

# Deuteronomy

## The Covenant Setting

1:1 This is what<sup>1</sup> Moses said to the assembly of Israel<sup>2</sup> in the Transjordanian<sup>3</sup> wastelands, the arid country opposite<sup>4</sup> Suph,<sup>5</sup> between<sup>6</sup> Paran<sup>7</sup> and Tophel,<sup>8</sup> Laban,<sup>9</sup> Hazereth,<sup>10</sup> and Di Zahab<sup>11</sup> 1:2 Now it is ordinarily an eleven-day journey<sup>12</sup> from Horeb<sup>13</sup> to Kadesh Barnea<sup>14</sup> by way of Mount Seir.<sup>15</sup> 1:3 However, it was not until<sup>16</sup> the first day of the eleventh month<sup>17</sup> of the fortieth year<sup>18</sup> that Moses addressed the Israelites just as<sup>19</sup> the LORD had instructed him to do. 1:4 This took place after the defeat<sup>20</sup> of King Sihon<sup>21</sup> of

the Amorites, whose capital was<sup>22</sup> in Heshbon,<sup>23</sup> and King Og of Bashan, whose capital was<sup>24</sup> in Ashtaroth,<sup>25</sup> specifically in Edrei.<sup>26</sup> 1:5 So it was in the Transjordan, in Moab, that Moses began to deliver these words:<sup>27</sup>

## Events at Horeb

1:6 The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb and said, “You have stayed<sup>28</sup> in the area of this mountain long enough. 1:7 Get up now,<sup>29</sup> resume your journey, heading for<sup>30</sup> the Amorite hill country, to all its areas<sup>31</sup> including the arid country,<sup>32</sup> the highlands, the Shephelah,<sup>33</sup> the Negev,<sup>34</sup> and the coastal plain – all of Canaan and Lebanon as far as the Great River, that is, the Euphrates. 1:8 Look! I have already given the land to you.<sup>35</sup> Go, occupy the territory that I,<sup>36</sup> the LORD, promised<sup>37</sup> to give to your ancestors<sup>38</sup> Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their descendants.”<sup>39</sup> 1:9 I also said to you at that time, “I am no longer able to sustain you by myself. 1:10 The LORD your God has increased your population<sup>40</sup> to the point that you are now as

<sup>1</sup> tn Heb “These are the words.”

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb “to all Israel.”

<sup>3</sup> tn Heb “on the other side of the Jordan.” This would appear to favor authorship by someone living on the west side of the Jordan, that is, in Canaan, whereas the biblical tradition locates Moses on the east side (cf. v. 5). However the Hebrew phrase בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן (*bē’ever hayyārden*) is a frozen form meaning “Transjordan,” a name appropriate from any geographical vantage point. To this day, one standing east of the Jordan can describe himself as being in Transjordan.

<sup>4</sup> tn The Hebrew term מִלְּפָנֶיךָ (*mol*) may also mean “in front of” or “near” (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>5</sup> sn This place is otherwise unattested and its location is unknown. Perhaps it is Khirbet Sufah, 4 mi (6 km) SSE of Madaba, Jordan.

<sup>6</sup> tn The Hebrew term בֵּין (*ben*) may suggest “in the area of.”  
<sup>7</sup> sn Paran is the well-known desert area between Mount Sinai and Kadesh Barnea (cf. Num 10:12; 12:16).

<sup>8</sup> sn Tophel refers possibly to *et-Tafileh*, 15 mi (25 km) SE of the Dead Sea, or to *Dābilu*, another name for Paran. See H. Cazelles, “Tophel (Deut. 1:1),” VT 9 (1959): 412-15.

<sup>9</sup> sn Laban. Perhaps this refers to Libnah (Num 33:20).

<sup>10</sup> sn Hazereth. This probably refers to *‘Ain Khadra*. See Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible*, 199-200.

<sup>11</sup> sn Di Zahab. Perhaps this refers to *Mina al-Dhahab* on the eastern Sinai coast.

<sup>12</sup> sn An eleven-day journey was about 140 mi (233 km).

<sup>13</sup> sn Horeb is another name for Sinai. “Horeb” occurs 9 times in the Book of Deuteronomy and “Sinai” only once (33:2). “Sinai” occurs 13 times in the Book of Exodus and “Horeb” only 3 times.

<sup>14</sup> sn Kadesh Barnea. Possibly this refers to *‘Ain Qudeis*, about 50 mi (80 km) southwest of Beer Sheba, but more likely to *‘Ain Qudeirat*, 5 mi (8 km) NW of *‘Ain Qudeis*. See R. Cohen, “Did I Excavate Kadesh-Barnea?” BAR 7 (1981): 20-33.

<sup>15</sup> sn Mount Seir is synonymous with Edom. “By way of Mount Seir” refers to the route from Horeb that ended up in Edom Cf. CEV “by way of the Mount Seir Road”; TEV “by way of the hill country of Edom.”

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “in” or “on.” Here there is a contrast between the ordinary time of eleven days (v. 2) and the actual time of forty years, so “not until” brings out that vast disparity.

<sup>17</sup> sn The eleventh month is Shebat in the Hebrew calendar, January/February in the modern (Gregorian) calendar.

<sup>18</sup> sn The fortieth year would be 1406 b.c. according to the “early” date of the exodus. See E. H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 66-75.

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb “according to all which.”

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb “when he struck [or “smote].”

<sup>21</sup> sn See Deut 2:26-3:22.

<sup>22</sup> tn Heb “who lived.”

<sup>23</sup> sn Heshbon is probably modern *Tell Hesban*, about 7.5 mi (12 km) south southwest of Amman, Jordan.

<sup>24</sup> tn Heb “who lived.”

<sup>25</sup> sn Ashtaroth is probably *Tell ‘Asharah*, about 22 mi (35 km) due east of the Sea of Galilee.

<sup>26</sup> sn Edrei is probably modern *Der‘a*, 60 mi (95 km) south of Damascus (see Num 21:33; Josh 12:4; 13:12, 31).

<sup>27</sup> tn Heb “this instruction”; KJV, NIV, NRSV “this law”; TEV “God’s laws and teachings.” The Hebrew noun תּוֹרָה (*torah*) is derived from the verb יָרָה (*yarah*, “to teach”) and here it refers to the Book of Deuteronomy, not the Pentateuch as a whole.

<sup>28</sup> tn Heb “lived”; “dwelled.”

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb “turn”; NAB “Leave here”; NIV, TEV “Break camp.”

<sup>30</sup> tn Heb “go (to).”

<sup>31</sup> tn Heb “its dwelling places.”

<sup>32</sup> tn Heb “the Arabah” (so ASV, NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>33</sup> tn Heb “lowlands” (so TEV) or “steppes”; NIV, CEV, NLT “the western foothills.”

<sup>34</sup> sn The Shephelah is the geographical region between the Mediterranean coastal plain and the Judean hill country.

<sup>35</sup> sn The Hebrew term Negev means literally “desert” or “south” (so KJV, ASV). It refers to the area south of Beer Sheba and generally west of the Arabah Valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba.

<sup>36</sup> tn Heb “I have placed before you the land.”

<sup>37</sup> tn Heb “the LORD.” Since the Lord is speaking, it is preferable for clarity to supply the first person pronoun in the translation.

<sup>38</sup> tn Heb “swore” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). This refers to God’s promise, made by solemn oath, to give the patriarchs the land.

<sup>39</sup> tn Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 11, 21, 35).

<sup>40</sup> tn Heb “their seed after them.”

<sup>40</sup> tn Heb “multiplied you.”

numerous as the very stars of the sky.<sup>1</sup> **1:11** Indeed, may the LORD, the God of your ancestors, make you a thousand times more numerous than you are now, blessing you<sup>2</sup> just as he said he would! **1:12** But how can I alone bear up under the burden of your hardship and strife? **1:13** Select wise and practical<sup>3</sup> men, those known among your tribes, whom I may appoint as your leaders.” **1:14** You replied to me that what I had said to you was good. **1:15** So I chose<sup>4</sup> as your tribal leaders wise and well-known men, placing them over you as administrators of groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, and also as other tribal officials. **1:16** I furthermore admonished your judges at that time that they<sup>5</sup> should pay attention to issues among your fellow citizens<sup>6</sup> and judge fairly,<sup>7</sup> whether between one citizen and another<sup>8</sup> or a citizen and a resident foreigner.<sup>9</sup> **1:17** They<sup>10</sup> must not discriminate in judgment, but hear the lowly<sup>11</sup> and the great alike. Nor should they be intimidated by human beings, for judgment belongs to God. If the matter being adjudicated is too difficult for them, they should bring it before me for a hearing.

#### *Instructions at Kadesh Barnea*

**1:18** So I instructed you at that time regarding everything you should do. **1:19** Then we left Horeb and passed through all that immense, forbidding wilderness that you saw on the way to the Amorite hill country as the LORD our God had commanded us to do, finally arriving at Kadesh Barnea. **1:20** Then I said to you, “You have come to the Amorite hill country which the

LORD our God is about to give<sup>12</sup> us. **1:21** Look, he<sup>13</sup> has placed the land in front of you!<sup>14</sup> Go up, take possession of it, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, said to do. Do not be afraid or discouraged!” **1:22** So all of you approached me and said, “Let’s send some men ahead of us to scout out the land and bring us back word as to how we should attack it and what the cities are like there.” **1:23** I thought this was a good idea,<sup>15</sup> so I sent<sup>16</sup> twelve men from among you, one from each tribe. **1:24** They left and went up to the hill country, coming to the Eshcol Valley,<sup>17</sup> which they scouted out. **1:25** Then they took<sup>18</sup> some of the produce of the land and carried it back down to us. They also brought a report to us, saying, “The land that the LORD our God is about to give us is good.”

#### *Disobedience at Kadesh Barnea*

**1:26** You were not willing to go up, however, but instead rebelled against the LORD your God.<sup>19</sup> **1:27** You complained among yourselves privately<sup>20</sup> and said, “Because the LORD hates us he brought us from Egypt to deliver us over to the Amorites so they could destroy us! **1:28** What is going to happen to us? Our brothers have drained away our courage<sup>21</sup> by describing people who are more numerous<sup>22</sup> and taller than we are, and great cities whose defenses appear to be as high as heaven<sup>23</sup> itself! Moreover, they said they saw<sup>24</sup> Anakites<sup>25</sup> there.” **1:29** So I re-

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The Hebrew participle has an imminent future sense here, although many English versions treat it as a present tense (“is giving us,” NAB, NIV, NRSV) or a predictive future (“will give us,” NCV).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” The pronoun (“he”) has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons, to avoid repetition.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Or “has given you the land” (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the thing was good in my eyes.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Or “selected” (so NIV, NRSV, TEV); *Heb* “took.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Or “the Wadi Eshcol” (so NAB).

**sn** The *Eshcol Valley* is a verdant valley near Hebron, still famous for its viticulture (cf. Num 13:22-23). The Hebrew name “Eshcol” means “trestle,” that is, the frame on which grape vines grow.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “in their hand,” which is unnecessary and somewhat redundant in English style.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the mouth of the LORD your God.” To include “the mouth” would make for odd English style. The mouth stands by metonymy for the Lord’s command, which in turn represents the Lord himself.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in your tents,” that is, privately.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “have caused our hearts to melt.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “greater.” Many English versions understand this to refer to physical size or strength rather than numbers (cf. “stronger,” NAB, NIV, NRSV; “bigger,” NASB).

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Or “as the sky.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* “we have seen.”

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the sons of the Anakim.”

**sn** *Anakites* were giant people (Num 13:33; Deut 2:10, 21; 9:2) descended from a certain Anak whose own forefather Arba founded the city of Kiriath Arba, i.e., Hebron (Josh 21:11).

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Or “heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “may he bless you.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The Hebrew verb בָּחַר ( *baḥar*, from בָּיַן [*bin*]) is a Niphal referring to skill or intelligence (see T. Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 1:652-53).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Or “selected”; *Heb* “took.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Or “you.” A number of English versions treat the remainder of this verse and v. 17 as direct discourse rather than indirect discourse (cf. KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “brothers.” The term “brothers” could, in English, be understood to refer to siblings, so “fellow citizens” has been used in the translation.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The Hebrew word צַדִּיק (*tsedeq*, “fairly”) carries the basic idea of conformity to a norm of expected behavior or character, one established by God himself. Fair judgment adheres strictly to that norm or standard (see D. Reimer, *NIDOTTE* 3:750).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “between a man and his brother.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “his stranger” or “his sojourner”; NAB, NIV “an alien”; NRSV “resident alien.” The Hebrew word גֵּר (*ger*) commonly means “foreigner.”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “you,” and throughout the verse (cf. NASB, NRSV).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the small,” but referring to social status, not physical stature.

sponded to you, “Do not be terrified<sup>1</sup> of them! **1:30** The LORD your God is about to go<sup>2</sup> ahead of you; he will fight for you, just as you saw him do in Egypt<sup>3</sup> **1:31** and in the desert, where you saw him<sup>4</sup> carrying you along like a man carries his son. This he did everywhere you went until you came to this very place.” **1:32** However, through all this you did not have confidence in the LORD your God, **1:33** the one who was constantly going before you to find places for you to set up camp. He appeared by fire at night and cloud by day, to show you the way you ought to go.

### *Judgment at Kadesh Barnea*

**1:34** When the LORD heard you, he became angry and made this vow:<sup>5</sup> **1:35** “Not a single person<sup>6</sup> of this evil generation will see the good land that I promised to give to your ancestors! **1:36** The exception is Caleb son of Jephunneh;<sup>7</sup> he will see it and I will give him and his descendants the territory on which he has walked, because he has wholeheartedly followed me.”<sup>8</sup> **1:37** As for me, the LORD was also angry with me on your account. He said, “You also will not be able to go there. **1:38** However, Joshua son of Nun, your assistant,<sup>9</sup> will go. Encourage him, because he will enable Israel to inherit the land.<sup>10</sup> **1:39** Also, your infants, who you thought would die on the way,<sup>11</sup> and your children, who as yet do not know good from bad,<sup>12</sup> will go there; I will give them the land and they will

possess it. **1:40** But as for you,<sup>13</sup> turn back and head for the desert by the way to the Red Sea.”<sup>14</sup>

### *Unsuccessful Conquest of Canaan*

**1:41** Then you responded to me and admitted, “We have sinned against the LORD. We will now go up and fight as the LORD our God has told us to do.” So you each put on your battle gear and prepared to go up to the hill country. **1:42** But the LORD told me: “Tell them this: ‘Do not go up and fight, because I will not be with you and you will be defeated by your enemies.’” **1:43** I spoke to you, but you did not listen. Instead you rebelled against the LORD<sup>15</sup> and recklessly went up to the hill country. **1:44** The Amorite inhabitants of that area<sup>16</sup> confronted<sup>17</sup> you and chased you like a swarm of bees, striking you down from Seir as far as Hormah.<sup>18</sup> **1:45** Then you came back and wept before the LORD, but he<sup>19</sup> paid no attention to you whatsoever.<sup>20</sup> **1:46** Therefore, you remained at Kadesh for a long time – indeed, for the full time.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Journey from Kadesh Barnea to Moab*

**2:1** Then we turned and set out toward the desert land on the way to the Red Sea<sup>22</sup> just as the LORD told me to do, detouring around Mount Seir for a long time. **2:2** At this point the LORD said to me, **2:3** “You have circled around this mountain long enough; now turn north. **2:4** Instruct<sup>23</sup> these people as follows: ‘You are about to cross the border of your relatives<sup>24</sup> the descendants of Esau,<sup>25</sup> who inhabit Seir. They will

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “do not tremble and do not be afraid.” Two synonymous commands are combined for emphasis.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The Hebrew participle indicates imminent future action here, though some English versions treat it as a predictive future (“will go ahead of you,” NCV; cf. also TEV, CEV).

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “according to all which he did for you in Egypt before your eyes.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun (“him”) has been employed in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “and swore,” i.e., made an oath or vow.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “Not a man among these men.”

<sup>7</sup> **sn** Caleb had, with Joshua, brought back to Israel a minority report from Canaan urging a conquest of the land, for he was confident of the Lord’s power (Num 13:6, 8, 16, 30; 14:30, 38).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” The pronoun (“me”) has been employed in the translation, since it sounds strange to an English reader for the Lord to speak about himself in third person.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “the one who stands before you”; NAB “your aide”; TEV “your helper.”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “it”; the referent (the land) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “would be a prey.”

<sup>12</sup> **sn** Do not know good from bad. This is a figure of speech called a merism (suggesting a whole by referring to its extreme opposites). Other examples are the tree of “the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen 2:9), the boy who knows enough “to reject the wrong and choose the right” (Isa 7:16; 8:4), and those who “cannot tell their right hand from their left” (Jonah 4:11). A young child is characterized by lack of knowledge.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The Hebrew pronoun is plural, as are the following verbs, indicating that Moses and the people are addressed (note v. 41).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “the Reed Sea.” “Reed” is a better translation of the Hebrew רֶבֶעַ (suf), traditionally rendered “red.” The name “Red Sea” is based on the LXX which referred to it as ἐρυθρὸς θαλάσσης (eruthras thalassēs, “red sea”). Nevertheless, because the body of water in question is known in modern times as the Red Sea, this term was used in the translation. The part of the Red Sea in view here is not the one crossed in the exodus but its eastern arm, now known as the Gulf of Eilat or Gulf of Aqaba.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “the mouth of the LORD.” See note at 1:26.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “in that hill country,” repeating the end of v. 43.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “came out to meet.”

<sup>18</sup> **sn** Hormah is probably Khirbet el-Meshash, 5.5 mi (9 km) west of Arad and 7.5 mi (12 km) SE of Beer Sheba. Its name is a derivative of the verb כָּרַם (kharām, “to ban; to exterminate”). See Num 21:3.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” The pronoun (“he”) has been employed in the translation here for stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “did not hear your voice and did not turn an ear to you.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “like the days which you lived.” This refers to the rest of the forty-year period in the desert before Israel arrived in Moab.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “Reed Sea.” See note on the term “Red Sea” in Deut 1:40.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “command” (so KJV, NASB); NRSV “charge the people as follows.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb “brothers”; NAB “your kinsmen.”

