 13:5).

Furthermore, both words lack the definite article, meaning that we are not looking at just a particular desert, but that we are looking at the concept of a *wilderness* and the concept of a *desert*. Therefore, this can apply to several different situations and/or areas which would be analogous to *a land of wilderness* and *a desolate waste place of howling*³⁸¹.

Then we have a description of what God did for Israel. We first have the Poel (this is essentially an intensive stem) imperfect of *çâ^bva^bv* (כּוּרַב) [pronounced *saw^b-VAH^BV*], which means *to go around, to surround, to encircle*. In the Poel, this means *to encircle, to surround, to envelop, to enclose*. In this context, this means to surround or envelop or enclose in a protective way. Strong's #5437 BDB #685. *Many are the sorrows of the guilty, but he who trusts in Y^ehowah, grace will surround him* (Psalm 32:8).

The second thing which God did was the Polel imperfect of *bîyn* (יָבֵן) [pronounced *bean*] and it means *discern, perceive, consider, understand*; in the imperative, it could mean *examine*. We saw this word back in v. 7. In the Polel (intensive stem), it means *to carefully examine*. Strong's #995 BDB #106. When God chose Israel, he did not go through the peoples of the earth and arbitrarily choose Israel. It was not a situation where God could have just as easily taken the Egyptians or the Canaanites. God knew exactly what the Israelites were like and knew just exactly what they would do as a people until the end of time. The third thing which God did for Israel is: Qal imperfect of *nâtsar* (נָצַר) [pronounced *naw-TSAHR*], which means *to keep, to guard, to watch over, to protect*. Strong's #5341 BDB #665.

The word for pupil is *ʿîyshôn* (עֵישׁוֹן) [pronounced *ee-SHONE*] and it means *pupil* or *black*. The NIV Study Bible says something about this meaning the *little man of the eye*. However, I do not have a clue as to the origin of this spurious idea. Check the passages for yourself; this noun is found only in this passage, Psalm 17:8 Prov. 7:2, 8 20:20.* Strong's #380 BDB #36. This verse ends with the phrase: *as a pupil of His eye*. I'm not certain that I fully grasp the meaning of that idiom. We find it again in Zech. 2:8: *For thus says Y^ehowah of the armies, “After glory He has sent Me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.”* Prov. 7:2: *Keep My commandments and live and My teaching as the pupil of your eye*. My educated guess that in the ancient world, without eyesight, you were pretty much powerless and unable to do for yourself. Therefore, in any kind of a confrontation, what you would be most concerned about is protecting your eyes. Their protection from the minions of Pharaoh in the Red Sea is a prime example of the protection afforded Israel. Keil and Delitzsch write: *“To keep as the apple of the eye” is a figurative description of the tenderest care. The apple of the eye is most carefully preserved (vid., Ps. 17:8; Prov. 7:2).*³⁸² In any case, the eye of God is generally associated with His grace and care (see Deut. 11:12 1Kings 9:3 2Chron. 16:9 Psalm 31:22 32:8 Ezek. 5:11 7:4 20:17)

³⁸¹ See Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 990 for more details on the rendering of this verse. They point out that it is better understood **not** as *the desert in which wild beasts howl, but the howling which is heard in the desert of wild beasts. The meaning of the passage, therefore, is “in the midst of the howling of the wild beasts of the desert.”*

³⁸² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 990.

**“As an eagle stirs up his nest;
over his young ones he flutters.
He spreads out his [two] wings;
he takes him;
he bears him on his [broad] wing.**

Deut. 32:11

**“Just as an eagle stirs up its young in
their nest;
and flutters over his young ones,
He spreads out His wings—he takes
him;
He bears him on his broad wing.**

When it comes to putting together a translation, I am very dependant upon Owen’s *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*; I don’t really look at his translation as carefully as I do the verbs, their stems, number, and the grammatical aspects of the verse. If my translation is almost dead on with Young and with Rotherham, then I don’t spend much time giving you a background on the words and why they are translated thus and so. However, if I notice some major differences between my translation and Owen’s English version, Young’s translation and Rotherham’s, then I look more carefully at each word, and break down the verse more. In this verse, there was not a lot of difficulty with the language; hence, there was less explanation.

The first verb is the Piel imperfect of *râchaph* (רָחַף) [pronounced *raw-KHAHF*] means *to hover over, to flutter over*. It is a picture of care and protection. This verb only occurs three times in the Old Testament; here, Jer. 23:9 and Gen. 1:2. In Gen. 1:2,* the picture is of God hovering over the earth. Strong’s #7363 BDB #934. Recall also that in Gen. 1:2, the earth had become a *waste*; Moses uses a very similar imagery in this passage as is used in the beginning of Genesis. *Nest* is a metonymy for the eagle’s young in the nest. That is, the hovering over and stirring up is done actually over the *young*.

In this verse, as carefully noted above, *young ones* is in the plural, yet the last two verbs have a masculine singular suffix. There are two different words for wings in this verse, the former in the dual, as we would expect, and the latter in the singular.

The pictorial image conjured up here is the care and nurturing of an eagle for its young. An eagle is very majestic and analogous to God; and its young are very helpless, analogous to the Israelite. **“You yourselves have seen what I did in the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.”** (Ex. 19:4).

McGee explains this better than I ever could: *At the time when the little eaglets ought to be out spreading their wings, they are perfectly willing to stay in the nest and let mamma and papa bring them food all day long, then take care of them at night. The day comes when the mother eagle pushes those little ones off the cliff, and they have to stretch those wings. But suppose a little eaglet does not do very well. That mother, with those tremendous wings of hers, comes right up under the little eaglet, catches him on her wings, then lifts him back up to the rock and gives im a few more worms to eat for the next few days. Then she tries him out again. This is the way God watches over those who are His own. God uses us out of the nest sometimes, not because He doesn’t love us, but because He wants us to learn to fly—He wants us to learn to live for Him³⁸³.*

**“Y^ehowah alone led him
and not with him a god of foreignness.**

Deut. 32:12

**“Y^ehowah alone led him
no foreign god was with him.**

The Hebrews were not lead through the wilderness by anyone other than the God of the Universe. **“Know therefore today and take it to your heart, that Y^ehowah, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.”** (Deut. 4:39; see also 4:36). **“You are My witnesses,”** declares Y^ehowah, **“And My servant whom I have chosen in order that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me, there was no God formed and there will be none after Me.”** (Isa. 43:10; see also Isa. 45:5).

³⁸³ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 192.

“He made him ride [or, caused him to ride] upon high places of the earth; then he ate fruits of field [or, He caused him to eat the fruits of field]; and yet He caused him to nurse [or, to suck] honey out from cliff and oil out of a flint of rock.

Deut. 32:13

“He made him ride upon high places of the earth; then he caused him to eat the fruits of field; and He caused him to nurse honey out from a cliff and oil out of a flint of rock.

Râkak (רָכַךְ) [pronounced *raw-KAHK*] means *to mount and ride, to ride*. However, we miss some of the significance in this word by such a literal translation. This riding over the high places of the earth in somewhat of a royal procession of honor and of dominance. Those who controlled the high places of the land controlled the land. Isaiah, a great student of Deuteronomy, refers back to this passage in Isa. 58:14. Strong’s #7392 BDB #938.

When Israel entered into the mountain range directly east of the Jordan, across from Jericho, this line of the song was fulfilled.³⁸⁴ Rotherham claims that the second line should be *[and he] caused him to eat the increase of the fields*. This is because even though the verb for *eat* is in the Qal stem in the Massoretic text, in the Septuagint and in the Samaritan, it reads differently. This would be in keeping with the tenor of this verse.

Çelaʿ means *crag, cliff*. Strong’s #5553 BDB #700. Challâmîysh (חַלְאֵםִישׁ) [pronounced *khahl-law-MEESH*] means *flint* and is only found in Deut. 8:15 32:13 Job 28:9 Psalm 114:8 Isa. 50:7.* Strong’s #2496 BDB #321. Tsûr (צוּר) [pronounced *tzoor*] means *rock, cliff*. Strong’s #6697 BDB #849. Obviously, honey and oil could not be produced from cliffs or from a flint of rock. What we have here is the appearance of *impossibility*; that is, although the honey does not come out of a rock, bees would sometimes build their hives in the cleft of rocks; and olive trees grew on rocky hillsides (hence the name, Mount of Olives). God first glorified Israel and then Israel went into the land and ate the marvelous provisions from the fields, which were, at that time, greatly prosperous. **“But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”** (Psalm 81:16; see also Isa. 58:14). Barnes writes: *God gave Israel possession of those commanding positions which carry with them dominion over the whole land...and enabled him to draw the richest provision out of spots naturally unproductive.*³⁸⁵ The opinion of Freeman is that this phrase refers to an olive press made from a flinty rock, making this reference a bit less obscure³⁸⁶.

“Butter of a herd and milk of a flock with fat of lambs and rams, sons of Bashan, and goats with fat of kidneys of wheat stalks; and blood of grape you drank [even] wine.

Deut. 32:14

“Butter of the herd and milk of the flock with fat of lambs and rams, sons of Bashan, and goats. With choicest of the wheat And you drank the blood of the grape, even wine.

There is only one verb in this verse and that is at the very end. There are a series of constructs tied together by *wâw* conjunctions. We have this peculiar word *kidneys*, which is *kîlʿyâh* (כִּלְעָיִם) [pronounced *kilʿ-YAWH*], which is always in the plural and means *kidneys*. (See Ex. 29:13 Lev. 3:4, 10, 15). Although this word generally means *emotions*, when used figuratively (Psalm 16:7 Prov. 23:16), here it refers to the *choices and the richest*.³⁸⁷ Strong’s #3629 BDB #480.

³⁸⁴ I don’t mean as prophecy, as the song came after the encampment of Israel in that mountain region.

³⁸⁵ *Barnes’ Notes*, Vol. II, p. 335.

³⁸⁶ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 214.

³⁸⁷ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, p. 480. I guess that I should mention that sometimes I footnote these things which deal with the Hebrew because I am not sure that I buy it; however, I do not have another alternative point of view here.

Bashan was famous for its cattle; Reuben, Gad and a portion of the tribe of Ephraim were anxious to become cattle ranchers and chose the area of Bashan, if you will recall, as their portion of the land from God. Wine is often used as a metaphor for prosperity and happiness. This verse simply describes their prosperity in the land at the hand of God.

Let's just look for a moment at the *blood fo the grape*. This is called a catachresis [pronounced CAT-a-chree-sis]. To understand a catachresis, recall a **metonymy** is where one word is exchanged for another and there is a relation between the two words (like *nest* and the *eagle's young*). In a **synecdoche**, one word is exchanged for another and there is some association between the two words. 2Sam. 17:24 reads: *And Absalom...and all the men of Israel*. *All the men of Israel* stands for the greater part (synecdoche of the genus). *And he bare the sins of many* (Isa. 53:12), where *many* stands for *all* (Synecdoche of the species). *He executes judgement of the fatherless and the widow* (Deut. 10:18), where *fatherless and the widow* stand for *all types of afflicted and/or helpless people* (also a synecdoche of the species). The *all flesh had become corrupted* of Gen. 6:12 did not include Noah (synecdoche of the whole). Gen. 14:7 reads: *And they struck down the whole field of the Amalekites*. The *whole field* stands for the *country or region* of the Amalekites (synecdoche of the part). An **hendiadys** is when two words are used but only one thing is referred to. Zeph. 1:16 reads: *A day of trumpet and alarm*; the gist of the meaning is: *A day of the trumpet, yes, and an alarming trumpet at that*. We find hendiadys throughout Scripture (e.g., Gen. 4:4 1Sam. 17:40 28:3 1Chron. 22:5). Finally, a **catachresis** is where one word is exchanged for another and they are only remotely related concepts or words. Here, the blood of the grape stands for that which is inside the grape, just as the blood is inside us.

The sort of blessing and care which God gave to Israel was unprecedented. Since no other god had been with Y^ehowah to lead, to guide, to care for and to bless Israel, Israel was beholden to no other god but Jesus Christ. With the phenomenal blessings placed up Israel by God, this further deprived them of any excuse for their rebellion against God; it placed *their ingratitude in all the stronger light*.³⁸⁸ In the past several verses, we have example after example of how God will bless Israel. Israel will express its gratitude by rebelling against God.

You may wonder, having seen pictures of Israel today and pictures of the so-called holy land, how could that desert area have supported two million men and women along with all of their cattle and livestock? God saw to it that Israel was given enough pasture and enough water to survive those forty years and then He gave them tremendous prosperity in the land. Some of this was provided supernaturally, such as the water from the rock (there were two occasions of this and, as I have pointed out, there was more than just a stream of water from a 5/8" hose; the result was more of a volcanic eruption of water); and, such as the manna from heaven, which was provided for the majority of the forty years. We have looked at the words for translated *desert* and *wilderness* and have found two different Hebrew words which are not always correctly distinguished throughout many translations of the Torah. Most of the time in the KJV when we find the word *wilderness*, it means *wilderness*. In many other translations, when we find the word *desert*, it should usually be rendered *wilderness*. According to *When Critics Ask* (Geisler and Howe, ©1992, Victor Books, p. 131—which inspired this paragraph), there is archeological evidence which would indicate that the Land of Promise during the time of Moses had abundant water, as more and more civilizations are unearthed from that area. Finally, although there are no Biblical allusions to this in the writings of Moses, there was undoubtedly some trade which occurred between the Israelites and the surrounding nations (Midian, Edom and Moab) and between the Israelites and traveling caravans of traders. God had given the Israelites a great deal of silver and gold and jewelry from Egypt, in payment for their 400 years of servitude.

³⁸⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 991.

**“And then Y^eshurun became fat then he became rebellious.
You have become fat;
you have become swollen [or, thick];
you became gorged.
And then he forsook God;
He made him! And then he esteems as foolish a Rock of his salvation.**

Deut. 32:15

**“And so Y^eshurun became fat then he became rebellious.
You have become fat;
you have become swollen;
you became gorged.
And then he forsook God; He made him!
And then he sees as foolish the Rock of his salvation.**

We come to a word for which there is some minor disagreement. Y^eshurûn (יֵשׁוּרׁוּן) [pronounced *yesh-oo-ROON* or *y^e-shoo-ROON*], and it is a word built upon the word for *uprightness*. BDB gives this as a poetical name for Israel—Israel as spiritually mature. Barnes espouses a similar, but different view: *y^eshurûn...describes not the character which belonged to Israel in fact, but that to which Israel was called.*³⁸⁹ Thieme gives this as a coined word of Moses (which is quite likely true), which refers to the handful of believers upon whose shoulders rest the fate of a nation—Thieme used to call such a person a *spiritual atlas*. There are not enough believers to make up a pivot, so it is these few believers who preserve a nation. And we have a large number of alternate readings: *good little people; darling honest one; a poetical and fond or pet name for Israel*³⁹⁰.

Let me give you the other passages where this word occurs: **“Y^ehowah from Sinai has come and He has risen from Seir for them; He has shone from Mount Paran and He has come—myriads of holy ones. At His right hand: springs for them. Also, He [is] loving peoples; all His holy ones [are] in your hand; and they, even they, sat down at your foot. He lifts up at Your words. A law Moses has commanded us, a possession of the assembly of Jacob; and He [or, he] is in Y^eshurun a king in gathering heads of people together, tribes of Israel.”** (Deut. 33:2–5). **“There is none like the God of Y^eshurun, riding the heavens in your help and in His excellency the skies.”** (Deut. 33:26). **“And now hear, O Jacob, My servant, and Israel, whom I have chosen: thus proclaims Y^ehowah, your Maker, and formed you out from the womb, Who will help you; Fear not, my servant Jacob, and Y^eshurun, whom I have chosen.”** (Isa. 44:1–2). Notice there is a parallelism in vv. 1 and 2: Jacob was a scoundrel and a cad, who was also given the name Israel to refer to him when more mature (he was never a spiritual giant). Because Jacob was a scheming manipulator early in life and a whiner for the rest of his life, particularly when he did not get his way, giving him the name Israel is almost humorous in a way; it more points to his potential than what he actually achieved. The contrasting use of the name Jacob with Israel here and then Jacob with Y^eshurun would indicate that the traditional view, that Y^eshurun refers to a spiritually-grown Israel or represents that to which Israel is called, is the best explanation. Strong’s #3484 BDB #449.

The verb is *shâmên* (שָׁמַן) [pronounced *shaw-MAIN*] and it means *to grow fat*. It is a reference to Israel growing prosperous and arrogant. It is found twice in this verse: the first time with Y^eshurun as the subject and the second time with the 2nd masculine singular subject. This verb is found in the Qal stem in Jer. 5:28 and in the Hiphil stem in Neh. 9:25 Isa. 6:10.* Strong’s #8080 BDB #1031. The verb for *kicked* is *bâ’at* (בָּאָתַּ) [pronounced *baw-ĠAHT*], which means *to tread, to trample down, to kick at*. Metaphorically, it means *to treat with contempt, to contemn, to neglect*. *Bâ’at* is used of Israel here and in 1Sam. 2:29 for the reprobate sons of Eli and the word indicates rebellion. Here, it is found without an object and in 1Samuel, it has an object. In Deuteronomy, it only has a subject (*Jeshurun*, which appears to be a proper noun which refers to Israel, but in a negative sense). Personally, I would go with the meaning *to rebel [against]* or *to profane, to become profane*. Strong’s #1163 BDB #127. The verb which I rendered swollen means *swollen from eating*, not from some infection. The verb for *gorged* is found only here and *swollen* is found in 1Kings 7:46 2Chron. 10:10.* Strong’s #3780 BDB #505. However, the concept of becoming satiated and indifferent to God is found throughout Scripture. Looking back to this time, the Levites in Nehemiah’s time said, **“And they captured fortified cities and a fertile and. They took possession of houses full of every good thing: hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive groves, fruit trees in abundance. So they ate, were filled, and grew fat, and reveled in Your great goodness. But they became disobedient and**

³⁸⁹ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 335.

³⁹⁰ Rotherham’s *The Emphasized Bible*, Kregel Publications, printed 1971; p. 232.

rebelled against You and cast Your law behind their backs and killed Your prophets who had admonished them.” (Neh. 9:25–26a; see also Hos. 13:6).

Israel waxed fat, and kicked! What a picture this is of the affluent society we have in America today. And what a bunch of complainers there are—and the Christians join with them. “Thou art waxed fat, thou are grown thick” means these folk were getting fat. In their prosperity, they didn’t think their Rock was important anymore³⁹¹.

Let’s look at that last phrase:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then he forsook God Who made him, and forsook <i>and</i> despised the Rock of his salvation.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i> KJV	So he forsook the God who made him, And treated as foolish his Rock of salvation. ...then he forsook God <i>which</i> made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
NASB	Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the Rock of his salvation.
NIV	He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior.
NRSV	He abandoned God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And he leaveth God who made him, And dishonoureth the Rock of his salvation.

You will notice several things. First off, we have pretty much total agreement of the first portion of this verse, *then he forsook [or abandoned]* and you notice this unusual font in *The Emphasized Bible*. The word for God here is 'elôhah (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-OH-hah*], a word for God or deity found primarily in Job (e.g., Job 3:4, 23 4:9, 17 5:17 6:4, 8, 9) and found scattered throughout the Bible in fewer than a dozen other places. This is its first occurrence in the Bible, although the book of Job certainly preceded this book in time. Strong’s #433 BDB #43. Only the KJV notes that there is no relative pronoun here. **He forsook God. He made him!** The Bible is filled with times that Israel forsook God: **Then the sons of Israel against did evil in the sight of Y^ehowah, served the Baals and the Ashtroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; thus, they forsook Y^ehowah and did not serve Him.** (Judges 10:6). **They are fat and sleek. The also excel in deeds of wickedness; they do not plead the cause, the cause of the orphan, that they may prosper. And they do not defend the rights of the poor** (Jer. 5:28). **“Alas, sinful nation, a people wieghted down with iniquity; children of evildoers, sons who behave corruptly! They have abandoned Y^ehowah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel. They have turned away from Him.”** (Isa. 1:4). **“You have forgotten Y^ehowah your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, and he makes ready to destroy.”** (Isa. 51:13a; see also Isa. 1:28 58:2 65:11–12 Jer. 2:7 15:6 Ezek. 14:5).

Then you will notice the large number of translations for the next verb. Nâ^bvêl (נָבַל) [pronounced *naw^b-VAIL*] is found mostly in the Qal and generally should be translated *fade* (Psalm 1:3 Isa. 1:30 24:4 28:1 Jer. 8:13). However, the adjective cognate (which is sometimes used as a substantive) for this verb is na^bvâl (נָבַל) [pronounced *naw^b-VAWL*], which means *fool* (Deut. 32:6,21 Psalm 14:1 30:8 2Sam. 3:33). Therefore, we can determine that the Piel of this verb means *to look upon as foolish, esteem as foolish, to lightly esteem*. Adjective = Strong’s #5036 BDB #614. Verb = Strong’s #5034 BDB #614.

What he esteems as *foolish* is a Rock—Jesus Christ—the Rock of his salvation.

**“They provoked Him to jealousy
in unauthorized personnel [i.e., strange
gods].
In abominable practices,
they provoked Him to anger.**

Deut. 32:16

**“They provoked Him to jealousy
with unauthorized personnel [i.e.,
strange gods].
With abominable practices,
they provoked Him to anger.**

³⁹¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 192.

The verb for *jealous* is in the Hiphil; therefore it is rendered *caused to become jealous, stirred up to jealousy, provoked to jealousy*. This is followed by the Qal active participle of *zûwr* (זִוַּר) [pronounced *zoor*] and this is a verb, used rarely so in seven instances, and primarily as an adjective or a substantive in its Qal participle form. *Unauthorized personnel* or *stranger* are both reasonable renderings. Strong's #2114 BDB #266.

There must be a name for the type of poetry found in this verse. The structure of the sentence is reversed. The first verse of the stanza begins with the Hiphil imperfect and ends with a *vêyth* preposition and a Qal active participle; and the second line of this stanza begins with the *vêyth* preposition and a Qal active participle and ends with the Hiphil imperfect. In form, each line parallels the other—they are like mirror images of one another. This is called an introverted parallelism and looks like this:

They provoked Him to jealousy
With strange gods
With abominations
They provoked Him to anger.

The many times that Israel fell into apostasy is well-documented throughout Scripture. *Yet they tempted and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep His testimonies. But they turned back and acted treacherously like their fathers; they turned aside like a treacherous bow. For they provoked Him with their high places and around His jealousy with their graven images. When God heard, He was filled with wrath and He greatly abhorred Israel* (Psalm 78:56–59).

**“They sacrifice to demons [or,
 destroyers]—not God!
 [They sacrifice to] gods they have not
 known
 new ones
 from nearby they have come in.
 Your fathers did not shudder [with fear]
 them!**

Deut. 32:17

**“They sacrifice to demons—not God!
 gods they have not known—new ones!
 From nearby they have come in.
 Your fathers did not shudder with fear
 concerning them!**

The word for *demons* here is a borrowed word and found only here and in Psalm 106:37, where this word is closely aligned with child sacrifice. Although BDB calls it possibly a *protective spirit*, Barnes gives a better concept of the meaning of this word: *The application of the word to the false gods points to the trait so deeply graven in all heathen worship, that of regarding the deities as malignant, and needing to be propitiated by human sufferings...render [this word] destroyers.*³⁹² Strong's #7700 BDB #993.

Again, in this verse, we have the new name for God, *'elôhah* (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-OH-hah*]. Strong's #433 BDB #43. *Gods* is the more common *'elôhîym*³⁹³ (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*] which can refer to the Godhead or to foreign gods, determined by context. Strong's #430 BDB #43.

After the adjective *new* (in the plural and used as a substantive), we have the adjective *qârôb*^{bv} (קָרִיב) [pronounced *kaw-ROH^{bv}V*], which means *near, nearby*; often rendered *nigh* in the KJV. Strong's #7138 BDB #898. There is a bit of sarcasm in the phrase *from nearby they have come in*. This refers to gods that Israel would worship. They are able to choose between the omnipresent, God of the Universe, or some god who happens to live nearby to where they are now by virtue of some group of people who live in the vicinity who worship him. So they have chosen a god to worship that their fathers could not have known because their fathers lived too far away from this god.

Once and awhile, I do not grasp what is going on in the Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon. The last verb is listed in three different places on two different pages with several words between them. *Sâ'ar* (סָאָר) [pronounced *saw-*

³⁹² Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 335.

³⁹³ Since this is so commonly referred to in reference books, we will use the designation *Elohim* as well.

AHR] is defined as *bristle with horror* on p. 972; as *sweep, whirl away* in the middle of p. 973 and as *be acquainted* at the bottom of p. 973. This is not the word normally given as *fear-respect* in the Bible. The connection with the various meanings is the high winds cause one to shake from being cold and blown upon; the rendering found in Keil and Delitzsch of *shudder* is quite reasonable. There is no respect associated with this word; simply fear. Strong's #8175 BDB #972 & 973.

“He who sacrifices to any God other than to Y^ehowah along will be utterly destroyed.” (Ex. 22:20). **What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons** (I Cor. 10:20; see also Ex. 32:8 Lev. 17:7 Psalm 106:37 1Kings 14:9, 22 Rev. 9:20).

**“A Rock sired you
you were unmindful;
and so you forgot God travelling to give
you birth.**

Deut. 32:18

**“A Rock sired you—you were
unmindful;
and so you forgot God laboring to give
you birth.**

The second verb found in this verse also occurs only here and the translation *were unmindful* is just a guess as to what it means. The parallelism of the Hebrew verse indicates that it means something similar to forgetting. **They forgot God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt** (Psalm 106:21). **For you have forgotten the God of your salvation and you have not remembered the rock of your refuge. Therefore, you plant delightful plants and set them with vine slips of a strange god** (Isa. 17:10). **For Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces; and Judah has multiplied fortified cities; however, I will send a fire on its cities that it may consume its palatial dwellings** (Hos. 8:14; see also 1Sam. 12:9 Psalm 44:17, 20 Jer. 2:32 Ezek. 23:35 Hos. 13:6). The outside verbs are both related to childbirth, the latter one to the pain of delivering a child.

**“Then Y^ehowah saw
and then he was disgusted out from the
provocation of His sons
and His daughters.**

Deut. 32:19

**“Then Y^ehowah observed their idolatry
and, consequently, He was struck with
disgust
because of the provocation of His sons
and His daughters**

The second verb is the Qal imperfect of *nâ'ats* (נָאַץ) [pronounced *naw-AHTZ*] and it means *abhor, despise, disgust* and it has a direct object (Psalm 107:11 Prov. 1:30) more often than not (Deut. 32:19 Psalm 10:3 Jer. 14:21). Strong's #5006 BDB #610.

The image of these two verses is a parent who has gone through great pain to bear a child and then that child is not just disappointing, but his actions cause you to despise him. That is the picture painted by Moses concerning God and His people. **“I will then destroy your high places and I will cut down your incense altars and heap your corpses on the corpses of your idols, for My soul will abhor you.”** (Lev. 26:30). **And the anger of Y^ehowah burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of Y^ehowah was against them for evil, as Y^ehowah had spoken and as Y^ehowah had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed** (Judges 2:14–15). **The Lord Y^ehowah has sworn by Himself, Y^ehowah God of the armies has declared, “I loathe the arrogance of Jacob and I detest his citadels. Therefore, I will deliver up the city and all it contains.”** (Amos 6:8; see also Psalm 78:59 106:40–41 Jer. 44:21–30 Lam. 2:6).

Notice the inclusion of the daughters of Israel here. The women were not blameless in the apostasy of Israel. **Moreover, Y^ehowah said, “because the daughters of Zion are proud and walk with heads held high and with seductive eyes and go along with mincing steps and tinkle the bangles on their feet; therefore, Y^ehowah will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs and Y^ehowah will make their foreheads bare.”** (Isa. 4:16–17; see also Isa. 32:9 Jer. 7:18 44:15). The immorality found in our country is not simply a matter of proliferation of male degeneracy; we find female immorality and degeneracy rampant in our country.

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
Deuteronomy 31	Deuteronomy 32	Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	
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The Song of Moses: God Speaks of His Severe Discipline of Israel

“So He said, ‘I, [even] I, will hide My faces from them; I [continually] see what their latter end for they [are] a generation of recalcitrants. They sons no faithfulness in them!

Deut. 32:20

“So He said, ‘I, even I, will hide My face from them; I continually see what their latter end will be; For they are a generation of recalcitrants. They are sons without faithfulness in them!

God looks forward to the future of Israel, at their rebellious nature; He can continually see their dismal future. God hides his face from them is in stark contrast with His seeing their latter end. Hiding His face has a two-fold meaning: God can no longer stand to watch his people fall into apostasy and idolatry. If you have a son who has gone bad and has totally made a shambles of his life with his arrogance and disregard for others, a parent can no longer look upon this son—it is too painful. If you have fallen in love and are dumped; and then the object of your affection shows up with a significant other—you cannot look, it is too painful. However, even in your looking away, you can still see it in your mind’s eye—the pain caused by seeing those things still remains. This is why in one line, God is hiding His face from them yet he continually observes their latter end. The second meaning of God hiding His face from Israel is the withholding of blessing and guidance. With Israel falling into deep degeneracy and with God withholding His blessing from them, He knows how all of this will turn out—He knows the inevitable result of their apostasy. **“Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day and I will forsake them and I will hide My face from them and they will be consumed and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, ‘Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?”** (Deut. 31:17). **Why do you hide your face and forget our affliction and our oppression?** (Psalm 44:24). **“For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will fall upon you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of Y^ehowah, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands.”** (Deut. 31:29). This people has no faithfulness toward God, their Father—they are in rebellion against Him.

We are so used to the description of Israel as being a *perverse generation* that we do not realize that is not what is found here. One of the most common Hebrew words is *dôwr* (דֹּוֹר) [pronounced *dohr*], which is rendered *generation, age*. It is a time slice out of a group of people, a slice of a people (the Jews as versus other national groups) or just a time slice in general. It might be considered the *time period of a specific generation*. Strong’s #1755 BDB #189. The descriptor of this generation is the feminine plural noun of *tah^epukâh* (תַּהֲפֻקָּה) [pronounced *tah-h^e-poo-KAW*],³⁹⁴ which is generally translated *perverse* or *froward*. This is not the same word as we had in v. 5 (Strong’s #6141). This particular word is found only here and in the book of Proverbs (2:12, 14 6:14 8:13 10:31–32 16:28, 30 23:33).^{*} Since this is based upon the verb *hâfak^e* (הָפַק) [pronounced *haw-FAHK^e*], which means *overturn, overthrow, turn*; I would go with the translations *insubordinate, insubordination, recalcitrant, recalcitrance*. Strong’s #8419 BDB #246 Recall what Moses designated them in v. : **“He has corrupted Him; they are not His sons! They have a defect; a generation which is twisted and crooked!”** **“For this is a rebellious people, lying sons; sons who refuse to listen to the instruction of Y^ehowah.”** (Isa. 30:9). **“And when Y^ehowah set you from Kadeshparnea, saying, ‘God up and possess the land which I have given you,’ then you rebelled against the mouth of Y^ehowah your God; you neither believed Him nor did you listen to His voice. You have been rebellious against Y^ehowah from the day I first knew you.”** (Deut. 9:23–24). The Israeli1tes were unfaithful to God, placing their trust in idols and false gods rather than in Y^ehowah, their God.