<sup>25</sup> **sn** The descendants of Esau (Heb “sons of Esau”; the phrase also occurs in 2:8, 12, 22, 29). These are the inhabitants of the land otherwise known as Edom, south and east of the Dead Sea. Jacob’s brother Esau had settled there after

be afraid of you, so watch yourselves carefully. **2:5** Do not be hostile toward them, because I am not giving you any of their land, not even a footprint, for I have given Mount Seir<sup>1</sup> as an inheritance for Esau. **2:6** You may purchase<sup>2</sup> food to eat and water to drink from them. **2:7** All along the way I, the LORD your God,<sup>3</sup> have blessed your every effort.<sup>4</sup> I have<sup>5</sup> been attentive to<sup>6</sup> your travels through this great wasteland. These forty years I have<sup>7</sup> been with you; you have lacked for nothing.”

**2:8** So we turned away from our relatives<sup>8</sup> the descendants of Esau, the inhabitants of Seir, turning from the desert route,<sup>9</sup> from Elat<sup>10</sup> and Ezion Geber,<sup>11</sup> and traveling the way of the Moab wastelands. **2:9** Then the LORD said to me, “Do not harass Moab and provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as your territory. This is because I have given Ar<sup>12</sup> to the descendants of Lot<sup>13</sup> as their possession. **2:10** (The Emites<sup>14</sup> used to live there, a people as

powerful, numerous, and tall as the Anakites. **2:11** These people, as well as the Anakites, are also considered Rephaites;<sup>15</sup> the Moabites call them Emites. **2:12** Previously the Horites<sup>16</sup> lived in Seir but the descendants of Esau dispossessed and destroyed them and settled in their place, just as Israel did to the land it came to possess, the land the LORD gave them.)<sup>17</sup> **2:13** Now, get up and cross the Wadi Zered.”<sup>18</sup> So we did so.<sup>19</sup> **2:14** Now the length of time it took for us to go from Kadesh Barnea to the crossing of Wadi Zered was thirty-eight years, time for all the military men of that generation to die, just as the LORD had vowed to them. **2:15** Indeed, it was the very hand of the LORD that eliminated them from within<sup>20</sup> the camp until they were all gone.

#### *Instructions Concerning Ammon*

**2:16** So it was that after all the military men had been eliminated from the community,<sup>21</sup> **2:17** the LORD said to me, **2:18** “Today you are going to cross the border of Moab, that is, of Ar.<sup>22</sup> **2:19** But when you come close to the Ammonites, do not harass or provoke them because I am not giving you any of the Ammonites’ land as your possession; I have already given it to Lot’s descendants<sup>23</sup> as their possession.”

his bitter strife with Jacob (Gen 36:1-8). “Edom” means “red-dish,” probably because of the red sandstone of the region, but also by popular etymology because Esau, at birth, was reddish (Gen 25:25).

<sup>1</sup> **sn** Mount Seir is synonymous with Edom.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* includes “with silver.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text does not have the first person pronoun; it has been supplied for purposes of English style (the Lord is speaking here).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “all the work of your hands.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he has.” This has been converted to first person in the translation in keeping with English style.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “known” (so ASV, NASB); NAB “been concerned about.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God has.” This has been replaced in the translation by the first person pronoun (“I”) in keeping with English style.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Or “brothers”; NRSV “our kin.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the way of the Arabah” (so ASV); NASB, NIV “the Arabah road.”

<sup>10</sup> **sn** *Elat* was a port city at the head of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, that is, the Gulf of Aqaba (or Gulf of Eilat). Solomon (1 Kgs 9:28), Uzziah (2 Kgs 14:22), and Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:5-6) used it as a port but eventually it became permanently part of Edom. It may be what is known today as *Tell el-Kheleifeh*. Modern Eilat is located further west along the northern coast. See G. Pratico, “Nelson Glueck’s 1938-1940 Excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh: A Reappraisal,” *BASOR* 259 (1985): 1-32.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** *Ezion Geber*. A place near the Gulf of Aqaba, Ezion-Geber must be distinguished from Elat (cf. 1 Kgs 9:26-28; 2 Chr 8:17-18). It was, however, also a port city (1 Kgs 22:48-49). It may be the same as the modern site *Gzirat al-Fauran*, 15 mi (24 km) south-southwest from *Tell el-Kheleifeh*.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** *Ar* was a Moabite city on the Arnon River east of the Dead Sea. It is mentioned elsewhere in the “Book of the Wars of Yahweh” (Num 21:15; cf. 21:28; Isa 15:1). Here it is synonymous with the whole land of Moab.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** *The descendants of Lot*. Following the destruction of the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, as God’s judgment, Lot fathered two sons by his two daughters, namely, Moab and Ammon (Gen 19:30-38). Thus, these descendants of Lot in and around Ar were the Moabites.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** *Emites*. These giant people, like the Anakites (Deut 1:28), were also known as Rephaites (v. 11). They appear elsewhere in the narrative of the invasion of the kings of the east where they are said to have lived around Shaveh Kiriat-haim, perhaps 9 to 11 mi (15 to 18 km) east of the north end of the Dead Sea (Gen 14:5).

<sup>15</sup> **sn** *Rephaites*. The earliest reference to this infamous giant race is, again, in the story of the invasion of the eastern kings (Gen 14:5). They lived around Ashteroth Karnaim, probably modern *Tell Ashtarrah* (cf. Deut 1:4), in the Bashan plateau east of the Sea of Galilee. Og, king of Bashan, was a Rephate (Deut 3:11; Josh 12:4; 13:12). Other texts speak of them or their kinfolk in both Transjordan (Deut 2:20; 3:13) and Canaan (Josh 11:21-22; 14:12, 15; 15:13-14; Judg 1:20; 1 Sam 17:4; 1 Chr 20:4-8). They also appear in extrabiblical literature, especially in connection with the city state of Ugarit. See C. L’Heureux, “Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim,” *HTR* 67 (1974): 265-74.

<sup>16</sup> **sn** *Horites*. Most likely these are the same as the well-known people of ancient Near Eastern texts described as Hurrians. They were geographically widespread and probably non-Semitic. Genesis speaks of them as the indigenous peoples of Edom that Esau expelled (Gen 36:8-19, 31-43) and also as among those who confronted the kings of the east (Gen 14:6).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Most modern English versions, beginning with the ASV (1901), regard vv. 10-12 as parenthetical to the narrative.

<sup>18</sup> **sn** *Wadi Zered*. Now known as *Wadi el-Hesa*, this valley marked the boundary between Moab to the north and Edom to the south.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “we crossed the Wadi Zered.” This has been translated as “we did so” for stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “from the middle of.” Although many recent English versions leave this expression untranslated, the point seems to be that these soldiers did not die in battle but “with-in the camp.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and it was when they were eliminated, all the men of war, to die from the midst of the people.”

<sup>22</sup> **sn** *Ar*. See note on this word in Deut 2:9.

<sup>23</sup> **sn** *Lot’s descendants*. See note on this phrase in Deut 2:9.

**2:20** (That also is considered to be a land of the Rephaites.<sup>1</sup> The Rephaites lived there originally; the Ammonites call them Zamzummites.<sup>2</sup> **2:21** They are a people as powerful, numerous, and tall as the Anakites. But the LORD destroyed the Rephaites<sup>3</sup> in advance of the Ammonites,<sup>4</sup> so they dispossessed them and settled down in their place. **2:22** This is exactly what he did for the descendants of Esau who lived in Seir when he destroyed the Horites before them so that they could dispossess them and settle in their area to this very day. **2:23** As for the Avvites<sup>5</sup> who lived in settlements as far west as Gaza, Caphtorites<sup>6</sup> who came from Crete<sup>7</sup> destroyed them and settled down in their place.)

**2:24** “Get up, make your way across Wadi Arnon. Look! I have already delivered over to you Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon,<sup>8</sup> and his land. Go ahead! Take it! Engage him in war! **2:25** This very day I will begin to fill all the people of the earth<sup>9</sup> with dread and to terrify them when they hear about you. They will shiver and shake in anticipation of your approach.”<sup>10</sup>

#### *Defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon*

**2:26** Then I sent messengers from the Kedemoth<sup>11</sup> Desert to King Sihon of Heshbon with an offer of peace: **2:27** “Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the roadway.<sup>12</sup> I will not turn aside to the right or the left. **2:28** Sell me food for cash<sup>13</sup> so that I can eat and sell me water to drink.<sup>14</sup> Just allow me to go through on

foot, **2:29** just as the descendants of Esau who live at Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land the LORD our God is giving us.” **2:30** But King Sihon of Heshbon was unwilling to allow us to pass near him because the LORD our<sup>15</sup> God had made him obstinate<sup>16</sup> and stubborn<sup>17</sup> so that he might deliver him over to you<sup>18</sup> this very day. **2:31** The LORD said to me, “Look! I have already begun to give over Sihon and his land to you. Start right now to take his land as your possession.” **2:32** When Sihon and all his troops<sup>19</sup> emerged to encounter us in battle at Jahaz,<sup>20</sup> **2:33** the LORD our God delivered him over to us and we struck him down, along with his sons<sup>21</sup> and everyone else.<sup>22</sup> **2:34** At that time we seized all his cities and put every one of them<sup>23</sup> under divine judgment,<sup>24</sup> including even the women and children; we left no survivors. **2:35** We kept only the livestock and plunder from the cities for ourselves. **2:36** From Aroer,<sup>25</sup> which is at the edge of Wadi Arnon (it is the city in the wadi),<sup>26</sup> all the way to Gilead there was not a town able to resist us – the LORD our God gave them all to us. **2:37** However, you did not approach the land of the Ammonites, the Wadi Jabbok,<sup>27</sup> the cities of the hill country, or any place else forbidden by the LORD our God.

<sup>1</sup> **sn** *Rephaites*. See note on this word in Deut 2:11.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** *Zamzummites*. Just as the Moabites called Rephaites by the name Emmites, the Ammonites called them Zamzummites (or Zazites; Gen 14:5).

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “them”; the referent (the Rephaites) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “them”; the referent (the Ammonites) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>5</sup> **sn** *Avvites*. Otherwise unknown, these people were probably also Anakite (or Rephaite) giants who lived in the lower Mediterranean coastal plain until they were expelled by the Caphtorites.

<sup>6</sup> **sn** *Caphtorites*. These peoples are familiar from both the OT (Gen 10:14; 1 Chr 1:12; Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7) and ancient Near Eastern texts (Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:37-38; ANET 138). They originated in Crete (OT “Caphtor”) and are identified as the ancestors of the Philistines (Gen 10:14; Jer 47:4).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “Caphtor”; the modern name of the island of Crete is used in the translation for clarity (cf. NCV, TEV, NLT).

<sup>8</sup> **sn** *Heshbon* is the name of a prominent site (now *Tell Heshban*, about 7.5 mi [12 km] south southwest of Amman, Jordan). Sihon made it his capital after having driven Moab from the area and forced them south to the Arnon (Num 21:26-30). Heshbon is also mentioned in Deut 1:4.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “under heaven” (so NIV, NRSV).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “from before you.”

<sup>11</sup> **sn** *Kedemoth*. This is probably *Aleiyan*, about 8 mi (13 km) north of the Arnon and between Dibon and Mattanah.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in the way in the way” (כַּדְרֵךְ בְּדֵרֵךְ, *baderekh baderekh*). The repetition lays great stress on the idea of resolute determination to stick to the path. *IBHS* 1.16 §7.2.3c.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “silver.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and water for silver give to me so that I may drink.”

<sup>15</sup> **tc** The translation follows the LXX in reading the first person pronoun. The MT, followed by many English versions, has a second person masculine singular pronoun, “your.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “hardened his spirit” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV); NIV “made his spirit stubborn.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “made his heart obstinate” (so KJV, NASB); NRSV “made his heart defiant.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “into your hand.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “people.”

<sup>20</sup> **sn** *Jahaz*. This is probably Khirbet el-Medeiyneh. See J. Dearman, “The Levitical Cities of Reuben and Moabite Toponymy,” *BASOR* 276 (1984): 55-57.

<sup>21</sup> **tc** The translation follows the *Qere* or marginal reading; the *Kethib* (consonantal text) has the singular, “his son.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “all his people.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “every city of men.” This apparently identifies the cities as inhabited.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* “under the ban” (נֶחֱרֵם, *nakharem*). The verb employed is חָרַם (*kharam*, usually in the Hiphil) and the associated noun is חֶרֶם (*kherem*). See J. Naudé, *NIDOTTE*, 2:276-77, and, for a more thorough discussion, Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, 28-77.

**sn** *Divine judgment* refers to God’s designation of certain persons, places, and things as objects of his special wrath and judgment because, in his omniscience, he knows them to be impure and hopelessly unrepentant.

<sup>25</sup> **sn** *Aroer*. Now known as ‘*Ara’ir* on the northern edge of the Arnon river, Aroer marked the southern limit of Moab and, later, of the allotment of the tribe of Reuben (Josh 13:9, 16).

<sup>26</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the city in the wadi.” This enigmatic reference may refer to Ar or, more likely, to Aroer itself. Epexegetically the text might read, “From Aroer..., that is, the city in the wadi.” See D. L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (WBC), 49.

<sup>27</sup> **sn** *Wadi Jabbok*. Now known as the Zerqa River, this is a major tributary of the Jordan that normally served as a boundary between Ammon and Gad (Deut 3:16).

*Defeat of King Og of Bashan*

**3:1** Next we set out on<sup>1</sup> the route to Bashan,<sup>2</sup> but King Og of Bashan and his whole army<sup>3</sup> came out to meet us in battle at Edrei.<sup>4</sup> **3:2** The LORD, however, said to me, “Don’t be afraid of him because I have already given him, his whole army,<sup>5</sup> and his land to you. You will do to him exactly what you did to King Sihon of the Amorites who lived in Heshbon.” **3:3** So the LORD our God did indeed give over to us King Og of Bashan and his whole army and we struck them down until not a single survivor was left.<sup>6</sup> **3:4** We captured all his cities at that time – there was not a town we did not take from them – sixty cities, all the region of Argob,<sup>7</sup> the dominion of Og in Bashan. **3:5** All of these cities were fortified by high walls, gates, and locking bars;<sup>8</sup> in addition there were a great many open villages.<sup>9</sup> **3:6** We put all of these under divine judgment<sup>10</sup> just as we had done to King Sihon of Heshbon – every occupied city,<sup>11</sup> including women and children. **3:7** But all the livestock and plunder from the cities we kept for ourselves. **3:8** So at that time we took the land of the two Amorite kings in the Transjordan from Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon<sup>12</sup> **3:9** (the Sidonians<sup>13</sup> call Hermon Sirion<sup>14</sup> and the Amorites call it Senir),<sup>15</sup> **3:10** all the cities of the plateau, all of Gilead and Bashan as far as Salecah<sup>16</sup> and Edrei,<sup>17</sup> cities of

the kingdom of Og in Bashan. **3:11** Only King Og of Bashan was left of the remaining Rephaites. (It is noteworthy<sup>18</sup> that his sarcophagus<sup>19</sup> was made of iron.<sup>20</sup> Does it not, indeed, still remain in Rabbath<sup>21</sup> of the Ammonites? It is thirteen and a half feet<sup>22</sup> long and six feet<sup>23</sup> wide according to standard measure.)<sup>24</sup>

*Distribution of the Transjordanian Allotments*

**3:12** This is the land we brought under our control at that time: The territory extending from Aroer<sup>25</sup> by the Wadi Arnon and half the Gilead hill country with its cities I gave to the Reubenites and Gadites.<sup>26</sup> **3:13** The rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh.<sup>27</sup> (All the region of Argob,<sup>28</sup> that is, all Bashan, is called the land of Rephaim. **3:14** Jair, son of Manasseh, took all the Argob region as far as the border with the Geshurites<sup>29</sup> and Maacathites<sup>30</sup> (namely Bashan)

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “turned and went up.”

<sup>2</sup> **sn** *Bashan*. This plateau country, famous for its oaks (Isa 2:13) and cattle (Deut 32:14; Amos 4:1), was north of Gilead along the Yarmuk River.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “people.”

<sup>4</sup> **sn** *Edrei* is probably modern *Der’a*, 60 mi (95 km) south of Damascus (see Num 21:33; Josh 12:4; 13:12, 31; also mentioned in Deut 1:4).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “people.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “was left to him.” The final phrase “to him” is redundant in English and has been left untranslated.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** *Argob*. This is a subdistrict of Bashan, perhaps north of the Yarmuk River. See Y. Aharoni, *Land of the Bible*, 314.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Or “high walls and barred gates” (NLT); Heb “high walls, gates, and bars.” Since “bars” could be understood to mean “saloons,” the qualifying adjective “locking” has been supplied in the translation.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term פְּרָזִי (p̄rāzīy) refers to rural areas, at the most “unwalled villages” (KJV, NASB “unwalled towns”).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “we put them under the ban” (נִחְרַם, *nakharem*). See note at 2:34.

**sn** *The divine curse*. See note on this phrase in Deut 2:34.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “city of men.”

<sup>12</sup> **sn** *Mount Hermon*. This is the famous peak at the southern end of the Anti-Lebanon mountain range known today as Jebel es-Sheik.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** *Sidonians* were Phoenician inhabitants of the city of Sidon (now in Lebanon), about 47 mi (75 km) north of Mount Carmel.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** *Sirion*. This name is attested in the Ugaritic texts as *sr̄yn*. See UT 495.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** *Senir*. Probably this was actually one of the peaks of Hermon and not the main mountain (Song of Songs 4:8; 1 Chr 5:23). It is mentioned in a royal inscription of Shalmaneser III of Assyria (*saninu*; see ANET 280).

<sup>16</sup> **sn** *Salecah*. Today this is known as *Salkhad*, in Jordan, about 31 mi (50 km) east of the Jordan River in the Hauran Desert.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** *Edrei*. See note on this term in 3:1.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “Behold” (הִנֵּה, *hinneh*).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term עֵרֶשׁ (*eres*), traditionally translated “bed” (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT) is likely a basaltic (volcanic) stone sarcophagus of suitable size to contain the coffin of the giant Rephaite king. Its iron-like color and texture caused it to be described as an iron container. See A. Millard, “King Og’s Iron Bed: Fact or Fancy?” *BR* 6 (1990): 16-21, 44; cf. also NEB “his sarcophagus of basalt”; TEV, CEV “his coffin.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Or “of iron-colored basalt.” See note on the word “sarcophagus” earlier in this verse.

<sup>21</sup> **sn** *Rabbath*. This place name (usually occurring as *Rabbah*; 2 Sam 11:11; 12:27; Jer 49:3) refers to the ancient capital of the Ammonite kingdom, now the modern city of Amman, Jordan. The word means “great [one],” probably because of its political importance. The fact that the sarcophagus “still remain[ed]” there suggests this part of the verse is post-Mosaic, having been added as a matter of explanation for the existence of the artifact and also to verify the claim as to its size.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “nine cubits.” Assuming a length of 18 in (45 cm) for the standard cubit, this would be 13.5 ft (4.1 m) long.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “four cubits.” This would be 6 ft (1.8 m) wide.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb “by the cubit of man.” This probably refers to the “short” or “regular” cubit of approximately 18 in (45 cm).

<sup>25</sup> **tn** The words “the territory extending” are not in the Hebrew text; they are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

**sn** *Aroer*. See note on this term in Deut 2:36.

<sup>26</sup> **sn** *Reubenites and Gadites*. By the time of Moses’ address the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had already been granted permission to settle in the Transjordan, provided they helped the other tribes subdue the occupants of Canaan (cf. Num 32:28-42).

<sup>27</sup> **sn** *Half the tribe of Manasseh*. The tribe of Manasseh split into clans, with half opting to settle in Bashan and the other half in Canaan (cf. Num 32:39-42; Josh 17:1-13).

<sup>28</sup> **sn** *Argob*. See note on this term in v. 4.

<sup>29</sup> **sn** *Geshurites*. Geshur was a city and its surrounding area somewhere northeast of Bashan (cf. Josh 12:5; 13:11, 13). One of David’s wives was Maacah, the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur and mother of Absalom (cf. 2 Sam 13:37; 15:8; 1 Chr 3:2).

<sup>30</sup> **sn** *Maacathites*. These were the people of a territory southwest of Mount Hermon on the Jordan River. The name probably has nothing to do with David’s wife from Geshur (see note on “Geshurites” earlier in this verse).

and called it by his name, Havvoth Jair,<sup>1</sup> which it retains to this very day.) **3:15** I gave Gilead to Machir.<sup>2</sup> **3:16** To the Reubenites and Gadites I allocated the territory extending from Gilead as far as Wadi Arnon (the exact middle of the wadi was a boundary) all the way to the Wadi Jabbok, the Ammonite border. **3:17** The Arabah and the Jordan River<sup>3</sup> were also a border, from the sea of Kinnereth<sup>4</sup> to the sea of the Arabah (that is, the Salt Sea),<sup>5</sup> beneath the watershed<sup>6</sup> of Pisgah<sup>7</sup> to the east.

#### *Instructions to the Transjordanian Tribes*

**3:18** At that time I instructed you as follows: “The LORD your God has given you this land for your possession. You warriors are to cross over before your fellow Israelites<sup>8</sup> equipped for battle. **3:19** But your wives, children, and livestock (of which I know you have many) may remain in the cities I have given you. **3:20** You must fight<sup>9</sup> until the LORD gives your countrymen victory<sup>10</sup> as he did you and they take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them on the other side of the Jordan River. Then each of you may return to his own territory that I have given you.” **3:21** I also commanded Joshua at the same time, “You have seen everything the LORD your God did to these two kings; he<sup>11</sup> will do the same to all the kingdoms where you are going.<sup>12</sup> **3:22** Do not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God will personally fight for you.”

#### *Denial to Moses of the Promised Land*

**3:23** Moreover, at that time I pleaded with the LORD, **3:24** “O, Lord GOD,<sup>13</sup> you have begun to

show me<sup>14</sup> your greatness and strength.<sup>15</sup> (What god in heaven or earth can rival your works and mighty deeds?) **3:25** Let me please cross over to see the good land on the other side of the Jordan River – this good hill country and the Lebanon!”<sup>16</sup> **3:26** But the LORD was angry at me because of you and would not listen to me. Instead, he<sup>17</sup> said to me, “Enough of that!<sup>18</sup> Do not speak to me anymore about this matter. **3:27** Go up to the top of Pisgah and take a good look to the west, north, south, and east,<sup>19</sup> for you will not be allowed to cross the Jordan. **3:28** Commission<sup>20</sup> Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, because he will lead these people over and will enable them to inherit the land you will see.” **3:29** So we settled down in the valley opposite Beth Peor.<sup>21</sup>

#### *The Privileges of the Covenant*

**4:1** Now, Israel, pay attention to the statutes and ordinances<sup>22</sup> I am about to teach you, so that you might live and go on to enter and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors,<sup>23</sup> is giving you. **4:2** Do not add a thing to what I command you nor subtract from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I am delivering to<sup>24</sup> you. **4:3** You have witnessed what the LORD did at Baal Peor,<sup>25</sup> how he<sup>26</sup> eradicated from your

<sup>1</sup> **sn** *Havvoth Jair*. The Hebrew name means “villages of Jair,” the latter being named after a son (i.e., descendant) of Manasseh who took the area by conquest.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** *Machir* was the name of another descendant of Manasseh (cf. Num 32:41; 1 Chr 7:14-19). Eastern Manasseh was thus divided between the Jairites and the Machirites.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity (also in vv. 20, 25).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “from Kinnereth.” The words “the sea of” have been supplied in the translation as a clarification.

**sn** *Kinnereth*. This is another name for the Sea of Galilee, so called because its shape is that of a harp (the Hebrew term for “harp” is כִּנּוּר, *kinnoor*).

<sup>5</sup> **sn** *The Salt Sea* is another name for the Dead Sea (cf. Gen 14:3; Josh 3:16).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The meaning of the Hebrew term אֲשֵׁרֶת (*ashdot*) is unclear. It is usually translated either “slopes” (ASV, NAB, NIV) or “watershed” (NEB).

<sup>7</sup> **sn** *Pisgah*. This appears to refer to a small range of mountains, the most prominent peak of which is Mount Nebo (Num 21:20; 23:14; Deut 3:27; cf. 34:1).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “your brothers, the sons of Israel.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The words “you must fight” are not present in the Hebrew text, but are supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “gives your brothers rest.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” The translation uses the pronoun (“he”) for stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “which you are crossing over there.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “Lord LORD.” The phrase אֲדוֹנָי יְהוָה (*adonay yehviah*) is customarily rendered by Jewish tradition as “Lord God.” Cf. NIV, TEV, NLT “Sovereign Lord.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “your servant.” The pronoun is used in the translation to clarify that Moses is speaking of himself, since in contemporary English one does not usually refer to oneself in third person.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “your strong hand” (so NIV), a symbol of God’s activity.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The article is retained in the translation (“the Lebanon,” cf. also NAB, NRSV) to indicate that a region (rather than the modern country of Lebanon) is referred to here. Other recent English versions accomplish this by supplying “mountains” after “Lebanon” (TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” For stylistic reasons the pronoun (“he”) has been used in the translation here.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “much to you” (an idiom).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lift your eyes to the west, north, south, and east and see with your eyes.” The translation omits the repetition of “your eyes” for stylistic reasons.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “command”; KJV, NASB, NRSV “charge Joshua.”

<sup>21</sup> **sn** *Beth Peor*. This is probably the spot near Pisgah where Balaam attempted to curse the nation Israel (Num 23:28). The Moabites also worshiped Baal there by the name “Baal [of] Peor” (Num 25:1:5).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** These technical Hebrew terms (חֻקִּים [*khuqqim*] and מִשְׁפָּטִים [*mishpatim*]) occur repeatedly throughout the Book of Deuteronomy to describe the covenant stipulations to which Israel had been called to subscribe (see, in this chapter alone, vv. 1, 5, 6, 8). The word חֻקִּים derives from the verb חָקַע (*khaq*, “to inscribe; to carve”) and מִשְׁפָּטִים (*mishpatim*) from שָׁפַט (*shafat*, “to judge”). They are virtually synonymous and are used interchangeably in Deuteronomy.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “fathers” (also in vv. 31, 37).

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* “commanding.”

<sup>25</sup> **tc** The LXX and Syriac read “to Baal Peor,” that is, the god worshiped at that place; see note on the name “Beth Peor” in Deut 3:29.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

midst everyone who followed Baal Peor.<sup>1</sup> 4:4 But you who remained faithful to the LORD your God are still alive to this very day, every one of you. 4:5 Look! I have taught you statutes and ordinances just as the LORD my God told me to do, so that you might carry them out in<sup>2</sup> the land you are about to enter and possess. 4:6 So be sure to do them, because this will testify of your wise understanding<sup>3</sup> to the people who will learn of all these statutes and say, “Indeed, this great nation is a very wise<sup>4</sup> people.” 4:7 In fact, what other great nation has a god so near to them like the LORD our God whenever we call on him? 4:8 And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just<sup>5</sup> as this whole law<sup>6</sup> that I am about to share with<sup>7</sup> you today?

### Reminder of the Horeb Covenant

4:9 Again, however, pay very careful attention,<sup>8</sup> lest you forget the things you have seen and disregard them for the rest of your life; instead teach them to your children and grandchildren. 4:10 You<sup>9</sup> stood before the LORD your God at Horeb and he<sup>10</sup> said to me, “Assemble the people before me so that I can tell them my commands.<sup>11</sup> Then they will learn to revere me all the days they live in the land, and they will instruct their children.” 4:11 You approached and stood at the foot of the mountain, a mountain ablaze to the sky above it<sup>12</sup> and yet dark with a thick cloud.<sup>13</sup> 4:12 Then the LORD spoke to you from the middle of the fire; you heard speech but you could not see anything – only a voice was heard.<sup>14</sup> 4:13 And he revealed to you the covenant<sup>15</sup> he has commanded you to

keep, the ten commandments,<sup>16</sup> writing them on two stone tablets. 4:14 Moreover, at that same time the LORD commanded me to teach you statutes and ordinances for you to keep in the land which you are about to enter and possess.<sup>17</sup>

### The Nature of Israel's God

4:15 Be very careful,<sup>18</sup> then, because you saw no form at the time the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the middle of the fire. 4:16 I say this<sup>19</sup> so you will not corrupt yourselves by making an image in the form of any kind of figure. This includes the likeness of a human male or female, 4:17 any kind of land animal, any bird that flies in the sky, 4:18 anything that crawls<sup>20</sup> on the ground, or any fish in the deep waters of the earth.<sup>21</sup> 4:19 When you look up<sup>22</sup> to the sky<sup>23</sup> and see the sun, moon, and stars – the whole heavenly creation<sup>24</sup> – you must not be seduced to worship and serve them,<sup>25</sup> for the LORD your God has assigned<sup>26</sup> them to all the people<sup>27</sup> of the world.<sup>28</sup> 4:20 You, however, the LORD has selected and brought from Egypt, that

<sup>1</sup> tn Or “followed the Baal of Peor” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV), referring to the pagan god Baal.

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb “in the midst of” (so ASV).

<sup>3</sup> tn Heb “it is wisdom and understanding.”

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb “wise and understanding.”

<sup>5</sup> tn Or “pure”; or “fair”; Heb “righteous.”

<sup>6</sup> tn The Hebrew phrase הַחֹרֵף הַזֶּה (hattorah hazzo’), in this context, refers specifically to the Book of Deuteronomy. That is, it is the collection of all the חֻקִּים (khuqim, “statutes,” 4:1) and מִשְׁפָּטִים (mishpatim, “ordinances,” 4:1) to be included in the covenant text. In a full canonical sense, of course, it pertains to the entire Pentateuch or Torah.

<sup>7</sup> tn Heb “place before.”

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb “watch yourself and watch your soul carefully.”

<sup>9</sup> tn The text begins with “(the) day (in) which.” In the Hebrew text v. 10 is subordinate to v. 11, but for stylistic reasons the translation treats v. 10 as an independent clause, necessitating the omission of the subordinating temporal phrase at the beginning of the verse.

<sup>10</sup> tn Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 4:3.

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb “my words.” See v. 13; in Hebrew the “ten commandments” are the “ten words.”

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb “a mountain burning with fire as far as the heart of the heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (shamayim) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb “darkness, cloud, and heavy cloud.”

<sup>14</sup> tn The words “was heard” are supplied in the translation to avoid the impression that the voice was seen.

<sup>15</sup> sn This is the first occurrence of the word בְּרִית (berit, “covenant”) in the Book of Deuteronomy but it appears commonly hereafter (4:23, 31; 5:2, 3; 7:9, 12; 8:18; 9:9, 10, 11, 15; 10:2, 4, 5, 8; 17:2; 29:1, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18, 21, 25; 31:9, 16, 20, 25, 26; 33:9). Etymologically, it derives from the notion of

linking or yoking together. See M. Weinfeld, *TDOT* 2:255.

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “the ten words.”

<sup>17</sup> tn Heb “to which you are crossing over to possess it.”

<sup>18</sup> tn Heb “give great care to your souls.”

<sup>19</sup> tn The words “I say this” are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons. In the Hebrew text v. 16 is subordinated to “Be careful” in v. 15, but this makes for an unduly long sentence in English.

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb “creeping thing.”

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb “under the earth.”

<sup>22</sup> tn Heb “lest you lift up your eyes.” In the Hebrew text vv. 16-19 are subordinated to “Be careful” in v. 15, but this makes for an unduly long sentence in English.

<sup>23</sup> tn Or “heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (shamayim) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>24</sup> tn Heb “all the host of heaven.”

<sup>25</sup> tn In the Hebrew text the verbal sequence in v. 19 is “lest you look up...and see...and be seduced...and worship them...and serve them.” However, the first two actions are not prohibited in and of themselves. The prohibition pertains to the final three actions. The first two verbs describe actions that are logically subordinate to the following actions and can be treated as temporal or circumstantial: “lest, looking up...and seeing... you are seduced.” See Joüon 2:635 §168.h.

<sup>26</sup> tn Or “allotted.”

<sup>27</sup> tn Or “nations.”

<sup>28</sup> tn Heb “under all the heaven.”

sn The OT views the heavenly host as God’s council, which surrounds his royal throne ready to do his bidding (see 1 Kgs 22:19). God has given this group, sometimes called the “sons of God” (cf. Job 1:6; 38:7; Ps 89:6), jurisdiction over the nations. See Deut 32:8 (LXX). Some also see this assembly as the addressee in Ps 82. While God delegated his council to rule over the nations, he established a theocratic government over Israel and ruled directly over his chosen people via the Mosaic covenant. See v. 20, as well as Deut 32:9.



iron-smelting furnace,<sup>1</sup> to be his special people<sup>2</sup> as you are today. **4:21** But the LORD became angry with me because of you and vowed that I would never cross the Jordan nor enter the good land that he<sup>3</sup> is about to give you.<sup>4</sup> **4:22** So I must die here in this land; I will not cross the Jordan. But you are going over and will possess that<sup>5</sup> good land. **4:23** Be on guard so that you do not forget the covenant of the LORD your God that he has made with you, and that you do not make an image of any kind, just as he<sup>6</sup> has forbidden<sup>7</sup> you. **4:24** For the LORD your God is a consuming fire; he is a jealous God.<sup>8</sup>

*Threat and Blessing following Covenant Disobedience*

**4:25** After you have produced children and grandchildren and have been in the land a long time,<sup>9</sup> if you become corrupt and make an image of any kind<sup>10</sup> and do other evil things before the LORD your God that enrage him,<sup>11</sup> **4:26** I invoke heaven and earth as witnesses against you<sup>12</sup> today that you will surely and swiftly be re-

moved<sup>13</sup> from the very land you are about to cross the Jordan to possess. You will not last long there because you will surely be<sup>14</sup> annihilated. **4:27** Then the LORD will scatter you among the peoples and there will be very few of you<sup>15</sup> among the nations where the LORD will drive you. **4:28** There you will worship gods made by human hands – wood and stone that can neither see, hear, eat, nor smell. **4:29** But if you seek the LORD your God from there, you will find him, if, indeed, you seek him with all your heart and soul.<sup>16</sup> **4:30** In your distress when all these things happen to you in the latter days,<sup>17</sup> if you return to the LORD your God and obey him<sup>18</sup> **4:31** (for he<sup>19</sup> is a merciful God), he will not let you down<sup>20</sup> or destroy you, for he cannot<sup>21</sup> forget the covenant with your ancestors that he confirmed by oath to them.