³⁹⁴ *The New Englishman’s Concordance* has a somewhat different spelling.

“ ‘They, [even] they, have provoked me to jealousy in no-god [or, not God]; they have provoked Me in their emptinesses.
I, [even] I, will provoke them to jealousy in no-people; in a people [or nation] of foolishness [in spiritual matters], I will provoke them.

Deut. 32:21

“ ‘They, even they, have provoked me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked Me with their emptiness.
I, even I, will provoke them to jealousy with no-people; with a people bereft of spiritual knowledge I will provoke them.

The Israelites worship what is not God. This causes God to become jealous and enraged (certainly an anthropopathism). What we need to examine here is the **Doctrine of Jealousy as an Anthropopathism—not finished yet!!** Their religion will become empty and meaningless. Therefore, God will cause them to become jealous and enraged. In fact, the idolatry of the Jew has always been a source of anger and jealousy on the part of God. We have seen examples throughout the past several sets of Scriptures. However, let’s add to these 1Kings 16:13, 26: *For all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, which they sinned and which they made Israel sin, provoking Y^ehowah God of Israel to anger with their emptinesses...and Omri did evil in the sight of Y^ehowah and acted more wickedly than all those before him, for he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam ben Nebat and in his sins which he made Israel sin, provoking Y^ehowah God of Israel with their emptinesses.*

Throughout many translations, we have the word *he^vel* (הַבֵּל) [pronounced *HEH^B-vel*] rendered as *idols*. Unfortunately, this misdirects the emphasis of a verse. This word is rendered fairly consistently in the KJV as *vanities* and it means *vapor, breath*; and therefore, *that which is unsubstantial, emptiness, that which is empty or devoid of real content, vacuous*; and it is the combination of the three adjectives *ineffectual, meaningless, and trivial*. Whereas, this word should not be rendered *idols*, it can describe idols (Jer. 10:14–15) as well as the religion of heathen nations (Jer. 10:3). Strong’s #1892 BDB #210.

In this verse, *emptinesses* is more applicable to the heathen religious doctrine adhered to by the Israelites rather than to their manufactured idols, which is but one aspect of idolatry. We lose sight of the fact that what Israel engaged in was much more than manufacturing some graven images and prostrating themselves before these images. We lose the applicability of their failures to today; the key is their adherence to a false system of values, a heathen religion, a cult, that which is in opposition to the truth. This describes not only the Israelites of that day until today, but it also describes the typical Christian. I have been asked by those who are Catholics or who are charismatics why be concerned over a few minor differences in doctrine? God’s truth is everything; we are to adhere to God’s truth and those who deviate from it or place anything in its stead, whether the declarations of the pope or personal experiences, provoke God to jealousy with their no-god and with their empty doctrines. *Yet Y^ehowah warned Israel and Judah, through all His prophets and every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments. My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets.”* However, they did not listen, but they stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in Y^ehowah their God. Furthermore, they rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their father, and His warning with which He warned them. And they followed emptiness and they became empty, following the nations which surrounded them, concerning which Y^ehowah had commanded them not to do like them (2Kings 17:13–15). Thus says Y^ehowah, “What injustice did your fathers find in Me that they went far from Me and walked after emptiness and therefore became empty.” (Jer. 2:3).

They, even they, have provoked me to jealousy with not-god; this is God’s predilection that Israel would fall into the worship of that which is not God. *They have provoked Me with their emptiness*; this is Israel’s adherence to the doctrines of demons, to that which is false and in opposition to the truth. *I, even I, will provoke them to*

jealousy with not a people;³⁹⁵ God had chosen Israel out of all the peoples in the world. God made them a people. The Gentiles were considered *not a people*. Even more accurately, the church of our time is not a people as Israel was a people; that is, we are not a specific nation, per se. **With a people bereft of spiritual knowledge; I will provoke them.** God specifically came to the Jews with His Word; they were favored above all other nations as they had God's Word. Paul asks the rhetorical questions: **What the is the advantage of the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, they were entrusted with the oracles of God** (Rom. 3:1–2). One of the reasons the Jew looked down on the Gentile is God gave the Israelite His Word; it was not given to the Gentile. So the Jew looked upon the Gentile as being *foolish* (specifically with regards to things spiritual). We have recently examined the word *nâ'vâl* (נָבֵל) [pronounced *na'-VAL*], which is generally translated *foolish* but it should be taken in the sense of *having no spiritual understanding*. This is the completely lack spiritual discernment. This is how they viewed the Gentile and, if you will recall, Moses used this word to describe them back in v. 6. Strong's #5036 BDB #614.

The Israelite who knows his own history, their historic dealings with God, can't help but look at such atrocities as the holocaust and cry out against God. They can't help but look at the power and dynamics of the early church and become jealous and enraged. In the short span of a hundred years, Israel—who belonged to God, who was given God's Word, was was given direct messages from God's prophets—is suddenly cast aside by God, destroyed in great numbers by the Romans, deported, removed from the land given them by God; and, this was all coterminous with a sudden flourishing of the Apostolic church, and the giving of God's power and God's truth to a people who formerly were not a people. Those who did not believe in Jesus Christ were greatly confused by all of these events which took place. An Israelite who is honest will admit to being jealous of the glorious manifestations of power given to the early church and provoked to anger towards God for how they were massacred without mercy.

Paul quotes the second portion of this verse: **But I say, certainly Israel did not know did they? From the very first, Moses said, "I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation; by a nation without understanding will I anger you."** (Rom. 10:19). God warned them over and over again. **"And you will yourself let go of your inheritance that I gave you and I will make you serve your enemies in the land which you do not know; for you have kindled a fire in My anger which will burn forever."**³⁹⁶ (Jer. 17:4). **Y^ehowah has accopmlished His wrath; He has poured our His fierce anger and He has kindled a fire in Zion which has consumed its foundations. The kings of the earth did not believe, nor did any of the inhabitants of the world believe that the adversar and the enemy could enter into the gates of Jersalem. Because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests who have shed the blood of the righteous in her midst** (Lam. 4:11–12).

Now before we leave this verse, let's look at it from the standpoint of a unified whole; in structure, it is an alternate parallelism:

A "They, even they, have caused me to become **jealous**
 B with that which is **not God**;
 C they have **provoked Me**
 D with their **emptiness**.

A I, even I, will cause them to become **jealous**
 B with **no-people**;
 C I will **provoke them**
 D with a **people bereft of spiritual knowledge**.

³⁹⁵ I have protected you from some of the weirder interpretations of these words and concepts by giving you the correct understanding of this verse. There are those who describe a foolish nation as *an ungodly nation, which despises all laws both human and divine*; and interpret no-people as *a truly inhuman people, terrible and repulsive; a horde of men that does not deserve to be called a people*. Keil and Delitzsch mention these incorrect interpretations (and so identify them) on p. 995 of vol. I.

³⁹⁶ This fire which burns forever is the Lake of Fire where all unbelieving Israelites will be thrown.

I should mention, as a side-note, that Owen's switches the order of the last two lines as does the Septuagint. I am guessing that the original did not. Although it is the majority of the scribes and copyists certainly took their calling very seriously, all it takes is just one important link to the screwed up by one scribe. He may have turned the two phrases around, noticed, and then just left it that way, not wanting to go back and redo that entire page. As I do my personal studies, after I have been typing for a long time, it is difficult to keep a clear head and to handle each verse as accurately and as carefully as I do at the very start.

**“ ‘For a fire is kindled in My anger
and so it burns as far as lower Sheol
and so it devours earth and its increase
and so sets on fire foundations of
mountains.**

Deut. 32:22

**“ ‘For a fire is kindled in My anger
Then it burns as far as the depths of
Sheol
Then it devours earth and its increase
Then it sets on fire the foundations of
mountains.**

We have had a number of passages where God's anger is kindled against the Israelite. However, this verse takes that anthropopathism one step further into a raging fire. Both generations of Israel got a visual to go with this: during Korah's rebellion, Korah and those who clung to him were swallowed by what appears to be an incredibly severe earthquake which was accompanied by what appears to be lightening. *Then it came to pass as he finished speaking all these words that the ground that was under them split open and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up and their households and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. And all Israel who were around them fled at their outcry, for they said, "The earth may swallow us up!"* Fire also came forth from Y^ehowah and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense (Num. 16:31–35).

In the verse at hand, Moses pictures the fire beginning as a kindling of Y^ehowah's anger, which begins a fire in the depths of Sheol, which coming from down below, begins to set a fire in the earth which spreads even to the base of the mountains. No doubt this was a verse that Peter had studied when he wrote: *But the present heavens and earth by His Word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men...the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up* (2Peter 3:7, 10). Moses moves to the end times with these past two verses, describing events far into the future, even future from us.

**“ ‘I will transfer [or, possibly, add] upon
them evils;
my arrows I will finish [off] in them.**

Deut. 32:23

**“ ‘I will transfer evils upon them;
I will use up all My arrows in them.**

The first verb in this verse is tricky. It is the Hiphil imperfect of *çaphâh* (חָפַח) [pronounced *saw-PHAWH*], which means *to snatch away, to sweep away*; the implication being that the object of the verb is consumed or destroyed (Gen. 18:23–24 19:15, 17 Num. 16:26 Psalm 40:14 1Sam. 26:10). This word also means *to join, to add, to augment, to attach to*, as seen in Num. 32:14 Isa. 13:15 30:1 Jer. 7:21. Strong's #5595 BDB #705. That is the verb which is written in the Massoretic text. However, in a few instances, when a public reading is made of the Hebrew, a different word is sometimes read. Here, what is read is the verb *'âçaph* (אָצַף) [pronounced *aw-SAHF*], which means *transfer, transport, relocate, gather*. Strong's #622 BDB #62 (another opinion is what is read is the word for *add, multiply*). The other verb used in this verse is *kâlâh* (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which means *to complete, to bring an end to, to finish* (Piel meanings). Strong's #3615 BDB #477.

We have the same visual of the arrows of God given to us in Psalm 18:13–14: *Y^ehowah also thundered in the heavens and the Most High utter His voice—hailstones and coals of fire. And He sent out His arrows and scattered them; and lightning flashes in abundance and he routed them.* We also find this in Psalm 45:5: *Your arrows are sharp; the people fall under you. Your arrows are in the heart of the King's enemies.* Job tells us the result of being struck by the arrows of God: *"For the arrows of the Almighty are within me; their poison is drunk by my spirit; the terrors of God are arrayed against me."* (Job 6:4). See also Psalm 7:13 77:17 (which closely

associates lightning with God's arrows) Isa. 49:2 (which, in context, describes Jesus Christ as the arrow of God hidden in his quiver). In fact, we ought to look at the doctrine of the **Arrows of God—not finished yet!!**

The Bible clearly teaches that even before Israel was a nation dwelling in its own land, they would undergo tremendous discipline and hurt. This will be such an incredible amount of discipline that **"All the nations will say, 'Why has Y^ehowah done this to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?' "** (Deut. 29:21).

**" 'Debilitation of famine,
and devourings of burnings
and bitter destruction and tooth of
beasts
I will send against them
with poison of crawling things of dust.**

Deut. 32:24

**" 'I will send against them
Debilitation by famine,
and they will be devoured by burning
illnesses;
and bitter destruction
and the gnashing of wild animals
along with the poison of the snakes
(and scorpions) of the dirt**

Note the different translations for the beginning of this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	They shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured with burning heat and poisonous pestilence; and the teeth of beasts will I send against them, with the poison of crawling things of the dust.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	The meltings of hunger, The devourings of fever, And the dangerous pestilence, And the tooth of beasts will I send among them, With the poison of crawlers of the dust:
KJV	<i>They shall be burnt</i> with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.
NASB	<i>They shall be</i> wasted by famine, and consumed by plague, And bitter destruction; And the teeth of beasts I will send upon them, With the venom of crawling things of the dust.
NIV	I will send wasting famine against them, consuming pestilence and deadly plague, I will send against them the fangs of wild beasts, the venom of vipers that glide in the dust.
NRSV	...wasting hunger, burning consumption, bitter pestilence. The teeth of beasts I will send against them, with venom of things crawling in the dust.
Owen's Translation	Empty from hunger and devoured with burning heat and poisonous pestilence and the teeth of beasts I will send against them with venom of crawling things of dust.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Exhausted by famine, And consumed by heat, and bitter destruction. And the teeth of beasts I send upon them, With poison of fearful things of the dust.

As you see, the verses all say roughly the same things, but we have several differences in the set up of the verses and in some of the vocabulary. First, note back in v. 23, we have the phrase **My arrows I will use up against them.**

In this verse we have four things mentioned, and then these are four arrows which God will send against Israel. As you can tell by most of the translations and the italics in both the KJV and the NASB, there is no *they shall be*. There is the masculine plural adjective construct of *māzeh* (מָזֶה) [pronounced *maw-ZEH*] found only here and possibly in Isa. 5:13. Our best guess is that this means *sucked out, empty* resulting in *exhausted by*. Strong's #4198 BDB #561. The next word is *hunger, famine*. Then we have the conjunction and the Qal passive participle masculine plural construct of *devour*, properly rendered *devourings of*. Then we have the masculine singular noun *resheph* (רֶשֶׁף) [pronounced *REH-shef*] and this is given several related renderings in the KJV: *burning heat, thunderbolts, lightnings, coals, burning coals*. I will go with just *burnings*. Although we have had burnings with fire and burnings with snake bites (not this word), my guess would this would be the burning of a fever due to disease. Strong's #7565 (8313) BDB #958. Moses spoke of this before in Deut. 28:22: **"Y^ehowah will strike you down with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew and they will pursue you until you perish."**

The third item sent by God to the Jew is the word *qetē^{bv}* (קֶטֶב) [pronounced *KEH-te^{bv}*], which means *destruction*. We only find this word in two or three other places. Psalm 91:6 reads: *Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.* Isa. 28:2: *“Observe, a strong and mighty one is to Y^ehowah as a storm of hail, a tempest of destruction. Like a storm of mighty overflowing waters, He has cast it down to the earth with His hand.”* Finally, we have what is likely the same word (it differs by a vowel point) in Hos. 13:14: *I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from death. O Death, where are your thorns? O Sheol, I will be your destruction. Repentance will be hid from My eyes.*³⁹⁷ Strong’s #6986 (& 6987) BDB #881. Many of the words in this poem are rare and used here and in just one or three other places. This is followed by the adjective *bitter* (used only here, but there is support for its meaning).

The last item is *tooth of beasts*. We would always use the plural in regard to *teeth* (and the singular when using the word *face*) whereas it is the opposite in the Hebrew. This is followed by the 1st person singular subject of the word *shālach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAHKH*] and means simply *to send, to send forth, to send away*. Strong’s #7971 BDB #1018. This is followed by the *vēyth* preposition (which can mean *against* as well as *in*; adjunct is the 3rd person masculine plural suffix. This is mentioned in Lev. 26:22 as well: *“And I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.”* Also see Amos 5:18–19.

As is often done in the Hebrew, we have a thing upon which the verb acts (in this case, it was a total of four things) and then something else is added. This is not just poetry but a common Hebrewism. The additional item sent is the feminine singular construct noun *chēmâh* (חֵמָה) [pronounced *khay-MAW*] which means *fury, rage, heated anger, poison*. Strong’s #2534 BDB #404. Then we have a word, found only in this chapter, which might mean *shrink back, crawl away, crawling things*. This leaves us with the translation: *with poison of crawling things of dust*. This is likely a reference to snakes; *“For observe, I am sending serpents against you; adders, for which there is no charm; and they will bite you,”* declares Y^ehowah (Jer. 8:17). Further references found in Job 20:16 Psalm 58:4. As has been described earlier, these are some of the ways which God will attack Israel. However, here, it will all be captured in a song which the Israelites will all learn.

**“ ‘From outside the sword will bereave
[them]
and in chambers terror
both young man and virgin
and suckling child with a man of gray
hair.**

Deut. 32:25

**“ ‘When outside, the sword will bereave
[them]
and while inside their homes—terror;
both the young man and the virgin
and the infant along with the old man.**

There are few things one can do in the case of a national disaster. It does not matter whether one hides inside or flees to the outside. People who have been stricken with fear react in different ways. In neither place are they safe. Then God focuses in on the helpless: the youth, both males and females, and the babies and the older population. They will be killed or they will be bereaved. *“Observe, O Y^ehowah, for I am in distress. My spirit is greatly troubled; my heart is overturned within me, for I have been very rebellious. In the street, the sword slays; in the house, it is like death...On the ground in the streets lie young and old, my virgins and my young men have fallen by the sword. You have slain them in the day of Your anger. You have slaughtered, not sparing a soul.”* (Lam. 1:20 2:21). *“The sword is outside and the plague and the famine are within. He who is in the field will die by the sword; famine and the plague will also consume those in the city.”* (Ezek. 7:15). Therefore, He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who struck down their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion the the young man or virgin, old man or infirm. He gave them all into his hand (2Chron. 36:17). See also Isa. 13:18 Jer. 4:31 14:18. For today, we have the attacks upon the productive believer by Satan and his demon army: *For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side—conflicts without, fears within* (2Cor. 7:5).

³⁹⁷ I can tell that this particular verse will require a lot of work in the original languages to sort it out. Compare the difference in translation between the KJV and the NASB.

**“ I have said,
I would have caused them to be cut into
pieces;
I would have [cause to] cease from men
their remembrance.**

Deut. 32:26

**“ I have said,
I would have caused them to be cut into
pieces;
I would have caused to cease their
remembrance from men**

The first verb is found only once in the Bible. BDB and Owen's render this as *cleave into pieces*; KJV: *I would scatter them*; Young: *I blow them away*; Rotherham: *I will puff them away*. The closest noun to this verb, which has the same consonants, means *corner, side, edge, border*. The cutting into pieces does not necessarily mean that their physical bodies would be cut into pieces—we do not know for certain the actual meaning of this verb—this probably refers to the scattering of Israel to the other nations. **“Moreover, Y^ehowah will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you will serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.”** (Deut. 28:64; see Num. 14:12 Ezek. 20:23).

The two verbs could have been rendered *I will cause to, I have caused to, I would have caused to*; there is really nothing to distinguish any of these renderings other than context. The context of the next verse will indicate why I have rendered this *I would have caused*. The enemies of the Israelite were the enemies of God; had God allowed the Israelites to be wiped out, their enemies, notably Satan, would claim victory and claim that God was not with them. During one rebellious period, God went to Moses and said He was ready to remove Israel from history. **“Let Me alone that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.”** (Deut. 9:14). **“Memory of him perishes from the earth and he has no name abroad.”** (Job 18:17). See also Psalm 34:16 37:28 109:15 Isa. 14:20.

I need to make some general comments concerning the church and Israel. There are some who completely confuse the two, thinking that the church is the spiritual Israel and that the nation Israel is merely the seed of the church to come. They are both separate entities with salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as their only point of commonality. That is, true Israel is regenerate Israel. Furthermore, in the Old Testament, there are just the barest of clues of what we find ourselves in—the Church Age. We know that Israel will be scattered and we know that there will be the bringing in of the Gentiles, but there is not much more detail than that. The fact that God would choose an entirely different entity through which to do His will is not stated clearly in the prophecy of the Old Testament. Therefore, although God would use the heathen to discipline Israel, they are nowhere in this passage referred to as *the bride of God* nor is there an explicit statement that God would turn toward the Gentiles as opposed to turning toward the Israelites. Also, notice in this chapter that there is no distinction from a pre-historic standpoint between the righteous and the wicked in Israel. That is, Israel is dealt with as a cohesive unit. They will be exalted as a whole and they will be taken down as a whole. This is God's historic dealing with the nation Israel; in eternity, only the righteous will be with God. Furthermore, even though the future apostasy of Israel is well-attested to throughout the entirety of the Old Testament, there is no indication that Israel will reject God in toto, down to the very last man. As God told Elijah, **“I have left 7000 men in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”** (1Kings 19:18a). And if we have any doubt as to the final end of Israel, Rev. 7 and 14 mentions the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who will be immediately converted during the last times; Rev. 7 even tells from which tribes these men will come. Finally, the idea that God would choose another entity over and above Israel as a complete replacement of Israel and then to call this the *spiritual Israel* makes His promises to Israel seem pretty thin and causes the end time prophecies appear pretty weak. It also weakens God's specific promises to Israel; for instance: **Thus proclaims Jehovah, Who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night; Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—Jehovah of hosts is His name. “If this fixed order departs from before Me,” declares Jehovah, “Then the descendants of Israel will also cease from being a nation before Me forever.” Thus said Jehovah, “If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the descendants of Israel for all that they have done,” declares Jehovah** (Jer. 31:35–37). We in the Church Age are not a *spiritual Israel* in the sense that we are an entity which has grown out of and totally replaced Israel. We are, for this period of time called the Church Age, a spiritual Israel and we have replaced Israel temporarily as God's representative on earth. However, at some point in time in the future, we will be removed from this world and God will return to those who are Hebrews by birth and to the nation Israel and He will literally fulfill every promise which He has delivered to Israel.

**“ Except for a taunting provocation
of an enemy I keep fearing,
lest their adversaries misconstrue,
lest they say, “Our two hands exalted
[or, are high].
And Y^ehowah has not done all this!”**

Deut. 32:27

**“ If weren’t that I fear the taunting
provocations of the enemy;
or else their adversaries will
misinterpret the situation;
and they will say, “We are triumphant!
Y^ehowah has not done all of this!”**

This verse begins with *lûlêy* (לֹּלְאֵי) [pronounced *loo-LAY*], which means *otherwise, except that, if not, unless*. Strong’s #3884 BDB #530. The KJV is all over the map with the next word, the masculine singular construct substantive *ka’ac* (כֹּאֵץ) [pronounced *KAH-ġahs*]; they translate it *provoking, wrath, sore, grief, anger, sorrow*. For a word which occurs 21 times, this is too many different renderings. BDB gives the definitions: *vexation, anger*. When the enemies of Israel *lûlêy*’s God, they are *taunting* Him, *provoking* Him to anger; they are *heckling* Him and *aggravating* Him. Perhaps ***taunting provocation***? Strong’s #3708 BDB #495

We have the Old English word *lest* twice in this verse, which, as we have seen, can be rendered *so that + a negative*, or more simply as *else, or for the aversion of, for the avoidance of, so that [you] avoid, in order to prevent*. Strong’s #6435 BDB #814. This is followed by the 3rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect of *nâkar* (נָכַר) [pronounced *naw-KAHR*] and it means *misconstrue, misinterpret [the situation]*. This word is a homonym with a word found on BDB #647. Strong’s #5234 BDB #649. David prayed for this not to happen in Psalm 140:8: **“Do not grant, O Y^ehowah, the desires of the wicked; do not promote his evil device—they will exalt themselves.”**

The next portion of their exclamation is the *wâw* conjunction, a negative, the name of God, and then the verb *pâ’al* (פָּעַל) [pronounced *paw-AHL*], which is the poetical equivalent of *’âsâh* (see BDB# 793), and it means *to do to make, to construct*. Strong’s #6466 BDB #821.

Israel is so negative toward God and deserves to be totally removed from this earth; however, this would be done by the enemies of Israel, who would then provoke and taunt God, claiming that all of His works with regard to Israel were not really His. God had to take Assyria down a notch as they celebrated their victory over Israel. **So it will come to pass when Y^ehowah has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, saying, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his arrogance, for he has said, ‘By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did this, for I have understanding and I removed the boundaries of the peoples and plundered their treasures and, like a mighty man, I brought down their inhabitants. Furthermore, my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest and as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth; and there was not one that flapped its wing or opened its beak or chirped.’ Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?”** (Isa. 10:12–15a). Israel fell due to its internal spiritual deterioration and not because of the great strength of Assyria. **Now the captain of the bodyguard had taken Jeremiah and said, to him, “Y^ehowah your God promised this calamity against this place; and Y^ehowah has brought it to pass and has done just as He promised, because you [referring to Israel] sinned against Y^ehowah and did not listen to His voice, therefore, this thing has happened to you.”** (Jer. 40:2–3; see also Jer. 19:3–9).

**“ For a nation perishing of counsel
they; and nothing in them
understanding.**

Deut. 32:28

**“ For they are a nation lost to counsel;
and there is no understanding in them.**

In context this refers to the enemies of Israel. They are not counseled by God’s Word due to their negative volition; it is their choice not to be counseled. This is a problem with Israel as well as with her enemies: **“An ox knows its owner and a donkey its master’s manger, but Israel does not know; My people do not understand.”** (Isa. 1:3; see also Jer. 4:22 8:7). **“When its limbs are dry, they are broken off. Women come and make a fire with them. For they are not a people of discernment. Therefore their mMaker will not have compassion on them and their Creator will not be gracious to them.”** (Isa. 27:11).

**“ If they were wise,
they would have understood this;
they would discern in regard to their
latter end.**

Deut. 32:29

**“ If they were wise, they would have
understood this;
they could understand their latter end.**

This verse begins with *if they were wise*; the implication is *and they are not!* In the past three verses, we have one noun and two verbs which refer to cognition, understanding, discerning. This is the key to the spiritual life. The Word of God is knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Note what sharp contrast this is to the Jew today. But you are thinking to yourself, they are known for their intellectual abilities. They are known to move into a nation with very little and they prosper through their intelligence and hard work. What is the deal? The deal is that they lack divine wisdom, divine understanding. Even those who study the Scriptures concentrate upon the Talmud and the Mishnah, running commentaries which primarily subvert the grace of God transforming it into legalism. This is why the Jew can look back at the Spanish Inquisition or back to the Holocaust and ask God *why?* Without divine wisdom, they do not understand their own history, recent or ancient. [God speaking to Moses]: *“Oh, that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all of My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever! Go and say to them, ‘Return to your tents.’ But, as for you, stand here by Me, that I may speak to you all the commandments and the statues and the judgments which you will teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I have given them.”* (Deut. 5:29–30). *“Oh, that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways!”* (Psalm 81:13).

**“ How would one pursue a thousand
and two put to flight ten thousand
if not their rock had sold them,
and Y^ehowah had delivered them over.**

Deut. 32:30

**“ How would one pursue a thousand
and could two put to flight ten thousand
if not their rock had sold them,
and Y^ehowah had delivered them over.**

The Israelites have only been veterans of a couple of battles; however, in the future, they will have great victories of just a few Israelites against a huge number of enemies. God had promised them this back in Lev. 26:7–8: *“But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; five of you will chase a hundred and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword.”* However, this verse states just the opposite. This is where a small number of their enemies put them to flight. This song was to remain with them throughout their history as a witness against them. One of the greatest fulfillments of this verse was the holocaust where a huge number of Jews were under the direct control of a relatively small number of German soldiers. This is poetry, by the way, and we do not require a literal fulfillment of each of these lines. When speaking of the numbers here, a small number of adversaires would overrun a much larger force of Israelites. This does not require a literal one per one thousand ratio and a two per ten thousand ratio. Nor did Jesus Christ literally take them out to some auction block and sell them. However, the image of Jesus Christ selling the Jew indicates an obvious lack of interest in possessing them. When it reads *their Rock had sold them* this is not too unlike our idiom today of being *sold out*. However, it is more like a master selling a slave who had become a part of the family. *And the anger of Y^ehowah burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of Y^ehowah was against them for evil, as Y^ehowah had spoken and as Y^ehowah had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed* (Judges 2:14–15; see Judges 3:8 4:2 10:7 1Sam. 12:9 Isa. 50:1). *You have given us as sheep to be eaten and You have scattered us among the nations. You sell Your people cheaply and You have not profited by their sale. You make us a reproach to our neighbors—a scoffing and a derision to those around us* (Psalm 44:11–13).

The last verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect, 3rd person masculine plural suffix, of *çâgar* (צָגַר) [pronounced *saw-GAHR*] which means *shut up, to close up*; however, in the Piel and the Hiphil, it means *to deliver over*. Strong’s #5462 BDB #688. The verse says how could the people of God be beaten by their enemy, if God had not given them up? Barnes wrote: *The defeat of Israel would be due to the fact that God, their strength, had abandoned them because of their apostasy.*³⁹⁸ Keil and Delitzsch: *The giving up of Israel into the power of te*

³⁹⁸ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 336.

heathen arose, not from the superior power of the heathen and their gods, but solely from the apostasy of Israel from its own God³⁹⁹.

“ **For not as our Rock [is] their rock and our enemies [are] judges**

Deut. 32:31

“ **For our Rock is not like their rock; yet our enemies are judges!**

We have already dealt with the Doctrine of the Rock back in Ex. 33—the Rock of Israel is Jesus Christ. That is upon whom regenerate Israel depends. This is still a part of the incredulousness of the idea that Israel, having the God of the Universe on their side, could actually be defeated. The stability and strength of Israel is Jesus Christ; how could any nation defeat and destroy Israel under those circumstances. “**There is no one holy like Y^ehowah; indeed, there is no one besides You; nor is there any rock like our God.**” (1Sam. 2:2).

I will admit that I have flip-flopped on the references in this verse and the surrounding verses. I’ve even slept on it twice to try to get a clear head about this. When I explain it, it will seem simple. Throughout all of this chapter, from v. 19 on, the song of Moses changes from *you* to *they*. That is, the song is addressed for awhile to Israel—you neglected the Rock who begot you and you forgot the God Who gave you birth (v. 18) and then, in v. 19, we have two changes. Moses is no longer the speaker, but God is (Y^ehowah saw this...and He said—vv. 19a and 20a); and Israel is spoken of in the third person plural (“**They have made Me jealous with not God...I will heap misfortunes on them.**”—vv. 21a and 23a). In the previous verse, the reference to *their Rock* is Jesus Christ; they is still degenerate Israel. V. 31 throws in a contrast—Israel has to depend upon something or someone; they depended upon a rock, but not the Rock. Then entire tenor of the remainder of this song and this verse all depend upon understanding who is speaking and who *they* is. God is speaking and *they* is apostate Israel. They trusted in false gods, they took refuge in a false rock (v. 37); they made sacrifices to that which was not God (v. 38). All these *they’s* are Israel, not heathen nations. Here, *our* Rock is God the Father speaking, referring to the Rock of Moses, the Rock of present Israel, the Rock of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. *Their* rock is in whom apostate Israel will trust in the future. There is no change of person in this verse; no change of speaker. If we remain consistent on this point, then the remainder of the interpretation is easy.

The last phrase is a bit difficult because the attempt to interpret in the translation:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...even our enemies themselves being judges.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...our enemies themselves being judges.
KJV	...even our enemies themselves <i>being</i> judges.
NASB	Even our enemies themselves judge this [alt., Even our enemies are judges].
NIV	...as even our enemies concede.
NRSV	...our enemies are fools.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	(And our enemies are judges!)

As you see, we have quite a difference of opinion. What is certain is the translation: And our enemies [the ones being at enmity with us]—enemies is the Qal active participle of the verb *’āya^v* (אָיַב) [pronounced *aw-YA^v*] and it means *to be at enmity, to be hostile*. As a participle, it can be reasonably rendered *enemy*, but it is more literally, *the one being at enmity with you*. Strong’s #340 BDB #33. This is followed by the word *pālîyl* (פָּלִיֵל) [pronounced *paw-LEEL*], which is found only in Ex. 21:22 Deut. 32:31 Job 31:11.* And, although the NRSV indicates that the meaning of this word is uncertain, there is the corresponding verb *pālal* (פָּלַל) [pronounced *paw-LAHL*], which means, in the Piel *to judge* and in the Hithpael *to pray*. We find this only in the Piel four times in Scripture: Gen. 48:11 1Sam. 2:25 Psalm 106:30 Ezek. 16:52.* Neither of these are the common words for *judge* (as a verb or noun). Noun: Strong’s #6414 (& #6419) BDB #813. Verb: Strong’s #6419 BDB #813.