*The Uniqueness of Israel's God*

**4:32** Indeed, ask about the distant past, starting from the day God created humankind<sup>22</sup> on the earth, and ask<sup>23</sup> from one end of heaven to the other, whether there has ever been such a great thing as this, or even a rumor of it. **4:33** Have a people ever heard the voice of God speaking from the middle of fire, as you yourselves have, and lived to tell about it? **4:34** Or has God<sup>24</sup> ever before tried to deliver<sup>25</sup> a nation from the middle of another nation,

<sup>1</sup> **tn** אור (*kur*) was not a source of heat but a crucible (“iron-smelting furnace”) in which precious metals were melted down and their impurities burned away (see I. Cornelius, *NIDOTTE* 2:618-19); cf. NAB “that iron foundry, Egypt.” The term is a metaphor for intense heat. Here it refers to the oppression and suffering Israel endured in Egypt. Since a crucible was used to burn away impurities, it is possible that the metaphor views Egypt as a place of refinement to bring Israel to a place of submission to divine sovereignty.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to be his people of inheritance.” The Lord compares his people to valued property inherited from one’s ancestors and passed on to one’s descendants.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 4:3.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “(as) an inheritance,” or “(as) a possession.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “this.” The translation uses “that” to avoid confusion; earlier in the verse Moses refers to Transjordan as “this land.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 4:3.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “commanded.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The juxtaposition of the Hebrew terms אֵשׁ (*esh*, “fire”) and קַנְיָן (*qanna*, “jealous”) is interesting in light of Deut 6:15 where the LORD is seen as a jealous God whose anger bursts into a destructive fire. For God to be “jealous” means that his holiness and uniqueness cannot tolerate pretended or imaginary rivals. It is not petty envy but response to an act of insubordination that must be severely judged (see H. Peels, *NIDOTTE* 3:937-40).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “have grown old in the land,” i.e., been there for a long time.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “a form of anything.” Cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV, TEV “an idol.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The infinitive construct is understood here as indicating the result, not the intention, of their actions.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** I invoke heaven and earth as witnesses against you. This stock formula introduces what is known form-critically as a רִיב (*riv*) or controversy pattern. It is commonly used in the ancient Near Eastern world in legal contexts and in the OT as a forensic or judicial device to draw attention to Israel’s violation of the LORD’s covenant with them (see Deut 30:19; Isa 1:2; 3:13; Jer 2:9). Since court proceedings required the testimony of witnesses, the LORD here summons heaven and earth (that is, all creation) to testify to his faithfulness, Israel’s disobedience, and the threat of judgment.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Or “be destroyed”; KJV “utterly perish”; NLT “will quickly disappear”; CEV “you won’t have long to live.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Or “be completely” (so NCV, TEV). It is not certain here if the infinitive absolute indicates the certainty of the following action (cf. NIV) or its degree.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “you will be left men (i.e., few) of number.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Or “mind and being.” See Deut 6:5.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** The phrase is not used here in a technical sense for the eschaton, but rather refers to a future time when Israel will be punished for its sin and experience exile. See Deut 31:29.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “hear his voice.” The expression is an idiom meaning “obey,” occurring in Deut 8:20; 9:23; 13:18; 21:18, 20; 26:14, 17; 27:10; 28:1-2, 15, 45, 62; 30:2, 8, 10, 20.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 4:3.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he will not drop you,” i.e., “will not abandon you” (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Or “will not.” The translation understands the imperfect verbal form to have an added nuance of capability here.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term אָדָם (*adam*) may refer either to Adam or, more likely, to “man” in the sense of the human race (“mankind,” “humankind”). The idea here seems more universal in scope than reference to Adam alone would suggest.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** The verb is not present in the Hebrew text but has been supplied in the translation for clarification. The challenge has both temporal and geographical dimensions. The people are challenged to (1) inquire about the entire scope of past history and (2) conduct their investigation on a worldwide scale.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** The translation assumes the reference is to Israel’s God in which case the point is this: God’s intervention in Israel’s experience is unique in the sense that he has never intervened in such power for any other people on earth. The focus is on the uniqueness of Israel’s experience. Some understand the divine name here in a generic sense, “a god,” or “any god.” In this case God’s incomparability is the focus (cf. v. 35, where this theme is expressed).

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* “tried to go to take for himself.”

accompanied by judgments,<sup>1</sup> signs, wonders, war, strength, power,<sup>2</sup> and other very terrifying things like the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? **4:35** You have been taught that the LORD alone is God – there is no other besides him. **4:36** From heaven he spoke to you in order to teach you, and on earth he showed you his great fire from which you also heard his words.<sup>3</sup> **4:37** Moreover, because he loved<sup>4</sup> your ancestors, he chose their<sup>5</sup> descendants who followed them and personally brought you out of Egypt with his great power **4:38** to dispossess nations greater and stronger than you and brought you here this day to give you their land as your property.<sup>6</sup> **4:39** Today realize and carefully consider that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth below – there is no other! **4:40** Keep his statutes and commandments that I am setting forth<sup>7</sup> today so that it may go well with you and your descendants and that you may enjoy longevity in the land that the LORD your God is about to give you as a permanent possession.

#### *The Narrative Concerning Cities of Refuge*

**4:41** Then Moses selected three cities in the Transjordan, toward the east. **4:42** Anyone who accidentally killed someone<sup>8</sup> without hating him at the time of the accident<sup>9</sup> could flee to one of those cities and be safe. **4:43** These cities are Bezer, in the desert plateau, for the Reubenites; Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan for the Manassehites.

#### *The Setting and Introduction of the Covenant*

**4:44** This is the law that Moses set before the Israelites.<sup>10</sup> **4:45** These are the stipulations, statutes, and ordinances that Moses spoke to the

Israelites after he had brought them out of Egypt, **4:46** in the Transjordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon. (It is he whom Moses and the Israelites attacked after they came out of Egypt. **4:47** They possessed his land and that of King Og of Bashan – both of whom were Amorite kings in the Transjordan, to the east. **4:48** Their territory extended<sup>11</sup> from Aroer at the edge of the Arnon valley as far as Mount Siyon<sup>12</sup> – that is, Hermon – **4:49** including all the Arabah of the Transjordan in the east to the sea of the Arabah,<sup>13</sup> beneath the watershed<sup>14</sup> of Pisgah.)

#### *The Opening Exhortation*

**5:1** Then Moses called all the people of Israel together and said to them:<sup>15</sup> “Listen, Israel, to the statutes and ordinances that I am about to deliver to you today; learn them and be careful to keep them! **5:2** The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. **5:3** He<sup>16</sup> did not make this covenant with our ancestors<sup>17</sup> but with us, we who are here today, all of us living now. **5:4** The LORD spoke face to face with you at the mountain, from the middle of the fire. **5:5** (I was standing between the LORD and you at that time to reveal to you the message<sup>18</sup> of the LORD, because you were afraid of the fire and would not go up the mountain.) He said:

#### *The Ten Commandments*

**5:6** “I am the LORD your God, he who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the place of slavery. **5:7** You must not have any other gods<sup>19</sup> besides me.<sup>20</sup> **5:8** You must not

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “by testings.” The reference here is the judgments upon Pharaoh in the form of plagues. See Deut 7:19 (cf. v. 18) and 29:3 (cf. v. 2).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “by strong hand and by outstretched arm.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “and his words you heard from the midst of the fire.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The concept of love here is not primarily that of emotional affection but of commitment or devotion. This verse suggests that God chose Israel to be his special people because he loved the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) and had promised to bless their descendants. See as well Deut 7:7-9.

<sup>5</sup> **tc** The LXX, Smr, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read a third person masculine plural suffix for the MT’s 3rd person masculine singular, “his descendants.” Cf. Deut 10:15. Quite likely the MT should be emended in this instance.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “(as) an inheritance,” that is, landed property that one can pass on to one’s descendants.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “commanding” (so NRSV).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “the slayer who slew his neighbor without knowledge.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “yesterday and a third (day).” The point is that there was no animosity between the two parties at the time of the accident and therefore no motive for the killing.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “the sons of Israel” (likewise in the following verse).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The words “their territory extended” are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons. In the Hebrew text vv. 47-49 are all one sentence, but for the sake of English style and readability the translation divides the text into two sentences.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** Mount Siyon (the Hebrew name is שִׁיּוֹן [si’ōn], not to be confused with Zion [צִיּוֹן, tsiyōn]) is another name for Mount Hermon, also called Sirion and Senir (cf. Deut 3:9).

<sup>13</sup> **sn** The sea of the Arabah refers to the Dead Sea, also known as the Salt Sea in OT times (cf. Deut 3:17).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The meaning of the Hebrew term אֲשְׁדוֹת (’ashdot) is unclear. It is usually translated either “slopes” (ASV, NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT) or “watershed” (NEB).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “and Moses called to all Israel and he said to them”; NAB, NASB, NIV “Moses summoned (convened NRSV) all Israel.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “fathers.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Or “word” (so KJV, NASB, NIV); NRSV “words.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “there must not be for you other gods.” The expression “for you” indicates possession.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “upon my face,” or “before me” (עַל-פָּנַי, ’al-panaya). Some understand this in a locative sense: “in my sight.” The translation assumes that the phrase indicates exclusion. The idea is that of placing any other god before the LORD in the sense of taking his place. Contrary to the view of some, this does not leave the door open for a henotheistic system where the Lord is the primary god among others. In its literary context the statement must be taken in a monotheistic sense. See, e.g., 4:39; 6:13-15.

make for yourself an image<sup>1</sup> of anything in heaven above, on earth below, or in the waters beneath.<sup>2</sup> **5:9** You must not worship or serve them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God. I punish<sup>3</sup> the sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons for the sin of the fathers who reject<sup>4</sup> me,<sup>5</sup> **5:10** but I show covenant faithfulness<sup>6</sup> to the thousands<sup>7</sup> who choose<sup>8</sup> me and keep my commandments. **5:11** You must not make use of the name of the LORD your God for worthless purposes,<sup>9</sup> for the LORD will not exonerate anyone who abuses his name that way.<sup>10</sup> **5:12** Be

careful to observe<sup>11</sup> the Sabbath day just as the LORD your God has commanded you. **5:13** You are to work and do all your tasks in six days, **5:14** but the seventh day is the Sabbath<sup>12</sup> of the LORD your God. On that day you must not do any work, you, your son, your daughter, your male slave, your female slave, your ox, your donkey, any other animal, or the foreigner who lives with you,<sup>13</sup> so that your male and female slaves, like yourself, may have rest. **5:15** Recall that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there by strength and power.<sup>14</sup> That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to observe<sup>15</sup> the Sabbath day. **5:16** Honor<sup>16</sup> your father and your mother just as the LORD your God has commanded you to do, so that your days may be extended and that it may go well with you in the land that he<sup>17</sup> is about to give you. **5:17** You must not murder.<sup>18</sup> **5:18** You must not commit adultery. **5:19** You must not steal. **5:20** You must not offer false testimony against another.<sup>19</sup> **5:21** You must not desire<sup>20</sup> another man's<sup>21</sup> wife, nor should you crave his<sup>22</sup> house, his field, his male and female servants, his ox, his donkey, or anything else he owns.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>1</sup> tn Heb "an image, any likeness."

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb "under the earth" (so ASV, NASB, NRSV); NCV "below the land."

<sup>3</sup> tn In the Hebrew text the form is a participle, which is subordinated to what precedes. For the sake of English style, the translation divides this lengthy verse into two sentences.

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb "who hate" (so NAB, NIV, NLT). Just as "to love" (אהב, 'ahav) means in a covenant context "to choose, obey," so "to hate" (שנא, sane') means "to reject, disobey" (cf. the note on the word "loved" in Deut 4:37; see also 5:10).

<sup>5</sup> tn Heb "visiting the sin of fathers upon sons and upon a third (generation) and upon a fourth (generation) of those who hate me." God sometimes punishes children for the sins of a father (cf. Num 16:27, 32; Josh 7:24-25; 2 Sam 21:1-9). On the principle of corporate solidarity and responsibility in OT thought see J. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSup). In the idiom of the text, the father is the first generation and the "sons" the second generation, making grandsons the third and great-grandsons the fourth. The reference to a third and fourth generation is a way of emphasizing that the sinner's punishment would last throughout his lifetime. In this culture, where men married and fathered children at a relatively young age, it would not be unusual for one to see his great-grandsons. In an Aramaic tomb inscription from Nerab dating to the seventh century B.C., Agbar observes that he was surrounded by "children of the fourth generation" as he lay on his death bed (see ANET 661). The language of the text differs from Exod 34:7, the sons are the first generation, the grandsons (literally, "sons of the sons") the second, great-grandsons the third, and great-great-grandsons the fourth. One could argue that formulation in Deut 5:9 (see also Exod 20:5) is elliptical/abbreviated or that it suffers from textual corruption (the repetition of the words "sons" would invite accidental omission).

<sup>6</sup> tn This theologically rich term (חסד, *khased*) describes God's loyalty to those who keep covenant with him. Sometimes it is used synonymously with ברית (*b'rit*, "covenant"; Deut 7:9), and sometimes interchangeably with it (Deut 7:12). See H.-J. Zobel, *TDOT* 5:44-64.

<sup>7</sup> tc By a slight emendation (לאלופים [*la'alufim*] for לאלפים [*la'alafim*]) "clans" could be read in place of the MT reading "thousands." However, no ms or versional evidence exists to support this emendation.

tn Another option is to understand this as referring to "thousands (of generations) of those who love me" (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT). See Deut 7:9.

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb "love." See note on the word "reject" in v. 9.

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb "take up the name of the LORD your God to emptiness"; KJV "take the name of the LORD thy God in vain." The idea here is not cursing or profanity in the modern sense of these terms but rather the use of the divine Name for unholy, mundane purposes, that is, for meaningless (the Hebrew term is שווא) and empty ends. In ancient Israel this would include using the Lord's name as a witness in vows one did not intend to keep.

<sup>10</sup> tn Heb "who takes up his name to emptiness."

#### *The Narrative of the Sinai Revelation and Israel's Response*

**5:22** The LORD said these things to your entire assembly at the mountain from the middle of the fire, the cloud, and the darkness with a loud

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb "to make holy," that is, to put to special use, in this case, to sacred purposes (cf. v. 13-15).

<sup>12</sup> tn There is some degree of paronomasia (wordplay) here: "the seventh (השביעי, *hash'vi'i*) day is the Sabbath (שבת, *shabbat*)." Otherwise, the words have nothing in common, since "Sabbath" is derived from the verb שָׁבַת (*shavat*, "to cease").

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb "in your gates"; NRSV, CEV "in your towns"; TEV "in your country."

<sup>14</sup> tn Heb "by a strong hand and an outstretched arm," the hand and arm symbolizing divine activity and strength. Cf. NLT "with amazing power and mighty deeds."

<sup>15</sup> tn Or "keep" (so KJV, NRSV).

<sup>16</sup> tn The imperative here means, literally, "regard as heavy" (כבד, *kabbed*). The meaning is that great importance must be ascribed to parents by their children.

<sup>17</sup> tn Heb "the LORD your God." See note on "He" in 5:3.

<sup>18</sup> tn Traditionally "kill" (so KJV, ASV, RSV, NAB). The verb here (רָצַח, *ratsakh*) is generic for homicide but in the OT both killing in war and capital punishment were permitted and even commanded (Deut 13:5, 9; 20:13, 16-17), so the technical meaning here is "murder."

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb "your neighbor." Clearly this is intended generically, however, and not to be limited only to those persons who live nearby (frequently the way "neighbor" is understood in contemporary contexts). So also in v. 20.

<sup>20</sup> tn The Hebrew verb used here (חָמַד, *khamad*) is different from the one translated "crave" (אָוַה, *avah*) in the next line. The former has sexual overtones ("lust" or the like; cf. Song of Sol 2:3) whereas the latter has more the idea of a desire or craving for material things.

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb "your neighbor's." See note on the term "fellow man" in v. 19.

<sup>22</sup> tn Heb "your neighbor's." The pronoun is used in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb "or anything that is your neighbor's."

voice, and that was all he said.<sup>1</sup> Then he inscribed the words<sup>2</sup> on two stone tablets and gave them to me. **5:23** Then, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness while the mountain was ablaze, all your tribal leaders and elders approached me. **5:24** You said, “The LORD our God has shown us his great glory<sup>3</sup> and we have heard him speak from the middle of the fire. It is now clear to us<sup>4</sup> that God can speak to human beings and they can keep on living. **5:25** But now, why should we die, because this intense fire will consume us! If we keep hearing the voice of the LORD our God we will die! **5:26** Who is there from the entire human race<sup>5</sup> who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the middle of the fire as we have, and has lived? **5:27** You go near so that you can hear everything the LORD our God is saying and then you can tell us whatever he<sup>6</sup> says to you; then we will pay attention and do it.” **5:28** When the LORD heard you speaking to me, he<sup>7</sup> said to me, “I have heard what these people have said to you – they have spoken well. **5:29** If only it would really be their desire to fear me and obey<sup>8</sup> all my commandments in the future, so that it may go well with them and their descendants forever. **5:30** Go and tell them, ‘Return to your tents!’ **5:31** But as for you, remain here with me so I can declare to you all the commandments,<sup>9</sup> statutes, and ordinances that you are to teach them, so that they can carry them out in the land I am

about to give them.”<sup>10</sup> **5:32** Be careful, therefore, to do exactly what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn right or left! **5:33** Walk just as he<sup>11</sup> has commanded you so that you may live, that it may go well with you, and that you may live long<sup>12</sup> in the land you are going to possess.

#### *Exhortation to Keep the Covenant Principles*

**6:1** Now these are the commandments,<sup>13</sup> statutes, and ordinances that the LORD your God instructed me to teach you so that you may carry them out in the land where you are headed<sup>14</sup> **6:2** and that you may so revere the LORD your God that you will keep all his statutes and commandments<sup>15</sup> that I am giving<sup>16</sup> you – you, your children, and your grandchildren – all your lives, to prolong your days. **6:3** Pay attention, Israel, and be careful to do this so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in number<sup>17</sup> – as the LORD, God of your ancestors,<sup>18</sup> said to you, you will have a land flowing with milk and honey.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “and he added no more” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV); NLT “This was all he said at that time.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “them”; the referent (the words spoken by the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “his glory and his greatness.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “this day we have seen.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “who is there of all flesh.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD our God.” See note on “He” in 5:3.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on “He” in 5:3.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “keep” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “commandment.” The MT actually has the singular **הַמִּצְוָה** (*hammitsvah*), suggesting perhaps that the following terms (**הַקְּוִיִּם** [*khuqqim*] and **הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים** [*mishpatim*]) are in exegetical apposition to “commandment.” That is, the phrase could be translated “the entire command, namely, the statutes and ordinances.” This would essentially make **הַמִּצְוָה** (*mitsvah*) synonymous with **תּוֹרָה** (*torah*), the usual term for the whole collection of law.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “to possess it” (so KJV, ASV); NLT “as their inheritance.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “may prolong your days”; NAB “may have long life”; TEV “will continue to live.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “commandment.” The word **הַמִּצְוָה** (*mitsvah*) again is in the singular, serving as a comprehensive term for the whole stipulation section of the book. See note on the word “commandments” in 5:31.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “where you are going over to possess it” (so NASB); NRSV “that you are about to cross into and occupy.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Here the terms are not the usual **הַקְּוִיִּם** (*khuqqim*) and **הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים** (*mishpatim*; as in v. 1) but **הַקְּוִיִּם** (*khuqqot*, “statutes”) and **הַמִּצְוָה** (*mitsot*, “commandments”). It is clear that these terms are used interchangeably and that their technical precision ought not be overly stressed.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “commanding.” For stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy, “giving” has been used in the translation.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “may multiply greatly” (so NASB, NRSV); the words “in number” have been supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 10, 18, 23).

*The Essence of the Covenant Principles*

**6:4** Listen, Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!<sup>1</sup> **6:5** You must love<sup>2</sup> the LORD your God with your whole mind,<sup>3</sup> your whole being,<sup>4</sup> and all your strength.<sup>5</sup>

*Exhortation to Teach the Covenant Principles*

**6:6** These words I am commanding you today must be kept in mind, **6:7** and you must teach<sup>6</sup> them to your children and speak of them as you sit in your house, as you walk along the road,<sup>7</sup> as you lie down, and as you get up. **6:8** You should tie them as a reminder on your forearm<sup>8</sup> and fasten them as symbols<sup>9</sup> on your fore-

head. **6:9** Inscribe them on the doorframes of your houses and gates.<sup>10</sup>

*Exhortation to Worship the LORD Exclusively*

**6:10** Then when the LORD your God brings you to the land he promised your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give you – a land with large, fine cities you did not build, **6:11** houses filled with choice things you did not accumulate, hewn out cisterns you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant – and you eat your fill, **6:12** be careful not to forget the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, that place of slavery.<sup>11</sup> **6:13** You must revere the LORD your God, serve him, and take oaths using only his name. **6:14** You must not go after other gods, those<sup>12</sup> of the surrounding peoples, **6:15** for the LORD your God, who is present among you, is a jealous God and his anger will erupt against you and remove you from the land.<sup>13</sup>

*Exhortation to Obey the LORD Exclusively*

**6:16** You must not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah.<sup>14</sup> **6:17** Keep his<sup>15</sup> commandments very carefully,<sup>16</sup> as well as the stipulations and statutes he commanded you to observe. **6:18** Do whatever is proper<sup>17</sup> and good before the LORD so that it may go well with you and that you may enter and occupy the good land that he<sup>18</sup> promised your ancestors, **6:19** and that you may drive out all your enemies just as the LORD said.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD, our God, the LORD, one.” (1) One option is to translate: “The LORD is our God, the LORD alone” (cf. NAB, NRSV, NLT). This would be an affirmation that the LORD was the sole object of their devotion. This interpretation finds support from the appeals to loyalty that follow (vv. 5, 14). (2) Another option is to translate: “The LORD is our God, the LORD is unique.” In this case the text would be affirming the people’s allegiance to the Lord, as well as the Lord’s superiority to all other gods. It would also imply that he is the only one worthy of their worship. Support for this view comes from parallel texts such as Deut 7:9 and 10:17, as well as the use of “one” in Song 6:8-9, where the starstruck lover declares that his beloved is unique (literally, “one,” that is, “one of a kind”) when compared to all other women.

**sn** Verses 4-5 constitute the so-called *Shema* (after the first word שְׁמַע, *shema*, “hear”), widely regarded as the very heart of Jewish confession and faith. When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment of all, he quoted this text (Matt 22:37-38).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The verb אָהַב (*ahav*, “to love”) in this setting communicates not so much an emotional idea as one of covenant commitment. To love the LORD is to be absolutely loyal and obedient to him in every respect, a truth Jesus himself taught (cf. John 14:15). See also the note on the word “loved” in Deut 4:37.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “heart.” In OT physiology the heart (לֵב, לֵבָב; *levav, lev*) was considered the seat of the mind or intellect, so that one could think with one’s heart. See A. Luc, *NIDOTTE* 2:749-54.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “soul”; “being.” Contrary to Hellenistic ideas of a soul that is discrete and separate from the body and spirit, OT anthropology equated the “soul” (נֶפֶשׁ, *nefesh*) with the person himself. It is therefore best in most cases to translate נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*) as “being” or the like. See H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, 10-25; D. Fredericks, *NIDOTTE* 3:133-34.

<sup>5</sup> **sn** For NT variations on the *Shema* see Matt 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “repeat” (so NLT). If from the root לָמַד (*shanan*), the verb means essentially to “engrave,” that is, “to teach incisively” (Piel); note NAB “Drill them into your children.” Cf. BDB 1041-42 s.v.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Or “as you are away on a journey” (cf. NRSV, TEV, NLT); NAB “at home and abroad.”

<sup>8</sup> **sn** Tie them as a sign on your forearm. Later Jewish tradition referred to the little leather containers tied to the forearms and foreheads as *tefillin*. They were to contain the following passages from the Torah: Exod 13:1-10, 11-16; Deut 6:5-9; 11:13-21. The purpose was to serve as a “sign” of covenant relationship and obedience.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** Fasten them as symbols on your forehead. These were also known later as *tefillin* (see previous note) or phylacteries (from the Greek term). These box-like containers, like those on the forearms, held the same scraps of the Torah. It was the hypocritical practice of wearing these without heartfelt sincerity that caused Jesus to speak scathingly about them (cf. Matt 23:5).

<sup>10</sup> **sn** The Hebrew term מַזוּזוֹת (*m<sup>e</sup>zuzot*) refers both to the door frames and to small cases attached on them containing scripture texts (always Deut 6:4-9 and 11:13-21; and sometimes the decalogue; Exod 13:1-10, 11-16; and Num 10:35-36). See J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPSTC), 443-44.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “out of the house of slavery” (so NASB, NRSV).

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “from the gods.” The demonstrative pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you and destroy you from upon the surface of the ground.” Cf. KJV, ASV “from off the face of the earth.”

<sup>14</sup> **sn** The place name *Massah* (מַסָּה, *massah*) derives from a root מָסָה (*nasah*) meaning “to test; to try.” The reference here is to the experience in the Sinai desert when Moses struck the rock to obtain water (Exod 17:1-2). The complaining Israelites had, thus, “tested” the LORD, a wickedness that gave rise to the naming of the place (Exod 17:7; cf. Deut 9:22; 33:8).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the commandments of the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute before the finite verb to emphasize the statement. The imperfect verbal form is used here with an obligatory nuance that can be captured in English through the imperative. Cf. NASB, NRSV “diligently keep (obey NLT).”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “upright.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on the word “his” in v. 17.

*Exhortation to Remember the Past*

**6:20** When your children<sup>1</sup> ask you later on, “What are the stipulations, statutes, and ordinances that the LORD our God commanded you?” **6:21** you must say to them,<sup>2</sup> “We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt in a powerful way.<sup>3</sup> **6:22** And he<sup>4</sup> brought signs and great, devastating wonders on Egypt, on Pharaoh, and on his whole family<sup>5</sup> before our very eyes. **6:23** He delivered us from there so that he could give us the land he had promised our ancestors. **6:24** The LORD commanded us to obey all these statutes and to revere him<sup>6</sup> so that it may always go well for us and he may preserve us, as he has to this day. **6:25** We will be innocent if we carefully keep all these commandments<sup>7</sup> before the LORD our God, just as he demands.”<sup>8</sup>

*The Dispossession of Nonvassals*

**7:1** When the LORD your God brings you to the land that you are going to occupy and forces out many nations before you – Hittites,<sup>9</sup> Girgashites,<sup>10</sup> Amorites,<sup>11</sup> Canaanites,<sup>12</sup> Perizzites,<sup>13</sup> Hivites,<sup>14</sup> and Jebusites,<sup>15</sup> seven<sup>16</sup> nations more

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “your son.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “to your son.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “by a strong hand.” The image is that of a warrior who, with weapon in hand, overcomes his enemies. The LORD is commonly depicted as a divine warrior in the Book of Deuteronomy (cf. 5:15; 7:8; 9:26; 26:8).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on the word “his” in v. 17.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “house,” referring to the entire household.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD our God.” See note on the word “his” in v. 17.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The term “commandment” (מִצְוָה, *mitsvah*), here in the singular, refers to the entire body of covenant stipulations.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “as he has commanded us” (so NIV, NRSV).

<sup>9</sup> **sn** *Hittites*. The center of Hittite power was in Anatolia (central modern Turkey). In the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.) they were at their zenith, establishing outposts and colonies near and far. Some elements were obviously in Canaan at the time of the Conquest (1400-1350 B.C.).

<sup>10</sup> **sn** *Girgashites*. These cannot be ethnically identified and are unknown outside the OT. They usually appear in such lists only when the intention is to have seven groups in all (see also the note on the word “seven” later in this verse).

<sup>11</sup> **sn** *Amorites*. Originally from the upper Euphrates region (*Amurru*), the Amorites appear to have migrated into Canaan beginning in 2200 B.C. or thereabouts.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** *Canaanites*. These were the indigenous peoples of the land, going back to the beginning of recorded history (ca. 3000 B.C.). The OT identifies them as descendants of Ham (Gen 10:6), the only Hamites to have settled north and east of Egypt.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** *Perizzites*. This is probably a subgroup of Canaanites (Gen 13:7; 34:30).

<sup>14</sup> **sn** *Hivites*. These are usually thought to be the same as the Hurrians, a people well-known in ancient Near Eastern texts. They are likely identical to the Horites (see note on the term “Horites” in Deut 2:12).

<sup>15</sup> **sn** *Jebusites*. These inhabited the hill country, particularly in and about Jerusalem (cf. Num 13:29; Josh 15:8; 2 Sam 5:6; 24:16).

<sup>16</sup> **sn** *Seven*. This is an ideal number in the OT, one symbolizing fullness or completeness. Therefore, the intent of the text here is not to be precise and list all of Israel’s enemies but simply to state that Israel will have a full complement of foes to deal with. For other lists of Canaanites, some with fewer than seven peoples, see Exod 3:8; 13:5; 23:23, 28; 33:2;

numerous and powerful than you – **7:2** and he<sup>17</sup> delivers them over to you and you attack them, you must utterly annihilate<sup>18</sup> them. Make no treaty<sup>19</sup> with them and show them no mercy! **7:3** You must not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, **7:4** for they will turn your sons away from me to worship other gods. Then the anger of the LORD will erupt against you and he will quickly destroy you. **7:5** Instead, this is what you must do to them: You must tear down their altars, shatter their sacred pillars,<sup>20</sup> cut down their sacred Asherah poles,<sup>21</sup> and burn up their idols. **7:6** For you are a people holy<sup>22</sup> to the LORD your God. He<sup>23</sup> has chosen you to be his people, prized<sup>24</sup> above all others on the face of the earth.

*The Basis of Israel’s Election*

**7:7** It is not because you were more numerous than all the other peoples that the LORD favored and chose you – for in fact you were the least numerous of all peoples. **7:8** Rather it is because of his<sup>25</sup> love<sup>26</sup> for you and his faithfulness to the promise<sup>27</sup> he solemnly vowed<sup>28</sup> to

34:11; Deut 20:17; Josh 3:10; 9:1; 24:11. Moreover, the “Table of Nations” (Gen 10:15-19) suggests that all of these (possibly excepting the Perizzites) were offspring of Canaan and therefore Canaanites.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** In the Hebrew text the infinitive absolute before the finite verb emphasizes the statement. The imperfect has an obligatory nuance here. Cf. ASV “shalt (must NRSV) utterly destroy them”; CEV “must destroy them without mercy.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “covenant” (so NASB, NRSV); TEV “alliance.”

<sup>20</sup> **sn** *Sacred pillars*. The Hebrew word (מַצֵּבָה, *matsevet*) denotes a standing pillar, usually made of stone. Its purpose was to mark the presence of a shrine or altar thought to have been visited by deity. Though sometimes associated with pure worship of the LORD (Gen 28:18, 22; 31:13; 35:14; Exod 24:4), these pillars were usually associated with pagan cults and rituals (Exod 23:24; 34:13; Deut 12:3; 1 Kgs 14:23; 2 Kgs 17:10; Hos 3:4; 10:1; Jer 43:13).

<sup>21</sup> **sn** *Sacred Asherah poles*. A leading deity of the Canaanite pantheon was Asherah, wife/sister of El and goddess of fertility. She was commonly worshiped at shrines in or near groves of evergreen trees, or, failing that, at places marked by wooden poles (Hebrew אֲשֵׁרִים [*asherim*], as here). They were to be burned or cut down (Deut 12:3; 16:21; Judg 6:25, 28, 30; 2 Kgs 18:4).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** That is, “set apart.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Or “treasured” (so NIV, NRSV); NLT “his own special treasure.” The Hebrew term כִּנְיָהוּ (*kinayah*) describes Israel as God’s choice people, those whom he elected and who are most precious to him (cf. Exod 19:4-6; Deut 14:2; 26:18; 1 Chr 29:3; Ps 135:4; Eccl 2:8 Mal 3:17). See E. Carpenter, *NIDOTTE* 3:224.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD’s.” See note on “He” in 7:6.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** For the verb אָהַב (*ahav*, “to love”) as a term of choice or election, see note on the word “loved” in Deut 4:37.

<sup>27</sup> **tn** Heb “oath.” This is a reference to the promises of the so-called “Abrahamic Covenant” (cf. Gen 15:13-16).

<sup>28</sup> **tn** Heb “swore on oath.”

your ancestors<sup>1</sup> that the LORD brought you out with great power,<sup>2</sup> redeeming<sup>3</sup> you from the place of slavery, from the power<sup>4</sup> of Pharaoh king of Egypt. **7:9** So realize that the LORD your God is the true God,<sup>5</sup> the faithful God who keeps covenant faithfully<sup>6</sup> with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, **7:10** but who pays back those who hate<sup>7</sup> him as they deserve and destroys them. He will not ignore<sup>8</sup> those who hate him but will repay them as they deserve! **7:11** So keep the commandments, statutes, and ordinances that I today am commanding you to do.

#### *Promises of Good for Covenant Obedience*

**7:12** If you obey these ordinances and are careful to do them, the LORD your God will faithfully keep covenant with you<sup>9</sup> as he promised<sup>10</sup> your ancestors. **7:13** He will love and bless you, and make you numerous. He will bless you with many children,<sup>11</sup> with the produce of your soil, your grain, your new wine, your oil, the offspring of your oxen, and the young of your flocks in the land which he promised your ancestors to give you. **7:14** You will be blessed beyond all peoples; there will be no barrenness<sup>12</sup> among you or your livestock. **7:15** The LORD

will protect you from all sickness, and you will not experience any of the terrible diseases that you knew in Egypt; instead he will inflict them on all those who hate you.

#### *Exhortation to Destroy Canaanite Paganism*

**7:16** You must destroy<sup>13</sup> all the people whom the LORD your God is about to deliver over to you; you must not pity them or worship<sup>14</sup> their gods, for that will be a snare to you. **7:17** If you think, “These nations are more numerous than I – how can I dispossess them?” **7:18** you must not fear them. You must carefully recall<sup>15</sup> what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt, **7:19** the great judgments<sup>16</sup> you saw, the signs and wonders, the strength and power<sup>17</sup> by which he<sup>18</sup> brought you out – thus the LORD your God will do to all the people you fear. **7:20** Furthermore, the LORD your God will release hornets<sup>19</sup> among them until the very last ones who hide from you<sup>20</sup> perish. **7:21** You must not tremble in their presence, for the LORD your God, who is present among you, is a great and awesome God. **7:22** He,<sup>21</sup> the God who leads you, will expel the nations little by little. You will not be allowed to destroy them all at once lest the wild animals overrun you. **7:23** The LORD your God will give them over to you; he will throw them into a great panic<sup>22</sup> until they are destroyed. **7:24** He will hand over their kings to you and you will erase their very names from memory.<sup>23</sup> Nobody will be able to resist you until you destroy them.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 12, 13).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “by a strong hand” (NAB similar); NLT “with such amazing power.”

<sup>3</sup> **sn** Redeeming you from the place of slavery. The Hebrew verb translated “redeeming” (from the root פָּדָה, *padah*) has the idea of redemption by the payment of a ransom. The initial symbol of this was the Passover lamb, offered by Israel to the LORD as ransom in exchange for deliverance from bondage and death (Exod 12:1-14). Later, the firstborn sons of Israel, represented by the Levites, became the ransom (Num 3:11-13). These were all types of the redemption effected by the death of Christ who described his atoning work as “a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28; cf. 1 Pet 1:18).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “hand” (so KJV, NRSV), a metaphor for power or domination.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “the God.” The article here expresses uniqueness; cf. TEV “is the only God”; NLT “is indeed God.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “who keeps covenant and loyalty.” The syndetic construction of בְּרִית (b’rit) and חֶסֶד (khesed) should be understood not as “covenant” plus “loyalty” but as an adverbial construction in which חֶסֶד (“loyalty”) modifies the verb שָׁמַר (shamar, “keeps”).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** For the term “hate” as synonymous with rejection or disobedience see note on the word “reject” in Deut 5:9 (cf. NRSV “reject”).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “he will not hesitate concerning.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “will keep with you the covenant and loyalty.” On the construction used here, see v. 9.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “which he swore on oath.” The relative pronoun modifies “covenant,” so one could translate “will keep faithfully the covenant (or promise) he made on oath to your ancestors.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “will bless the fruit of your womb” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>12</sup> **sn** One of the ironies about the promises to the patriarchs concerning offspring was the characteristic barrenness of the wives of the men to whom these pledges were made (cf. Gen 11:30; 25:21; 29:31). Their affliction is in each case described by the very Hebrew word used here (אָצָרָה, *aqarah*), an affliction that will no longer prevail in Canaan.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “devour” (so NRSV); KJV, NAB, NASB “consume.” The verbal form (a perfect with vav consecutive) is understood here as having an imperatival or obligatory nuance (cf. the instructions and commands that follow). Another option is to take the statement as a continuation of the preceding conditional promises and translate “and you will destroy.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Or “serve” (so KJV, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “recalling, you must recall.” The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute before the finite verb for emphasis. Cf. KJV, ASV “shalt well remember.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “testings” (so NAB), a reference to the plagues. See note at 4:34.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “the strong hand and outstretched arm.” See 4:34.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The meaning of the term translated “hornets” (צְרִיחַ, *tsir’ah*) is debated. Various suggestions are “discouragement” (HALOT 1056-57 s.v.; cf. NEB, TEV, CEV “panic”; NCV “terror”) and “leprosy” (J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* [JPSTC], 360, n. 33; cf. NRSV “the pestilence”), as well as “hornet” (BDB 864 s.v.; cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NLT). The latter seems most suitable to the verb שָׁלַח (shalakh, “send”; cf. Exod 23:28; Josh 24:12).