We have no word for *themselves* in this verse. Let’s go with context. *Our* is spoken by God the Father; whatever He is speaking of refers to *our* in terms of God, Moses and present Israel. Then we have the two words *enemies judges*. This line begins with *and*, which could also be rendered *even*. **Even our enemies judges**. The Rock which Israel has followed through the desert wilderness and the Rock which will crush the indigenous population of the

³⁹⁹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 998.

Land of Promise—this Rock is Jesus Christ. *Their*, throughout this passage, has always referred to Israel, but to apostate Israel. There is no reason to change that. The enemies of the Israel that Moses is teaching this song will corroborate what this song has said: the rock in whom apostate Israel will trust is not the same as Our Rock. How can the enemies of Israel judge this? By v. 30—instead of one Israelite putting to flight a thousand, one heathen puts to flight a thousand Israelites. These enemies are not conceding a point nor are they made judges over Israel; they are agreeing with God’s assessment of the situation which is obvious to them in battle. The Rock on the side of Israel would defeat them soundly; a false rock on the side of Israel is no god at all. A comment of Barnes is apropos: *That the heathen should thus be constrained to bear witness to the supremacy of Israel’s God heightened the folly of Israel’s apostasy.*⁴⁰⁰ We have case histories of Gentiles who have judged or have given testimony that the true God of Israel is the Rock: Num. 23–24 (Balaam), Ex. 14:25 (the Egyptians), Joshua 2:9–10 (Rahab the harlot) and 1Sam. 5:7–12 (the Philistines). Quite likely, some of these Gentiles were or became believers in Jesus Christ as a result of their observations.

Now, I have just spent a paragraph justifying the correct interpretation of this verse. This is because of a slick trick which theologians and logicians use known as *it’s obvious that*. Keil and Delitzsch wrote concerning this verse: *“Our Rock,” as Moses calls the Lord, identifying himself with the nation, is not as their rock, i.e., the gods in whom the heathen trust. That the pronoun in “their rock refers to the heathen, is so perfectly obvious from the antithesis “our rock,” that there cannot possibly be any doubt about it.”*⁴⁰¹ I have done this myself, usually unwittingly. I come across a spiritual truth or an interpretation which I do not want to spend time explaining or justifying, so I say *it is obvious that*. I recall a college professor who taught me my first course in *Probability and Statistics* mention a pertinent mathematical fact in a problem, dismissing it as trivial. I told him that it wasn’t trivial to me and I didn’t understand from whence this notion came. After spending fifteen minutes explaining it to me (and the class), he conceded that maybe it wasn’t all that trivial. My point is that anytime someone tells you that this is an obvious fact, that it is readily discernable, that any fool recognizes this, etc.; look carefully—this usually means that if this is a viewpoint that they are trying to get across or a premise on which another doctrine is built, then it is not necessarily all that trivial. The phrase *it’s obvious that* is a euphemism for *I am pretty sure that this is true; I just don’t know at this moment how to prove it to you*; and then, sometimes it means *I sure hope you don’t notice this sudden illogical leap that I just made*.

**“ ‘For from the vine of Sodom
[is] their vine
and from the fields of Gomorrah
[are] their grapes
grapes of poison,
clusters of bitterness to them.**

Deut. 32:32

**“ ‘For they are grown from the vine of
Sodom
And their grapes are from the fields of
Gomorrah
Grapes of poison!
And clusters of bitterness to them!**

Being tied in any way to Sodom and Gomorrah is to ultimate emblem of depravity. God spoke to Jeremiah and tied Israel to Sodom and Gomorrah: **“And among the prophets of Jerusalem, I have seen a horrible thing: the committing of adultery and walking in falsehood; and they strengthen the hands of evildoers so that no one has turned back from his wickedness. All of them have become to Me like Sodom and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.”** (Jer. 23:14; see also Isa. 1:9–10). After spending a great deal of time in the previous two verses being careful to note who *they* is, we recognize that this verse continues to apply to apostate Israel and not to the Gentile nations. Throughout Scripture, when comparisons are made to Sodom and Gomorrah, these comparisons are made between apostate Israel and those two cities (Isa. 1:9–10 3:9 Jer. 23:14 Ezek. 16:46–57) and not between the Gentile nations and Sodom and Gomorrah. Such a comparison to the Israelite is a grave insult; to a heathen Gentile, the insult is not quite as meaningful. Allow me to add the words of Schultz: *It is à priori inconceivable, that in so short an ode there should be so elaborate a digression on the subject of the heathen, seeing that their folly is altogether foreign to the theme of the whole*⁴⁰².

⁴⁰⁰ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 337.

⁴⁰¹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 998.

⁴⁰² With such an excellent observation, I feel lacking that I do not know who Schultz is; I took this quote from Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 999.

Rô`sh (רֹשׁ) [pronounced *rowsh*] is a bitter and poisonous herb, or, simply the poison of a snake. This word is often translated *gall*, although it is not the same gall which we find in Matt. 27:34, which was probably a bitter herb which was mixed with the cheap wine given to our Lord on the crucifix. Strong's #7219 BDB #912. On the one hand, Israel is related to the God of the Universe, the Author of Life and, on the other hand, their enemies are tied to death and bitterness and poison. It would make no sense for their enemies to prevail over them.

**“ ‘Poison of serpents [or, creatures]
their wine and venom of vicious asps.**

Deut. 32:33

**“ ‘Their wine is the poison of creatures
and their wine is the venom of vicious
asps.**

Tannîyn (תַּנְיִן) [pronounced *tahn-NEEM*] is generally rendered *dragon* in the KJV. BDB defines this as a *serpent* (though not the same *serpent* is in the garden or as bit the people of Israel in the desert. BDB writes that this is a figurative mythological creature, symbolic of chaos. What is somewhat confusing is that there are two very similar words, treated by BDB and Strong's as the same word, yet ZPEB and *The New Englishman's Concordance* treats them as separate words (actually, the concordance lists them as three different words). The word found here is the same one found in Gen. 1:21, where God creates the *great sea-monsters* and found in Ex. 7, where the staffs are turned into tannîyn's. This is more akin to our English word *creature*, which could stand for a myriad of different kinds of animals and even non-animals. Strong's #8577 BDB #1072.

Asp is an easier word. Pethen (פֶּתֶן) [pronounced *PEH-then*]; these are *poisonous snakes*, likely *asps* (*Egyptian cobras*). Even though their name lacks an *s*, it is almost an onomatopoeic name. Strong's #6620 BDB #837. These are described by the adjective 'ak^ezâr (אֶכְזָר) [pronounced *ahk^e-ZAWR*] means *cruel, fierce, vicious*. This word is found only in Deut. 32:33 Job 30:21 41:10 Lam. 4:3.* Strong's #393 BDB #470.

This verse is even stronger than the previous verse. What they produce—which is not a reference to literal food and drink, but their own works—is poison; in fact, the poison of a vicious Egyptian cobra. The religion and the aspirations of these people are a poison which gets into your system innocuously, like from the eating of a grape, whereas the true picture is being struck by a poisonous asp. This is certainly the *modus operandi* of all man's religions. They seem to be wonderful examples of truth, love, beautify, kindness; but biting into them is bitter and poisonous—and what we do not see is that these religions are the attack of Satan. David spoke of the wicked in a similar fashion in Psalm 58:3–6: **The wicked are estranged out from the womb. These who speak lies go astray from birth. They have venom like the venom of a serpent, like a deaf cobra that stops up its ear so that it does not hear the voice of charmers, a skillful caster of spells. O God, shatter their teeth in their mouth; break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord.**

**“ ‘Not this laying up in store with me?
Sealed up in My treasuries?**

Deut. 32:34

**“ ‘Is this not laid up in store with Me?
Is this not sealed up in My treasuries?**

This verse is more difficult to interpret. To help, let me first give you a variety of translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Is not this laid up in store with Me, sealed up in My treasuries?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Is not that stored up with me,—Sealed amongst my treasures;
NASB	'Is it not laid up in store with Me, Sealed up in My treasuries?'
NIV	"Have I not kept this in reserve and sealed it in my vaults?"
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Is I not laid up with Me? Sealed among My treasuries?

Part of the difficulty of this verse is who is speaking. This is a song, being taught by Moses to the people. Occasionally, it is sung from the viewpoint of the people (vv. 2–19). However, with v. 20, the speaker becomes Y^ehowah God. The Rock are spoken of in the 3rd person in vv. 30–31. However, this does not mean the first person is no longer God. This would be confusing to one who does not believe in the trinity, but often Scripture has God speaking, but the other members of the Godhead are spoken of in the third person (Isa. 48:16, most notably). In v. 35, we have the phrase, Vengeance is Mine, which is clearly God, although in the following few verses, Y^ehowah and the Rock are again spoken of in the 3rd person. With v. 39, we pick up with God undeniably

speaking, although throughout the previous dozen or so verses, there is no indication of a change of speaker as we find in v. 27 (**Lest their adversaries...should say**; and v. Vv. 19–20 **And Y^ehowah...said**). Therefore, for these reasons, God is still the speaker in this verse; hence the capitalizing the personal pronouns.

Now that we know who the speaker is, we can determine what the verse means. This trials and tribulations for Israel are put aside in God's vaults or treasuries for Israel. He holds Israel's future. As the NIV Study Bible notes: *The Lord's plans for the future are fixed and certain. Sin will be punished in due time.*⁴⁰³ **Then Jeremiah said to all the people, to the men and women—even to the people who were giving him an answer—saying, “As for the smoking sacrifices that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; you and your forefathers, your kings and princes, and the people of the land; did not Y^ehowah remember them and did this not all come into His mind? So Y^ehowah was no longer able to endure it because of the evil of your deeds, because of the abominations which you have committed. Therefore, you land has become a ruin, an object of horror and a curse, without an inhabitant, as it is today.”** (Jer. 44:20–23). **“My transgression is sealed up in a bag and You have wrapped up my iniquity.”** (Job 14:17; see Hosea 13:12). **Because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God** (Rom. 2:5).

**“To Me [possibly, to the days of],
vengeance and recompense
to a time their foot will slip
for near a day of their calamity
and swiftly approaching prepared
things for them;’**

Deut. 32:35

**“To Me vengeance and recompense
to a time their foot will slip;
for near is the day of their calamity
and a destiny prepared for them swiftly
approaches.’**

The Massoretic text reads: **To Me, vengeance and recompense**; however, the Onkelos of Jonathan, the Samaritan and the Septuagint codices all have **To days of...** Actually, the Septuagint reads: **In a day of...** However, Paul quotes this as: **“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord** (Rom. 12:19b). The writer of Hebrews wrote: **For we know Him who said,** “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” (Heb. 10:30a). God knew in eternity past that Israel would fail and fail badly. He had stored up wrath for them. This is the time their foot will slip. **“Therefore their way will be like slippery paths to them. They will be driven away into the gloom and fall down in it. For I will bring calamity upon them, the year of their punishment.”** declares **Y^ehowah** (Jer. 23:12). Psalm 17:5 gives the alternative: **My steps have held fast to Your paths; My feet have not slipped.** And Psalm 37:31: **The law of God is in his heart; His steps do not slip.** Partially because of what we find in the codices mentioned and partially because of a poetic parallelism which I will cover next, the actual reading in the original is mostly likely *to a day of*. This is interesting because what Paul quoted was a correct doctrine and it is what was found in the Massoretic text which Paul used. However, what is most accurate is what is found in the Septuagint, which is what Paul often quoted from. In other words, what Moses wrote was absolutely correct and what was changed became God's Word, as Paul validated the change by his quote while he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

One of the reasons that we know how this verse went is the parallelism of v. 34 and v. 35a. We often miss it in the Bible as the two are separated and mistranslated. However, it goes like this:

A	“Is this not laid up in store with Me?
B	Is this not sealed up in My treasuries?
A	To a day of vengeance and recompense
B	to a time their foot will slip.”

Notice how the first and third lines belong together, as do the second and forth: **Is this not laid up in store with Me to a day of vengeance and recompense? Is this not sealed up in My treasuries to a time their foot will slip?**

⁴⁰³ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 280.

Now, when these are seen properly related, the interpretation given them seems rather obvious. Furthermore, the correct rendering also is obvious⁴⁰⁴.

A parallel passage to near a day of their calamity is Ezek. 7:5–10: “Thus says Y^ehowah God, ‘A disaster, unique disaster, observe, it is coming! An end is coming, the end has come! It has awakened against you; observe, it has come! Your doom has come to you, O inhabitant of the land. The time has come, the day is near—tumult rather than joyful shouting on the mountains. Now I will shortly pour out My wrath on you and spend My anger against you, judge you according to your ways and bring upon you all your abominations. And My eye will show yno pity nor will I spare. I will repay you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst; then you will know that I, Y^ehowah, am doing the striking down. Obsrve the day! Observe, it is coming! Doom has gone forth, the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed.’ “

As believers in Jesus Christ, God the Father is our Father. A father disciplines his child and this is where the Hebrews find themselves. Once they have committed too many transgressions against God, then He will manifest the perfect justice and perfect righteousness which is in Him. Actually, this is not completely accurate. God’s perfect justice and righteousness are revealed at the cross. The true punishment which we deserve for our transgressions was poured out upon our Lord. What God is promising the Israelites here is discipline for their shoddy behavior. This actually is more of a manifestation of His perfect love. For those who have children that you love, you know the most difficult thing in the world is to physically hurt that child by spanking—however, once and awhile, they deserve it, particularly little boys. There is a heirarchy of discipline which you take your child through and, ideally, this has nothing to do with how mad you are at them. It has to do with the degree of their disobedience and the severity of the offense. If a parent loves their child, then he will discipline that child when necessary. Because God loved Israel, God must discipline them. To them, it will appear as vengeance, retribution, their just rewards for evil, although this reveals God’s perfect love as much as it does His perfect justice.

The Psalmist asks [why do the wicked prosper?](#) You know people who are sinful, who have no interest in God; or you know those who attend church all of the time and they are the most self-righteous turds that you have ever known, and yet they appear to be financially well-off, they live in an expensive house, they have expensive toys (a boat, a Mercedes, a Cadillac) and everyone inthe family is healthy. In fact their only misery appears to be self-imposed. What is the deal? Where is God’s discipline? If for mere jealousy, we want to see God’s jealousy manifested. We want to see God let them have it. Please understand, if they are unbelievers, God does not discipline them. God is not their Father; their father is Satan. God is not in the business of disciplining unbelievers as they will receive their just rewards at the Last Judgment when God throws them alive into the Lake of Fire. For those who spend every waking moment of every hour of everyday of their lives pushing God away, when it comes to eternity, they no more want to spend time with God there than they did here on earth. They have rejected His only means of salvation, Jesus Christ, and they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, burning , in pain, and separated from God. That is a manifestation of God’s perfect justice and His perfect righteousness. That Christ died for their sins and that they have their entire lifetimes to spend just a few seconds believing in Jesus Christ in order to have eternal fellowship with God, that manifests God’s perfect love as well as His perfect justice and righteousness. However, they are not disciplined on earth by God for the simply reason that they are not sons of God.

Okay then, why do the evil suffer? God causes the evil to suffer for several reasons: (1) to encourage them to believe in Jesus Christ. Not many of us believe in Jesus Christ when our life is good. Not many of us turn to Him when we are happy, rich, prosperous, etc. Some of us have to be taken to our lowest point in order to look to Him. Unbelievers who suffer in this respect are not under discipline; they are being called by God. If you are an unbeliever and you have been in serious difficulty and pain, it is God speaking to you because this is the only time you will listen to Him. (2) Some unbelievers are hurt because they have injured God’s elect. We are protected and we are God’s own. There are unbelievers who do us terrific wrong and God puts the hurt on them for what

⁴⁰⁴ The fact that all of this falls together and is so obvious is only because of my reading *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E.W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 115. It is his work that clears this particular verse up. However, his original exlanation was a little bizarre: “Here, b is in a parenthesis with respect to a and a, while a is in a parenthensis with respect to b and b; and the passage really reads thus...”

they have done. You do not touch God's elect without there being serious repercussions. We may not get to see it and it may not come as quickly as we would like. (3) Some unbelievers suffer because they touch a hot stove. That is, they do things which naturally result in their own pain. For instance, an unbeliever who chooses to abuse drugs or to get drunk faces a veritable plethora of painful results. The natural results might include trouble with the law, physical deterioration, sickness, addiction, loss of material things, loss of family, etc. This is not God disciplining this unbeliever—they are hurting themselves. The same thing happens to those who choose to be sexually promiscuous—there are results which can be quite painful. (4) Sometimes Satan causes his own to suffer for whatever reasons he has. Why would he do this? Because he is evil; because in him is no real love. You have no doubt seen relationships between married people where one hurts the other, either physically or psychologically. This can occur between people who love each other, so certainly it is no big deal to Satan to hurt someone who is in league with him. (5) Some unbelievers are hurt because it is a result of natural causes. They have corrupt bodies which are subject to disease and pain and as we approach old age, we all tend to feel more pain which is tied directly to our bodies of sin. (6) Finally, unbelievers can suffer as an answer to our prayers. We can pray against those who have hurt us (believers and unbelievers) and pray for God to lead them (the unbelievers) painfully to salvation. We are allowed to do this and God does answer our prayers. Lastly, it is obvious that these different areas of pain can overlap for the unbeliever. For instance, an unbeliever who is an alcoholic might naturally cause himself a great deal of personal pain, although some of that is a result of our prayers against this person and a result of God calling this person to salvation.

The last portion of this verse has several wildly different renderings:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And their destiny speedeth on.
NASB	And the impending things are hastening upon them.
NIV	...and their doom rushes upon them.
NRSV	...their doom comes swiftly.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And hast do things prepared for them.

We obviously begin with the wâw conjunction followed by the Qal active participle of *chûsh* (חֹשׂ) [pronounced *khoosh*], which sounds a little like our *whoosh* and it means *to make haste*. The more modern renderings of *hastening, rushes, comes swiftly, approaches swiftly* are better. Strong's #2363 BDB #301. What is approaching swiftly is the adjective, used as a substantive, *âthîyd* (אֲתִיָּד) [pronounced *aw-THEED*], which means *ready, prepared*; and, as a substantive, means *those things which have been prepared*; here, I will render this *a destiny prepared*; in Job 3:8, a person who has been prepared in his vocation is referred to as *âthîyd*, or *skilled*. Strong's #6264 (& 6259) BDB #800.

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
Deuteronomy 31	Deuteronomy 32	Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	
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The Song of Moses: the Restoration of Israel

**“For Y^ehowah will evaluate His people
and upon His servants He will have
compassion
when He sees a hand is exhausted;
and a ceasing of restraining and
forsaking.**

Deut. 32:36

**“For Y^ehowah will correctly evaluate His
people
and He will have compassion upon His
servants
when He observes that their human
strength has been exhausted;
then the restraining and forsaking will
cease.**

Note that with this verse and the beginning of v. 37, Moses will become the speaker and speak of God in the third person. With v. 37, it will become clear that God is speaking again. There are all kinds of Christians who proclaim *it is God's will* that we do this or that; only in the case of Moses do we have a situation where Moses could write exactly that which was God's will just as though it came out of God's mouth. When others say that, it is, at best, a ploy or self-delusion, and, at worst, it can be a manifestation of mental illness.

The first verb is the word *dāyn* (דָּיַן) [pronounced *deen*], and although this is pretty consistently rendered as *judge*, I would prefer to go with *correctly evaluate* in the light of passages such as 1Sam. 2:10 Palm 54:1 Jer. 30:13. Judgement tends to carry with it a negative connotation, and this word seems to carry with it an honest evaluation, a correct determination of the situation at hand. Depending upon the outcome of the judgment, some translators render this *vindicate*, which puts the translator in the shoes of a commentator. That is to say, both *judge* and *vindicate* are correct renderings, but then a translator has to choose when to use one over the other. *Correctly evaluate* does not require that choice. Strong's #1777 BDB #192.

I have had conversations with people who do not like the God of the Old Testament but think that the God of the New Testament is different. The combination of the life of Jesus Christ and His death for our sins gives us a good idea as to the perfect justice, perfect righteousness and perfect love which are a part of God's perfect essence. Heb. 10:29–31: **How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of Grace. For we know Him Who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** In that passage we have this and the previous verse quoted in part and we see that God's character has not changed—we must face Him as someone Who will correctly evaluate us. Personally, I do not want to be judged according to my puny works; I want to stand on the finished work of Jesus Christ my Savior. And to those who are overly concerned about the God of the Old Testament, as though there is a difference: the God of the Old Testament is, if anything, overindulgent, as a husband is with a new bride. **Many times He would deliver them. They, however, were rebellious in their counsel and so sank down in their iniquity. Nevertheless, He looked upon their distress when He heard their cry; and He remembered His covenant for their sake, and He relented according to the greatness of His grace. Furthermore, He made them objects of His compassion in the presence of all their captors (Psalm 106:43–46). For Y^ehowah will correctly evaluate His people and He will have compassion upon His servants (Psalm 135:14 quoting Deut. 32:36a).**

One of the things pointed out by Keil and Delitzsch⁴⁰⁵ is that Israel is under discipline as Israel is God's own. Therefore, Israel is never completely destroyed. The Babylonian Empire, the Chaldean Empire, the Assyrian Empire were all completely destroyed by God—no one knows of a single person who is Chaldean, Babylonian or Assyrian today, even though these were empires which ruled great portions of the earth. However, we all know people who are Jewish. **Though he fall, he will not be utterly cast down (Psalm 34:27a).** God disciplines those who are His. However, God does not sentence any believer to the Lake of Fire, to eternal separation from Him, no matter how horrible that unbeliever is. Israel, because Israel is God's, is illustrative of our relationship with God. God will discipline us and God may even take us out under the isn unto death, but we will spend eternity with Him. Israel might fall under discipline, Israel might be removed from the Land of Promise, but those who have believed in Y^ehowah God, Jesus Christ, the God of the Universe, will spend eternity with Him and God will call the Jew back into the land during the tribulation and He will restore Israel to the Land of Promise.

The verb *to have compassion* is in the Hithpael imperfect, which is generally the reflexive intensive stem. However, this behaves more as a reflexive causative stem, which I don't know whether that is acceptable or not. Most translations ignore the fact that there is a Hithpael here. Young attempts with **And for His servants doth repent Himself...** Even the very literal *The Emphasized Bible* ignores the Hithpael, which is difficult to render in the English in this verse.

God's compassion for Israel, despite her constant rebellion, is manifest throughout Scripture and throughout history. **"So it shall come to pass when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which**

⁴⁰⁵ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1001.

I have placed before you, and you call these things to heart in all the nations where Y^ehowah your God has banished you, and you return to Y^ehowah your God and you obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons; then Y^ehowah your God will restore you from captivity and He will have compassion upon you and He will gather you again from all the peoples where Y^ehowah your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, even from there Y^ehowah your God will gather you and from there He will return you. And Y^ehowah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you will possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.” (Deut. 30:1–5). In dealing with people, I give them a couple of chances and cut them off. When they cross me more than twice, then it is time for me to cut ties and move on. Jesus Christ has compassion for His people which is everlasting. No matter when, no matter what period of history, the Israelite can always come to God and receive incredible blessing and forgiveness. “Yet in spite of all this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am Y^ehowah their God. I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations that I might be their God—I am Y^ehowah.” (Lev. 26:44–45).

In the third line, we have the word *yâd* (יָד) [pronounced *yawd*] or *hand*. The *hand* is a metonymy which represents *strength, power, or ability* (Lev. 5:7 14:21 Num. 6:21 Joshua 8:20). Strong's #3027 BDB #388. What happens to the hand is the Qal perfect of *ʾâzal* (אָזַל) [pronounced *aw-ZAHL*], which means *to be gone, to be exhausted, to be used up, to go away*. Strong's #235 BDB #23.

There will come a time in Israel where their dependence upon human strength and human ability will be gone, as their own ability and power has been exhausted. God will both judge His people but He will have compassion upon His servants, a reference to those who are born again and *servicing Him* (two words which I use with great caution).

The last three words are difficult. One of the silliest interpretations which I have seen with regards to these three words is *married or single*; and the most common is *slave or free*. Let me show you what others have done with regards to translating this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...and none remain, whether bond or free.
Bullinger ⁴⁰⁶	...and there is none remaining, shut up or left at large.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And there is no one shut up or at large.
KJV	...and <i>there is</i> none, shut up, or left.
NASB	And there is none remaining, bond or free.
NIV	...and no one is left, slave or free.
NRSV	...neither bond nor free remaining.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And one is restrained and left.

We begin with the *wâw* conjunction and the masculine singular of *ʿepheç* (עֲפֵחַ) [pronounced *EH-fes*], which means *ceasing, end, ending, extremity* and expresses *non-existence*. Strong's #657 BDB #67. This is followed by the Qal passive participle of *ʿâsar* (עָסַר) [pronounced *ġaw-TSAHR*], which means *confined, shut up, restrained, refrained*. The KJV gives the following astonishing array of renderings: *restrained, closed up, shut up, did recover, were able, retained, fast closed up, detain, keep still, withhold, stop, slack, prevail, kept, stayed*. Let's tried *confined* and see how it works. Strong's #6113 BDB #783. This is followed by the *wâw* conjunction and the Qal passive participle of *ʿâza^bv* (עָזַב) [pronounced *ġaw-ZA^bV*] means *to leave, to forsake*. Strong's #5800 BDB #736. Literally, this is: **and a ceasing of restraining and forsaking**. God will cease to restrain demonic activity and He will cease forsaking the Israelite. The end times are also covered in 2Thess. 2:1–12: **Now we request you, brothers, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, that you may not be so easily disturbed either by a person or a policy or a letter as if from us to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the departure comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object or worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself to be God. Don't you remember that while I was still with you, I was teaching you this? And you know Who restrains him now, so that**

⁴⁰⁶ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E.W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 1008. Bullinger did not put together a translation; however he did have trouble with this particular verse and gave his own rendering of it.

in his dispensation, he may be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now **restrains** will continue to do so until He is taken out of the way. And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming. [this is] the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and miraculous signs and false wonders and with all the deception of wickedness for those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be delivered. And for this reason, God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe the lie in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in **unrighteousness**. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, we have found many places where God will return to the Jew and the Israelite will no longer be forsaken. The second way to take the end of this verse is God will no longer forsake His people and they will no longer be under the restraints of foreign nations. Both interpretations of the end of this verse are true in general and the latter interpretation can certainly be gotten from this passage.

There is a similar phrasing found in 1Kings 14:10 21:21 and 2Kings 9:8. However, here, some one is being *cut off* from all males, both those who are restrained and those who have been forsaken. In these three cases, the operative verb explains that the king involved is being cut off from these people; that is, he no longer has the popular support. In the context of this verse, even though we have the same two Qal participles, the preceding word means *a ceasing of or an ending of*.

As I examine particular verses, like this one, it is amazing how a literal translation will clear up the meaning of the passage tremendously. I am amazed at how poorly other translators have done with the last portion of this verse.

“And He will say, ‘Where [are] their gods? [Where is] a rock they sought refuge in him?’

Deut. 32:37

**“And He will say, ‘Where are their gods?
And where is the rock in whom they sought refuge?’**

Let's first deal with the last line, which contains the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *châçâh* (חָצָח) [pronounced *khaw-SAW*] and it means *to take refuge*, and hence *to trust [in]*. Its useage in Ruth 2:12 Psalm 57:1 61:4 91:4 allow for us to take the former meaning as primary and the latter by implication. Strong's #2620 BDB #340. This verse is also a little tricky. Are we speaking of the Godhead and specifically of Jesus Christ or are we speaking of idols? With the declaration of v. 39b: **“I, even I, [am] He and there is no [other] god with Me! I put to death and I maintain life”** indicates that the speaker is Y^ehowah, God of Israel. V. 31a, which says: **For their rock is not as our Rock** allows for *rock* to stand either for Jesus Christ or for whomever else they have trusted in. Vv. 39–42, Y^ehowah proclaims that He is God and there is no other, implying that this verse speaks of idols. God is asking Israel where are their gods in whom they have trusted. Jeremiah, speaking God's Word, said the same thing in his timeto the Israelites: **“So where are your gods which you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you in a time of your trouble; for, according to the number of your cities are your gods, O Judah...and so the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they surely will not save them in the time of their disaster.”** (Jer. 2:28 11:12; see Judges 10:14 as well).

**“ [Where are the gods] whose fat of their sacrifices they [continually] ate? They [continually] drank the wine of their appointed one.
Let them rise up and help you!
Let them be over you [as] shelters.**

Deut. 32:38

**“ ‘So, where are the gods whose fat of their sacrifices they kept eating?
They kept drinking the wine of their prince.
Let them rise up and help you!
Let them be over you as your protection.**

The relative pronoun which begins v. 38 refers back to the gods and the rock in whom the Israelites had trusted. When the Israelites sacrificed their animals and ate them, the sacrifices were to these false gods and not to Y^ehowah. The drink offerings which they, the Israelites drank, were to these false gods and not to Y^ehowah.

What they are drinking the wine of is the masculine noun *nâcîyk*^e (נִצְיָק) [pronounced *naw-SEEK*^e], which is generally rendered *prince*, although this is not the normal word that we use for *prince* (it is found only in Deut. 32:38 Joshua 13:21 Psalm 83:11 Ezek. 32:30 Daniel 11:8 Micah 5:4). It is this particular passage which is troubling, as it is often rendered *drink-offering*. In the book of Daniel, it is rendered *molten image*. The key is the verb, which, although BDB says that it means *to set, to install*; really means *to appoint* and the noun means *appointed one*. Strong's #5257 BDB #651. These are the drink offerings to the gods; and, in particular, the drink offerings made to Satan, who is their god and appointed one (they appointed him over themselves).

There is a problem with the translation in the last line. In the Massoretic text, it reads *he is over you shelters* and in the Onkelos of Jonathan, the Samaritan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate codices, it reads *they are over you shelters*. The final word is in the plural, is found only once in Scripture, and is closely related in form to several other words which mean *shelter* or *hiding place*. The Israelites had already been guilty of chasing after other gods back in Num. 25:1–3: **While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to engage in an immoral relationship with the daughters of Moab, for they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor and Y^ehowah was angry against Israel.** See also Jer. 44:8, 25.

Keil and Delitzsch refer to this verse as holy irony, but it is more sarcastic than ironic. *The handing over of the sacrificial portions to the deity is described here with holy iron, as though the gods themselves consumed the fat of the slain offerings, and drank the wine poured out for them, for the purpose of expression this thought: "The gods, whome ye entertained so well, and provided so abundantly with sacrifices, let them now arise and help you, and thus make themselves clearly known to you."*⁴⁰⁷

**“ ‘Look now!
For I, [even] I, [am] he and [there are] no
gods with Me.
I, [even] I, kill and I sustain life;
I wound [severely] and I, [even] I, heal;
and not [another] from of My hand a
deliverer.**

Deut. 32:39

**“ ‘Now pay attention! For I, even I, am
He
and there are no gods with Me.
I, even I, kill and I sustain life;
I severely wound and I, [even] I, heal;
and not from of My hand [another]
deliverer.**

As we have studied in the past, there is an exclusivity of Y^ehowah, the God of Israel. This is not a matter of semantics; that is, the idea that you could worship Y^ehowah or you could worship Buddha—it is not the same God with a different name. One is a demon and one is God, the Creator of the Universe. There is no God but Y^ehowah, Who is Jesus Christ. **“Who has performed and accomplished it—the calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, Y^ehowah, am the first, and with the last, I am He.”** (Isa. 41:4). **“You are My witnesses,”** declares Y^ehowah, **“And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me, there was no God formed; and there will be none after Me. I, even I, am Y^ehowah, and there is no Savior besides Me.”** (Isa. 43:10–11). Also see Isa. 44:8 48:12.