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “the remnant and those who hide themselves.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 7:19.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “he will confuse them (with) great confusion.” The verb used here means “shake, stir up” (see Ruth 1:19; 1 Sam 4:5; 1 Kgs 1:45; Ps 55:2); the accompanying cognate noun refers to confusion, unrest, havoc, or panic (1 Sam 5:9, 11; 14:20; 2 Chr 15:5; Prov 15:16; Isa 22:5; Ezek 7:7; 22:5; Amos 3:9; Zech 14:13).

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “you will destroy their name from under heaven” (cf. KJV); NRSV “blot out their name from under heaven.”

7:25 You must burn the images of their gods, but do not covet the silver and gold that covers them so much that you take it for yourself and thus become ensnared by it; for it is abhorrent<sup>1</sup> to the LORD your God. 7:26 You must not bring any abhorrent thing into your house and thereby become an object of divine wrath<sup>2</sup> along with it.<sup>3</sup> You must absolutely detest<sup>4</sup> and abhor it,<sup>5</sup> for it is an object of divine wrath.

*The LORD's Provision in the Desert*

8:1 You must keep carefully all these commandments<sup>6</sup> I am giving<sup>7</sup> you today so that you may live, increase in number,<sup>8</sup> and go in and occupy the land that the LORD promised to your ancestors.<sup>9</sup> 8:2 Remember the whole way by which he<sup>10</sup> has brought you these forty years through the desert<sup>11</sup> so that he might, by humbling you, test you to see if you have it within you to keep his commandments or not. 8:3 So he humbled you by making you hungry and then feeding you with unfamiliar manna.<sup>12</sup> He did this

to teach you<sup>13</sup> that humankind<sup>14</sup> cannot live by bread<sup>15</sup> alone, but also by everything that comes from the LORD's mouth.<sup>16</sup> 8:4 Your clothing did not wear out nor did your feet swell all these forty years. 8:5 Be keenly aware that just as a parent disciplines his child,<sup>17</sup> the LORD your God disciplines you. 8:6 So you must keep his<sup>18</sup> commandments, live according to his standards,<sup>19</sup> and revere him. 8:7 For the LORD your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of brooks,<sup>20</sup> springs, and fountains flowing forth in valleys and hills, 8:8 a land of wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, and pomegranates, of olive trees and honey, 8:9 a land where you may eat food<sup>21</sup> in plenty and find no lack of anything, a land whose stones are iron<sup>22</sup> and from whose hills you can mine copper. 8:10 You will eat your fill and then praise the LORD your God because of the good land he has given you.

*Exhortation to Remember That Blessing Comes from God*

8:11 Be sure you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments, ordinances, and statutes that I am giving you today. 8:12 When you eat your fill, when you build and occupy good houses, 8:13 when your cattle and flocks increase, when you have plenty of silver and gold, and when you have abundance of everything, 8:14 be sure<sup>23</sup> you do not feel self-important and forget the LORD your

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The Hebrew word תועבה (*to'evah*, "abhorrent; detestable") describes anything detestable to the LORD because of its innate evil or inconsistency with his own nature and character. Frequently such things (or even persons) must be condemned to annihilation (הָרַם, *kherem*) lest they become a means of polluting or contaminating others (cf. Deut 13:17; 20:17-18). See M. Grisanti, *NIDOTTE* 4:315.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* "come under the ban" (so NASB); NRSV "be set apart for destruction." The same phrase occurs again at the end of this verse.

<sup>3</sup> **sn** The Hebrew word translated *an object of divine wrath* (הָרַם, *kherem*) refers to persons or things placed under God's judgment, usually to the extent of their complete destruction. See note on the phrase "divine judgment" in Deut 2:34.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Or "like it is."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** This Hebrew verb (שָׂקַץ, *shaqav*) is essentially synonymous with the next verb (תִּבְחַץ, *ta'av*; cf. תועבה, *to'evah*; see note on the word "abhorrent" in v. 25), though its field of meaning is more limited to cultic abomination (cf. Lev 11:11, 13; Ps 22:25).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* "detesting you must detest and abhorring you must abhor." Both verbs are preceded by a cognate infinitive absolute indicating emphasis.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The singular term מִצְוָה (*mitsvah*) includes the whole corpus of covenant stipulations, certainly the book of Deuteronomy at least (cf. Deut 5:28; 6:1, 25; 7:11; 11:8, 22; 15:5; 17:20; 19:9; 27:1; 30:11; 31:5). The plural מִצְוֹת (*mitsot*) refers to individual stipulations (as in vv. 2, 6).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* "commanding" (so NASB). For stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy, "giving" has been used in the translation (likewise in v. 11).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* "multiply" (so KJV, NASB, NLT); NIV, NRSV "increase."

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* "fathers" (also in vv. 16, 18).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the LORD your God." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Or "wilderness" (so KJV, NRSV, NLT); likewise in v. 15.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* "manna which you and your ancestors did not know." By popular etymology the word "manna" comes from the Hebrew phrase מַן הוּא (man hu'), i.e., "What is it?" (Exod 16:15). The question remains unanswered to this very day. Elsewhere the material is said to be "white like coriander seed" with "a taste like honey cakes" (Exod 16:31; cf. Num 11:7). Modern attempts to associate it with various desert plants are unsuccessful for the text says it was a new thing and, furthermore, one that appeared and disappeared miraculously (Exod 16:21-27).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* "in order to make known to you." In the Hebrew text this statement is subordinated to what precedes, resulting in a very long sentence in English. The translation makes this statement a separate sentence for stylistic reasons.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the man," but in a generic sense, referring to the whole human race ("mankind" or "humankind").

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term may refer to "food" in a more general sense (cf. CEV).

<sup>17</sup> **sn** Jesus quoted this text to the devil in the midst of his forty-day fast to make the point that spiritual nourishment is incomparably more important than mere physical bread (Matt 4:4; cf. Luke 4:4).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* "just as a man disciplines his son." The Hebrew text reflects the patriarchal idiom of the culture.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the commandments of the LORD your God." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* "by walking in his ways." The "ways" of the Lord refer here to his moral standards as reflected in his commandments. The verb "walk" is used frequently in the Bible (both OT and NT) for one's moral and ethical behavior.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Or "wadis."

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term may refer to "food" in a more general sense (cf. NASB, NCV, NLT) or "bread" in particular (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>23</sup> **sn** *A land whose stones are iron.* Since iron deposits are few and far between in Palestine, the reference here is probably to iron ore found in mines as opposed to the meteorite iron more commonly known in that area.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** The words "be sure" are not in the Hebrew text; vv. 12-14 are part of the previous sentence. For stylistic reasons a new sentence was started at the beginning of v. 12 in the translation and the words "be sure" repeated from v. 11 to indicate the connection.



God who brought you from the land of Egypt, the place of slavery, **8:15** and who brought you through the great, fearful desert of venomous serpents<sup>1</sup> and scorpions, an arid place with no water. He made water flow<sup>2</sup> from a flint rock and **8:16** fed you in the desert with manna (which your ancestors had never before known) so that he might by humbling you test you<sup>3</sup> and eventually bring good to you. **8:17** Be careful<sup>4</sup> not to say, “My own ability and skill<sup>5</sup> have gotten me this wealth.” **8:18** You must remember the LORD your God, for he is the one who gives ability to get wealth; if you do this he will confirm his covenant that he made by oath to your ancestors,<sup>6</sup> even as he has to this day. **8:19** Now if you forget the LORD your God at all<sup>7</sup> and follow other gods, worshiping and prostrating yourselves before them, I testify to you today that you will surely be annihilated. **8:20** Just like the nations the LORD is about to destroy from your sight, so he will do to you<sup>8</sup> because you would not obey him.<sup>9</sup>

### *Theological Justification of the Conquest*

**9:1** Listen, Israel: Today you are about to cross the Jordan so you can dispossess the nations there, people greater and stronger than you who live in large cities with extremely high fortifications.<sup>10</sup> **9:2** They include the Anakites,<sup>11</sup> a numerous<sup>12</sup> and tall people whom you know about and of whom it is said, “Who is able to resist the Anakites?” **9:3** Understand today that the LORD your God who goes before you is a devouring fire; he will defeat and subdue them before you. You will dispossess and destroy

them quickly just as he<sup>13</sup> has told you. **9:4** Do not think to yourself after the LORD your God has driven them out before you, “Because of my own righteousness the LORD has brought me here to possess this land.” It is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out ahead of you. **9:5** It is not because of your righteousness, or even your inner uprightness,<sup>14</sup> that you have come here to possess their land. Instead, because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out ahead of you in order to confirm the promise he<sup>15</sup> made on oath to your ancestors,<sup>16</sup> to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **9:6** Understand, therefore, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is about to give you this good land as a possession, for you are a stubborn<sup>17</sup> people!

### *The History of Israel's Stubbornness*

**9:7** Remember – don't ever forget<sup>18</sup> – how you provoked the LORD your God in the desert; from the time you left the land of Egypt until you came to this place you were constantly rebelling against him.<sup>19</sup> **9:8** At Horeb you provoked him and he was angry enough with you to destroy you. **9:9** When I went up the mountain to receive the stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant that the LORD made with you, I remained there<sup>20</sup> forty days and nights, eating and drinking nothing. **9:10** The LORD gave me the two stone tablets, written by the very finger<sup>21</sup> of God, and

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “flaming serpents”; KJV, NASB “fiery serpents”; NAB “saraph serpents.” This figure of speech (metonymy) probably describes the venomous and painful results of snakebite. The feeling from such an experience would be like a burning fire (רַפְּרָף, *saraf*).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the one who brought out for you water.” In the Hebrew text this continues the preceding sentence, but the translation begins a new sentence here for stylistic reasons.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in order to humble you and in order to test you.” See 8:2.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** For stylistic reasons a new sentence was started at the beginning of v. 17 in the translation and the words “be careful” supplied to indicate the connection.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “my strength and the might of my hand.”

<sup>6</sup> **tc** Smr and Lucian add “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” the standard way of rendering this almost stereotypical formula (cf. Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4). The MT's harder reading presumptively argues for its originality, however.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “if forgetting, you forget.” The infinitive absolute is used for emphasis; the translation indicates this with the words “at all” (cf. KJV).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “so you will perish.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “listen to the voice of the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “fortified to the heavens” (so NRSV); NLT “cities with walls that reach to the sky.” This is hyperbole.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** *Anakites*. See note on this term in Deut 1:28.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “great and tall.” Many English versions understand this to refer to physical size or strength rather than numbers (cf. “strong,” NIV, NCV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” The pronoun has been used in the translation in keeping with contemporary English style to avoid redundancy.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “uprightness of your heart” (so NASB, NRSV). The Hebrew word יָשָׁר (*is<sup>c</sup>daqah*, “righteousness”), though essentially synonymous here with יָשָׁר (*yosher*, “uprightness”), carries the idea of conformity to an objective standard. The term יָשָׁר has more to do with an inner, moral quality (cf. NAB, NIV “integrity”). Neither, however, was grounds for the LORD's favor. As he states in both vv. 4-5, the main reason he allowed Israel to take this land was the sinfulness of the Canaanites who lived there (cf. Gen 15:16).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “fathers.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “stiff-necked” (so KJV, NAB, NIV).

**sn** The Hebrew word translated *stubborn* means “stiff-necked.” The image is that of a draft animal that is unsubmitive to the rein or yoke and refuses to bend its neck to draw the load. This is an apt description of OT Israel (Exod 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 9:13).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** By juxtaposing the positive זָכַר (*zekhor*, “remember”) with the negative אַל-תִּשְׁכַּח (*al-tish<sup>c</sup>kakh*, “do not forget”), Moses makes a most emphatic plea.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD” (likewise in the following verse with both “him” and “he”). See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in the mountain.” The demonstrative pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>21</sup> **sn** *The very finger of God*. This is a double figure of speech (1) in which God is ascribed human features (anthropomorphism) and (2) in which a part stands for the whole (synecdoche). That is, God, as Spirit, has no literal finger nor, if he had, would he write with his finger. Rather, the sense is that God himself – not Moses in any way – was responsible for the composition of the Ten Commandments (cf. Exod 31:18; 32:16; 34:1).

on them was everything<sup>1</sup> he<sup>2</sup> said to you at the mountain from the midst of the fire at the time of that assembly. **9:11** Now at the end of the forty days and nights the LORD presented me with the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant. **9:12** And he said to me, “Get up, go down at once from here because your people whom you brought out of Egypt have sinned! They have quickly turned from the way I commanded them and have made for themselves a cast metal image.”<sup>3</sup> **9:13** Moreover, he said to me, “I have taken note of these people; they are a stubborn<sup>4</sup> lot! **9:14** Stand aside<sup>5</sup> and I will destroy them, obliterating their very name from memory,<sup>6</sup> and I will make you into a stronger and more numerous nation than they are.”

**9:15** So I turned and went down the mountain while it<sup>7</sup> was blazing with fire; the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands. **9:16** When I looked, you had indeed sinned against the LORD your God and had cast for yourselves a metal calf;<sup>8</sup> you had quickly turned aside from the way he<sup>9</sup> had commanded you! **9:17** I grabbed the two tablets, threw them down,<sup>10</sup> and shattered them before your very eyes. **9:18** Then I again fell down before the LORD for forty days and nights; I ate and drank nothing because of all the sin you had committed, doing such evil before the LORD as to enrage him. **9:19** For I was terrified at the LORD’s intense anger<sup>11</sup> that threatened to destroy you. But he<sup>12</sup> listened to me this time as well. **9:20** The LORD was also angry enough at Aaron to kill him, but at that time I prayed for him<sup>13</sup> too. **9:21** As for your sinful thing<sup>14</sup> that you had made, the calf, I took it, melted it down,<sup>15</sup> ground it up until it was as fine as dust, and tossed the dust into the stream that flows down the mountain. **9:22** Moreover,

you continued to provoke the LORD at Taberah,<sup>16</sup> Massah,<sup>17</sup> and Kibroth-Hattaavah.<sup>18</sup> **9:23** And when he<sup>19</sup> sent you from Kadesh-Barnea and told you, “Go up and possess the land I have given you,” you rebelled against the LORD your God<sup>20</sup> and would neither believe nor obey him. **9:24** You have been rebelling against him<sup>21</sup> from the very first day I knew you!

#### *Moses’ Plea on Behalf of the LORD’s Reputation*

**9:25** I lay flat on the ground before the LORD for forty days and nights,<sup>22</sup> for he<sup>23</sup> had said he would destroy you. **9:26** I prayed to him:<sup>24</sup> O, Lord God,<sup>25</sup> do not destroy your people, your valued property<sup>26</sup> that you have powerfully redeemed,<sup>27</sup> whom you brought out of Egypt by your strength.<sup>28</sup> **9:27** Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; ignore the stubbornness, wickedness, and sin of these people. **9:28** Otherwise the people of the land<sup>29</sup> from which you brought us will say, “The LORD was unable to bring them to the land he promised them, and because of his hatred for them he has brought them out to kill them in the desert.”<sup>30</sup> **9:29** They are your people, your valued property,<sup>31</sup> whom you brought out with great strength and power.<sup>32</sup>

#### *The Opportunity to Begin Again*

**10:1** At that same time the LORD said to me, “Carve out for yourself two stone tablets like the first ones and come up the mountain to me; also

<sup>16</sup> **sn** *Taberah*. By popular etymology this derives from the Hebrew verb *ba’ar* (“to burn”), thus, here, “burning.” The reference is to the LORD’s fiery wrath against Israel because of their constant complaints against him (Num 11:1-3).

<sup>17</sup> **sn** *Massah*. See note on this term in Deut 6:16.

<sup>18</sup> **sn** *Kibroth-Hattaavah*. This place name means in Hebrew “burial places of appetite,” that is, graves that resulted from overindulgence. The reference is to the Israelites stuffing themselves with the quail God had provided and doing so with thanklessness (Num 11:31-35).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the mouth of the LORD your God,” that is, against the commandment that he had spoken.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “when I prostrated myself.” Since this is redundant, it has been left untranslated.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* “Lord LORD” (אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, *’adonay yehviah*). The phrase is customarily rendered by Jewish tradition as “Lord God” (אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה, *’adonay ’elohim*). See also the note on the phrase “Lord God” in Deut 3:24.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** *Heb* “your inheritance”; NLT “your special (very own NRSV) possession.” Israel is compared to landed property that one would inherit from his ancestors and pass on to his descendants.

<sup>27</sup> **tn** *Heb* “you have redeemed in your greatness.”

<sup>28</sup> **tn** *Heb* “by your strong hand.”

<sup>29</sup> **tc** The MT reads only “the land.” Smr supplies אֲמ (‘am, “people”) and LXX and its dependents supply “the inhabitants of the land.” The truncated form found in the MT is adequate to communicate the intended meaning; the words “the people of” are supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>30</sup> **tn** Or “wilderness” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>31</sup> **tn** *Heb* “your inheritance.” See note at v. 26.

<sup>32</sup> **tn** *Heb* “an outstretched arm.”

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “according to all the words.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD” (likewise at the beginning of vv. 12, 13). See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>3</sup> **tc** *Heb* “a casting.” The MT reads מַסֵּכָה (*massekah*, “a cast thing”) but some mss and Smr add עֵגֶל (‘egel, “calf”), “a molten calf” or the like (Exod 32:8). Perhaps Moses here omits reference to the calf out of contempt for it.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “stiff-necked.” See note on the word “stubborn” in 9:6.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “leave me alone.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “from under heaven.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the mountain.” The translation uses a pronoun for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** On the phrase “metal calf,” see note on the term “metal image” in v. 12.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “from upon my two hands,” but as this seems somewhat obvious and redundant, it has been left untranslated for stylistic reasons.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the anger and the wrath.” Although many English versions translate as two terms, this construction is a hendiadys which serves to intensify the emotion (cf. NAB, TEV “fierce anger”).