Kill is in the Hiphil, or causative, stem. The next verb is the Piel imperfect of *châyâh* (חַיָּה) [pronounced *khaw-YAW*], which means *to live, to have life*; in the Piel stem, it does not mean to give life to a newly-born child (Job 33:4) nearly as often as it means *to sustain life, to deliver out of danger so that one remains alive, to preserve life* (Gen. 12:12 Ex. 1:17 1Sam. 27:11 Job 36:6). Strong's #2421 & 2425 BDB #310. **“Y^ehowah causes death and He makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and He raises up. Y^ehowah makes poor and rich; He brings low; he also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust. He lifts the beggar from the dung heap to cause them to dwell in a place of blessing.”** (1Sam. 2:6–8). See Job 5:18 Psalm 147:3 68:20 Isa. 30:26 57:18 Hosea 6:1.

The last line of this stanza literally reads: **and none [or, not] from My hand a deliverer.** Properly interpreted, there is no one else out from his hand who delivers. **“Were He [God] to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’”** (Job 9:12). **“Even from eternity, I am He and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?”** (Isa. 43:13). See also Dan. 4:35.

⁴⁰⁷ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1002.

**“ For I lift up unto heavens My hand
and I have said living I [am] to eternity.**

Deut. 32:40

**“ For I lift up My hand to the heavens
and I swear, As I live forever.**

The first portion of this verse is easy to grasp—God is lifting up His hand to the heavens in an anthropopathism of taking an oath or guaranteeing the veracity of what He is about to say. In a court of law, when we raise one hand, it is an imitation of this. Let's see what others have done with the last line:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	As I live forever...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Living am I unto times age-abiding:
KJV	I live forever.
NASB	As I live forever...
NIV	As surely as I live forever,...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	I live—to the age!

This begins with an adjective for *living*; which is followed by the personal pronoun *I*, which often carries with it the implied verb *to be*. This is followed by the lamed preposition (*to, for*) and the word for *aniquity, perpetuity, eternity*. This is a portion of God's pledge: **[As] I live forever**. We find a similar pledge in Ezek. 20:5b–6: **“Thus says Y^ehowah God, ‘On the day when I chose Israel and lifted up my hand to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I swore to them, saying, I am Y^ehowah your God—on that day, I lifted up my hand to them to bring them out from the land of Egypt into a land that I had spied out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands.’ ”** See also Gen. 14:22 Ex. 6:8 Num. 14:30 for a similar pledge.

**“ If [or, when] I sharpen a lightening
flash of My sword
and My hand takes possession in
judgment,
I will return vengeance to My
adversaries and to those hating Me I
will recompense.**

Deut. 32:41

**“ When I sharpen My sword so that it
gleams
and My hand takes possession in
judgment,
then I will return vengeance to My
adversaries and I will recompense
those hating Me.**

This verse begins with the interrogative particle *partical 'im* (אם) [pronounced *eem*], which means *if*; however, when followed by a verb in the perfect tense, it almost has the meaning of *when*.⁴⁰⁸ This may be similar to the Greek 1st class conditional clause (*if—and it's true*). Strong's #518 BDB #49.

Whet is old English for *sharpen*. Although the rendering of *lightening flash* is literal, it more often refers to the *gleam* of a sword. Here, as throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New, there are

In the third line of poetry, we have the Hiphil imperfect of *shûb* (שוב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*], which means *to return*. In the Hiphil (the causative) stem, it can mean *to be caused to return* (2Sam. 19:11 2Chron. 6:25), *to bring* (Gen. 14:16 28:15), *to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce* (Deut. 30:1) or *to return something, to restore, to bring back, to make restitution*. (Neh. 5:11 Prov. 24:12 Lam. 3:64). Strong's #7725 BDB #996. What God restores is vengeance upon His enemies and the enemies of Israel. Up until this point in time, it appears as though there is no judgment reserved for the evil. However, God in this song, takes a vow, as He lives forever, that He will sharpen the gleam of His sword and bring back vengeance upon evil. **The sword of Y^ehowah is filled with blood. It is saturated with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For Y^ehowah has a sacrifice in Bozrah and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. Wild oxen will also fall with them and young bulls with strong ones; thus their land will be soaked with blood and their dust will become greasy with fat. For Y^ehowah has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion (Isa. 34:6–8). “There is a sound of fugitives and refuges from the land of Babylon to declare in Zion the vengeance of Y^ehowah our God—vengeance for His temple. Summon many against Babylon: all those who bend the bow; encamp against**

⁴⁰⁸ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, p. 50.

her on every side; let there be no escape. Repay her according to her work, according to all that she has done, so do to her, for she has become arrogant against Y^ehowah, against the Holy One of Israel. Therefore, her young men will fall in her streets and all her men of war will be silenced in that day,” declares Lord Y^ehowah of the armies, “For your day has come, the time when I will punish you and the arrogant one will stumble and fall with no one to raise him up. And I will set fire to his cities and it will devour all his environs.” (Jer. 50:28–32). A jealous and avenging God is Y^ehowah; Y^ehowah is avenging and wrathful. Y^ehowah take vengeance on His adversairs and He reserves wrath for His enemies. Y^ehowah is slow to anger and great in power and Y^ehowah will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In a whirlwind and storm is His way and clouds are the dust beneath His feet (Nahum 1:2–3). See also Psalm 137:7–9 149:6–9 Isa. 1:24 66:16 Jer. 12:12 25:14 46:2–24 51:24 Ezek. 21:9–10.

“ ‘I will make drunk my arrows from blood and My sword will [continually] eat flesh from blood of fatally wounded and captive from the head of long-haired heads of the enemy.’

Deut. 32:42

“ ‘I will make drunk my arrows from blood and My sword will devour the flesh from the blood of the slain and the captives from the long-haired heads of the enemy.’

Becoming drunk is a result of overindulgence. The arrows of God will take in so much blood that they will be made drunk from all the blood. For that day belongs to the Lord Y^ehowah of the armies: a day of vengeance, so as to avenge Himself on His foes. And the sword will devour and be satiated and it will drink its fill of their blood, for there will be a slaughter for the Lord Y^ehowah of the armies in the land of the north by the river Euphrates (Jer. 46:10). The sword will devour the flesh from the blood of the *châlâl* (חָלַל) [pronounced *chaw-LAWL*]. This is an adjective used as a substantive in this verse and it is rendered *slain*, *fatally wounded*, *wounded*, *pierced*; it is from a verb which means *to bore*, *to pierce*. It describes the result of someone who has been pierced. Strong’s #2491 BDB #319. The colorful expression of the sword devouring flesh is found in previously noted passages, e.g., Jer. 12:12 46:10, 14. The swords eating the flesh and the arrows becoming drunk with blood are known as *personification*. That is, inanimate objects are given actions which belong to human beings.

After the construct of *head*, we have the interesting word. Owens translates this as *from the long-haired heads of*; Young as *from the head of the freedman of*; *The Emphasized Bible* renders this: *with the chief leader [= head of the leadership] of*; the KJV: *the beginning of the revenge of*; the NASB: *from the long-haired leaders of*; *The Amplified Bible* translates this *the long-haired heads of*. The word in question is *p^erâ’ôth* (פְּרֵאֹת) [pronounced *p^eraw-OATH*] and this word is found only here and in Judges 5:2.* The word for *locks* (as in locks of hair) is *pera’* (פְּרָעַ) [pronounced *PEH-rah*], which is found in Num. 6:5 Ezek. 44:20 (Strong’s #6545 BDB #828). BDB, in fact, places Deut. 32:42 under Strong’s #6545. Apparently, according to one explanation found in BDB,⁴⁰⁹ there would be a vow taken by the soldiers, when in war, not to cut their hair. I prefer to think that the men in question were degenerate and one of the exterior signs of degeneracy was their long-hair. Strong’s #6546 BDB #828.

Now if you recall the alternate parallelism found in vv. 34–35a, we have the same sort of parallelism here:

A	“I will make drunk my arrows from blood
B	and My sword will devour the flesh
A	from the blood of the slain and the captives
B	from the long-haired heads of the enemy.”

Placing these together, this would read: “I will make drunk my arrows from blood, from the blood of the slain and the captives. And My sword will devour the flesh from the long-haired heads of the enemy.” You probably had no idea that Moses was a genius in the field of poetical literature as well as everything else.

⁴⁰⁹ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, p. 828.

“Be caused to sing, you heavens, along
with Him
And let the angels of God worship Him
Be caused to sing, O nations, His
people,
and all the sons of God strengthen
themselves in Him;
for blood of His servants He avenges
and He is caused to restore [or, return]
vengeance on His adversaries
and He covers over [or, atones for] His
soil [or, ground], His people.”

Deut. 32:43

““Be caused to sing, you heavens,
along with Him
And let the angels of God worship Him
Be caused to sing, O nations, His
people,
and all the sons of God strengthen
themselves in Him;
For He avenges the blood of His
servants
And He restores vengeance on His
adversaries
Furthermore, He atones for His land,
His people.”

This is the last verse of the song. From vv. 37–42, these have been the words of God. They return now to the words of Moses. However, since this is the Bible, what Moses writes is the Word of God. To be more explicit: most of the first half of the book of Exodus was narrative written by Moses, in the third person, which, because it is Scripture, is the Word of God. Most of the second half of Exodus was directly from the mouth of God as recorded by Moses, which is also the Word of God. If this throws you, we have covered the concept of inspiration back in the book of Genesis.

What I have given you here as a translation may not match at all what is in your Bible. The Septuagint reads: **Rejoice, you heavens, with Him, and let all the angels of God worship Him. Rejoice you nations, with His people, and let all the sons of God strengthen themselves in Him;** at the beginning of this verse. There has been a pre-Christian manuscript of Deuteronomy discovered at Qumran as a part of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, which confirms this rendering. We can rest assured that this is correct, as we find in Heb. 1:6: **And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, “And let all the angels of God worship Him.”** (Deut. 32:43 in the Septuagint and in the *Dead Sea Scrolls*).⁴¹⁰

Translators have had a tough time with **O nations, his people**; Young slips in the preposition *with*., as does Rotherham, the NASB and the NIV. Some give the alternate reading: **Praise His people, O Gentiles**,⁴¹¹ which is valid, but does not conform to the Septuagint and is generally second choice for rendering this verse. The verb preceding this is in the masculine plural, Hiphil imperative, and it is an order to the nations (or Gentiles). This is not in the construct, so it does not read *nations of His people*. Furthermore, there is no preposition or conjunction between them. This should have confused the Israelites, who perceived themselves (correctly) as His people. However, we know today, as God knew then and in eternity past, that there would be millions upon millions of people who would come out of Gentile nations which would be His and this is one of the references to that. This is in a perfect place, as (1) such an inference has been mentioned of those to come in the Church Age in v. 21; (2) the true enemies of Israel are the unregenerates of the world, some of whom are Hebrew and some of whom are Gentile; and (3) throughout the Old Testament there needs to be a reminder not only of the dispersion of the Israelites but the coming in of the Gentiles. Although the Church Age was the mystery doctrine taught by Paul, this does not mean that there were not hints of a change to come at some point in time. This, v. 21 and Isa. 28 are all hints that there would be a change which involved the dispersion of the Israelites and the coming in of the Gentiles. Paul mentions several of these telling passages in Rom. 15:9–12: **And that the Gentiles might glorify God, for His mercy, as it stands written, “Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles and I will sing to Your Name.” And again, He says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with⁴¹² His people.” And again, “Praise the Lord all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him.” And again, Isaiah says, “There will come the root of Jesse and He Who arises to rule over the Gentiles. In Him the Gentiles will hope.”** (2Sam. 22:50 Deut. 32:43 Psalm 117:1 Isa. 11:10). The comments of Barnes: *In this profound passage, there is shadowed forth the purpose of God to*

⁴¹⁰ Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 262.

⁴¹¹ Barnes and the NIV Study Bible.

⁴¹² *With* is in the Septuagint, from which Paul quoted.

overrule (1) the unbelief of the Jews to the bringing in of the Gentiles; and (2) the mercy shown to the Gentiles to the eventual restoration of the Jews... The Song closes as it began (vv. 1–3), with an invitation to praise. It has reached, through a long series of Divine interpositions, its grandest theme in this call to the Gentiles, now heathen no more, to rejoice over God's restored people, the Jews⁴¹³.

For He will avenge the blood of His servants is fulfilled in part in 2Kings 9:7: “And you will strike the house of Ahab, your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants, the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of Y^ehowah, at the hand of Jezebel.” This is also fulfilled in part in Dan. 5:30–31 when Darius the Mede took over the Babylonia kingdom, which had been ruled by Belshazzar the Chaldean. This fall of Babylon took place in 539 BC.

This has its complete fulfillment in the tribulation and in the final judgment: **And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until their fellow servants even their brothers who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also (Rev. 6:9–11).**

The sentiments of the third line are echoed in Isa. 1:24–25: **Therefore, the Lord Y^ehowah of the armies, the Might One of Israel declares, “Ah, I will be relieved of my adversaries and I will avenge Myself on My foes. I will also turn My hand against you and I will smelt away your dross as with lye and I will remove all your alloy [impurities].”**

As we have seen, future from this verse, God will bring great cursing against the Land of Promise and against His people, the Hebrews. God will pardon their sin and He will restore the land. The last verb is the Piel perfect of *kâphar* (כָּפַר) [pronounced *kaw-FAHR*] and it literally means *cover, placate, pacify*. We find this word used one time in the Qal stem back in Gen 6:14 where the verb clearly means *to cover [with pitch]*. This word is found in the Piel back in Gen. 32:20 where Jacob sends a tremendous present to Esau to *appease or placate* Esau. In this verse, God atones for the land and for His people. Strong's #3722 BDB #497. **Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, You will forgive them (Psalm 65:3). Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your Name; and deliver us, and forgive our sins, for Your Name's sake (Psalm 79:9).**

The very last two words in the Massoretic text read **His land [or, soil]; His people**. This, I believe, is correct, although the Samaritan and the Septuagint codices have land in the construct; that is, they read: *the land [or, soil] of His people*.

I played around with this according to Bullinger p. 375, and didn't get anywhere with it!!

One of the things which you would never notice is the structure of the Song of Moses. We have spent so much time with it, dissecting it bit by bit, that it is difficult to perceive it as a unified whole. However, not only is it a unified whole, but the structure of this song is called an inverted correspondence. There are two series of topics or matters which are covered; the very first corresponds with the very last. The second corresponds to the second to the last; the third with the third to the last, and so on. The following structure I took from Bullinger⁴¹⁴ and present it with some editing and modification:

A (vv. 1–2): A call to hear, an introduction.

B (vv. 3–4): A proclamation of the perfection of the character of God.

C (vv. 5–6): Those who are not His children, who have rejected Him. Questions to be answered in the affirmative.

B (vv. 7–14): The goodness and the guidance and the bounty of Y^ehowah to Israel (the period of the Pentateuch).

⁴¹³ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 338.

⁴¹⁴ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E.W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 375.

C (vv. 15–18): Israel grows fat and forsakes God, chasing after strange gods so God forsakes them.
 C (vv. 19–20): Since they have rejected God and have turned from Him, He forsakes them and hides His face from them.

D (v. 21a): Israel provokes God.

D (v. 21b): God provokes Israel.

E (v. 22): God’s anger burns.

E (vv. 23–33): God’s rejection of Israel turns into great discipline.

F (vv. 26–27): God pulls back on His discipline, not completely destroying Israel, so that their enemies misconstrue the situation.

F (vv. 28–29): It is Israel which lacks understanding

(V. 30): Only because of God could they have triumphed in the past

(V. 31): The rock of degenerate Israel is not the Rock of the Generation of Promise

G (vv. 32–33): Israel has become associated with Sodom and Gomorrah.

F (vv. 34–35): God has saved up vengeance and retribution for the day of their calamity

E (v. 36) God will vindicate His people and take compassion on His servants

D (vv. 37–38): Where are the false gods of the Israelites in whom they sought refuge? Let them come and help.

C (v. 39): There is no other God besides Y^ehowah.

B (vv. 40–42): Y^ehowah’s vow to take vengeance on His adversaries, making his weapons drunk with blood.

A (v. 43) A call to rejoice; Conclusion: Y^ehowah will avenge the blood of His people and atone for the Land and His people.

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Moses Impresses upon Israel the Importance of this Song

Then Moses came and then he spoke all of words of the song the this in the [two] ears of the people, he and Hoshea ben Nun.

Deut. 32:44

Then Moses came and taught all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, both he and Hoshea ben Nun.

Hôwshêa' (הוֹשֵׁעַ) [pronounced *hoh-SHAY-ahg'*], which means *salvation* (Strong’s #1954 BDB #448), is found only here and in Num. 13:8, 16, where Moses had renamed him Joshua. Joshua is spelled Y^ehōwshûa' (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) [pronounced *y^ehoh-SHOO-ahg'*] and it means *whose salvation is Y^ehowah* or *Y^ehowah is salvation*. The English equivalent from the Greek is *Jesus*. Strong’s #3091 BDB #221.

With this verse, we return to narrative. Joshua is the person who is writing this portion of Scripture at this point. He was certain to copy all the words from this song and then he recorded what Moses had to say to the people after giving them the song. Various commentators have Joshua, or an author different from Moses, beginning the narrative at different points. I personally believe that Joshua began back in Deut. 31:22 or so, weaving together some narrative of his own observations along with the words of the last few things recorded by Moses. Barnes claims that vv. 44–52 were certainly the hand of an author other than Moses. I only partially agree with him here. Not only do I believe that Joshua began writing sooner than this passage, but I believe that the latter portion of this chapter, vv. 48–52, were recorded by Moses and then added to the narrative in their chronological place.

Okay, now why the change of name and why do we return to *Joshua* in the book of Joshua? Joshua was a sacred nickname, if you will, given to Hoshea by Moses. Although Joshua is aware of Moses writing the Torah, he has

not necessarily read all of it. In the first writing of his own hand, when identifying himself, he gives his birth name, to properly identify himself. At this point in time in his life, he doesn't realize that, although most of the people of his subsequent generation know him as Hoshea, those of the generations subsequent to them will know him as Joshua. Out of respect for Moses, and in realizing that his name is tied to his destiny, Joshua begins his own book with the name that Moses gave him, *Joshua*.

Then Moses made an end to speak all of the words the these to all of Israel;

Deut. 32:45

Then Moses finished speaking all these words to all of Israel;

The literal English translation is a little stilted; the verb is the Piel imperfect of *kâlâh* (כָּלָה) [pronounced *kaw-LAWH*], which we saw in v. 23; it means *to complete, to bring an end to, to finish*. Strong's #3615 BDB #477.

Then he said to them, "Set your heart to all the words which I, [even] I, am being caused to testify against you [all] today; [words] which you will command them [to] your sons to take responsibility to do all words of the Law the this.

Deut. 32:46

Then he said to them, "Place all the words in your heart which I, even I, am caused to testify against you today; you will command these words to your sons so that they will take the responsibility to do all the words of this Law.

Moses tells them to *sîym* (סִיַּם) [pronounced *seem*] which means *to put, to place, to set*. Strong's #7760 BDB #962. This is in the Qal imperative and it has with it the word for *heart* in the masculine singular with the 2nd person masculine plural suffix. Literally, this reads: *place your heart*. Although the Massoretic text reads: *to take the responsibility to do*; the Samaritan, the targum of Jonathan, the Septuagint, the Syriac and one early printed edition of the Massoretic text read: *to observe [or, to take responsibility for] and to do*. The meaning remains unchanged in either case.

One of the most important themes of the Law was for the Israelite to lay the Word of God upon their hearts and to teach these things to their children: "Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen, and so that they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and to your grandsons." (Deut. 4:9). "And these words, which I am commanding you today, will be on your heart; and you will teach them diligently to your sons and you will talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. Furthermore, I you will bind them as a sign on your hand and they will be as frontals on your forehead. And you will write them on the dooposts of your house and on the gates." (Deut. 6:6–9). "And you will teach these things to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up." (Deut. 11:19).

"For this [is] not an empty word out from you [all] for it [is] your lives and in the word the this you [all] will be caused to live long upon the ground [or, soil] which you [all] are going over the Jordan there to possess it."

Deut. 32:47

"For this is not just some empty directive expected from you; it is your life and in this word you will be caused to live long upon the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess."

In this verse we have the adjective *rêq* (רֵק) [pronounced *rake*], which means *empty, vain, worthless*. Strong's #7386 BDB #938. We have the word *word* occur twice in this verse, often translated *thing*.

What Moses has given to them, the song in particular, and God's Word in general, is the most important thing that they will ever be given. There is nothing more important to them than to learn His Word and to teach it to their children. "And He humbled you and allowed you to be hungry, and He fed you with manna which you did not previously know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Y^ehowah." (Deut. 8:3). "I call heaven and earth

to witness against you today, that I have placed before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving Y^ehowah your god, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him. For, this is your life and the length of your days that you may live in the land which Y^ehowah has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give to them.” (Deut. 30:19–20). Moses stands even today in direct opposition to those who receive their silly messages through visions and aparitions—God’s Word is our life, and we are not to choose anything less than His Word. **My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you (Prov. 3:2). I will bow down toward Your temple and I will give thanks to Your Name, because of Your grace and Your truth; because You have magnified Your Word over all Your Name.” (Psalm 138:2).**

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God’s Final Instructions to Moses

Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, in [the] same day the that, saying,

Deut. 32:48

Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, in that very same day, saying,

As I have mentioned twice before, here again we hav, between vv. 48–52, the words of Moses. We do not find Joshua mentioned in this portion of Scripture and I am assuming that he is not the fly on the wall, as he was in Deut. 31:23–30. Moses has spent the significant portion of his life recording God’s Word. He had assumed that he had finished, other than writing a song, and delivered the *finished* product to the Levites (Deut. 31:24–26). However, because of his habit, Moses also recorded his second to the last meeting with Jesus Christ. This would only make sense. He has, for forty years, carefully recorded God’s Words; so, when he meets with God again, even though he thought that he had finished his project of writing Scripture, it would be his habit to record this meeting. This would be very likely the last thing that Moses ever actually wrote. It is my hypothesis that Deut. 33 was extemporaneous, which is rare, but Moses had the spiritual stuff with which to give an extemporaneous message (99.99% of the pastors of this era do not).

We have an a noun here: 'etsem (אֶתְסֵם) [pronounced *eh-TSEM*], which is translated several ways, offically as *bone, substance, self*; however, with the word *day*, it means *self-same* or *in that very same day*. Strong’s #6106 BDB #782.

“Go up into [the] mountain of the Abarim the this Mountain of Nebo which [is] in the land of Moab which [is] against the face of Jericho and see [the] land of Canaan which I am giving to sons of Israel to possess;

Deut. 32:49

“Go up into the mountain of the Abarim, specifically this Mount Nebo which is in the land of Moab which is directly opposite Jericho and I want you to see the land of Canaan which I am giving to the sons of Israel as a possession.

Abarim means *the region beyond*. This is a mountain range of Tran-Jordan and Mount Nebo is a part of this range. These are 600 feet above the plains of Moab and they overlook the Dead Sea, which is 4000 feet below.⁴¹⁵ Way back in Num. 27:12–13, God foretold Moses that he would go up on this mountain to see the land which He was giving to Israel, and then he would die: **Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel. And when you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was.”** This indicates that the time between Num. 27 and Deut. 32 was very short—perhaps a week and no longer than a month. This general area was the last stop prior to crossing over the Jordan into Jericho (Num. 33:47–49).

⁴¹⁵ Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible; ©1976; Vol. I, p. 6.

God is taking Moses one more time to see the land which will be given to all of Israel. It will be the last earthly look of Moses on this land. V. 50 continues with what God expects Moses to do.

“And die in the mountain which you go up to and be gathered to your people like [those] who have died: Aaron, your brother in Hor the mountain and then was gathered to his people.

Deut. 32:50

“And die on that mountain and be gathered to your people just like those who have already died, like Aaron, your brother died on Mount Hor and then was gathered to his people.

The remainder of this command is for Moses to die on this mountain. That is in the imperative; God has ordered Moses to die. Being gathered to one's people is a Hebrew Euphemism for death (Gen. 25:8).

“Because which, you transgressed against Me in [the] midst of sons of Israel at waters of Meribath-Kadesh, wilderness of Zin, because which you did not set Me apart [as holy] in [the] midst of sons of Israel.

Deut. 32:51

“[You will die] because you committed a serious infraction against Me in the midst of children of Israel at waters of Meribath-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not set Me apart as holy in the midst of the children of Israel.

The first verb in this verse is the Qal perfect of *mâ'al* (מָאַל) [pronounced *maw-AL*], consistently rendered by the KJV as *transgress* or *tresspass*. Most of the time this transgression is specifically *against* someone, either God (2Chron. 28:19 Neh. 13:27) or one's spouse (Num. 5:12, 27). BDB, which occasionally does nothing more than list the various way a word has been translated, bypasses the KJV altogether and translates this as *act unfaithfully*, *act treacherously*. *Commit an infraction* might be a more updated version of this verb. Strong's #4603 BDB #591.

As we have seen, when Moses struck the rock the first time when gen X was whining about water, Jesus Christ was right there on the rock and Moses struck Him, just as He would be judged for our sins and out from Him would flow living waters. We examined this in Ex. 17:1–7. However, our Lord is judged but once for our sins. When we sin after that point in time, we need merely name our sins to Him in order to be forgiven. Therefore, when the children of Israel needed water once again, Moses needed to only speak to the rock. Jesus Christ, symbolically, had already been judged; now to receive the living waters, Moses needed only speak to Him. When we desire to have eternal life, we need only speak to Him, confess our faith, however small, which is in Him. Jesus Christ does not have to return to the cross for any of our sins, past, present or future. However, what Moses did instead was to strike the rock twice. We have studied this back in Num. 20:8–13 and 27:14. God was setting up an analogy to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, an analogy which would have been served correctly by having Moses speak to the rock the second time. However, Moses confused the analogy by striking the rock twice instead. Now Moses, of course, did not know all the ramifications of his sin against God. He just knew that he was ordered to do one thing and he did something else. God gave him specific directions and, before all the children of Israel, he went against God's specific instructions (although the Israelites may not have known it at the time). Since Moses robbed God of this wonderful analogy, this breaking faith with God is covered several times throughout the Torah: Num. 27:14 Deut. 1:37 3:23–27 4:21–22 31:2 32:51–52 34:4.

The application to today is simple: we have a specific code of behavior and a specific morality which God has placed us under. We have a specific *modus operandi* which we are to operate under. We may not always fully understand why God requires His plan A over our plan B. We don't have to understand it completely. The eternal ramifications may be phenomenal and more than we realize. It is our duty to go with God's plan A, regardless of how good we think our own plan B is.

One of the most common examples of this is pre-marital sex. Millions of Christians—believers in Jesus Christ—have engaged in pre-marital sex and they may have used every rationalization in the world for it. However, it is still wrong; it is still to our detriment; we are still punished. Furthermore, this often delays and, very often, completely removes the possibility of a meaningful relationship with, if we are so inclined, lots of sex. God's plan A vs. our plan B. Moses did not fully grasp his own transgression here, other than it was so bad that he was

not allowed to enter the land with this people whom he had led for forty years. How many decisions do we make which akin to this choice of Moses?

One of the very ironic aspects of this verse, which I don't know if anyone has pointed this out in their commentary or not—is that the Moses transgressed against God in the midst of the children of Israel at the **waters** of Meribath-Kadesh. Remember what their problem was? No water. Too many people visualize that when Moses struck the rock on these two instances that something akin to a hose-sized burst of water shot out of the rock and somehow two million people and their animals were satisfied by this little fount of water. Two thousand people would not be satiated by a little fountain of water. What burst forth on both instances, despite Moses transgression the second time, is a burst of water which may have started out small, to allow everyone the chance to move back, but we are dealing with a burst of water which was more volcanic with regards to size. There was so much water that this place became known as the **waters** of Meribath-Kadesh. The word for water is mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced *MAH-yim*] and it is found everywhere in the plural. We find this word association with both the Euphrates (Isa. 8:7 Jer. 2:18), with the Nile (Ex. 2:10 4:9). It is used in association with springs, streams or seas (Deut. 8:7 10:7 Amos 5:8 9:6), of subterranean waters (Ex. 20:4 Deut. 4:18) and of flood waters (Gen. 7:7 8:3). Strong's #4325 BDB #565. Apparently the subterranean waters which were unleashed (or waters of miraculous origin) turned that formerly dry area in somewhat of a resort known for its streams and lakes. I'm certain that something might be made of the change of the name from meriBAH to meriBATH, but the different between the Hebrew *h* (ה —hê) and the Hebrew *th* (ת —thâ^v) are very slight. I don't know whether this represents the construct at this point, a slight change of name, or a mistake in the letters.

“For in front of [you], you will see the land, and there you will not go into the land which I am giving to sons of Israel.”

Deut. 32:52

“For from there, right in front of you, you will be able to see the land; however, you will not go into the land, the land which I am giving to children of Israel.”

This verse begins with the word for *for*, *when*, or *that*. Then we have the *mîn* (*out, out from, away from*) combined with the preposition *neged* (נֶגֶד) [pronounced *NEH-ged*], which means *what is conspicuous* when it is a substantive and, as a preposition, *in front of, in the sight of, opposite to*. With *mîn*, this means *in front of, from before*. Strong's #5048 BDB #617 (erroneously given as #616 in Owen's).

Allow me to insert some comments by McGee: *Moses, the representative of the Law, the lawgiver, cannot enter into the land. Legalism is actually a hinderance. The Law is a revealer, not a remover of sin. The Law cannot save. The Law could not bring Moses into the land. The Law cannot bring us into the place of blessing*⁴¹⁶.

Sometimes we become too goal-oriented. Moses, probably unbeknownst to himself, has just written the heart and soul of the Old Testament, the Torah, the Law, and in the final few days of his life, in his teaching, wrote the heart and soul of the Torah, Deuteronomy. His reputation as a spiritual giant will stand unparalleled throughout the annals of Old Testament history. In his writings, recalling the experiences of Israel and the miracles of God, he wrote time and time again of Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death for our sins. Although the entry of Moses into the land with his people, the Jews, seemed to be the most important thing in his life, the last goal to accomplish prior to his death, what he accomplished was far greater than the seven-year movement of the children of Israel into the land. Even in his greatest failure, which I know would seem trivial to orthodox Jews, if they would admit to it in their heart of hearts, is his greatest success because his act of hitting the rock twice when the rock had already been judged, made it clear to us three thousand years later that God had set up a wonderful analogy testifying to the work of His Son on the cross. Had Moses stayed with the directives of God, the analogy would stand; however, since we have God's Word and therefore we have God's specific directives, we know exactly what should have been done, which tells us how carefully God planned these provisions of past times to point toward the greatest event of human history—our Lord's payment for our rebellion against Him at the cross.

⁴¹⁶ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 194.

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Deuteronomy 33

Deuteronomy 33:1–29

Outline of Chapter 33:

- Vv. 1–5 **Introduction to the blessing of Moses**
- Vv. 6–25 **Moses blesses the twelve tribes**
- Vv. 26–29 **Moses concludes that Israel is blessed of God**

Charts:

- v. 4 **Interpretation of vv. 2–5**
- v. 8 **A Summary of the Doctrine of Urim and Thummim**

Introduction: As I pointed out in the previous chapter, these two chapters were not written down by Moses—at least, certainly not Deut. 33—he pronounced the blessings in public and they were then recorded by someone else, mostly likely, Joshua. Keil and Delitzsch also take this stance. Keil and Delitzsch’s reasoning was the verbiage, [Moses, a man of the God](#), which is found first in Deut. 33:1, Joshua 14:6 and Psalm 90:0.⁴¹⁷ Concerning this title, Barnes writes: *The occurrence of the title here is no doubt a token that the Blessing was not, as was the Song, transcribed by Moses himself*⁴¹⁸.

There does not appear to be an unusual order in which the tribes are named. Reuben is named first, as the first-born, but then Simeon is skipped, and Judah, to whom Jacob gave the birthright, is named next. Levi, the tribe of priests, those dedicated to God, is named third. Then we have the sons of Rachel, Benjamin and Joseph (along with the double portion given to Joseph—i.e., his two half-tribes are named), and the last two sons of Leah, Zebulun and Issachar. In these last two pairs, the youngest son is named first. Finally, we have Gad, the son of Zilpah, then Dan and Naphtali, the two sons of Bilhah, and then Asher, Zilpah’s second son. Also, of some small importance, we do not necessarily have the entirety of each blessing.

The tenor of this chapter is quite a bit different from the previous; in fact, in contrast to almost every single message of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, this chapter *is pervaded by a tone of happy augury; and the total absence of warning and reproof has been rightly noted as indicating that Moses is here speaking of the ideal, of the people of God as they might and would have been but for their perverseness, rather than foretelling what would in fact be the fate and fortunes of the twelve tribes*⁴¹⁹.

There are some detractors of Scripture who maintain that the books of Moses were written long after the actual historical events. In fact, some of these theologians believe Genesis and Deuteronomy to be written hundreds of years later. One of the things that we would expect in such a case is for the blessings of Jacob, at the end of Genesis, and the blessings here of Moses to be quite similar; or, at least, complementary. However, there is very little similarity between the two sets of blessings. Moses had read the blessings of Jacob; however, what he said was completely independent of Jacob. Furthermore, Moses primarily recorded his blessing in the jussive—that is, these were desires that he had for the individual tribes, prayers which he made on their behalf. Whereas Jacob recorded a number of prophetic decrees (see Gen. 49:1), Moses, the great prophet of God, had very little to say in the way of prophecy. What he said was more optitive—that is, he desired for it to come to pass. Furthermore, if any tribe desired some precise prophetic information of its particular future, these blessings of Moses would not be the place to go. *Moses...does nothing more than expound their names, and on the ground of the peculiar characters expressed in the names, foretell to the tribes themselves their peculiar calling and future development within the dovenant nation. Consequently we have nowhere any special predictions, but simply prophetic glances*

⁴¹⁷ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1005.

⁴¹⁸ *Barnes’ Notes*, Vol. II, p. 338.

⁴¹⁹ *Barnes’ Notes*, Vol. II, p. 338.

at the future, depicted in a purely ideal manner, whilst in the case of most of the tribes the utter want of precise information concerning their future history prevents us from showing in what way they were fulfilled.⁴²⁰ You would assume that if a message had been written long after the time of Moses that there would have been some specific historical predictions found here, as such things would be easy to fabricate. For instance, there is nothing in this payer for blessing which can be tied to anything which occurred during the period of the judges, to the inherent evil of the Canaanites which were never expelled from the land, to the period of David and Solomon, to the divided kingdom or to the attacks from without. In fact, it is this distinct lack of such foretelling which is quite striking.

Finally, I found Deut. 33 to be one of the most difficult and frustrating chapters which I have ever dealt with. After Deut. 32, I thought that this poetry stuff was going to be time-consuming, but essentially easy. Although sometimes a verse took a long time in Deut. 32, its meaning became clear with a good translation. However, even with a good rendering, I had difficulty with Deut. 33. I had to depend upon the opinions and work of others much more than I usually do in this chapter. In fact, most of the time, I pull together the translation and look at related verses before I examine another man's commentary. Then, if they caught something which I did not, or stated something more clearly, or caused me to re-think my position, then I draw from their work. However, for this chapter I went immediately for the commentaries to gain from their impressions as I had very few. This is why you will find a great many allusions to Keil and Delitzsch in the exposition of this chapter. Their outstanding commentary on this chapter provided me with insights which I would not have otherwise been privy to.

As perhaps a testimony to the difficulty of this chapter, J. Vernon McGee, who has the ability to take complex ideas and put them into simple terms, a great skill, had very little to say about Deut. 33. His commentary could have been reduced to a page (it was two pages with Scripture). However, he spent seven pages on the previous chapter and gave more commentary on the following chapter, which was less than half as long.

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Introduction to the Blessing of Moses

Literally:

This the blessing which Moses, a man of the God [blessed] sons of Israel before the faces of his death:

Deut. 33:1

Smoother English rendering:

This is the blessing with which Moses, a man of God, blessed the sons of Israel immediately prior to his death:

Writing the song had inspired Moses. On his deathbed, so to speak (he did not lay on a deathbed—he would climb up a mountain to die, as per the order of God), he gave this final blessing to Israel. *This “blessing” differs widely from the ...song of the previous chapter. There Moses’ worst fears, here his fondest wishes and idealisations find expression.*⁴²¹ Here is one of the few times where I believe that Moses likely spoke extemporaneously.

The title, *a man of God*, was first applied to Moses, as has been noted, and was then applied to God's prophets (1Sam. 2:27 9:6 1Kings 12:22 13:1 2Kings 1:9–13 5:8 Jer. 35:4).

Keil and Delitzsch sum up the next three verses as so: v. 2 describes the origin of Israel, v. 3 its nature, and vv. 4–5, its intention and goal.

⁴²⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1006.

⁴²¹ Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*, p. 234.

Then he said,
 “Y^ehowah, from Sinai, came in
 and [majestically] appeared from Seir to
 them
 He was caused to come out from Mount
 Paran
 and He came from ten thousands of
 sacredness
 from His right hand a fire of throwing
 for them

Deut. 33:2

“Then he said,
 “Y^ehowah, at Mount Sinai, came in
 and then He majestically appeared from
 Seir to them
 He was caused to come out from Mount
 Paran
 and He came from myriads of elect
 angels
 from His right hand a lightning flash to
 guide them

We have four different synonyms in this verse, all of which could be translated *come*. The first word is the Qal perfect of the most common word for *go, come*, is *bôw* (בּוּ) [pronounced *bo*]. It can also mean *to come in, to go in*. The idea here is that He came into the lives of the Israelites; He came into their reality. Strong's #935 BDB #97. The second verb is the Qal perfect of *zârach* (צָרַח) [pronounced *zaw-RAHKH*] and this word is used primarily of the sun *rising* (Ex. 22:3 Judges 9:33 Ecc. 1:5). This is poetry, and in poetry, we are allowed a certain amount of leeway in our figures of speech. Therefore, I rendered this *majestically appeared*. Strong's #2224 BDB #280. Our third word for *come* is the Hiphil perfect of *yâtsâ* (צָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*] and it means *to be caused go out, to be caused come out*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. The final word for *come* is the Qal perfect of *âthâh* (אַתָּה) [pronounced *aw-THAWH*] and it is a word which means *to come* and is found only in Hebrew poetry. Strong's #857 BDB #87.

Along with the four synonyms in this verse, we have three specific areas mentioned. At Sinai is where God appeared to the people and gave them the Law. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because Y^ehowah had descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently...And Y^ehowah came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, and Y^ehowah called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up (Ex. 19:18, 20; also see Psalm 68:8). Seir was both a reference to the mountainous land of Edom and it was also the name of a mountain on the outskirts of the land belonging to the Edomites (the sons of Esau). The Israelites circled this mountain for some time (Deut. 2:1–4) before passing around the land of Edom, as the Edomite would not let them pass through (Num. 20:14–23 Deut. 2:8). Mount Paran is in the northern portion of the Sinai desert (Num. 10:12). These three areas made up a huge area of land through which the Israelites had passed while God revealed the Law to Moses. Let me append this with a comment from Keil and Delitzsch: *The three clauses, “Jehovah came from Sinai...from Seir...from the mountains of Paran,” do not refer to different manifestations of God (Knobel), but to the one appearance of God at Sinai. Like the sun when it rises, and fills the whole of the broad horizon with its beams, the glory of the Lord, when He appeared, was no confined to one a single point, but shone upon the people of Israel from Sinai, from Seir, and the mountains of Paran, as they came from the west to Sinai. The Lord appeared to the people from the summit of Sinai, as they lay encamped at the foot of the mountain. This appearance rose like a streaming light from Seir, and shone at the same time from the mountains of Paran. Seir is the mountain land of the Edomites to the east of Sinai; and the mountains of Paran are in all probability not the mountains of et-Tib, which form the southern boundary of the desert of Paran, but rather the mountains of the Azazimeh, which ascend to a great height above Kadesh, and form the boundary wall of Canaan towards the south. The glory of the Lord, who appeared upon Sinai, sent its beams even to the eastern and northern extremities of the desert. This manifestation of God formed the basis for all subsequent manifestations of the omnipotence and grace of the Lord for the salvation of His people*⁴²².

The second to the last line has been given several incorrect renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...from among ten thousands of holy ones...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Yea he came out of holy myriads,...
KJV	...and he came with ten thousands of saints.

⁴²² Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1008.

NASB	And He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones;
NIV	He came with myriads of holy ones.
TEV [Today's Eng. V.]	Ten thousand angels were with him.
Young's Lit. Translation	And hath come <i>with</i> myriads of holy ones.

We can go with either *myriads of* or *ten thousand*. However, the last word is the masculine **singular** of qôdesh (קֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced *koe-DESH*], which is a noun meaning *sacredness, apartness, that which is holy, holy things*. We are not referring to *holy ones* here, as this is in the singular. In fact, this word is never correctly translated as *holy one* or *holy ones*. The adjective is used for that translation. This simply means *the myriads of sacredness* or *the myriads of holiness* or, very freely, *the myriads of elect [angels]*. Strong's #6944 BDB #871.

God appeared to Israel at Sinai, His glory shining throughout all of Israel. However, the second to the last line tells from whence He came. God was manifest from heaven, coming out of the holy myriads, which are the elect angels that surround His throne. “A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands were attending Him and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him. The court sat and the books were opened.” (Dan. 7:10). “You received the Law as ordained by angels and you did not keep it.” (Acts 7:53; see also 1Kings 2:19 Job 1:6 2:1 Psalm 89:7 Zech. 14:5 Rev. 5:11). Our Lord comes with and stands apart from the elect angels.

Now let's see what translators have done with that last line:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...a flaming fire, la law, at His right hand.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Out of His right hand [proceeded] fire to guide them.
KJV	From His right hand <i>went</i> a fiery law for them.
NASB	At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them.
NIV	...from the south, from the his mountain slopes.
NRSV	...at his right, a host of his own.
The Septuagint	...on his right hand <i>were</i> his angles with him.
Young's Lit. Translation	At His right hand <i>are</i> springs for them.

As you can see, we have quite the variety of renderings for this last line. It either reads *at His right hand a fire a decree (or, an edict or a law) for them* or it reads *at His right hand a burning fire for them*. The latter makes the most sense, as God guided (here's where the hand comes in) the Israelites with the burning pillar of fire. This verse describes the first interaction between God and Israel. Keil and Delitzsch give a more detailed explanation as to why this is rendered *a burning fire* and not *a fire of law*. Let me give the gist of it: the word for law which is found here is not a Semitic word, but a word which was later adopted from the Persian into the Chaldee and it was only used by Gentiles when referencing the Law of God (Ezra 7:12, 21, 25, 26 Dan. 6:6). Strong's #1881 BDB #206. The problem is that this is not two separate words *fire law*, but one word, as it is found in a number of manuscripts and some printed editions. What we actually have here is probably one word which means *a fire of throwing or flashes of lightning*.⁴²³ This is not unlike the scene painted for us in Ex. 20:18: *And all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw, they trembled and stood at a distance*. See also Isa. 65:5.

Now, although I refer generally to *The Emphasized Bible* for a more literal rendering of a verse, once and a while it is a great work of poetry:

Yahweh from Sinai came near,
Yea he dawned out of Seir upon them,
He shone forth out of Mount Paran,
Yea he came out of holy myriads,—
Out of his right hand [proceeded] fire to guide them.

⁴²³ The more detailed explanation can be found in Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1008.

One of the things which was news to me is that some Islamic believers point to this verse as a promise of the coming of Mohammed. Now, as we have seen over and over again, Jesus Christ is portrayed in shadow form. Even to the unbelieving Jew, they must admit that there are an awful lot of parallels and similarities which correspond to our Lord and His sacrifice on our behalf on the cross. You certainly recall the seriousness of the transgression of Moses because it did not fit the shadow of the coming cross. Apart from that, it appears as though there was just some arbitrary transgression of Moses that God wanted it done His way and no other, although there would be no reason for that. I mean, unless we parallel our Lord's coming, what difference does it really make if Moses speaks to the rock or strikes it twice? However, if striking the rock once represents God's judgment upon our Lord once and for all for our sins, then striking the rock twice later ruins the shadow image. Recall the sacrifice of Abraham when he took his son upon the mountain to slit his throat and he was given a substitute instead to sacrifice on his son's behalf. Over and over throughout our study of these great books of Moses I have pointed our similarities and shadowing of what was to come to pass. The Islam people point to the phrase **He was caused to come out from Mount Paran and He came from ten thousands of sacredness** and claim that this predicts the coming of Mohammed. They claim that Moses came out of Sinai, Jesus out of Seir and Mohammed out of Paran. Sorry, it just does not say that. (1) It is not a clear prediction of that nor is there any clear shadowing of Mohammed's coming. (2) Mohammed came to Mecca with an army of *ten thousand*, but not with ten thousand angels. (3) Seir and Paran are both located near Egypt in the Sinai peninsula (Gen. 14:6 Num. 10:12 12:16–13:3 Deut. 1:1); Jesus ministered in Palestine, not in Seir. Paran is nowhere near Mecca but it is in the eastern portion of Sinai near southern Palestine, hundreds of miles away. (4) This verse speaks clearly of Y^ehowah, not of Mohammed. (5) Throughout most of this chapter, we are speaking of blessings to Israel. Islam has been a constant enemy of Israel so there is no way that the coming of Mohammed could be construed as even remotely related to the blessing of Israel. It is obvious that those of the Islamic faith have to look pretty hard at this verse in order to see the coming of Mohammed.

**“Indeed loving peoples,
all His holy ones in your hand;
And they, [even] they, were assembled
to your foot;
he kept taking from your instructions.”**

Deut. 33:3

**“Indeed loving peoples,
all His holy ones in your hands;
And they, even they, were assembled at
your feet;
each one kept taking from your
instruction.”**

Poetry is not easy. First, we deal sometimes with a different set of words than with prose; secondly, words are used in a way unlike how they are used in prose; and finally, once we know the words that were spoken, then we have to determine just what exactly do they mean.

This verse begins with the particle *ʾaph* (אֶף) [pronounced *ahf*], which denotes addition, especially of something greater; it can be *also, yea, even, indeed*. Strong's #637 BDB #64 *Loving* is a present active participle (I would have gone for *beloved* if this were a present passive participle). A participle is built upon a verb, but it is used as an adjective or a noun. That is, the action of the verb describes the action of what the substantive that this noun stands for. This stands for the Gentiles which traveled with Israel from Egypt. This is the mixed multitude which received such an undeserved bad rap in the past from some theologians. By application, this stands for all Gentiles who pursue the God through the Israelites.

We have the words *His holy ones* here. With the sloppy job which was done in many of the translations in vv. 2–3, it would make sense for the average person to conclude that the *holy ones* form this verse and *the holy ones* from the previous verse are the same things. Incorrect. In the previous verse, the word was in the singular. In this verse, it is a **different** (but similar) word in the plural. *Qâdôwsh* (קָדוֹשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DOWSH*] is an adjective which means *sacred, holy, set apart*. When this adjective stands by itself, it functions, like all Hebrew adjectives, as a substantive. It should be rendered *holy ones, set-apart ones, sacred ones, consecrated ones, those set apart to God*. Strong's 6918 BDB #872. **“He keeps the feet of His godly ones, but the wicket ones are silenced in darkness.”** (1Sam. 2:9).

The verb rendered *assembled* is a total guess. It occurs only once in Scripture and has no cognates which help define it. Other guesses include *sat down* (Young), *encamped* (Rotherham), *bow down* (NIV), and *followed* (NASB). Since Moses is the speaker and Israel is the listener, whatever they, the mixed multitude did, it was at the foot of the Israelites. This is followed by the word *take, carry, lift, bear*; in the 3rd person singular, Qal imperfect. This means *he kept taking, he kept bearing*. What was *lifted, carried, or taken* was *instructions*, a plural noun which is found only here, and is built upon the Hebrew word for *word*. Some common renderings: *words* (Young, Rotherham, NASB), *instruction* (NIV, Owen), and *direction* (NRSV). *Your* (singular) is the suffix of the word *instructions*, and not of the preposition of separation *from* (as it is usually translated).

What this means is generally lost in the freeness of the translation. The second line along with the context of the previous verse means that this applies primarily to the mixed multitude which traveled with Israel and learned God's Word along with them. In a greater sense, this will be the Gentile world which is loved by God and which *loves* as a result of their salvation, which comes from learning at the foot of the Israelite. It is a matter of interpretation that the 3rd person plural (lines 1–3) and the 3rd person singular (line 4) speaks of the same people (Psalm 49:19 gives a similar change of number). The first three lines describe the group as a whole and the fourth line describes individual response from that group.

Now, there are those who interpret this as a reference to the elect angels who observe us and learn from us, and that is an accurate doctrine. However, I don't believe that is the meaning intended here, primarily because of the first line in this verse, and secondarily because of the change from the noun in the singular in v. 2 to the adjective in the plural in v. 3. If the two verses referred to the same things (angels), then it would have been easy for Moses to have used the same words in each verse to tie them together. What we have are two great groups of people who observe Israel—the elect angels, out from which comes out Lord; and the elect Gentiles.

Let me give you another option; Moses is possibly speaking to the heads of the Israelites (v. 5). The *loving peoples* would be the Israelites; the *holy ones* would be Israelites entrusted to these leaders; the Israelites are in their hand and follow in their steps and receive their words. Moses is speaking to the leaders and using the 2nd person masculine singular to refer to them. Then, in vv. 4–5, Joshua gives us an aside, telling us, the readers, that Moses charged him and the other leaders (*us*) with a law, the possession of the assembly of Jacob. Moses functioned as a king in calling the heads of the tribes together like this. This interpretation allows everything to fit quite nicely together with the exception of the use of the word *peoples* in the plural at the beginning of v. 3. This is the word *ʿam* (אָם) [pronounced *ahm*] and it means *people*. It is not a specific word for *Gentiles* nor is it a word which stands for *Israel*. This word can stand for Israel and for Gentiles in the very same context (Deut. 28:9–10). In general, when *ʿam* is in the singular, it tends to stand for Israel (Isa. 62:12 63:18 Dan. 8:24 12:7) or for a particular non-Israelic people (Ex. 21:8 Deut. 28:32 Ezek. 3:5). In the plural, 99% of the time it stands for Gentile nations (Deut. 4:19, 27 6:14 13:7) or for all nations of the earth (Deut. 7:6 32:8). Once and awhile it stands for Israel (Gen. 28:3 48:4 Judges 5:14 Hos. 10:14). In fact, the last two usages could refer to believers and unbelievers of Israel. Strong's #5971 BDB #766. If you will examine Gen. 28:3 and 48:4, you will see this is a specialized usage of this word for Israel in the plural. For this reason, I could only interpret *peoples* as a reference to Gentile nations and therefore reject this particular interpretation of this set of verses.

Finally, the most common interpretation of this verse is that the *peoples* and the *holy ones* refer to Israel and the 2nd person singulars all refer to God. The two problems with this are the change of person for God (from 3rd in the previous verse to 2nd here and back to the 3rd person in v. 6—not unknown in Hebrew poetry); however, there is no intervening petition directly to God (as we find in v. 6 for Israel). Our second problem with this interpretation is as was stated above, the plural of the word *peoples*.

I realize that I have given you three very different views of this previous verse, which I will summarize in a chart after v. 4.

(Protocol [or, law] Moses commanded us, a possession [of] the assembly of Jacob.

Deut. 33:4

(This is the law [or, instruction] which had Moses commanded us, which is now a possession of the assembly of Jacob.

V. 4 begins with the very famous word *tôwrâh* (תּוֹרָה) [pronounced *to-RAW*], which means *regulation, law, protocol*. BDB gives the additional meanings *direction, instruction*. Strong's #8451 and #8452 BDB #435. **For the law a given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ** (John 1:17).

This is a more difficult verse to interpret. At first, like most expositors, I thought that Moses, in this blessing, places himself in the third person, as a fellow Israelite receiving this instruction. And most of translations place this as a part of the blessing of Moses. However, that is a little forced. If this were a song, then Moses speaking of himself in the third person would be more reasonable, as he would be teaching this to the people to sing for centuries after his death. But this is not a song. For the song, it is mentioned several times as a song and several times it is mentioned that Moses taught it to the people. Here, in this context, Moses is just speaking. He is speaking in poetry, but he is still speaking just the same. Furthermore, throughout Deuteronomy, when he spoke to the people, he spoke of himself in the first person (he wrote of himself in the third person, but spoke in the first). Furthermore, it doesn't make much sense for him to **say Moses commanded us**.

Moses speaks of God in vv. 1–3 and speaks either to Israel or to God in prayer in vv. 6–29. Nowhere does he stop and say anything about himself—not in the first or third person. In death, he is focused on the tribes of Israel and he is focused upon making intercession for them. Moses is not thinking about himself at all—or, at least his words don't reveal this.

My thought is that this is Joshua breaking in, setting the scene for the individual blessings. The *us* is simply Joshua writing, referring to himself and the people of Israel. The Law, which had already been written by Moses and passed to the Levites, was a possession of the assembly of Jacob. This instruction, commanded by Moses, will also become a possession of the assembly of Jacob and it will become a part of the Law. **Your Word I have I treasured in my heart that I might no sin against You...I have inherited You testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart** (Psalm 119:11, 111).

Now, as an aside, I am not 100% thoroughly convinced that what I have exegeted here is correct. Moses, in v. 3, could be speaking of the people of Israel and *your* could be a reference to God. Throughout this blessing, he does speak to God directly (vv. 7–11). However, notice that Moses addressed God specifically in v. 7 and specifically in v. 11, the opening and closing verses of his speaking to God, praying on their behalf. We don't have this in v. 3. Again, other translators and theologians, most of them, in fact, place vv. 4–5 as a portion of these blessings. This has Moses speaking either to God or to Israel in the previous verse in the second person (which means that Moses is speaking from the source of himself, which is the first person), and then, suddenly in v. 4, he speaks of himself in the third person, and in v. 5, he either continues to speak of himself in the third person or he speaks of God in the third person. Even though in poetry and in some translations such as the NASB, this can be made to look and sound semi-reasonable, it does end up being quite convoluted to jump from voice to voice. Similarly, Israel would be going from either the third person or the second person in v. 3, to Moses speaking directly to this crowd, as though he, Moses, in the third person, and he has given the instruction to *us*, which is the first person plural, referring to Israel. Perhaps not a single one of you has followed what I have said. What I have attempted to do was to lessen or eliminate the number of times the point of view changes and the voice changes. Maybe a chart would help.

Interpretation of vv. 2–5				
Verse	Keil & Delitzsch	Kukis	NASB	NIV
v. 2a Then he said,	Joshua is writing he = Moses	Joshua is writing he = Moses	Joshua is writing he = Moses	Joshua is writing he = Moses

Interpretation of vv. 2–5				
Verse	Keil & Delitzsch	Kukis	NASB	NIV
v. 2b “Y ^e howah, from Sinai, came in and [majestically] appeared from Seir to them. He was caused to come out from Mount Paran and He came from ten thousands of holy ones from His right hand a fire of throwing for them	Moses is speaking Jehovah = 3 rd person them = Israel He = Y ^e howah His = Y ^e howah holy ones = angels them = Israel	Moses is speaking Y ^e howah = 3 rd person them = Israel He = Y ^e howah His = Y ^e howah holy ones = angels them = Israel	Moses is speaking LORD = 3 rd person them = Israel He = Y ^e howah His = Y ^e howah holy ones = angels? them = Israel	Moses is speaking LORD = 3 rd person them = Israel He = Y ^e howah His = Y ^e howah holy ones = angels <i>them</i> left out
v. 3 “Indeed loving peoples, all His holy ones in your hand; And they, [even] they, were assembled to your foot; he kept taking from your instructions.”	Moses is speaking (He) = Y ^e howah nations = Israel and Gentile nations His holy ones = God’s elect angels Thy hand = God’s hand they, even they = Gentiles & angels? Thy = God he = ??	Moses is speaking there is no “he” peoples = Gentiles His holy ones = Y ^e howah’s saved Gentiles your hand = Israel’s hand they, even they = Gentiles your = Israel he = the individual Gentile	Moses is speaking (He) = Y ^e howah peoples = Israel Thy [His] (holy ones) = God’s saved Israel Thy hand = God’s hand people = Israel your = God he is left out and replaced by <i>everyone</i>	Moses is speaking (you) = Y ^e howah the people = Israel <i>his</i> is left out; holy ones = saved Israel your hand = God’s hand people = Israel your = God <i>holy ones</i> is incorrectly given as the subject

Interpretation of vv. 2–5				
Verse	Keil & Delitzsch	Kukis	NASB	NIV
v. 4 (Law Moses commanded us, a possession [of] the assembly of Jacob.	Moses is speaking Moses = 3 rd person us = Moses and the nation Israel possession = 3 rd person assembly of Jacob = 3 rd person	Joshua is writing Moses = 3 rd person us = Joshua and the nation Israel possession = 3 rd person assembly of Jacob = 3 rd person	Moses is speaking Moses = 3 rd person us = Moses and the nation Israel possession = 3 rd person assembly of Jacob = 3 rd person	Moses is speaking Moses = 3 rd person us = Joshua and the nation Israel possession = 3 rd person assembly of Jacob = 3 rd person
v. 5 So he became in Jeshurun a king in a gathering of heads of people tribes of Israel).	Moses is speaking he = Jehovah people = Israel	Joshua is writing he = Moses people = Israel	Moses is speaking He = God people = Israel	Moses is speaking he = God people = Israel
One of the biggest problems with interpreting vv. 4–5 as a portion of the poetry is that you have Moses speaking of himself in the 3 rd person, then he says that he has given the Law to himself and the nation Israel. In the interpretation which I have given this, there are very few times when the 2 nd person changes to 3 rd or there is a jump in number. With the interpretation which I have given this, the Gentiles are spoken of collectively in the plural at first in v. 3 and then in the singular at the end of v. 3, where personal responsibility was involved. Also, you will no doubt took note that <i>holy ones</i> meant angels in v. 2 and saved Gentiles in v. 3; what's the deal? These are related, but different words. In fact, Owens translates them <i>holy ones</i> and <i>those consecrated</i> , respectively.				
Now with traditional interpretations, there are a number of serious changes, many occurring within the same verse. Now, in all honesty, I am not completely happy with my interpretation of v. 3; but I am less satisfied with the interpretation of others.				

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So he became in Jeshurun a king in a gathering of heads of people, tribes of Israel).

Deut. 33:5

And so, in essence, he became like a king in Jeshurun when gathering the heads of the people from the tribes of Israel).

For our edification, we ought to examine the various translations here to get the various slants on this verse:

The Amplified Bible

[The Lord] was King in Jeshurun (Israel), when the heads of the people were gathered, all the tribes of Israel together.

The Emphasized Bible

Thus became he in Jeshurun a king,—when the heads of the people gathered themselves together, as one man the tribes of Israel.

KJV	And he was king is Jeshurun, when the heads of the people <i>and</i> the tribes of Israel were gathered together.
NASB	“And He was king in Jeshurun, When the heads of the people were gathered.”
NEB	Then a king arose in Jeshurun, when the chiefs of the people were assembled together with all the tribes of Israel.
NIV	He was king over Jeshurun when the leaders of the people assembled, along with the tribes of Israel.
NRSV	There arose a king in Jeshurun when the leaders of the people assembled—the united tribes of Israel.
Owen's Translation	Thus he became in Jeshurun king when were gathered the heads of the people together the tribes of Israel.
Young's Lit. Translation	And he is in Jeshurun king, In the heads of the people gathering together, The tribes of Israel.

Recall the Jeshurun was the more idealized version of Israel, the obedient and mature Israel. Moses became like a king over the people, having written these edicts which were now to be followed by Israel. Joshua describes this *swan song* scene, which did not take place on a deathbed, as well as the unofficial place of Moses. Moses is speaking to some of the heads of the tribes of Israel and this is likely a smaller grouping of people. Moses, when speaking to the heads of the tribes operated just like a king would have.

Now most commentators that I have read interpret this as God was king over Israel; the immediate context of v. 4 indicates to me that this is Moses, however, Moses was a type of Christ. If this is part of the blessing of Moses, certainly *He* refers to the God of Israel. However, it would make more sense for Moses to use God's name here, as he was not shy about using it. You may ask, *well, what about the "he" in v. 3a?* There is no *he* in v. 3a except in the incorrectly rendered English translations. *He* is not found in the Hebrew—not even as a part of the verb form. The traditional view that Moses speaks of God in the third person in v. 2, in the 2nd person in v. 3 and in the 3rd person in v. 5 (and the 2nd person in v. 7) is an awful lot of switching person without denoting that the focus has changed (as we find in v. 7). Certainly, Jesus Christ was Israel's true King. “Y^ehowah will reign forever and ever.” (Ex. 15:18). My personal inclination is toward a double meaning here of Moses, by context, but Jesus Christ in truth. The gathering of the heads of the people together was something that Moses did on a regular basis to teach them God's Word. Moses could call on them to be gathered just as a king could call upon the heads of state for a conference. However, their gathering was actually before God, as Moses taught God's Truth and stood in the place of God (recall that the people of Israel requested that Moses stand between them and God in Ex. 20). In any case, this does not mean that Moses was king over all Israel but that he acted like a king. It was not until the time of Samuel and Saul that Israel had a king. As Gideon told the people: “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. Y^ehowah will rule over you.” (Judges 8:23b). In those days [the days of the Judges], there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6). “But today you rejected your God, Who delivers you from all you calamities and your distresses; yet you have said ‘No, but place a king over us!’ Now therefore, present yourselves before Y^ehowah by your tribes and by your clans.” (1Sam. 10:19). Y^ehowah is King forever and ever. Nations have perished from his land (Psalm 10:16). Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the sons of Zion rejoice in their King (Psalm 149:2).