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 9:3.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “Aaron.” The pronoun is used in the translation to avoid redundancy.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “your sin.” This is a metonymy in which the effect (sin) stands for the cause (the metal calf).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “burned it with fire.”

make for yourself a wooden ark.<sup>4</sup> **10:2** I will write on the tablets the same words<sup>2</sup> that were on the first tablets you broke, and you must put them into the ark.” **10:3** So I made an ark of acacia<sup>3</sup> wood and carved out two stone tablets just like the first ones. Then I went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hands. **10:4** The LORD<sup>4</sup> then wrote on the tablets the same words,<sup>5</sup> the ten commandments,<sup>6</sup> which he<sup>7</sup> had spoken to you at the mountain from the middle of the fire at the time of that assembly, and he<sup>8</sup> gave them to me. **10:5** Then I turned, went down the mountain, and placed the tablets into the ark I had made – they are still there, just as the LORD commanded me.

### Conclusion of the Historical Resume

**10:6** “During those days the Israelites traveled from Beeroth Bene Jaakan<sup>9</sup> to Moserah.<sup>10</sup> There Aaron died and was buried, and his son Eleazar became priest in his place. **10:7** From there they traveled to Gudgodah,<sup>11</sup> and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah,<sup>12</sup> a place of flowing streams. **10:8** At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi<sup>13</sup> to carry the ark of the LORD’s covenant, to stand before the LORD to serve him,

and to formulate blessings<sup>14</sup> in his name, as they do to this very day. **10:9** Therefore Levi has no allotment or inheritance<sup>15</sup> among his brothers;<sup>16</sup> the LORD is his inheritance just as the LORD your God told him. **10:10** As for me, I stayed at the mountain as I did the first time, forty days and nights. The LORD listened to me that time as well and decided not to destroy you. **10:11** Then he<sup>17</sup> said to me, “Get up, set out leading<sup>18</sup> the people so they may go and possess<sup>19</sup> the land I promised to give to their ancestors.”<sup>20</sup>

### An Exhortation to Love Both God and People

**10:12** Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you except to revere him,<sup>21</sup> to obey all his commandments,<sup>22</sup> to love him, to serve him<sup>23</sup> with all your mind and being,<sup>24</sup> **10:13** and to keep the LORD’s commandments and statutes that I am giving<sup>25</sup> you today for your own good? **10:14** The heavens – indeed the highest heavens – belong to the LORD your God, as does the earth and everything in it. **10:15** However, only to your ancestors did he<sup>26</sup> show his loving favor,<sup>27</sup> and he chose you, their descendants,<sup>28</sup> from all peoples – as is apparent today. **10:16** Therefore, cleanse<sup>29</sup> your heart and stop

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Or “chest” (so NIV, CEV); NLT “sacred chest”; TEV “wooden box.” This chest was made of acacia wood; it is later known as the ark of the covenant.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** *The same words.* The care with which the replacement copy must be made underscores the importance of verbal precision in relaying the LORD’s commandments.

<sup>3</sup> **sn** *Acacia wood* (Heb “shittim wood”). This is wood from the acacia, the most common timber tree of the Sinai region. Most likely it is the species *Acacia raddiana* because this has the largest trunk. See F. N. Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 63.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “he”; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “according to the former writing.” See note on the phrase “the same words” in v. 2.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “ten words.” The “Ten Commandments” are known in Hebrew as the “Ten Words,” which in Greek became the “Decalogue.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” earlier in this verse.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** *Beeroth Bene Jaakan.* This Hebrew name could be translated “the wells of Bene Jaakan” or “the wells of the sons of Jaakan,” a site whose location cannot be determined (cf. Num 33:31-32; 1 Chr 1:42).

<sup>10</sup> **sn** *Moserah.* Since Aaron in other texts (Num 20:28; 33:38) is said to have died on Mount Hor, this must be the Arabah region in which Hor was located.

<sup>11</sup> **sn** *Gudgodah.* This is probably the same as Haggidgad, which is also associated with Jotbathah (Num 33:33).

<sup>12</sup> **sn** *Jotbathah.* This place, whose Hebrew name can be translated “place of wadis,” is possibly modern *Ain Tabah*, just north of Eilat, or *Tabah*, 6.5 mi (11 km) south of Eilat on the west shore of the Gulf of Aqaba.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** *The LORD set apart the tribe of Levi.* This was not the initial commissioning of the tribe of Levi to this ministry (cf. Num 3:11-13; 8:12-26), but with Aaron’s death it seemed appropriate to Moses to reiterate Levi’s responsibilities. There is no reference in the Book of Numbers to this having been done, but the account of Eleazar’s succession to the priesthood there (Num 20:25-28) would provide a setting for this to have occurred.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** *To formulate blessings.* The most famous example of this is the priestly “blessing formula” of Num 6:24-26.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** *Levi has no allotment or inheritance.* As the priestly tribe, Levi would have no land allotment except for forty-eight towns set apart for their use (Num 35:1-8; Josh 21:1-42). But theirs was a far greater inheritance, for the LORD himself was their apportionment, that is, service to him would be their full-time and lifelong privilege (Num 18:20-24; Deut 18:2; Josh 13:33).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** That is, among the other Israelite tribes.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 10:4.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “before” (so KJV, ASV); NAB, NRSV “at the head of.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** After the imperative these subordinated jussive forms (with prefixed *vav*) indicate purpose or result.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 15, 22).

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 10:4.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “to walk in all his ways” (so KJV, NIV, NRSV); NAB “follow his ways exactly”; NLT “to live according to his will.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 10:4.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb “heart and soul” or “heart and being”; NCV “with your whole being.” See note on the word “being” in Deut 6:5.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** Heb “to command” (so NASB, NRSV). For stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy, “giving” has been used in the translation.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 10:4.

<sup>27</sup> **tn** Heb “take delight to love.” Here again the verb אָהַב (*ahav*, “love”), juxtaposed with בָּחַר (*bakhar*, “choose”), is a term in covenant contexts that describes the LORD’s initiative in calling the patriarchal ancestors to be the founders of a people special to him (cf. the note on the word “loved” in Deut 4:37).

<sup>28</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “after them,” but it is redundant in English style and has not been included in the translation.

<sup>29</sup> **tn** Heb “circumcise the foreskin of” (cf. KJV, ASV, NRSV). Reference to the Abrahamic covenant prompts Moses to recall the sign of that covenant, namely, physical circumcision (Gen 17:9-14). Just as that act signified total covenant obedience, so spiritual circumcision (cleansing of the heart) signifies more internally a commitment to be pliable and obedient to the will of God (cf. Deut 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:26).

being so stubborn!<sup>1</sup> **10:17** For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God who is unbiased and takes no bribe, **10:18** who justly treats<sup>2</sup> the orphan and widow, and who loves resident foreigners, giving them food and clothing. **10:19** So you must love the resident foreigner because you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. **10:20** Revere the LORD your God, serve him, be loyal to him and take oaths only in his name. **10:21** He is the one you should praise;<sup>3</sup> he is your God, the one who has done these great and awesome things for you that you have seen. **10:22** When your ancestors went down to Egypt, they numbered only seventy, but now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of the sky.<sup>4</sup>

### Reiteration of the Call to Obedience

**11:1** You must love the LORD your God and do what he requires; keep his statutes, ordinances, and commandments<sup>5</sup> at all times. **11:2** Bear in mind today that I am not speaking<sup>6</sup> to your children who have not personally experienced the judgments<sup>7</sup> of the LORD your God, which revealed<sup>8</sup> his greatness, strength, and power.<sup>9</sup> **11:3** They did not see<sup>10</sup> the awesome deeds he performed<sup>11</sup> in the midst of Egypt

against Pharaoh king of Egypt and his whole land, **11:4** or what he did to the army of Egypt, including their horses and chariots, when he made the waters of the Red Sea<sup>12</sup> overwhelm them while they were pursuing you and he<sup>13</sup> annihilated them.<sup>14</sup> **11:5** They did not see<sup>15</sup> what he did to you in the desert before you reached this place, **11:6** or what he did to Dathan and Abiram,<sup>16</sup> sons of Eliab the Reubenite,<sup>17</sup> when the earth opened its mouth in the middle of the Israelite camp<sup>18</sup> and swallowed them, their families,<sup>19</sup> their tents, and all the property they brought with them.<sup>20</sup> **11:7** I am speaking to you<sup>21</sup> because you are the ones who saw all the great deeds of the LORD!

### The Abundance of the Land of Promise

**11:8** Now pay attention to all the commandments<sup>22</sup> I am giving<sup>23</sup> you today, so that you may be strong enough to enter and possess the land where you are headed.<sup>24</sup> **11:9** and that you may enjoy long life in the land the LORD promised to give to your ancestors<sup>25</sup> and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. **11:10** For the land where you are headed<sup>26</sup> is not like the land

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* "your neck do not harden again." See note on the word "stubborn" in Deut 9:6.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Or "who executes justice for" (so NAB, NRSV); NLT "gives justice to."

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* "your praise." The pronoun is subjective and the noun "praise" is used here metonymically for the object of their praise (the Lord).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Or "heavens." The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated "heaven(s)" or "sky" depending on the context.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** This collocation of technical terms for elements of the covenant text lends support to its importance and also signals a new section of paraenesis in which Moses will exhort Israel to covenant obedience. The Hebrew term מִשְׁמָרוֹת (*mishmarot*, "obligations") sums up the three terms that follow – חֻקֵּי ( *khuvot*), מִשְׁפָּטִים (*mishppatim*), and מִצְוֹת (*mitsot*).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* "that not." The words "I am speaking" have been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* "who have not known and who have not seen the discipline of the LORD." The collocation of the verbs "know" and "see" indicates that personal experience (knowing by seeing) is in view. The term translated "discipline" (KJV, ASV "chastisement") may also be rendered "instruction," but vv. 2b-6 indicate that the referent of the term is the various acts of divine judgment the Israelites had witnessed.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The words "which revealed" have been supplied in the translation to show the logical relationship between the terms that follow and the divine judgments. In the Hebrew text the former are in apposition to the latter.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* "his strong hand and his stretched-out arm."

<sup>10</sup> **tn** In the Hebrew text vv. 2-7 are one long sentence. For stylistic reasons the English translation divides the passage into three sentences. To facilitate this stylistic decision the words "They did not see" are supplied at the beginning of both v. 3 and v. 5, and "I am speaking" at the beginning of v. 7.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* "his signs and his deeds which he did" (NRSV similar). The collocation of "signs" and "deeds" indicates that these acts were intended to make an impression on observers and reveal something about God's power (cf. v. 2b). The word "awesome" has been employed to bring out the force of the word "signs" in this context.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* "Reed Sea." "Reed Sea" (or "Sea of Reeds") is a more accurate rendering of the Hebrew expression יַם סוּף (*yam suf*), traditionally translated "Red Sea." See note on the term "Red Sea" in Exod 13:18.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the LORD." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* "and the LORD destroyed them to this day" (cf. NRSV); NLT "he has kept them devastated to this very day." The translation uses the verb "annihilated" to indicate the permanency of the action.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** See note on these same words in v. 3.

<sup>16</sup> **sn** *Dathan and Abiram*. These two (along with others) had challenged Moses' leadership in the desert with the result that the earth beneath them opened up and they and their families disappeared (Num 16:1-3, 31-35).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Or "the descendant of Reuben"; *Heb* "son of Reuben."

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* "in the midst of all Israel" (so KJV, ASV, NRSV); NASB "among all Israel." In the Hebrew text these words appear at the end of the verse, but they are logically connected with the verbs. To make this clear the translation places the phrase after the first verb.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* "their houses," referring to all who lived in their household. Cf. KJV, ASV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT "households."

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* "and all the substance which was at their feet."

<sup>21</sup> **tn** On the addition of these words in the translation see note on "They did not see" in v. 3.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the commandment." The singular מִצְוָה (*mitsvah*, "commandment") speaks here as elsewhere of the whole corpus of covenant stipulations in Deuteronomy (cf. 6:1, 25; 7:11; 8:1).

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* "commanding" (so NASB, NRSV). For stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy, "giving" has been used in the translation (likewise in vv. 13, 27).

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* "which you are crossing over there to possess it."

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* "fathers" (also in v. 21).

<sup>26</sup> **tn** *Heb* "you are going there to possess it"; NASB "into which you are about to cross to possess it"; NRSV "that you are crossing over to occupy."

of Egypt from which you came, a land where you planted seed and which you irrigated by hand<sup>1</sup> like a vegetable garden. **11:11** Instead, the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy<sup>2</sup> is one of hills and valleys, a land that drinks in water from the rains,<sup>3</sup> **11:12** a land the LORD your God looks after.<sup>4</sup> He is constantly attentive to it<sup>5</sup> from the beginning to the end of the year.<sup>6</sup> **11:13** Now, if you pay close attention<sup>7</sup> to my commandments that I am giving you today and love<sup>8</sup> the LORD your God and serve him with all your mind and being,<sup>9</sup> **11:14** then he promises,<sup>10</sup> “I will send rain for your land<sup>11</sup> in its season, the autumn and the spring rains,<sup>12</sup> so that you may gather in your grain, new wine, and olive oil. **11:15** I will provide pasture<sup>13</sup> for your livestock and you will eat your fill.”

### *Exhortation to Instruction and Obedience*

**11:16** Make sure you do not turn away to serve and worship other gods!<sup>14</sup> **11:17** Then the

anger of the LORD will erupt<sup>15</sup> against you and he will close up the sky<sup>16</sup> so that it does not rain. The land will not yield its produce, and you will soon be removed<sup>17</sup> from the good land that the LORD<sup>18</sup> is ABOUT TO GIVE YOU. **11:18** Fix these words of mine into your mind and being,<sup>19</sup> and tie them as a reminder on your hands and let them be symbols<sup>20</sup> on your forehead. **11:19** Teach them to your children and speak of them as you sit in your house, as you walk along the road,<sup>21</sup> as you lie down, and as you get up. **11:20** Inscribe them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates **11:21** so that your days and those of your descendants may be extended in the land which the LORD promised to give to your ancestors, like the days of heaven itself.<sup>22</sup> **11:22** For if you carefully observe all of these commandments<sup>23</sup> I am giving you<sup>24</sup> and love the LORD your God, live according to his standards,<sup>25</sup> and remain loyal to him, **11:23** then he<sup>26</sup> will drive out all these nations ahead of you, and you will dispossess nations greater and stronger than you. **11:24** Every place you set your foot<sup>27</sup> will be yours; your border will extend from the desert to Lebanon and from the River (that is, the Euphrates) as far as the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>28</sup> **11:25** Nobody will be able to resist you; the LORD your God will spread the fear and terror of you over the whole land on which you walk, just as he promised you.

### *Anticipation of a Blessing and Cursing Ceremony*

**11:26** Take note – I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse.<sup>29</sup> **11:27** the blessing if

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “with your foot” (so NASB, NLT). There is a two-fold significance to this phrase. First, Egypt had no rain so water supply depended on human efforts at irrigation. Second, the Nile was the source of irrigation waters but those waters sometimes had to be pumped into fields and gardens by foot-power, perhaps the kind of machinery (Arabic *shaduf*) still used by Egyptian farmers (see C. Aldred, *The Egyptians*, 181). Nevertheless, the translation uses “by hand,” since that expression is the more common English idiom for an activity performed by manual labor.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “which you are crossing over there to possess it.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “rain of heaven.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “seeks.” The statement reflects the ancient belief that God (Baal in Canaanite thinking) directly controlled storms and rainfall.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it” (so NIV); NASB, NRSV “always on it.”

**sn** Constantly attentive to it. This attention to the land by the LORD is understandable in light of the centrality of the land in the Abraham covenant (cf. Gen 12:1, 7; 13:15; 15:7, 16, 18; 17:8; 26:3).

<sup>6</sup> **sn** From the beginning to the end of the year. This refers to the agricultural year that was marked by the onset of the heavy rains, thus the autumn. See note on the phrase “the former and the latter rains” in v. 14.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “if hearing, you will hear.” The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute to emphasize the verbal idea. The translation renders this emphasis with the word “close.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Again, the Hebrew term אָהַב (*’ahav*) draws attention to the reciprocation of divine love as a condition or sign of covenant loyalty (cf. Deut 6:5).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “heart and soul” or “heart and being.” See note on the word “being” in Deut 6:5.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The words “he promises” do not appear in the Hebrew text but are needed in the translation to facilitate the transition from the condition (v. 13) to the promise and make it clear that the Lord is speaking the words of vv. 14-15.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “the rain of your land.” In this case the genitive (modifying term) indicates the recipient of the rain.

<sup>12</sup> **sn** The autumn and the spring rains. The “former” (יָרֵד, *yoreh*) and “latter” (מַלְקוֹשׁ, *malqosh*) rains come in abundance respectively in September/October and March/April. Planting of most crops takes place before the former rains fall and the harvests follow the latter rains.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “grass in your field.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “Watch yourselves lest your heart turns and you turn aside and serve other gods and bow down to them.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “will become hot”; KJV, NASB, NRSV “will be kindled”; NAB “will flare up”; NIV, NLT “will burn.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Or “heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Or “be destroyed”; NAB, NIV “will soon perish.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 11:4.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “heart and soul” or “heart and being.” See note on the word “being” in Deut 6:5.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** On the Hebrew term טוֹטְפוֹת (*totafot*, “reminders”), cf. Deut 6:4-9.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Or “as you are away on a journey” (cf. NRSV, TEV, NLT); NAB “at home and abroad.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “like the days of the heavens upon the earth,” that is, forever.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “this commandment.” See note at Deut 5:30.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb “commanding you to do it.” For stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy, “giving” has been used in the translation and “to do it” has been left untranslated.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** Heb “walk in all his ways” (so KJV, NIV); TEV “do everything he commands.”

<sup>26</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>27</sup> **tn** Heb “the sole of your foot walks.” The placing of the foot symbolizes conquest and dominion, especially on land or on the necks of enemies (cf. Deut 1:36; Ps 7:13; Isa 63:3 Hab 3:19; Zech 9:13). See E. H. Merrill, *NIDOTTE* 1:992.