I had previously made a list of possible inconsistencies concerning the way which I interpreted the past four verses. However, I left one out. In v. 3, I labeled the *peoples* as the Gentiles—specifically, the saved Gentiles—and here I have interpreted the *people* as Israel. The difference is between the plural and the singular. The word is ʿam (אָם) [pronounced *ahm*] and it means *people*. As I mentioned before, this is not the specific word for *Gentiles* nor is it a word which stands for Israel. We find this word used prior to the formation of Israel (Gen. 11:6–14:16); it is used prophetically of Israel, in both the singular and the plural (Gen. 48:4, 16); and it is used to clearly stand for Israel (Ex. 20:20–21 1Sam. 2:29) and to clearly stand for groups of people who are not Israel (Ex. 21:8). This word can stand for Israel and for Gentiles in the very same context (Deut. 28:9–10). Strong's #5971 BDB #766.

Deuteronomy 31

Deuteronomy 32

Deuteronomy 33

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Moses Blesses the Twelve Tribes

**“Let Reuben live and not die
and his men are a number.”**

Deut. 33:6

**“Let Reuben live and not die
nor let his men be easily numbered.”**

Live is in the Qal cohortative jussive, which is from whence we get the *let*. The jussive means that this is a request of Moses, not a prediction. Reuben, as first-born, had a future as the leading tribe of all Israel. As has been seen so many times in the past, Reuben as an individual was a failure as a leader and his tribe as a whole was no better. The first line is a pleonasm [pronounced *PLAY-oh-nah-sim*], which means redundancy. The request of Moses is stated in the positive and then in the negative.

As most translators have done, I carried the sense of the jussive to the second verb in my freer translation. I also carried the sense of the negative to the final clause. *The negation must be carried on to the last clause. This the language will allow, as the rule that a negation can only be carried forward when it stands with emphatic force at the very beginning...is not without exception; see for example Prov. 30.2.*⁴²⁴ Bullinger, on p. 93, agrees with this carrying forward of the *not*. *The Amplified Bible* footnote on this verse disagrees. They cite several reasons (none which have to do with the Hebrew language): (1) Reuben was excoriated for not joining the other forces in fighting the Canaanites in Judges 5:16. (2) The tribe of Reuben is never mentioned again after that point in the history of Israel, with the exception of 1Chron. 5:3–20 (which is a genealogical reference). (3) The Mishna of Moab, of the ninth century BC does not mention the tribe of Reuben. (4) The territory of Reuben has been restored by Arabs and not by Israelites. Now you might be concerned, who is right? This is actually very simple—Moses is giving Reuben a blessing, he is not making a prediction. Moses is not asking for God to decrease the number of the tribe of Israel—that would be totally out of place in a blessing. He is asking that the tribe of Reuben have a future and that its numbers be not diminished. In effect, what has occurred is Moses, by making such a request, has inferred that what would happen in the future could be quite the opposite of what he is requesting. Moses prayed on behalf of Reuben not to become a small number, but Reuben became too much of a follower and not the leader he should have been as the first-born. He ended up living in a very isolated area in the far northeast of Israel and he was generally the first tribe to be encroached upon by outside forces and the tribe of Reuben was probably the first tribe to be carried away into captivity in 733 BC by Tiglath-pileser.

Simeon was passed over for blessing. It was predicted that the Levi and Simeon would be scattered (Gen. 49:7) and Simeon never received his own territory but was given cities which were scattered throughout Judah (Joshua 19:1, 9). Levi's cursing was turned to blessing.

V. 7 is a difficult verse, both to translate and to interpret; here are the results of efforts by others:

The Amplified Bible

And this [Moses] said to Judah: Hear, O Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him to his people! With his hands he contended for himself, but You be a help to him against his enemies.

The Emphasized Bible

And this is for Judah, when he said, Hear, O Yahweh, the voice of Judah, that unto his own people thou wouldst bring him home,—Let his own hands suffice him, and a helper from his adversaries do thou become.

KJV

And this *is the blessing* of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people; let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou a help *to him* from his enemies.

NASB

And this regarding Judah; so he said, “Hear, O LORD, the voice of Judah, And bring him to his people, With his hands he contended for them; And mayest Thou be a help against his adversaries.”

⁴²⁴ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1010.

NIV	And this he said about Judah: “Hear, O LORD, the cry of Judah; bring him to his people. With his own hands he defends his cause. Oh, be his help against his foes!”
NRSV	And this he said of Judah: O LORD, give heed to Judah, and bring him to his people; strengthen his hands for him, and be a help against his adversaries.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And this <i>is</i> for Judah; and he saith:—Hear, O Jehovah, the voice of Judah, And unto his people do Thou bring him in; His hand hath striven for him, And an help from his adversaries art Thou.

Part of the problem with translating this verse is determining what goes with what. Not only is the structure of the Hebrew language quite different from that of the English, but their poetry is then doubly hard to decipher. Furthermore, what phrase goes with what phrase is sometimes difficult. The first two lines of this verse are pretty straightforward. It is clear that the first line is not a part of the poem and that Moses then demands God to listen to the voice of Judah. However, the phrase, *and to his people* could be seen as *and listen to his people*. However, that phrase probably belongs with *bring him*; otherwise, *bring him* all by itself doesn't make a great deal of sense, nor does *bring him his two hands*. *Hear* and *bring* are both in the imperative.

Hands is in the dual, which is also unusual, as we have primarily seen the word *hand*, which stands for strength and ability, in the singular. Now we need to examine the **Doctrine of Reuben—not finished yet!**

**(And this to Judah) Then he said,
“Hear, O Y^ehowah, a voice of Judah
and to his people bring him;
his [two] hands contended for it,
and You will be a help from his
enemies.”**

Deut. 33:7

**And he said this to Judah:
“Hear, O Y^ehowah, a voice of Judah
and to his people bring him;
his [two] hands will contend for it [i.e.,
his people],
and You will be a help from his
enemies.”**

One of the reasons I believe vv. 4–5 to be an insertion by Joshua, besides the 3rd person reference to Moses, is the beginning of v. 7. As a part of the blessing, it makes little sense. As an aside it makes more sense. I wouldn't be surprised if Joshua didn't suddenly start writing this down after Moses began, missing some things here and there from the first of what Moses said.

When Moses asks God *to bring Judah to his people*, what is referred to is the leadership position that Judah will take over the other tribes of Israel; the other tribes of Israel are the *people* of this verse. What is meant is that Judah would often be leading the troops into action and Moses was asking for them to come back to their own people, their brothers *in safety and victory*.⁴²⁵ Jacob prophesied this in Gen. 49:8, even though it would have been our human prediction that the tribe of Joseph would overshadow the other tribes. This prayer of Moses was fulfilled primarily in the times of David and in King David's victories.

In my translation (and in others), *[two] hands* (hands is in the dual), is given as the subject of *contend*. However, *contend* is the 3rd person singular, Qal perfect of a verb which means *to strive, to contend, to fight*. It is unclear, after going through several Hebrew grammar books, whether the dual can take a singular verb. This might read: his [two] hands; he contended for him [or it]. What is meant here is that Judah would have to fight to take its position of leader of Israel; it would not just evolve. What is evoked from this is David's struggle to take the crown from Saul, a Benjamite (don't misinterpret this—David did not lead a full-scale rebellion against Saul; he remained on the defensive until God removed Saul). Finally, Moses says that God (*You*) will be a help from the enemies of Judah, which was the story of the passive-aggressive struggle for power between Saul and David. **How blessed is he whose help the God of Jacob, whose hope is in Y^ehowah his God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; [the one] Who keeps truth for eternity (Psalm 146:5–6).**

⁴²⁵ Barnes' Notes, Vol. II, p. 339.

Judah is the tribe of David and Solomon and the royal line in general, down to our Lord. Keil and Delitzsch point out that there have been wildly differing interpretations given to this verse: **Knobel** finds the desire expressed in this verse on behalf of Judah, that David, who had fled from Saul, might return, obtain possession of the government, and raise his tribe into the royal tribe, **Graf** imagines that it expresses the longing of the kingdom of Judah for reunion with that of Israel; and **Hofmann** and **Maurer** even trace an allusion to the inhabitants of Judea who were led into captivity along with Jehoiachin: one assumption being just as arbitrary and as much opposed to the text as the other.⁴²⁶ Often, this passage in particular is pointed to as proof that this portion of God's Word did not originate with Moses, but was placed several hundred years later making these predictions from an historical perspective. However, what is quite obvious from these interpretations is that they are distinctively different and contradictory; and that a careful reading of the passage reveals not one whit of specific historical note. That is, there is no particular portion of Judah's history which one could point to and indisputably claim that it is a direct fulfillment of this verse. Although my interpretation is correct, this verse is much less clear in what it states, as compared, to say, Lev. 26 or Duet. 28 or, even Gen. 49. If this verse is the work of some future writer who had intentions of defrauding the reader by recording historical events after the fact in the guise of prophecy, then this writer failed miserably, as this blessing is given in the most general of terms and is not subject to a definitive historical incident or portion of history, as does attest the great variety of interpretations previously given. Knobel, who is one of these who purports that an author other than Moses wrote these blessings hundreds of years later, admits that he cannot tie this verse to a specific historical event. Keil and Delitzsch write: *Even Knobel from his naturalistic stand-point is obliged to admit, that no traces can be found in the song of [Moses] any allusion to the calamities which fell upon the nation in the Syrian, Assyrian, and Chaldaean periods. And hitherto it has proved equally impossible to point out any distinct allusion to the circumstances of the nation in the period of the judges.*⁴²⁷ Now would be the perfect time to examine the **Doctrine of Judah—not finished yet!**

**And with respect to Levi, he said,
 "Your Thummin and Your Urim
 to a man of Your grace
 [the one] whom You tested him at
 Massah;
 You contended with Him upon the
 waters of Meribah.**

Deut. 33:8

**And with respect to Levi, he said,
 "Your Thummin and Your Urim
 to Your man of grace
 [the one] whom You tested him at
 Massah;
 You contended with Him upon the
 waters of Meribah.**

The blessings to Judah, the political leader of Israel, and to Levi, the spiritual leader of Israel, were both clearly invocations made directly to Jesus Christ. The two tribes together are part of a prayer, which begins in v. 7 (**Hear, O Y^ehowah, the voice of Judah...**) and ends in v. 11 (**O Y^ehowah, bless his substance...**). This is clear, as Moses speaks of God in the third person in v. 12. I mention this, because this helps us to determine who is who in this verse. On both sides of this verse we have Moses speaking to God in prayer concerning Levi; therefore, Moses refers to God in the second person singular. In v. 9, **Your Word and...Your covenant** are obviously references to God's Word and God's covenant. In the same verse, *he* seems to apply smoothly to Levi. Even though this is poetry, we try to stay in context and keep our persons straight. Therefore, every 2nd person singular reference is to God the Father, Whom Moses is addressing in prayer. This is why these references are all capitalized. There is no such thing as capital and lower case letters in the Hebrew. We capitalize the name of God and pronouns which refer to God out of respect and reverence; this practice also allows us to keep track of who is who in any verse. However, when you see this in any Bible, keep in mind that this is more of a matter of interpretation and not a matter of translation. This is why many translations do not capitalize any pronouns which refer to God, whether the reference is obvious or obscure.

Whereas we have several theories as to exactly what the Urim and Thummin were and we superficially examined it in Ex. 28:30. Now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of Urim and Thummin**. It is clear that they are connected to the determination of God's will. Urim and Thummin are tied to their Man of Grace by the lamed preposition, which means *to, for, with regards to*. Now you may wonder why is Urim and Thummim turned around

⁴²⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1007.

⁴²⁷ *ibid.*

here—that is because there is a turn around of relationships in the next verse. In the next verse, we would expect a person to put his mother, father and family first; however, not in the case of the Levites.

Below is an abbreviated version of the 10 page doctrine of Urim and Thummim.

A Summary of the Doctrine of Urim and Thummim

1. Urim and Thummim probably mean *Lights and Dark nesses*; however, it is possible that they mean *Lights and Perfections*. They are transliterated most of the time, as few translators feel confident of their exact meaning.
2. We find these words very few times in Scripture.
 - a. 4 times in the Law: Ex. 28:30 Lev. 8:8 Num. 27:21 Deut. 33:8.
 - b. 3 times in the historical narratives: 1Sam. 28:6 Ezra 2:63 Neh. 7:65.
3. Urim and Thummim are closely associated with the Ephod of God, which is a colorful and ornate vest (for want of a better word; the ephod probably looked similar to a sweater vest, although it may have been longer). Although we have several occasions where ephod are worn by those associated with the priesthood, there is one Ephod of God which is worn by the High Priest. There are two stones on the shoulders and 12 on the breastplate. Some theories are:
 - a. Urim and Thummim refer to these stones and whether they light up or not when questions are asked of God. Although I lean toward this explanation, I would not be dogmatic about it.
 - b. Urim and Thummim might be two stones kept in the pouch of the breast piece and used to determine God's will.
 - c. Urim and Thummim might be the lots referred to and they are thrown to determine God's will (the exact nature of the lots is unknown).
4. In any case, Urim and Thummim are used to determine God's will, although we have few instances in Scripture where there is clearly recorded (1Sam. 14 24:9–12 30:6–8). None of those passages actually mention Urim and Thummim; they do, however, refer to the Ephod of God.
5. There are a handful of incidents where Urim and Thummim may have been used, but they are not mentioned in the context (Joshua 7:6–19 15:1 16:1 Judges 1:1–2 20:18–28).
6. I believe that God kept their exact nature hidden from us because God does not want us to attempt to duplicate the construction of the Ephod and of Urim and Thummim. Our guidance is not from some external religious object telling us which way to turn, but from doctrine in our souls, which comes from learning the Word of God.

This summary gives the gist of the doctrine referred to.

[Deuteronomy 26](#)

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Because of the relative pronoun, the man of grace is not God and not a member of the trinity. The verb here is the 2nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect (with a 3rd person masculine singular suffix) of nâçâh (נָצַח) [pronounced *naw-SAWH*], a word which means *test, try*. This is a great word whose meaning is determined by the subject and the object. Our English equivalent is quite similar. As a teacher, I *test* my students; this is perfectly legitimate. However, when my students *test* me, this is something entirely different. God tested this man of grace at Masseh. However, their testing of Him was uncalled for. “You will not put Y^ehowah your God to the test, as you tested at Massah.” (Deut. 6:16). Strong's #5254 BDB #650.

Since some translators do not like the rendering *man of your grace*, they go with *pious one* (Young) or *holy one* (KJV). However, right here we simply have the two words which anywhere else are rendered *man* and *grace*. So, who is this *man of Your grace*? Although Keil and Delitzsch are often my saviors when it comes to a difficult portion of Scripture (for instance, the bulk of this chapter), they identify the man of grace as being Levi; and

Rotherham identifies him as the high priest. There are places where Levi and specifically the priesthood was tested and approved, but not here. Recall: *Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed their journeyings from the wilderness of Sin, according to the mouth of Y^ehowah and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test Y^ehowah?" But the people thirsted there fore water and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill me and my children and my livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to Y^ehowah, saying, "What will I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me." Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Observe, I will stand before your face there in the rock at Horeb; and you will strike the rock and water will gush out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he named the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel and because they tested Y^ehowah, saying, "Is Y^ehowah among us or not?" (Ex. 17:1–7).* What I want you to notice by this passage and the one we are studying in Deuteronomy, is that there were two testings there. The people were testing God (Ex. 17:2,7). But God tested a man of His grace. Who is that? That could be Moses or any one of the elders. Everyone who drank water at Massah and Meribah died prior to Deut. 33, with the exception of Moses, Caleb and Joshua (and maybe the high priest). However, even though in this *no-water* test, the Aaronic priesthood is never mentioned specifically, this passage indicates that God tested and approved not only Moses, but the elders as well, which would have included Aaron, who was the high priest, and to whom was the Urim and Thummim. And this fits together nicely, as Aaron and Moses are both Levites. In poetry, Moses speaks of himself and Aaron and Eleazar as God's man of grace. This indicates that Aaron and the other elders stood with him, and they were therefore men of grace. The Urim and Thummim, which are related to decisions based upon God's will, belonged to the Aaronic priesthood. So, what is the upshot of all this? The man of grace is Moses, it is Aaron, it is the high priest. How does Moses do this poetically? He refers to the man of God's grace in the singular, just as he refers to the tribe of Levi in the singular. In other words, Levi—and more accurately, the members of the tribe of Levi—is God's man of grace. What we need to examine is the **Doctrine of God's Man of Grace—not finished yet!!**

Now let's pursue this a little further. God tested Israel throughout the entire forty years. He provided direct revelation from God to Moses and He gave guidance through this Urim and Thummim to the Aaronic priesthood. These two tests were taken as representative of the testing of Israel which took place during these forty years; these two no-water tests are bookends of the wanderings of Israel through the desert for these forty years. Together, they represent all of the wanderings of Israel.

In other words, what Moses did here, in poetry, is quite complex. He uses the singular designation, *man of your grace* to stand for both himself and Aaron and other members of the tribe of Levi who were tested and approved; and he refers to a single test, which was repeated, which acts as bookends of the testings of God; and therefore stands for all of the tests which God placed upon Israel over the period of forty years. Moses has taken a singular reference to a man of grace and a singular reference to a testing of Israel and has let those two things stand for all of the tribe of Levi and for all of the testings of the wilderness wanderings.

To whom much is given, much is required. This is why Aaron's first two sons died at the altar for a transgression that some might perceive as trivial and this is why Moses was not allowed to enter the land, although many might consider his transgression a mere oversight. I know that the 1% of you are thinking, *well, maybe I should back off this Bible doctrine thing just a little so God won't expect so much of me.* This is an option, an option which will not only put you off balance for the remainder of your life, but will rob you of any real reward in heaven, which glorifies Jesus Christ.

You will recall the blessing of Jacob to Levi and Simeon—Jacob warned that they would be scattered among the tribes of Israel. This is incredible on several different levels. First of all, Simeon mostly was scattered among the lands of Judah and Levi as scattered throughout the land. For Simeon, this was cursing and for Levi, this was cursing turned to blessing. Plus this scattering was a foreshadowing of the Israelites being scattered throughout the world. And there would be two types of Israelites scattered throughout the world—Levites, who were men of violence, self-will and anger (Gen. 49:5–7), but, through God's grace became God's men of grace, and Simeonites, who were simply men of violence, self-will and anger. Simeon is not even mentioned by Moses. Now,

notice the shadow which is found here. Israel, both elect and fallen Israel, is scattered throughout the nations. Elect Israel being scattered is cursing turned to blessing. Those who have chosen to reject their Savior Jesus Christ will be scattered to the nations out of cursing, as Simeon was scattered throughout Judah, and not even called to mind by God⁴²⁸.

“The one speaking concerning his father and concerning his mother, ‘I don’t see him’; and he is caused to not regard his brothers and he does not know his children for they took responsibility for Your Word and they kept Your covenant.

Deut. 33:9

“The one speaking concerning his father and concerning his mother, ‘I don’t see him’; and he is caused to not regard his brothers and he does not care for his children for they took responsibility for Your Word and they kept Your covenant.

The first verb is *to say, to speak*; but it is in the Qal active participle preceded by a definite article; it can be rendered *the one speaking, the speaker*. The next verb, although given a wide variety of renderings (*behold, regard*), is our simple verb meaning *to see*. When this reads that Levi did not know his children, this is a poetic metonymy for *giving affection to, caring for*. We find a similar use of the word *know* in Ex. 2:25 Judges 2:10 Psalm 142:4.

Much of what our Lord taught was straight out of the Old Testament. Recall when He said, **“He who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worth of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worth of Me.”** (Matt. 10:37). Or, **“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, he will receive many times as much and he will inherit eternal life.”** (Matt. 19:29). This is the Levite who places spiritual things even above his own family. Now, I need to insert something for the 1%—there are people, who, because they are teenagers who are saved and still filled with rebellion, reject the rules of their mother and father and think that this is some great spiritual move—it is not! There are those who are lawless and oppose the law, as though this is some great moral stand that they are taking—wrong! There are others who are self-righteous and/or self-centered, and, always having a beef with their parents, believe that their separation is a great leap forward in the spiritual realm—absolutely wrong! If you have a parent or parents who are unsaved and you turn them off because you are some sort of a self-righteous religious fanatic and everyone hates to be around you for Thanksgiving, then keep your mouth shut and don’t tell anyone that you believe in Christ. Tell them you’re a Hindoo or a Buddhist. Do not embarrass the Lord Jesus Christ with your impertinence and with you spiritual immaturity. Now, there is a true doctrine of placing spiritual things above family, and the person who is able to do that correctly is a person with a great deal of doctrine, and one who is quite spiritually mature. They can handle priorities without appearing like a complete asshole to those around them. Remember, if people know that you are a believer in Jesus Christ then you are His witness here on earth. It does not do anyone any good for you to put them off in your belligerence and ignorant arrogance under the guise of putting Christ first. We did see an example of this in Ex. 32 where the Levites had to draw their swords and slay the idolaters: **Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Whoever is for Y^ehowah, to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him. And he said, to them, “Thus proclaims Y^ehowah, the God of Israel, ‘Every man put his sword upon his thigh and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.’ “ So the sons of Levi did as Moses had instructed them, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day** (Ex. 32:26–29).

You may look upon that as being a bit extreme and my recommendation is **not** to try to learn this Scripture and then live it, as, at the beginning of any change of dispensation, the penalty for apostasy tended to be quite harsh (e.g., Annanias and Saphira in Acts 5). In some ways, we get off a little easier because we are not under such

⁴²⁸ As some of you are readers, you will no doubt discover the alternate explanation that Simeon is included in the blessing of Judah and Joshua 19:1 and Judges 1:3 are both quoted to support this. Although this is reasonable, Joshua and Judges were written after this portion of Deuteronomy and the fact that Simeon would be a part of Judah was not known at the time of the blessing of Moses. Plus, we lose the marvelous analogy in this alternate interpretation.

a harsh and quick example of penalty; however, because of this, apostasy is rampant in this generation of the church. Out of the thousands upon thousands of churches in these United States, only a relative handful are not drenched with apostasy.

The last couple of lines of this verse are a bit difficult. The **he does not know his sons** goes along with the previous few lines; he is an individual Levite who places God's Word before his own family. However, the *they* in the next two lines **for they took responsibility for Your Word and they kept Your covenant** refer to the tribe of Levi in general. **So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of Y^ehowah, and to all the elders of Israel** (Deut. 31:9).

“They will be caused to continue teaching Your ordinances to Jacob and Your Law to Israel; they will place incense in Your nose and whole [burnt offerings] upon Your altar.

Deut. 33:10

“They will be caused to continue teaching Your ordinances to Jacob and Your Law to Israel; they will place incense before You and whole burnt offerings upon Your altar

The *they* are the Levites and the 2nd person singular refers to God. What is being said here is no great revelation. It merely describes their responsibilities. This is the first time where a case could be made in the Law for the Levites as a whole to handle the sacrifices, although this verse would not be enough to substantiate that position, as the family of Aaron are Levites. Also realize that the first and greatest teacher of the nation Israel was the Levite, Moses, who is not even in Aaron's line but is Aaron's brother. However, in the long term, the line of Aaron was responsible to teach God's laws. **Y^ehowah then spoke to Aaron, saying, “...Make a distinction between the holy and the profane and between the unclean and the clean, and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Y^ehowah has spoken to them through Moses.”** (Lev. 10:8,10b–11). This grave responsibility was not adhered to: **“For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for his is the messenger of Y^ehowah of the armies. But, as for you, you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi,”** says Y^ehowah of the armies (Mal. 2:7–8).

One of the other responsibilities of the Aaronic priesthood was to burn incense to God and to offer sacrifices to Him: **“And Aaron will burn fragrant incense on it; he will burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. And when Aaron causes the lamps to ascend between the evenings, he will burn incense—perpetual incense before Y^ehowah throughout your generations.”** (Ex. 30:7–8; see also Lev. 16:11–13). **“And the sons of Aaron, the priests will put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. Then Aaron's sons, the priests, will arrange the pieces, the head, and the suet over the wood which is on the fire that is on the altar. Its entrails, however, and its he legs, will wash with water. And the priest will offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to Y^ehowah.”** (Lev. 1:7–9; see also Psalm 51:19).

In this verse, at the very end, we have the word *kālîyl* (כָּלִיֵּל) [pronounced *kaw-LEEL*], which means *the whole, the entirety*. It is not adjoined in this verse by *burnt offering* and is rendered in some Bibles as *holocaust*. We also find this word in Judges 20:40. Strong's #3632 BDB #483.

Originally, because of the heartless violence of the men Levi and Simeon, Jacob had said, **“Simeon and Levi are brothers; their swords are implements of violence. Let my soul not enter into their council; let not my glory be united with their assembly, because, in their anger, they killed a man, and in their self will, they hamstrung oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is implacable. I will disperse them in Jacob and I will scatter them in Israel.”** (Gen. 49:5–7). Imperceptibly in this verse, there was a move from Jacob speaking to his sons and their families to God speaking through Jacob, predicting a scattering of Simeon and Levi throughout Israel, just as God would scatter the Jew throughout the world. In the case of Levi, this was turned into blessing, as Levi became the tribe without a stake in the physical world, but with their hope in the world to come while in service to God here on earth. Simeon will not be mentioned by Moses in these blessings. And, as has been

mentioned, Simeon never received his own property but was scattered throughout Judah. Now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of Levi** and the **Doctrine of Simeon—not finished yet!**

**“Bless his substance, O Y^ehowah
and you will be pleased with the work of
his [two] hands.**

**Pierce the loins of those rising [against]
him
and of those hating him
so they will not rise.”**

Deut. 33:11

**“Bless his substance, O Y^ehowah
and you accept the work of his hands.
Crush the loins of his adversaries
and of those who hate him
so that they will not rise against him.”**

What Moses asks for God to bless is Levi's chayil (כַּיִל) [pronounced *KHAH-yil*], which means *strength, efficiency, substance, wealth, army*. The KJV adds the renderings *host, able, riches, worthily, virtuous, valour, valiant, activity, power*. *Substance* appears to be a good rendering for this verse, its first occurrence in Gen. 34:29 and Num. 31:9. *Army* (or, *host*) seems apropos for Gen. 47:6 Ex. 14:4, 9, 17 15:4. Strong's #2428 BDB #298.

Moses also asks God to do the following with the work of Levi's [two] hands: râtsâh (רָצָה) [pronounced *raw-TSAWH*] means *to be acceptable, to be pleased with, to enjoy*. Owens indicates that it literally means *to be satisfied with a payment*; however, that does not appear to be the way it is used in the Bible. *To be pleased with* seems to be the primary meaning, as found in Gen. 33:10 Deut. 33:11 Job 34:9 Prov. 16:7. Strong's #7521 BDB #953. The work of the Levites' hands is their service to God. [May He remember all your meal offerings and find your burnt offering acceptable](#) (Psalm 20:3; see also Psalm 51:19).

Then we have the word mâchats (מָחַט) [pronounced *MAW-khats*], which BDB gives the meanings *smite through, wound severely, shatter*; the KJV adds the renderings *smite, pierce, dipped*. Mâchats is only found 13 times in the Old Testament. This word can function without an object (Deut. 32:39 Psalm 68:23) or with an object (Num. 24:17 Job 26:12 Psalm 18:38). I liked the rendering *crush* (Owens), but it does not work in Num. 24:8. Strong's #4272 BDB #563. The word loins is generally associated with the strength of a person (Job 40:16 Prov. 31:17). Strong's #4975 BDB #608

Although *adversaries* seemed good at first, Young renders the object of the previous verb as *withstanders* and Rotherham uses *them who rise up against him*. The word is Qal active participle of qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means *to stand, to rise up* (Gen. 37:7 Ex. 33:10 Prov. 28:12). Rotherham's rendering seems best, although *against* is inferred (this has a 3rd masculine singular suffix). Strong's #6965 BDB #877. As Keil and Delitzsch point out, these are not just the enemies like Korah, Dathan and Abirim, but of anyone who opposes the Levites. I have one complaint about the prayer of Moses—he should have prayed about the enemies from within. By the time we get to our Lord's day, the priests have become corrupt with legalism. Satan attacks from the inside. I have made some strong statements about the apostasy of the church today. I realize that some think that their church or organization is just the best in the world because they are constantly praising God, they are nonjudgmental, they all got the ghost and speak in tongues, they drink wine for communion, and they have no pastor but their meetings consist of whatever God has for them (people just stand up and yell stuff). Where do you think Satan attacks from? He does always send a detachment of storm troopers into a religious service to shut them down; he sends a detachment of demons who attach themselves to that particular body of believers and fill them with the doctrines of demons and present them with lying wonders. The authority which God's sets up in the pastor is abrogated or the pastor himself does not do his job and what we have is absolute chaos.

The last line is difficult. We have the simple min preposition (*out of, away from, from*) combined with the verb to rise (again). BDB claims that min is used here as a conjunction,⁴²⁹ poetically standing in for the word *lest*. Rotherham and Young apparently agree with their renderings (Rotherham: [...that they rise not again](#); Young: [...that they rise not!](#)). In the primary meanings in BDB, *so that not* is given for mîn; however, that would appear

⁴²⁹ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, p. 583.

to work only prior to a verb (as it is here). In fact, throughout the entire Old Testament, this is the only place where *min* precedes a finite verb (usually, it precedes an infinitive). Strong's #4480 BDB #577

We don't have predictions in this verse; this verse is simply a prayer for God to bless the Levites and protect them.

**Concerning Benjamin, he said,
"Beloved of Y^ehowah,
he tabernacles in safety by Him,
a One covering upon him all the day
and between His shoulders he has
tabernacled."**

Deut. 33:12

**Concerning Benjamin, he said,
"Beloved of Y^ehowah,
he pitches a tent in safety by Him,
the One protecting him all the day;
and he has pitched a tent between His
shoulders."**

With this verse, we leave the prayer of Moses to God, the intercession on behalf of the tribes of Judah and Levi, and Moses speaks of God in the third person. We do not find the jussive either (similar to the optative mood in the Greek; that is, *I wish*). Benjamin, recall was the second favorite son of Jacob, who made the mistake of having favorites. However, Benjamin was also beloved by God, as was the tribe. The verb which means *to tabernacle* also means *to pitch a tent*. Strong's #7931 BDB #1014. In the KJV, it reads: *shall dwell in safety by him*. The phrase *by Him* is found in the Massoretic text, but not in the Samaritan or the Septuagint. Pitching a tent *between his shoulders* refers to the strength of the back (see 1Sam. 17:6). The verb *to pitch a tent, to tabernacle* occurs twice in this verse; first where Benjamin is the subject and the verb is in the imperfect. However, the second case is a bit more difficult. You see, we have the Qal active participle of the one rendered *covering*, a word which occurs only once in the Old Testament. However, it is closely related to the noun for *covering* so that we know its meaning. This verb, as it is in the participle, so it could function as the subject of the next verb, rather than as another verb. A verb in the participial form often acts as a noun which takes on the next verb. However, not only does that confuse the issue (that is, God would be pitching a tent between the shoulders of Benjamin) but the intervening conjunction indicates that we are working with a new clause for the last line. *Tabernacle* in the last line is in the perfect tense, but Benjamin is again the subject. I believe the change in the subject is indicated by the participle in the middle line and the finite⁴³⁰ forms of the verb *tabernacle* in the lines which sandwich the middle line. Benjamin is the subject in lines one and three, and God is the subject of line two. This is indicated syntactically by the verb tenses. It is more of a happy coincidence that the verb for which Benjamin is the subject is finite and the verb for which God is the subject is infinite (*finite* and *infinite* are English descriptors of these verbs). "You will cross the Jordan and live in the land which Y^ehowah your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around so that you live in security." (Deut. 12:10). One might say that this is fulfilled when Benjamin and Judah both returned from exile in larger numbers than when they were removed.

Surprisingly enough, when Rotherham translated this verse, he again moved from a very literal rendering to a very poetical one: "The beloved of Yahweh shall settle down securely, with one to throw a shade over him all the day long, Yea between his shoulders hath he found rest." In this verse we have divine protection and we have Benjamin pitching a tent between the shoulders of God, not unlike a child being carried upon the back of his father: "And in the wilderness where you saw how Y^ehowah your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked, until you came to this place." (Deut. 1:31). This is much like the baby eagle being caught by its mother as it attempts its first flight (Ex. 19:4 Deut. 32:11). This is somewhat predictive, as God was the strength of Benjamin, and Benjamin dwelt on the border of Judah, which was where the tabernacle, God's dwelling place, was located. We will examine the **Doctrine of Benjamin** in Judges 20:38.

⁴³⁰ A finite verb in the Hebrew is a verb in the perfect, imperfect or imperative tense; this is because the verb has person and number (it is *confined*, you might say). However, infinite verbs, those which are participles or infinitives, do not have person and number.

**And concerning Joseph, he said,
“Y^ehowah blessing his land
from a choice gift of heavens,
from dew
and from deep crouching beneath.**

Deut. 33:13

**And concerning Joseph, he said,
“Y^ehowah will bless his land
with the choice rain from the heavens,
with the dew
and with the waters from the deep.**

Mîn, a preposition which generally denotes separation, is a tough preposition at times, as we saw in v. 11. However, in this verse, we find it three times, translated *with* and *of* by Owens; *by* by Young and *with* by Rotherham. Isaac gave a similar blessing to Jacob (thinking it was Esau): *Then his father Isaac said to him, “Please come close and kiss me, my son.” So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, “See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which Y^ehowah has blessed. Now may God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and an abundance of grain and new wine.”* (Gen. 27:26–28). What we are speaking of in this verse is water; the choice gift from above is rain; dew is the water on the surface of the earth; and the last phrase refers to the water in the seas. All three types of water are necessary for prosperity in an agricultural society and all three waters speak of blessing and prosperity in an agricultural society.

**“And from choicest of fruits (of) the
sun,
and from choicest of thrusting forth of
months.**

Deut. 33:14

**“And from the choicest of fruits of the
sun,
and from the choicest of the yield of the
growing season.**

In v. 14, we have no little disagreement as to how it should be rendered:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	From the precious things of the fruits of the sun, and from the precious yeild of the months.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i> KJV	And with the precious fruits of the sun,—And with the precious yield of the moons; And for the precious fruits <i>brought forth</i> by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon.
NIV	...with the best the sun brings forth and the finest the moon can yield;
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	And by precious things—fruits of the sun, And by precious things—cast forth by the moons.

Twice in this verse and once in the previous verse we have the noun meged (מֵגֵד) [pronounced *MEH-ged*], which is found only in Deut. 33:13–16 and SOS 4:13, 16 7:13.* This word means *excellent, choice* and is always mentioned with respect to gifts or to nature. Strong's #4022 BDB #550.

The final noun is the word yerah (יָרַח) [pronounced *YEH-rakh*] and it can mean *moons* or *months*. The reason it has two so divergent meanings is that each new moon meant a new month. When spoken of in the plural, it is not a reference to several different moons but to several different months which have gone by, each signified by a new moon. There is no indication here that the plants grew because of the moon but because several moons, or months, had passed. When in the plural (as it is here), this can only refer to *months*; however, when in the singular, context determines whether this means *moon* (Gen. 37:9 Deut. 4:19 17:3) or *month* (Deut. 21:13 1Kings 6:37–38). Strong's #3391 & 3394 BDB #437. What we have is a poetical play on words. *The precious things of the sun; the precious things of the moons (months)*.

What Moses desires for the tribe of Joseph is the *greatest possible abundance of earthly blessing, and a vigorous manifestation of power in conflict with the nations*⁴³¹.

⁴³¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1013.

“And from head of mountains of antiquity and from choicest of hills of everlasting;

Deut. 33:15

“And from the chief products of the mountains of antiquity and from the choicest produce of hills of everlasting;

The word for *head* can also mean *chief, choicest*. Strong's #7218 BDB #910. The last word in the first line is *qedem* (קֶדֶם) [pronounced *KEH-dem*] and it means *eastward, east, ancient, antiquity, front, aforeside*. The connection between these words is that the beginning of things is thought to be in the east, as that is where the sun rises and that is where civilization began (although east is obviously a relative term). That which is the beginning is also *old, antiquitous* and *ancient*. Strong's #6924 BDB #869. Poetically, we are speaking of spiritual benefits here. Moses and the Law were often associated with climbing up mountains. Even though the Israelites were enjoined not to place dens of idolatry in the high places, still this is where Moses went at first to receive the Law. These everlasting mountains may not be that everlasting: **He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, the ancient hills sank down—His ways are everlasting** (Habak. 3:6).

“And from choicest of earth and its fulness and grace of Him dwelling out from a bush. Let it come for a head of Joseph and for a crown of a dedicated one of his brothers.

Deut. 33:16

“And from the choicest of the earth and its fulness and grace of Him Who dwells outside the bush. Let it come for the head of Joseph and for the crown of the dedicated one of his brothers

Because of his marvelous beginning, Moses has spent a great deal of time with Joseph and, therefore, the two tribes of Joseph. Again, these are not predictions, as we had seen with Jacob at the end of Genesis, but blessings with which Moses blessed these tribes, asking for these things on their behalf.

The first manifestation of which we are aware of God to Moses was in Gen. 3:2–4: **And the angel of Y^ehowah appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, “I must turn aside now and see this great sight—why the bush is not burned up.” When Y^ehowah saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”** Jesus Christ is the one Who first met Moses as a burning bush but now dwells out apart from the bush (this is our preposition of separation *mîn*). For those few who stand apart from the general tribe of Joseph, those who are heads and those who are dedicated or consecrated, Moses prays for these blessings.

Joseph was the second youngest son of Jacob and Jacob's favorite, so his brothers were jealous. However, he was to be placed over his brothers in authority. Joseph had a dream which indicated this, causing his brothers to say: **“Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?”** (Gen. 37:8b). Moses prays for the continuation of this rulership (which does not mean that it will come to pass).

“His first-born bull [was] his splendor; and horns of wild buffalo—his horns—[was] with them; He will push together peoples [to] ends of earth [or, land] and they [are] ten thousands of Ephraim and they [are] thousands of Manasseh.”

Deut. 33:17

“His first-born bull was his splendor; and horns of wild buffalo—his horns—was with them; He will push the peoples together to ends of earth and they are ten thousands of Ephraim and they are thousands of Manasseh.”

The sacrifices stand for Jesus Christ and the honor of Joseph is Jesus Christ. *His* refers to Joseph and his first-born was Ephraim. This requires a little explaining, as the first-born of Joseph was really Manasseh (Gen. 41:51–52). However, Jacob placed Ephraim before Manasseh, blessing and raising Ephraim as though he were the first-born (Gen. 48:10–20). Therefore, the horns of a wild ox (or, water buffalo) is Manasseh (this isn't a unicorn as is translated in the KJV because we have the plural of horns and the singular of the name of the animal). The horns of the wild buffalo might be his first line of defense and the buffalo himself is a powerful animal. Scofield, the master of abbreviation, wrote: *The words "horn" and "horns" (O.T., qeren; N.T. keras) here are used in Scripture both literally and figuratively. In the latter sense, at least three meanings appear: strength in general (Deut. 33:17 Psalm 22:3); arrogant pride (Psalm 75:4–5); and political and military power (Dan. 8:20–21).*⁴³² *"Those who contend with Y^ehowah will be shattered; against them, He will thunder in the heavens. Y^ehowah will punish the ends of the earth and He will give authority to His King and He will exalt the horn of His anointed One."* (1Sam. 2:10). The power and might of the horns of a wild buffalo has previously been associated with God bringing Israel out of Egypt. *"God brings them out of Egypt; He is for them like the horns of the wild buffalo."* (Num. 23:22). When we come across this name again in Job 39, we will look at it more carefully. Interestingly enough, the word for *push* we have seen before also related to animals. In the early portion of the Law, in Ex. 21:28–32, which deals with the goring by an ox, the word for *gore* is the same as the word here for *push*. Where this verse reads that it will push people together, this means that Israel will be pushed out of the land as a group throughout the world. *"Because you push with side and with shoulder and you thrust at all the weak with your horns until you have scattered them abroad."* (Ezek. 34:21). We find this same word in Psalm 44:5. Strong's #5055 BDB #618. It won't be just one Israelite leaving here and another there. This is a small portion of the blessing of Moses which is partially prophetic—the tribe of Joseph will be spread throughout the world and Ephraim will be much larger than Manasseh. That's interesting as the tribe of Manasseh was almost twice the size of the tribe of Ephraim at the second census. We should now examine the **Doctrines of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim—not finished yet!**

**And concerning Zebulun, he said,
"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,
and Issachar in your tents.**

Deut. 33:18

**And concerning Zebulun, he said,
"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,
and rejoice, Issachar, in your tents.**

Moses lumps together the two sons of Leah, Zebulun and Issachar. He also mentioned the younger Zebulun first just as Jacob had in Gen. 49:13. What we have here is a Hebrew parallelism where success in both work and production (going out) and home life (in your tents) are both ascribed to both parties. That is, the *going out* and the *in your tents* are parallel concepts, like the phrase *sitting* in contrast to *going out and coming in* (2Kings 19:27 Psalm 139:2 Isa. 37:28); and the whole is to be properly applied to both parties. *This peculiarity, which is founded in the very nature of poetical parallelism, which is to individualize the thought by distributing it into parallel members, has been entirely overlooked by all the commentators who have given a historical interpretation to each.*⁴³³ At no time during the history of Israel do we have an indication that there were great blessings *abroad* for Zebulun or Issachar; however, in 1934, the Haifa bay one the great harbors of the Mediterranean, with commerce affecting the whole world⁴³⁴.

**"Peoples will proclaim a mountain;
They will slaughter there righteous
sacrifices
for [the] abundance of the seas they
suck
and hidden things hidden of the sand."**

Deut. 33:19

**"The Peoples will proclaim a mountain;
They will slaughter there righteous
sacrifices
for the abundance of the seas they suck
and hidden treasures of the sand."**

⁴³² *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; C.I. Scofield, D.D.; Oxford University Press, ©1967, p. 256. I've added an additional Scriptural reference or two.

⁴³³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1014.

⁴³⁴ *The Amplified Bible*; © 1965; p. 256.

In glancing at a couple of other translations, I had better justify this. Let me give you a literal rendering with the appropriate grammatical notation: **Peoples** (masculine plural noun) **mountain** (masculine singular noun) [continue to] **proclaim** (or, call, summon, read—3rd masculine plural, Qal imperfect] **there** [adverb]. Although several translations have Zebulun and Issachar summoning peoples to a mountain, there is not the untranslated Hebrew notation of a direct object prior to the word *peples* and there is no preposition prior to *mountain*. It makes more sense for *peples* to be the subject of the verb. **Peoples a mountain will proclaim there** is the most literal translation we can give this.

First off, this is not a reference to a particular mountain, but to the *mountain of Your inheritance* as Moses used to refer to the land of Canaan in Ex. 15:17: “**You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, the place, O Y^ehowah, which You have made for Your dwelling; the sanctuary, O Y^ehowah, which Your hands have established.**” Or, **Great is Y^ehowah and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, His holy mountain** (Psalm 48:1; see also Psalm 2:6). *Peoples*, in the plural, does not refer to the Israelites, but to the *nations* or *Gentiles*. The Gentiles will recognize and vigorously proclaim the spiritual prominence of Israel, wherein they (Zebulun and Issachar) will offer righteous sacrifices. **And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of Y^ehowah to the houe of the God of Jacob so that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.” For the Word will go forth from Zion and the word of Y^ehowah from Jerusalem** (Isa. 2:3). **Offer righteous sacrifices and trust in Y^ehowah** (Psalm 4:5; see also Psalm 51:19).

Although the latter phrases seem to refer to the wealth and abundance which will belong to Zebulun and Issachar through shipping and receiving, neither tribe appeared to border the coastline of the Great Sea. The phrasing simply refers to the treasures of the sea and to the treasures under the earth. However, Barnes still points to literal fulfillment in time, saying that *Zebulun possessed a commodious sea-shore and the fisheries of the Lake of Tiberias; and was therefore to thrive by commerce, and to rejoice in his “going out,” i.e. in his mercantile interprises. Issachar possessed a fertile inland district, and would therefore dwell at home and prosper in agriculture.*⁴³⁵ Both Barnes and Rotherham suggest the hidden treasures of the sand is glass. Murex, the marine gastropod, from whence comes that royal purple dye, is also found in this area. However, an even greater fulfillment of this, and more in keeping with **sucking out the abundance of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand** certainly sounds a great deal like the mining for oil in that land. As God’s Word says, **“Remember the former things of long past, for I am God, and there is not other; God, and there is no one like Me. I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not yet been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’”** (Isa. 46:9–10).

In addition to this, what Moses is petitioning for in his blessing is for these two tribes to be blessed from the riches and treasures which proceed from land and sea, which will be fulfilled for all the tribes of Israel in the Millennium. **Then you will see and be radiant and your heart will tremble and be enlarged because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you; the wealth of nations will come to you. A multitude of camels will cover you—the young camels of Midian and Ephah. All those from Sheba will come; they will bring gold and frankincense and they will bear god news of the praises of Y^ehowah...You will also suck the milk of nations and you will suck the breast of kings. Then you will know that I, Y^ehowah, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob**⁴³⁶ (Isa. 60:5–6, 16) **“Then they will bring all your brothers from all the nations as a grain offering to Y^ehowah on horses, in chariots, in litters on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,”** says Y^ehowah, **“Just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of Y^ehowah.”** (Isa. 60:20). **“And I will shake all the nations and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house with glory,”** says Y^ehowah **of the armies** (Haggai 2:7; see also Isa. 66:10–12 Zech. 14:14). Let’s look at the **Doctrines of Zebulun and Issachar—not finished yet!**

⁴³⁵ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 341.

⁴³⁶ An important aside here: the implication of the verse quoted from Isaiah is that previous to this time to come, the millennium, the Israelites did not recognize their God; they do not know Who their Savior is. Although some Jews today do not care for this implication, here it is in their own Bible.

**And concerning Gad, he said,
 “Blessed be the One enlarging Gad;
 like a lioness, he dwells
 and he tears an arm and also crown.**

Deut. 33:20

**And concerning Gad, he said,
 “Blessed be the One gives to Gad a
 spacious territory;
 like a lioness, Gad lies down
 and he tears an arm and also crown.**

The One Who enlarges Gad is Jesus Christ. Enlarging means that Gad is given a great territory in which he is blessed and prospered and in which he expands his territory. They, like Manasseh and Reuben, had almost unlimited room for growth. Since Gad is on the eastern border of Israel, he would be the first line of defense against a foreign invasion, his skills in war were to always be honed. Therefore, he is compared to a lion, tearing off the arm of an enemy and removing their crown, which signifies dominance.

**“Then he will see a first portion for
 himself
 for there a commander’s portion having
 been hidden [or, covered].
 Then he will come [to the] heads of
 people;
 he will execute decrees of Y^howah
 and His commands with Israel.”**

Deut. 33:21

**“Then he will see a first portion for
 himself
 for there a commander’s portion he will
 set aside in reserve
 Then he will come to the heads of
 people;
 he will execute decrees of Y^howah
 and His commands with Israel.”**

Not surprisingly, there are a wide variety of interpretations given to this verse. However, the explanation is quite simple. Moses is merely recording what has already occurred. The Gaddites saw the land which they wanted and then set it aside for themselves. Recall that Reuben and Gad both asked for the first land which was conquered (Num. 31–32). One primary way an army got paid was through the plunder which they got from the nation they overthrow. The commander of the armed forces could hide away the best of the spoil for himself. This is what Gad did. Along with Reuben, Gad looked at the land which they had just taken from Bashan and decided, *this is great; this is what we want*. However, Moses made it clear that they could not choose this land and then just peel off and settle in it. They had to first help the rest of Israel root out the Canaanites and to conquer the Land of Promise (Num. 32:29–33 34:14 Deut. 3:12–21). So Gad went into the land which they chose and settled their women and children there (Num. 32:33–42), and then returned to the leaders of Israel to engage in war with the indigenous population of the land of Canaan (Joshua 4:12 22:1–4). Here, from personal observation, Moses has seen that Gad is self-centered—in war, he sees the best portion of spoil and he hides it for himself. Gad first sees that the better portion has been set aside for himself—a commander’s portion—and then he does the decrees of God. Let’s examine here the **Doctrine of Gad—not finished yet!**

**And concerning Dan, he said,
 “Dan [is] a lion’s whelp;
 he leaps from the Bashan.”**

Deut. 33:22

**And concerning Dan, he said,
 “Dan [is] a lion’s whelp;
 he leaps from Bashan.”**

With the final three tribes, Moses tends to say very little. He will devote a couple of lines each to Dan, Naphtali and to Asher. In this verse, there is quite a contrast between Jacob’s blessing and the blessing of Moses. Jacob called Dan a snake in the road which bites the heel of horse, causing the rider to fall. The impression here is a ferocity in warfare. We see a certain stream of consciousness. Moses, in blessing Gad, calls to mind the early conflict of Israel with Bashan, giving the tribe of Dan much credit, and saying that the Danites emerged from Bashan a lion’s whelp; that is, their skills in war became very apparent. In their conquering of the land of Bashan, Keil and Delitzsch theorize that the caves in eastern Bashan and the woody western slopes of Jebel were the home of dangerous lions which would leap out and attack, a danger to the population of that area and to their herd (some of this is implied in SOS 4:8). Ezekial had this to say about Israel in general as compared to the lion: **“As for you, take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel and say, ‘What was your mother? A lioness among lions! She lay down among young lions; she reared her cubs. When she brought up one of her cubs, he became a lion**

and he learned to tear prey—he devoured men.’” (Ezek. 19:1–3). Let’s now look at the **Doctrine of Dan—not finished yet!**

**And concerning Naphtali, he said,
“O Naphtali, satisfied with grace
and filled [with the] blessing of
Y^ehowah; posses lake and south.”**

Deut. 33:23

**And concerning Naphtali, he said,
“O Naphtali, satisfied with grace
and filled [with the] blessing of
Y^ehowah; posses lake and south.”**

At first, this verse seems to make perfect sense, blessing Naphtali to where they would be satisfied with grace and the blessings of God. The last line is a bit obscure. Naphtali did possess the land west of Galilee, but they did not live in the south, but they occupied the north central section of Canaan. However, this is not a prediction but the imperative. It does not read *you will possess a lake and south*; it reads *take a lake and south*. Just because they did not does not negate this verse. Recall that much of this is a prayer on behalf of the tribes whereas much of Jacob’s blessing was prophetic. Barnes’ Notes, on the other hand, allows for the south to stand for a sunny area. At one time this was *a well-watered district near the springs of the Jordan. It contained some of the grandest scenery and some of the most fertile land in Palestine. Josephus speaks of the shore of Gennesaret as “an earthly paradise;” and Porter describes it as “the garden of Palestine.” The modern name for this district, “land of good tidings,” is significant.*⁴³⁷ Obviously what is next is the **Doctrine of Naphtali—not finished yet!**

**And concerning Asher, he said,
“Blessed out from sons [is] Asher;
Let him be accepted of his brothers
and let him dip in oil his foot.**

Deut. 33:24

**And concerning Asher, he said,
“Blessed out from sons [is] Asher;
Let him be accepted of his brothers
and let him dip in oil his foot.**

This is somewhat of a reversal of what we found on the mountains of blessing and cursing. In those mountains, Asher was one of those on the cursing side. Here, Moses is asking for God to bless him above the other sons of Jacob. Asher means *prosperous* and beginning with *blessed* is a confirmation of this. In terms of blessing, Moses is saying that Asher is blessed beyond the other sons of Jacob. As Keil and Delitzsch said, this *does not mean the beloved among his brethren, acceptable to his brethren, but the one who enjoyed the favour of the Lord, i.e., the one peculiarly favoured by the Lord.*⁴³⁸ The dipping one’s foot in oil generally refers back to the primitive method of reading over olives as one would do to mush them to get the oil out—a very primitive olive-press. The olives have to be quite ripe in order to remove the oil this way. This would be an indication of prosperity. Oil also speaks of the Holy Spirit throughout Scripture and Moses could be petitioning for Asher to be blessed with guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit (as the believers in the Old Testament did not automatically have the Holy spirit). Asher’s land was fertile throughout.

McGee mentions that there is a pipeline for oil which runs through northern Israel, through the land of Asher. I don’t know that that was what was intended here, but it is an interesting observation nonetheless. *The Amplified Bible* mentions that the land of Asher resembles a foot, or the shape of a leg and a foot, and mentions that the Great International Iraq-Petroleum Enterprise opened a pipeline in 1935 which crosses the “toe” of this foot and the oil is brought nearly 1000 miles across the sands bringing a million gallons of oil a day to the Haifa harbor.⁴³⁹ Again, whether this was the gist of this verse, is debatable, but a definite point of interest.

**“Your bolts [will be] iron and bronze;
and as your days your strength [or,
rest].**

Deut. 33:25

**“Your bolts will be iron and bronze;
and as your days continue, so your
strength [or, rest] continue as well.**

⁴³⁷ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. II, p. 342.

⁴³⁸ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1017.

⁴³⁹ *The Amplified Bible*; ©1965, p. 257.

In order to enjoy prosperity, a land must have security from the enemies from without. The word translated *sandles, shoes, bars* is a word found only once in the Old Testament. The core letters of this word (נ ל ׁ) match the core letters of the word for *sandal*; however, the word for bolt begins with ׁ, as does this word; therefore, this is most likely a house door bolt. Furthermore, there were no iron or brass fastenings on the shoes or sandals of the people of that time. As Keil and Delitzsch point out, even Goliath, who was clothed from head to foot in brass and iron, did not have brass or iron shoes. Only the Romans later had nails in the soles of their shoes.⁴⁴⁰ Strong's #4515 BDB #653. This would indicate security. This would be supported by such passages as Psalm 147:12–13: *Praise Y^ehowah, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For He has strengthened the bars of your gates; He has blessed your sons within you.* Also see Neh. 3:3 7:3. Barnes supposes that their land was rich with iron and copper, which agrees with Deut. 8:9, which reads: “...a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper.” (Moses was describing the blessings associated with the Land of Promise).

With regards to the line, the *days being their strength*, it is reasonable to suppose that this phrase is a saying or an idiom which asks their strength to continue for as long as they are alive. The Word of God is their strength and their length of days in the land (Deut. 4:40 32:47). Our basic problem with this verse is that the word translated *strength* occurs only here, so its meaning is guessed. Others render this word *rest*. The closest word in spelling is the word for *bear* (as in the animal). And finally, we will examine the **Doctrine of Asher—not finished yet!**

Deuteronomy 26	Deuteronomy 27	Deuteronomy 28	Deuteronomy 29	Deuteronomy 30
Deuteronomy 31	Deuteronomy 32	Deuteronomy 33	Deuteronomy 34	
Introduction	Kukis Homepage	Exegesis	Doctrines	Pentateuch

Moses Concludes That Israel Is Blessed of God

**“None like the God, O Jeshurun,
riding heavens in your help
and in His majesty, skies.**

Deut. 33:26

**“There is none like the God, O
Jeshurun,
Who rides the heavens to help you—
even the skies are within His majesty.**

The first line could read: *None like the God of Jeshurun*. That is, it is unclear whether Jeshurun is being addressed or whether God is in the construct state (it doesn't really have a construct state). The construct reading is the position of the NASB, NIV and Young. Those who read Jeshurun as a vocative are Keil and Delitzsch, Owen and Rotherham. Personally, if I don't have a reason, I will abide by the majority rule of Keil and Delitzsch, Rotherham and Young. Quite often, all three [groups] agree. However, that little line, *in your help* tells us that this is a vocative addressed to Israel (Jeshurun) and that Y^ehowah has chosen them out of all the other nations of the world to ride the heavens to them to help them. Furthermore, since the previous twenty verses all addressed the blessings of the various tribes, there would need to be some sort of poetic break to indicate that Moses was no longer speaking to individual tribes. Therefore, he addresses Israel as a whole. Furthermore, this is in keeping with what Moses has said before: “*To you it was shown that you might know that Y^ehowah, He is God—there is no other besides Him.*” (Deut. 4:35). “*Who is like You among the gods, O Y^ehowah? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?*” (Ex. 15:11). *There is no one like You among the gods, O Y^ehowah; nor are there any works like Yours* (Psalm 86:8; see Jer. 10:6).

The second two lines poetically describe the majesty of Jesus Christ, the God of Israel, as does Psalm 68:33–34: *To Him who rides upon the highest heavens, which are from ancient times; observe, He speaks forth with His voice, a mighty voice. Ascribe strength to God; His majesty is over Israel and His strength is in the skies* (see 2Sam. 22:10–11 Psalm 18:9–10 68:4 104:3–4 as well). God does not have to physically move from one place to another—this is an anthropomorphism. God is omniscient and all that is in the universe is His. “*Observe, to Y^ehowah your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is in it.*” (Deut. 10:14).

⁴⁴⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 1018.

**“A refuge, God of eternity
and underneath, arms of everlasting
then He casts out from your faces an
adversary;
then he says, ‘Destroy.’**

Deut. 33:27

**“A secure dwelling place [or, refuge] is
the eternal God for you
and underneath are the everlasting
arms.
then He casts out before you the
adversary;
then he says, ‘Destroy them!’**

The first word in this verse is $m^{\text{e}} \text{ } \acute{o}n\grave{a}h$ (מַעֲוֶה) [pronounced *m^e-goh-NAWH*] which is a den for animals (Job 37:8 38:40 SOS 4:8). In relationship to people, this means *a place of safety and security, a refuge*. Strong’s #4585 BDB #733. Moses points out to Israel the safety and security of their relationship to the God of the Universe. God is their dwelling place. O Y^ehowah, You have been our refuge in all generations, before the mountains were born or before You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God (Psalm 90:1–2). He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to Y^ehowah, “My refuge⁴⁴¹ and my fortress, my God in whom I trust!” (Psalm 91:1–2). Y^ehowah will also be a stronghold for the oppressed; a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know Your name will place their trust in You, for You, O Y^ehowah, have not forsaken those who seek You (Psalm 9:9–10). God’s eternal nature is testified to throughout Scripture: “Y^ehowah will reign forever and ever.” (Ex. 15:18). Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, Y^ehowah, the creator of the ends of the earth does not become eary or tired; his understanding is inscrutable (Isa. 40:28). For thus proclaims the High and Exalted One, Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, “I dwell on a high and holy place and with a contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.” (Isa. 57:15; see also Gen. 21:33).

As a point of historical interest, this phrase **and underneath are the everlasting arms** has a significance which one would not catch in the English. The Egyptian god, Horus, is pictured in their engravings as hanging upsidedown over the earth with his arms stretched over the earth. In hieroglyphics, Horus is represented by the scarabæus beetle.

A point to remember is that we are always under the scrutiny and under the protection of Jesus Christ. When out of fellowship due to unconfessed sin, we are under discipline and anything could happen. If we are in fellowship, then God is our dwelling place. Moses, saying this to the Israelites, is more meaningful than we realize at the first read, as they have not had a dwelling place for forty years. This means that the greater portion of those who are alive before Moses have never had a permanent dwelling. However, their permanent dwelling is Jesus Christ, the God of Jeshurun. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to Y^ehowah, “My refuge and my fortress—my God in Whom I trust!” (Psalm 91:1–2). Then Y^ehowah will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. And there will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain (Isa. 4:5–6). It is better to take refuge in Y^ehowah than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in Y^ehowah than to trust in politicians (Psalm 118:8–9).

We have in the past two verses a complete envelopment of God of Israel. God is in the heavens above, He is their dwelling place, and beneath them are His everlasting arms. Everlasting arms are a reference to perfect strength which is never exhausted. Along with this is the perfect security of a relationship to the Living God. **Though he falls, he will not be utterly ast down** (Psalm 37:24).

“Carefully observe what I am commanding you this day: look, I am going to drive out the Amorite gefore you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.” (Ex. 34:11). This was fulfilled, as we see in Joshua 24: “And Y^ehowah drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We will also serve Y^ehowah, for He is our God.” See also Deut. 9:3–4. The adversary or enemy spoken of in this verse is not necessarily the indigenous population of Canaan, but is fully applicable to any and all enemies of God, including Satan and his demon forces. Furthermore, we are a *spiritual* Israel, if you will allow, and the Land of Canaan is our world and God casts out Satan from before us. **For God did not spare angels when they sinned,**

⁴⁴¹ The word for *refuge* in this two passages is different from the word in our passage.

but He cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment (2Peter 2:4). This does not mean that we seek out people to exorcise demons from nor does this mean we are on the offensive with respect to demons. We must allow God to work His own work in regards to the demonic forces in this world. The first century gifts of casting out demons were very likely a part of the sign gifts given to those before the establishment of the canon of Scripture.

Finally, with respect to the last phrase, the Israelites were told to make no pacts with the degenerate peoples of the land. “And when Y^ehowah your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you will make no covenant with them and you will show no grace to them.” (Deut. 7:2).

**“So Israel dwells securely, separated
a spring of Jacob
unto a land of grain and wine;
Also his heavens drop down dew.**

Deut. 33:28

**“So Israel dwells in security,
Separated is the spring of Jacob
unto a land of grain and wine;
Furthermore, his heavens drop down
dew.**

There is some confusion as to where the word *alone* (or, *separated, isolated*) belongs. Young, the KJV and the NIV place it with the first line; Rotherham, *The Amplified Bible* and the NASB with the second. Because of God’s interceding protection, Israel lives securely and apart from all other nations. “For how then can it be known that I have found grace in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by You going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?” (Ex. 33:16). Therefore, my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh will also dwell securely (Psalm 16:9). The one who listens to me will live securely and he will be at ease from the dread of evil (Prov. 1:33). Recall Balaam’s blessing: “As I see him from the top of the rocks and I look at him from the hills; observe, a people dwelling apart” (Num. 23:9a). “In his days, Judah will be delivered and Israel will dwell securely. And this is His name by which He will be called: Y^ehowah, our righteousness.” (Jer. 23:6; see also Isa. 14:30 Jer. 33:16).

The word for *spring* and the word for *eye* are the same words; therefore, different translations have gone with different words. “For Y^ehowah your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranites, a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything.” (Deut. 8:7–8a). *Spring* can literally stand for the waters which were abundant in Israel in those days and it can be poetic as well. The *spring* of Jacob is a reference to the progeny of Jacob, who make up the nation Israel. God has placed the progeny (spring) Jacob aside to a land of grain and wine. Recall Isaac’s blessing to Jacob: “Now may God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and an abundance of grand and new wine.” (Gen. 27:28). And notice the moisture in the air—and his (Jacob’s) heavens drop down dew. “Now may God give you of the dew of heavens, and of the fatness of the earth and an abundance of grain and new wine.” (Gen. 27:28). “But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven.” (Deut. 11:11).

**“Your blessings, O Israel;
who [is] like you?
A people delivered [or, saved] by
Y^ehowah,
a shield of your help
and Who [is] a sword of your majesty;
and your adversaries will be defrauded
for you
and you will tread upon their high
places.”**

Deut. 33:29

**“[Considering] your blessings which
God has given you, O Israel;
who is like you?
You are a people delivered and saved
by Y^ehowah,
Who is the shield of your help
and Who is the sword of your majesty;
and your adversaries will be defrauded
on your behalf
and you will stomp down their
idolatrous high places.”**

The whole point of the previous few verses is that there is no nation like Israel on this earth. “[Considering] the blessings which God has given you, O Israel, who is like you?” God had never come to a nation as He came to Israel and the things done for Israel had never been done for a nation before or since. **How blessed are the people who are so situated; how blessed are the people whose God is Y^ehowah!** (Psalm 144:15). One of the most pathetic and distorted doctrines of our times is covenant theology. This theory believes that the church began in Abraham’s tent or at some time far prior to Acts 2. This totally flies against what we find in the Old Testament. It tells the people of God, redeemed Israel, that God was not altogether serious about His promises to Israel, that Israel is really kind of *spiritualized* and not exactly literal, and all of the time spent defining the physical boundaries of Israel and the promises to Israel, that was all sort of *spiritual* language. That is horseshit. One must negate roughly one-third of the entire Old Testament to fall for covenant theology. **“Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it? Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and survived? Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within a nation, by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as Y^ehowah your God did for you in Egypt before you eyes?”** (Deut. 4:32–34). The literal nation of Israel, the literal Jewish people are God’s people and the promises which God has delivered to the, those promises will be fulfilled. Now, of course, this applies only to Israel whose God is Y^ehowah, whose God is the Rock, whose God is the creator of the universe, Jesus Christ. **“For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is Y^ehowah our God whenever we call on Him? Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole Law which I am setting before you today?”** (Deut. 4:7). **“And what nation one nation on the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people and to make a name for Himself, and to do a great thing for You and awesome things for Your land, before Your people whom You have redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, nations and their gods? For You have established for Yourself Your people Israel as Your own people forever and You, O Y^ehowah, have become their God.”** (2Sam. 7:23–24).

When the Hebrews are identified as a people delivered by Y^ehowah, this is more than temporal deliverance from their enemies, but it is eternal salvation as we ourselves receive at the hand of God. **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey** (Zech. 9:9). The Lord, as a shield for Israel, is her defense; and the Lord as the sword of Israel is her offense. **After these things, the word of Y^ehowah came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward will be great.”** (Gen. 15:1). **O Israel, trust in Y^ehowah; He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in Y^ehowah; He is their help and their shield. You who fear [and respect] Y^ehowah, trust in Y^ehowah; He is their help and their shield. Y^ehowah has been mindful of us; He will bless; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless those who fear and respect Y^ehowah, the small together with the great** (Psalm 115:9–13). **I love you, O Y^ehowah, my strength: Y^ehowah is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God and my Rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold** (Psalm 18:1–2; see also Psalm 27:1 33:20 54:4).

The difficult verb is in the sixth line; the Niphal imperfect of *kâchash* (כַּחַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-KHAHSH*], a word which means *to lie, deceive, defraud*. This is the only time it is found in the Niphal stem and Israel is not the subject. The Niphal is the passive stem and the logical subject is the enemies of Israel—they receive the defrauding. Now, back in Lev. 19:11, Israel was forbidden from defrauding her neighbor; however, this is not Israel defrauding her enemies; what is happening is that the enemies of Israel will be defrauded by their own gods and by their own selves. God is a shield and a sword, defense and offense, for His people, Israel, and their enemies are defrauded by their own gods. Just so you are aware, most translators ignored this correct translation and instead rendered this word as *will cower* (NIV), *shall come fawning* (NRSV, Owens⁴⁴²), *come cringing* (Rotherham) *subdued* (Young). *The Amplified Bible* covers all of the bases and renders this word as *shall come fawning and cringing and submit feigned obedience*. The KJV gave the only close to reasonable translation *shall be found liars*. Strong’s #3584 BDB #471.

⁴⁴² Owens’ default setting is the RSV.

Finally, because their enemies have been deceived by their own gods, Israel will trample down all that is related to those gods. [“Then you will drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you and you will destroy all their figured stones and you will destroy all their molten images and you will demolish all their high places.”](#) (Num. 33:52).

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Deuteronomy 34

Deuteronomy 34:1–12

Outline of Chapter 34:

- Vv. 1–4 **Moses is shown the Land of Promise from the top of Pisgah**
- Vv. 5–8 **The death of Moses**
- Vv. 9–12 **Epilogue**

Introduction: Deut. 34 marks the end of the book of Deuteronomy and the death of Moses. One of the most knuckle-headed explanations for this chapter is that Moses wrote it prophetically. There is no reason to think that. As we have previously examined, Joshua had likely listened as the blessing was given by Moses and wrote this down, along with some bare-bones narrative. In this chapter, Joshua likely accompanied Moses to the Mount Nebo. When Aaron went to Mount Hor (not really the name of a mountain; it was just a mountain of a mountain), Moses and Eleazar joined him. Moses removed Aaron's garments and gave them to his son, Eleazar. Then Aaron died on the mountain top. God also called Moses to go up to Mount Nebo and to die there, so it is reasonable to expect that Joshua and Eleazar accompanied him there. Although it is possible that Eleazar recorded this information⁴⁴³, and there are even knuckle-headed theories that Moses wrote it himself in advance of his own death, it is much more plausible that Joshua pieced together the last few chapters, as the official successor to Moses. Throughout Genesis, we noticed a relatively smooth transition from one writer to the next, as appears to be the case here. And whereas the separation between the book of Deuteronomy and the book of Joshua is well-defined in the English, in the original Hebrew, we just had scroll after scroll after scroll and one began where the other finished. Although McGee suggests that this could well be the beginning of the book of Joshua, what we have here is properly an epilogue to the life of Moses, and, even though this is written by Joshua, it properly belongs with the book of Deuteronomy. Finally, there is nothing in Scripture which would preclude Joshua from writing this and there is internal evidence that Joshua was a writer of Scripture in Joshua 24:26–27: [And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the Law of God; and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Y^ehowah. And Joshua said to all the people, "Observe, this stone will be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of Y^ehowah which He spoke with us; therefore, it will be as a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God."](#)

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⁴⁴³ Okay, I admit that this is the easiest way to dismiss a theory—by using name calling. However, there are several phrases in this chapter; e.g., to this day (v. 6), since then, no prophet has arisen (v. 10) which stand in direct opposition to Mosaic authorship of this chapter. Previous evidence; the finishing of the Torah and handing it over to the priests (Deut. 31:24–26) indicates that Moses had thought that he had finished writing Holy Scripture (he hadn't, as his song and his blessing and a recount of one last experience also became a part of the Torah). And finally, the conclusion of this chapter, that no prophet like Moses has arisen and then his great and powerful gifts are enumerated, is uncharacteristic of the writing of Moses. He was not a man to toot his own horn, so to speak. So, that Moses could have written this final chapter is within the realm of possibility; and monkeys might fly out of my butt.

Moses Is Shown the Land of Promise from the Top of Pisgah

Literally:

So then Moses went up from plains of Moab to Mountain of Nebo, a top of the Pisgah which [is] a face of Jericho. Then Y^ehowah showed him all of the land—Gilead as far as Dan.

Deut. 34:1

Smoothen English rendering:

So then Moses went up from plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah which faces Jericho. Then Y^ehowah showed him all of the land—Gilead as far as Dan.

We do not know the meaning of the word *Pisgah*. Interestingly enough, *Pisgah* never occurs apart from qualifying phrases, such as *the top of Pisgah* (Num. 21:20 23:14 Deut. 3:27 34:1), *the slopes⁴⁴⁴ of Pisgah* (Deut. 3:17 4:49 Joshua 12:3 13:20). From this mountain, one can see the Dead Sea (Deut. 3:17 4:49 Joshua 12:3) and the land of Moab below where the Israelites were encamped. This area was given to Reuben in Joshua 13:15–20. When God took Moses to the top of Pisgah and showed him the land, we do have a supernatural occurrence. One cannot see the Mediterranean from anywhere in the trans Jordanian area, so God showed Moses what was not visible. Most scholars have Mount Nebo and Mount Pisgah as two twin peaks connect by a saddle. From the modern Pisgah (Ras es-Siyaghah), one can see the Jordan valley and Mount Hermon⁴⁴⁵.

Gilead is the land on the far east of the Land of Promise, the land east of the Jordan River and the land of Dan is on the coast of the Great Sea, the farthest west. Although Barnes gives several different ideas as to the *Dan* which is meant, e.g., the *Dan* of Gen. 14:14, the use of the names of the other tribes in subsequent verses indicate that the *Dan* we are speaking of is the area which would be inhabited by the tribe of Dan.

Climbing up this mountain was the response of Moses to the order of God. **And Y^ehowah spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, “Go up to this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. Then die on the mount to where you ascend, and be gathered to your people.”** (Deut. 32:48–50a; see also Num. 27:12–13 Deut. 3:27).

What is written here suggests a later writing or a later revision by Joshua, as Dan had not been assigned an area yet. Gilead is the land directly east of the Jordan, bordering Ammon; and Dan would be on the west coast of the Mediterranean. Now, it is possible that God the Holy Spirit inspired Joshua to write Dan; however, once the conquering had been completed, it is reasonable that Joshua made this alteration in the interest of clarity. However, my better determination would be that this portion of Deuteronomy, because of this verse and because of v. 10, was written by Joshua after he had finished conquering the land.

And all of Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and all of a land of Judah as far as sea the western.

Deut. 34:2

And He showed him all of Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and all of the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea.

This verse gives us a better grasp of what occurred. God pointed out all of these lands to Moses as Joshua and Eleazar watched. God identified this land area as Judah, this one as belonging to Ephraim; another to Manasseh, etc. Joshua cannot see this far, but God has allowed Moses to look down the southern portion of the Land of Promise all the way to the Med. Because of the use of the names of the tribes of Israel, we have two choices as to exactly what happened: (1) God pointed out the land and identified it as the land which would belong to whichever tribe; and/or (2) This was written after the land had been conquered and distributed to the tribes. It is my reasonable hypothesis that both occurred and because this was written roughly seven or eight years later, that

⁴⁴⁴ This word is often transliterated as opposed to being translated.

⁴⁴⁵ I depended upon *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976; Vol. 4, p. 800 for this information.

the entire conversation was not recorded nor were the details of the conversation recorded, but just the gist of it. In fact, I don't know that I should even call it a conversation. God is the only One Who speaks (v. 4).

In this verse, we are taken from the northern most portion of Isreal to the southernmost portion along the lake/river line. Not every tribe area is pointed out, just the larger areas. We begin with Naphtali in the north, which does not go as far as the coast of the Med, and we move in a southern direction. Naphtali is above and due west of the Sea of Chinnereth, called the Sea of Galilee over a millennium later. Directly south of Naphtali is Zebulun and Issachar, but these are small territories; Manasseh (west) and Ephraim are the lands which are immediately west of the Jordan River, running to the Mediterranean Sea. Below them we find Dan and Benjamin, also small areas and below them we find the area which would be occupied by Judah, which extends all the way from top to far below the Salt Sea, out to the Med. **“Every place on which the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, as far as the Western Sea.”** (Deut. 11:24). This particular quote from Moses to the people parallels the land named in v. 2. God gave a similar promise in Ex. 23:31a: **“And I will fix your boundary from the Sea of Reeds to the Sea of the Philistines; and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates.”** A more detailed border is given in Num. 34:1–12.

And the Nege^bv and the plain, a valley of Jericho, a city of the palm trees as far as Zoar.

Deut. 34:3

And He showed him the Nege^bv and the plain, the valley of Jericho, a city of the palm trees to down as far as Zoar.

The Nege^bv is the southern portion of the Land of Promise, and in this verse, we are brought across the south in a great sweeping motion. The city of palms appears to be an alternate name for Jericho (2Chron. 28:15).

The proper noun Zoar tells us a few things about the Hebrew language. The noun is Tsô'ar (צוֹעַר) [pronounced *TSOH-(g)ahr* or *ZOH-(g)ahr*] because the Septuagint transliterates the 'ayin with a gamma (g) whereas, Josephus does not transliterate that one letter. This tells us that the ayin probably had two distinct sounds, the *g* sound having been lost to later Hebrew pronunciation. Zoar is generally associated with Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, all which are said to be located in the Valley (or the Plain) of Siddim, and the five are called the Pentapolis in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon 10:6. Lot escaped Sodom and moved to Zoar in Gen. 19:19–25. Most scholars locate these on the southwestern portion of the Dead Sea. The primary objection to this location is that it could not be seen from where Moses was. However, this further indicates that what Moses was allowed to see from there was either a vision or a supernatural vision. God is allowing Moses to see from across the Jordan to Jericho, down along the coast of the Dead Sea throughout the southern valley to the southern end of the Dead Sea, where Zoar was. In fact, at one time, the land between Zoar and Egypt was well-watered and beautiful (Gen. 13:10). Moses knew many of these places from having traveled to them in his forty years of wandering and through his geographical training at the Egyptian palace.

We do not know how this was conveyed to Joshua, whether Moses spoke while he saw these things or told these things to Joshua afterwards. Although it would be possible that Joshua saw the same things, the seeing of these things is only attributed to Moses.

And Y^ehowah said to him, “This the land which I had sworn to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to say, ‘To your seed I will give it.’ I have caused you to see with your [two] eyes and there you will not pass over.”

Deut. 34:4

And Y^ehowah said to him, “This the land which I had sworn to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, having said, ‘I will give this land to your descendants.’ I have caused you to see this land with your own eyes and into there you will not cross over.”

One word which is quite important here and that is the 1st person singular, Hiphil perfect, with a 2nd person masculine singular suffix of the verb *râ`âh* (רָאָה) [pronounced *raw-AWH*], which means *to see*. Whereas, this verb occurs over 1200 times in the Qal, it only occurs less than 100 times in the Hiphil. This means that God *has caused* Abraham to see; in other words, this was a supernatural event, but not an ecstatic vision. That is Moses saw these places clearly with his own eyes. Strong's #7200 BDB #906. The area specified in these few verses

is not the totality of what Moses was caused to see. We read in Deut. 3:27: [“Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes to the west and north and south and east, and see the land with your eyes, for you will not cross over this Jordan.”](#)

We do not know how audible the voice of God was. My assumption is that Joshua (and, if he was there, Eleazar) heard his voice. Now, why don't we hear anything about either of these two men in this chapter? They are like the fly on the wall observers. Moses had served God for forty years under the greatest pressures that a man could face, at times when he was in opposition to almost two million others. Joshua does not cloud up his final hours with the mentioning of himself. Joshua, in these final couple of chapters, has seen to it that throughout the song and the blessing and the dying of Moses, that Moses is center stage. Joshua was a true man of grace. At any time, Joshua could have told us that he also heard the voice of God, that he also saw what Moses saw or that Moses spoke to him of what he saw, but he chose to remain the proverbial fly on the wall, recording with the barest of detail the last few hours of the life of Moses. Furthermore, the Word of God is a product of man and the Holy Spirit, wherein there is no compromise of the point of view, the vocabulary, the personality or the writing style of the person, yet, at the very same time, recording the exact Word of God as guided by the Holy Spirit. Using an anthropopathism, God had great respect for Moses and, despite the fact that the last couple days of his life were recorded by Joshua, God still saw to it that the concentration was upon Moses and his heritage.

God promised this land to Abraham in Gen. 12:1–7; to Isaac (Gen. 26:2–4); and to Jacob (Gen. 28:13–15).

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The Death of Moses

[So Moses, the servant of Y^ehowah, died there, in the land of Moab in accordance with a mouth of Y^ehowah.](#)

Deut. 34:5

[So Moses, the servant of Y^ehowah, died there, in the land of Moab, as Y^ehowah had said.](#)

The administration of a household was an analogy used for a long time throughout Scripture. [“Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My household.”](#) (Num. 12:7). The word *dispensation*, refers to the administration of a household. It is totally misused in the Catholic cult and it is partially misused by Protestants, when they refer to it as a period of time. The administration of God's household here on earth was earlier placed into the hands of the Israelites and then placed into the hands of the church.

The designation, servant of the Lord, has been applied to Abraham (Gen. 26:24), to Moses (Ex. 14:31), to Joshua (Joshua 24:29), to David (2Sam. 7:5), to the prophets in general (2Kings 9:7) and to Israel as a whole (Isa. 41:8). God, during the Age of Israel, even used a foreign king to carry out His will (Jer. 25:9) and called him His servant.⁴⁴⁶ This title was one of Paul's favorite personal designations (Rom. 1:1 Philip. 1:1).

God had told Moses, that, because of his transgression, that he would not enter into the land promised to his fathers.

Periodically, I need to mention the goofy interpretations and deal with them, as some of you have read or heard them. When Moses dies *at the mouth of God*, Rabbis in the past have interpreted this as God kissing Moses to his death. That certainly sounds poetic and sort of like a happy thought, but consistently throughout Scripture, when reference is made to the *mouth of Y^ehowah*, this same phrase is generally translated *according to the commandment of Y^ehowah*. This is because that which proceeds from God's mouth is His Word, His commands

⁴⁴⁶ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 283.

to us. Therefore, there is no reason to re-interpret this phrase which is so consistently rendered and understood elsewhere.

Then He buried him in the valley in a land of Moab opposite Beth-P^ogor and no man knows his burial place to the day the this.

Deut. 34:6

Then He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-P^ogor and no man knows where his burial place is to this day.

Most of the translations capitalize the first *He* in this verse, and that is reasonable. Even though Joshua was there, possibly what he saw was our Lord lifting up the body of Moses and carrying it off out of sight where He buried him.

Beth means *house of*; it is not much different than our custom of adding the word *town* or *village* to the name of a small city. P^ogor (פּוֹגוֹר) [pronounced P^E-gore] means *chasm, opening*. Strong's #1047 BDB #112. Recall that it was from P^ogor from whence Balaam went to curse, but ended up blessing Israel (Num. 24:28). It was in this area where the deity Baal-P^ogor was worshipped (Num. 25:3, 5, 18) (this worship, incidentally, infected the sons of Israel and 24,000 Israelites died by the plague due to this worship in Num. 25). P^ogor may have been an opening between the mountains, part of the saddle, above the city of Beth-P^ogor. Israel camped in the valley opposite Beth P^ogor (Deut. 3:29 4:46). The city was assigned to the tribe of Reuben in Joshua 13:20.

It is possible that the grave of Moses was kept secret so that the Israelites did not fall into some superstitious honoring of that site and worship at the grave of Moses (stranger things have happened; you have seen statues of Mary, have you not?). Obviously, even though man did not know where Moses was buried, this doesn't mean that the angelic population were ignorant. There was a disagreement between Michael, the archangel and Satan concerning the body of Moses (Jude 9). It is possible that P^ogor was the general area of the Mount of Transfiguration. This is where our Lord was glorified before Peter, James and John and where Moses and Elijah were revealed speaking to our Lord. However, we don't know if they were in temporarily resurrected bodies or whether Peter, James and John were allowed to see their spirits. There seems to be some ambiguity here concerning Enoch, Moses and Elijah. Moses is said to have died and it appears as though Enoch and Elijah were both *translated* into heaven; that is, they did not go through the experience of dying. In any case, we find Moses and Elijah having a post-life ministry of sorts at the Mount of Transfiguration.

Let me quote Keil and Delitzsch with respect to this passage: *The fact itself that the Lord buried His servant Moses, and no man knows of his sepulchre, is in perfect keeping with the relation in which Moses stood to the Lord while he was alive. Even if his sin at the water of strife rendered it necessary that he should suffer the punishment of death, as a memorable example of the terrible severity of the Holy God against sin, even in the case of His faithful servant; yet after the justice of God had been satisfied by this punishment, he was to be distinguished in death before all the people, and glorified as the servant who had been found faithful in all the house of God, whom the Lord had known face to face and to whom He had spoken mouth to mouth*⁴⁴⁷.

And Moses a son of a hundred and twenty years old in his death—his eye was not dim and his moisture had not fled.

Deut. 34:7

And Moses died at the age of one hundred and twenty years old and up until his death, his eyesight was still strong and he still retained his natural healthy glow.

What had not left Moses was his *lêach* (לֵאֵךְ) [pronounced *lay-AHKH*], a word found only here. It has the same consonants as the adjective for *fresh, moist, new*. This is variously translated *vigor* (NASB), *natural force* (KJV), *strength* (NIV), *freshness* (Rotherham) and *moisture* (Young). Strong's #3893 BDB #535. I think more than physical strength is involved here. With this word being so similar to the word for moisture, and with the drying

⁴⁴⁷ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. II, p. 1021.

affect of the sun and the desert over a period of 120 years old, Moses was still remarkably youthful looking. Recall, that this was the observation of Joshua, who saw him day in and day out. Furthermore, despite the fact of his age, Moses did not suffer from cataracts, as did Isaac (Gen. 27:1) and Jacob (Gen. 48:10). One of the blessings which Moses received of God was excellent health throughout his entire life.

Herein, we have a parallel to Jesus Christ, which I have not seen mentioned before. Moses did not die because he was old or his body worn out, but because he had finished his work. This was as far as he could serve God in a mortal body. Our Lord, on the cross, despite the cruel, physical torture to which He was subjected, also died because the work in His earthly body had been finished. They both died as a matter of their own volition coinciding with the volition of God the Father. This is not suicide, but God's perfect timing. The last few days of Moses' life were the most phenomenal of his entire ministry, as we have seen with our Lord. The book of Deuteronomy, a product of the last few days of the ministry of Moses, is often called the second Law and the last few hours of our Lord's life is the basis of our second chance.

Furthermore, Moses dies as a type of Christ, and after he dies, his people will cross over into the Land of Promise. He made intercession for his people back in Ex. 32, and here he dies before his people enter into the land. This marks Moses as a type of Christ.

Then people of Israel bewailed Moses in plains of Moab thirty days. Then the days of weeping, a bewailing Moses, were ended.

Deut. 34:8

Then the people of Israel wept because of the death of Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

The second generation, the Generation of Promise, appreciated Moses, who had trained them in Bible doctrine from their youth up. His loss was almost beyond their comprehension. Egypt wept for Joseph for 70 days, and Israel wept for Moses for 30, because **we do not sorrow as do the rest who have no hope** (1Thess. 4:13b).

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Epilogue

And Joshua ben Nun was filled [with] a Spirit of Wisdom since Moses had laid his hands upon him. So the people of Israel listened to him and they kept doing in which Y^ehowah commanded Moses.

Deut. 34:9

And Joshua ben Nun was filled with the Spirit of Wisdom since Moses had laid his hands upon him. Therefore, the people of Israel listened to him and they kept doing that which Y^ehowah commanded Moses.

The laying on of hands is not some mystical thing which someone does and then the recipient is *slain in the spirit*, an evil concept from the pit of hell. **So Y^ehowah said to Moses, "Take Joshua ben Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand upon him and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation; and commission him in their sight and you will put some of your authority upon him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him."** (Num. 27:18–20; see v. 23). Notice the Joshua had the Spirit of God prior to Moses laying his hands upon him. This was simply a way of conferring power to another, choosing a successor. This was done before the people and before God and God granted the power of the Holy Spirit to Joshua.

As you might recall, not every person in the Old Testament had the power of the Holy Spirit—in fact, only a small number of people did. Joseph did (Gen. 41:38–39), as did some of those who worked on the tabernacle and upon

the clothing of the priest (Ex. 28:3). Some people are totally confused as to the ministry of Jesus Christ and from whence He derived His powers. He called upon His deity little, if at all, and depended upon God the Holy Spirit for His earthly ministry, as we are to do. **Then a shoot will spring from the stump of Jesse and a branch from his roots will bear fruit and the Spirit of Y^ehowah will rest upon Him. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear/respect of Y^ehowah (Isa. 11:1–2).**

And a prophet has not arisen since [then] in Israel like Moses whom Y^ehowah had known face to face;

Deut. 34:10

And a prophet has not arisen since that time in Israel like Moses whom Y^ehowah had known face to face;

This verse indicates that some time had passed between the time of the death of Moses and the writing of this passage. We do not know if Joshua inserted just this verse many years later or whether this entire portion was written a decade or two later. When Miriam and Aaron got out of line in their judgment of Moses, **Y^ehowah came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward, He said, "Hear now My words: if there is a prophet among you, I, Y^ehowah, will make Myself known to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My household. With him, I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beheld the form of Y^ehowah. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?"** (Num. 12:5–8). There will not be a prophet with an old sin nature who will come close to the greatness of Moses. However, **"Y^ehowah your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, and you will listen to him... Y^ehowah said to me..., 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you and I will put My words in his mouth and He will speak to them all that I command Him.'**" (Deut. 18:15, 17a, 18). **Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later** (Heb. 3:5).

In this verse and the subsequent verses, there is no indication that this was written hundreds of years later after a long series of prophets. The hand of God was still manifest in the wars in which Joshua would engage. There were still some supernatural victories, such as the battle of Jericho. God was still with the people; however, no one during that period of time compared to Moses and certainly there remained with the people conviction that they would never have another leader like Moses and that this conviction was borne out by the subsequent passage of time.

Now there were prophets who would arise after the time of Moses who showed tremendous power—most notably, Elijah. However, the next few verses in this chapter will qualify the uniqueness of the position of Moses. Furthermore, although Elijah did perform some miracles through the power of the Spirit, few were as dramatic and as well-witnessed as those performed by Moses. Finally, although facing great opposition throughout the majority of his final forty years, Moses did not fall apart and have a pity party as Elijah did in 1Kings 19. In fact, now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the Preeminence of Moses—not finished yet.**

With respect to all the signs and the wonders which Y^ehowah sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land;

Deut. 34:11

With respect to all the signs and the wonders which Y^ehowah sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land;

Unfortunately, these three verses have been separated and we lose the flow of the context. However, what distinguished Moses from all other prophets before or since was the content of this verse. All these signs and wonders and demonstrations of God's power placed Moses head and shoulders above all of the subsequent prophets. This completes the analogy between Moses and Jesus Christ, the Prophet to come. Moses is distinguished in the Old Testament as the great prophet who has no equal; he foreshadows the coming of Jesus Christ, Who has no equal. Both of their ministries were characterized by great signs and wonders, those of Moses foreshadowing the coming of our Lord. There will be miracles throughout the remainder of the Old Testament, but nothing like those which accompanied Moses in his taking Israel out of Egypt and into the Land of Promise. Finally, the signs and wonders which Moses performed were done by the power of the Holy Spirit; he had no

inherent power which allowed him to do these. Similarly, our Lord chose not to use His own divine powers, but did only that which the Spirit of God allowed (thus setting the pattern for our lives in the Church Age)⁴⁴⁸.

And with respect to all the mighty hand and with respect to all the great [or, unyielding] fear [or, fearful deeds] which Moses did in the (two) eyes of all of Israel.

Deut. 34:12

And with respect to all the mighty hand and with respect to the mighty fearful deeds which Moses performed in the sight of Israel.

Like the book of Mark, there was a bogus ending appended to this verse which is found in some of the printed texts of the Hebrew Bible. I mention it only to satisfy your intense intellectual curiosity. "Be strong! The five-fifths of the Law are completed. Praise to God, great and fearful!"

So that you see how other translators handled the final verse of the Torah:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And in all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...and by all the firm hand, and by all the great terror which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.
KJV	And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel.
NASB	...and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.
NIV	For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.
NRSV	...and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying display of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...and in reference to all the strong hand, and to all the great fear which Moses did before the eyes of all Israel.

The first word is the wâw conjunction and the lâmed preposition, which means *to, for, in regards to, with respect to, with reference to*. Most of the translations show that this is a continuation of the previous verses. The next couple words are: **all of the hand the mighty**. For an adjective (*mighty*) to describe a noun (*hand*), they must agree in gender, number and definiteness (i.e., they both have or they both lack the definite article). In this case, *mighty* is an adjective in the attributive form, agreeing completely with the noun. We then have a repeat of the conjunction, the lâmed preposition and the word *all* (in the construct, so it means *all of*), followed by the definite article, a noun, the definite article and an adjective, both of which agree, meaning that the adjective is in the attributive position and acts as an adjective and not as another noun. The noun is môrâ' (מֹרְאָה) [pronounced *moh-RAW*] and it means *fear, terror, dread*. This is the kind of fear which is **not fear/respect**. Although the acts of God might inspire this sort of fear, it is not a saving fear or a respectful fear (as the feminine form is). We find this in Gen. 9:2 Deut. 4:34 11:25 26:8 34:12 Psalm 9:20 76:11 Isa. 8:12–13 Mal. 1:6 2:5.* Strong's #4172 BDB #432. The adjective which describes this noun is gadôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced *gaw-DOLE*] and it is translated *great, mighty*; however, it would be reasonable to translate it as *vast, unyielding, immutable*. Perhaps that its size is related to getting its own way all of the time. The literal translation here would be a little awkward: **the mighty fear which Moses did before the eyes of all Israel**; it could better be rendered **the mighty fearful deeds which Moses performed in the sight of Israel**. Strong's #1419 (& 1431) BDB #147 (& 152, 153, 175).

Joshua, as the writer of this portion of Scripture, continued to show great deference toward Moses and true personal humility. The relationship between Moses and God was unique; the power given Moses was greater than would ever be given to another prophet; Moses' physical strength and mental capabilities were phenomenal for a man of any age. Nowhere does Joshua reveal any personal jealousy; he does not run down Moses; he does not get involved in any inordinate competition. Joshua was a true man of grace.

⁴⁴⁸ I believe that Thieme calls this the test driving of the prototype spiritual life.

Muslims have taken this passage and have used it to claim that Jesus could not be the prophet predicted in Deut. 18:18 and that any prophet equivalent to Moses would have to come from without Israel. As we have noted, Joshua was the human author of this portion of Scripture and this statement stood during his lifetime and remained true for all prophets until the completion of the Old Testament canon. However, God did raise up a prophet like unto Moses, Who did speak with God face to face, Who did performed tremendous miracles, more than could be contained in a book, upon Whom our salvation is based. By his own admission, Mohammed (whom the Muslims believe is the fulfillment of Deut. 18:18) did not perform signs and miracles (Surah 17:90–93) nor did her speak with God face to face, but received his revelations from angels (e.g., Surah 2:97), whom we recognize as fallen angels, Satan’s demon army. Therefore, in Mohammed, we do not find a prophet like unto Moses (we have already examined Mohammed and Islam in Deut. 18:18).

Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end (Heb. 3:5–6).

There is one more thing which I would like to cover before we leave the book of Deuteronomy. We take for granted Who and What God is. All the Israelites had was the Law, at this point in time. What did they know about God? Therefore, we will study The **Doctrine of the Character and Essence of God as Taught in the Pentateuch—not finished yet!!**

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1.The information contained in this last point all came from *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; pp. 106–107.