<sup>28</sup> **tn** Heb “the after sea,” that is, the sea behind one when one is facing east, which is the normal OT orientation. Cf. ASV “the hinder sea.”

<sup>29</sup> **sn** A blessing and a curse. Every extant treaty text of the late Bronze Age attests to a section known as the “blessings and curses,” the former for covenant loyalty and the latter for covenant breach. Blessings were promised rewards for obedience; curses were threatened judgments for disobedience. In the Book of Deuteronomy these are fully developed

you take to heart<sup>1</sup> the commandments of the LORD your God that I am giving you today, **11:28** and the curse if you pay no attention<sup>2</sup> to his<sup>3</sup> commandments and turn from the way I am setting before<sup>4</sup> you today to pursue<sup>5</sup> other gods you have not known. **11:29** When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are to possess, you must pronounce the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.<sup>6</sup> **11:30** Are they not across the Jordan River,<sup>7</sup> toward the west, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah opposite Gilgal<sup>8</sup> near the oak<sup>9</sup> of Moreh? **11:31** For you are about to cross the Jordan to possess the land the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess and inhabit it. **11:32** Be certain to keep all the statutes and ordinances that I am presenting to you today.

### The Central Sanctuary

**12:1** These are the statutes and ordinances you must be careful to obey as long as you live in the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors,<sup>10</sup> has given you to possess.<sup>11</sup> **12:2** You must

in 27:1–28:68. Here Moses adumbrates the whole by way of anticipation.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “listen to,” that is, obey.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “do not listen to,” that is, do not obey.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “the commandments of the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “am commanding” (so NASB, NRSV).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “walk after”; NIV “by following”; NLT “by worshipping.” This is a violation of the first commandment, the most serious of the covenant violations (Deut 5:6-7).

<sup>6</sup> **sn** *Mount Gerizim...Mount Ebal*. These two mountains are near the ancient site of Shechem and the modern city of Nablus. The valley between them is like a great amphitheater with the mountain slopes as seating sections. The place was sacred because it was there that Abraham pitched his camp and built his first altar after coming to Canaan (Gen 12:6). Jacob also settled at Shechem for a time and dug a well from which Jesus once requested a drink of water (Gen 33:18-20; John 4:5-7). When Joshua and the Israelites finally brought Canaan under control they assembled at Shechem as Moses commanded and undertook a ritual of covenant reaffirmation (Josh 8:30-35; 24:1, 25). Half the tribes stood on Mt. Gerizim and half on Mt. Ebal and in antiphonal chorus pledged their loyalty to the LORD before Joshua and the Levites who stood in the valley below (Josh 8:33; cf. Deut 27:11-13).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>8</sup> **sn** *Gilgal*. From a Hebrew verb root גָּלַל (*galal*, “to roll”) this place name means “circle” or “rolling,” a name given because God had “rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you” (Josh 5:9). It is perhaps to be identified with Khirbet el-Metjir, 1.2 mi (2 km) northeast of OT Jericho.

<sup>9</sup> **tc** The MT plural “oaks” (אֵילִים, *’eloney*) should probably be altered (with many Greek texts) to the singular “oak” (אֵילָן, *’elon*; cf. NRSV) in line with the only other occurrence of the phrase (Gen 12:6). The Syriac, *Tg. Ps.-J.* read *mmr*, confusing this place with the “oaks of Mamre” near Hebron (Gen 13:18). *Smr* also appears to confuse “Moreh” with “Mamre” (reading *mmr*, a combined form), adding the clarification *mwšl shkm* (“near Shechem”) apparently to distinguish it from Mamre near Hebron.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “fathers.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “you must be careful to obey in the land the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess all the days which you live in the land.” This adverbial statement modifies “to obey,” not “to possess,” so the order in the translation has

by all means destroy<sup>12</sup> all the places where the nations you are about to dispossess worship their gods – on the high mountains and hills and under every leafy tree.<sup>13</sup> **12:3** You must tear down their altars, shatter their sacred pillars,<sup>14</sup> burn up their sacred Asherah poles,<sup>15</sup> and cut down the images of their gods; you must eliminate their very memory from that place. **12:4** You must not worship the LORD your God the way they worship. **12:5** But you must seek only the place he<sup>16</sup> chooses from all your tribes to establish his name as his place of residence,<sup>17</sup> and you must go there. **12:6** And there you must take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the personal offerings you have prepared,<sup>18</sup> your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. **12:7** Both you and your families<sup>19</sup> must feast there before the LORD your God and rejoice in all the output of your labor with which he<sup>20</sup> has blessed you. **12:8** You must not do like we are doing here today, with everyone<sup>21</sup> doing what seems best to him, **12:9** for you have not yet come to the final stop<sup>22</sup> and inheritance the LORD your God is giving you. **12:10** When you do go across the Jordan

been rearranged to make this clear.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “destroying you must destroy”; KJV “Ye shall utterly (surely ASV) destroy”; NRSV “must demolish completely.” The Hebrew infinitive absolute precedes the verb for emphasis, which is reflected in the translation by the words “by all means.”

<sup>13</sup> **sn** *Every leafy tree*. This expression refers to evergreens which, because they keep their foliage throughout the year, provided apt symbolism for nature cults such as those practiced in Canaan. The deity particularly in view is Asherah, wife of the great god El, who was considered the goddess of fertility and whose worship frequently took place at shrines near or among clusters (groves) of such trees (see also Deut 7:5). See J. Hadley, *NIDOTTE* 1:569-70; J. DeMoor, *TDOT* 1:438-44.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** *Sacred pillars*. These are the stelae (stone pillars; the Hebrew term is מַצֵּבֹת, *matsebot*) associated with Baal worship, perhaps to mark a spot hallowed by an alleged visitation of the gods. See also Deut 7:5.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** *Sacred Asherah poles*. The Hebrew term (plural) is אֲשֵׁרִים (*’asherim*). See note on the word “(leafy) tree” in v. 2, and also Deut 7:5.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>17</sup> **tc** Some scholars, on the basis of v. 11, emend the MT reading שְׁכֵנֹו (*shikhno*, “his residence”) to the infinitive construct לִישְׁבֵן (*’lishakhen*, “to make [his name] dwell”), perhaps with the 3rd person masculine singular sf לִישְׁבֵנו (*’lishak’eno*, “to cause it to dwell”). Though the presupposed noun שְׁכֵנָה (*shekhen*) is nowhere else attested, the parallel here with שְׁמָמָה (*shammah*, “there”) favors retaining the MT as it stands.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “heave offerings of your hand.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “and your houses,” referring to entire households. The pronouns “you” and “your” are plural in the Hebrew text.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 12:5.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “a man.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “rest.”

River<sup>1</sup> and settle in the land he<sup>2</sup> is granting you as an inheritance and you find relief from all the enemies who surround you, you will live in safety.<sup>3</sup> **12:11** Then you must come to the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to reside, bringing<sup>4</sup> everything I am commanding you – your burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, the personal offerings you have prepared,<sup>5</sup> and all your choice votive offerings which you devote to him.<sup>6</sup> **12:12** You shall rejoice in the presence of the LORD your God, along with your sons, daughters, male and female servants, and the Levites in your villages<sup>7</sup> (since they have no allotment or inheritance with you).<sup>8</sup> **12:13** Make sure you do not offer burnt offerings in any place you wish, **12:14** for you may do so<sup>9</sup> only in the place the LORD chooses in one of your tribal areas – there you may do everything I am commanding you.<sup>10</sup>

### *Regulations for Profane Slaughter*

**12:15** On the other hand, you may slaughter and eat meat as you please when the LORD your God blesses you<sup>11</sup> in all your villages.<sup>12</sup> Both the ritually pure and impure may eat it, whether it is a gazelle or an ibex. **12:16** However, you must not eat blood – pour it out on the ground like water. **12:17** You will not be allowed to eat in your villages your tithe of grain, new wine, olive oil, the firstborn of your herd and flock, any votive offerings you have vowed, or your freewill and personal offerings. **12:18** Only in the presence of the LORD your God may you eat these, in the place he<sup>13</sup> chooses. This applies to

you, your son, your daughter, your male and female servants, and the Levites<sup>14</sup> in your villages. In that place you will rejoice before the LORD your God in all the output of your labor.<sup>15</sup> **12:19** Be careful not to overlook the Levites as long as you live in the land.

### *The Sanctity of Blood*

**12:20** When the LORD your God extends your borders as he said he would do and you say, “I want to eat meat just as I please,”<sup>16</sup> you may do so as you wish.<sup>17</sup> **12:21** If the place he<sup>18</sup> chooses to locate his name is too far for you, you may slaughter any of your herd and flock he<sup>19</sup> has given you just as I have stipulated; you may eat them in your villages<sup>20</sup> just as you wish. **12:22** Like you eat the gazelle or ibex, so you may eat these; the ritually impure and pure alike may eat them. **12:23** However, by no means eat the blood, for the blood is life itself<sup>21</sup> – you must not eat the life with the meat! **12:24** You must not eat it! You must pour it out on the ground like water. **12:25** You must not eat it so that it may go well with you and your children after you; you will be doing what is right in the LORD’s sight.<sup>22</sup> **12:26** Only the holy things and votive offerings that belong to you, you must pick up and take to the place the LORD will choose.<sup>23</sup> **12:27** You must offer your burnt offerings, both meat and blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; the blood of your other sacrifices<sup>24</sup> you must pour out on his<sup>25</sup> altar while you eat the meat. **12:28** Pay careful attention to all these things I am commanding you so that it may always go well with you and your children

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 12:5.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** In the Hebrew text vv. 10–11 are one long, complex sentence. For stylistic reasons the translation divides this into two sentences.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and it will be (to) the place where the LORD your God chooses to cause his name to dwell you will bring.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “heave offerings of your hand.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 12:5.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “within your gates” (so KJV, NASB); NAB “who belongs to your community.”

<sup>8</sup> **sn** *They have no allotment or inheritance with you.* See note on the word “inheritance” in Deut 10:9.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “offer burnt offerings.” The expression “do so” has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** This injunction to worship in a single and central sanctuary – one limited and appropriate to the thrice-annual festival celebrations (see Exod 23:14–17; 34:22–24; Lev 23:4–36; Deut 16:16–17) – marks a departure from previous times when worship was carried out at local shrines (cf. Gen 8:20; 12:7; 13:18; 22:9; 26:25; 35:1, 3, 7; Exod 17:15). Apart from the corporate worship of the whole theocratic community, however, worship at local altars would still be permitted as in the past (Deut 16:21; Judg 6:24–27; 13:19–20; 1 Sam 7:17; 10:5, 13; 2 Sam 24:18–25; 1 Kgs 18:30).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “only in all the desire of your soul you may sacrifice and eat flesh according to the blessing of the LORD your God which he has given to you.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “gates” (so KJV, NASB; likewise in vv. 17, 18).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 12:5.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** See note at Deut 12:12.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in all the sending forth of your hands.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “for my soul desires to eat meat.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “according to all the desire of your soul you may eat meat.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 12:5.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 12:5.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “gates” (so KJV, NASB); NAB “in your own community.”

<sup>21</sup> **sn** *The blood is life itself.* This is a figure of speech (metonymy) in which the cause or means (the blood) stands for the result or effect (life). That is, life depends upon the existence and circulation of blood, a truth known empirically but not scientifically tested and proved until the 17th century A.D. (cf. Lev 17:11).

<sup>22</sup> **tc** *Heb* “in the eyes of the LORD.” The LXX adds “your God” to create the common formula, “the LORD your God.” The MT is preferred precisely because it does not include the stereotyped formula; thus it more likely preserves the original text.

<sup>23</sup> **tc** Again, to complete a commonly attested wording the LXX adds after “choose” the phrase “to place his name there.” This shows insensitivity to deliberate departures from literary stereotypes. The MT reading is to be preferred.

<sup>24</sup> **sn** These *other sacrifices* would be so-called peace or fellowship offerings whose ritual required a different use of the blood from that of burnt (sin and trespass) offerings (cf. Lev 3; 7:11–14, 19–21).

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* “on the altar of the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

after you when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

### *The Abomination of Pagan Gods*

**12:29** When the LORD your God eliminates the nations from the place where you are headed and you dispossess them, you will settle down in their land.<sup>1</sup> **12:30** After they have been destroyed from your presence, be careful not to be ensnared like they are; do not pursue their gods and say, “How do these nations serve their gods? I will do the same.” **12:31** You must not worship the LORD your God the way they do!<sup>2</sup> For everything that is abhorrent<sup>3</sup> to him,<sup>4</sup> everything he hates, they have done when worshiping their gods. They even burn up their sons and daughters before their gods!

### *Idolatry and False Prophets*

**12:32** (13:1)<sup>5</sup> You<sup>6</sup> must be careful to do everything I am commanding you. Do not add to it or subtract from it!<sup>7</sup> **13:1** Suppose a prophet or one who foretells by dreams<sup>8</sup> should appear

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “dwell in their land” (so NASB). In the Hebrew text vv. 29-30 are one long sentence. For stylistic reasons the translation divides it into two.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “you must not do thus to/for the LORD your God.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** See note on this term at Deut 7:25.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “every abomination of the LORD.” See note on the word “his” in v. 27.

<sup>5</sup> **sn** Beginning with **12:32**, the verse numbers through **13:18** in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with **12:32** ET = **13:1** HT, **13:1** ET = **13:2** HT, **13:2** ET = **13:3** HT, etc., through **13:18** ET = **13:19** HT. With **14:1** the verse numbers in the ET and HT are again the same.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** This verse highlights a phenomenon found throughout Deuteronomy, but most especially in chap. 12, namely, the alternation of grammatical singular and plural forms of the pronoun (known as *Numeruswechsel* in German scholarship). Critical scholarship in general resolves the “problem” by suggesting varying literary traditions – one favorable to the singular pronoun and the other to the plural – which appear in the (obviously rough) redacted text at hand. Even the ancient versions were troubled by the lack of harmony of grammatical number and in this verse, for example, offered a number of alternate readings. The MT reads “Everything I am commanding you (plural) you (plural) must be careful to do; you (singular) must not add to it nor should you (singular) subtract from it.” Smr, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate suggest singular for the first two pronouns but a few Smr MSS propose plural for the last two. What both ancient and modern scholars tend to overlook, however, is the covenantal theological tone of the Book of Deuteronomy, one that views Israel as a collective body (singular) made up of many individuals (plural). See M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (AB), 15–16; J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* (TOTC), 21–23.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** Do not add to it or subtract from it. This prohibition makes at least two profound theological points: (1) This work by Moses is of divine origination (i.e., it is inspired) and therefore can tolerate no human alteration; and (2) the work is complete as it stands (i.e., it is canonical).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “or a dreamer of dreams” (so KJV, ASV, NASB). The difference between a prophet (נָבִיא, *navi*) and one who foretells by dreams (חֹלֵם, *’o kholem*) was not so much one of office – for both received revelation by dreams (cf. Num 12:6) – as it was of function or emphasis. The prophet was more a proclaimer and interpreter of revelation whereas the one who foretold by dreams was a receiver of revelation. In later times the role of the one who foretold by dreams was abused and thus denigrated as compared to that of the prophet (cf. Jer 23:28).

among you and show you a sign or wonder,<sup>9</sup> **13:2** and the sign or wonder should come to pass concerning what he said to you, namely, “Let us follow other gods” – gods whom you have not previously known – “and let us serve them.” **13:3** You must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer,<sup>10</sup> for the LORD your God will be testing you to see if you love him<sup>11</sup> with all your mind and being.<sup>12</sup> **13:4** You must follow the LORD your God and revere only him; and you must observe his commandments, obey him, serve him, and remain loyal to him. **13:5** As for that prophet or dreamer,<sup>13</sup> he must be executed because he encouraged rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt, redeeming you from that place of slavery, and because he has tried to entice you from the way the LORD your God has commanded you to go. In this way you must purge out evil from within.<sup>14</sup>

### *False Prophets in the Family*

**13:6** Suppose your own full brother,<sup>15</sup> your son, your daughter, your beloved wife, or your closest friend should seduce you secretly and encourage you to go and serve other gods<sup>16</sup> that neither you nor your ancestors<sup>17</sup> have previously known.<sup>18</sup> **13:7** the gods of the surrounding people (whether near you or far from you, from one end of the earth<sup>19</sup> to the other). **13:8** You must

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The expression אֵיזֶה אֵל מִבְּיַד ה' (*’ot ’o mofet*) became a formulaic way of speaking of ways of authenticating prophetic messages or other works of God (cf. Deut 28:46; Isa 20:3). The NT equivalent is the Greek term σημεῖον (*sēmeion*), a sign performed (used frequently in the Gospel of John, cf. 2:11, 18; 20:30–31). They could, however, be counterfeited or (as here) permitted by the LORD to false prophets as a means of testing his people.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “or dreamer of dreams.” See note on this expression in v. 1.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “all your heart and soul” (so NRSV, CEV, NLT); or “heart and being” (NCV “your whole being”). See note on the word “being” in Deut 6:5.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “or dreamer of dreams.” See note on this expression in v. 1.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “your midst” (so NAB, NRSV). The severity of the judgment here (i.e., capital punishment) is because of the severity of the sin, namely, high treason against the Great King. Idolatry is a violation of the first two commandments (Deut 5:6–10) as well as the spirit and intent of the *Shema* (Deut 6:4–5).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “your brother, the son of your mother.” In a polygamous society it was not rare to have half brothers and sisters by way of a common father and different mothers.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** In the Hebrew text these words are in the form of a brief quotation: “entice you secretly saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods.’”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “fathers” (also in v. 17).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “which you have not known, you or your fathers.” (cf. KJV, ASV; on “fathers” cf. v. 18).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Or “land” (so NIV, NCV); the same Hebrew word can be translated “land” or “earth.”



not give in to him or even listen to him; do not feel sympathy for him or spare him or cover up for him. **13:9** Instead, you must kill him without fail!<sup>1</sup> Your own hand must be the first to strike him,<sup>2</sup> and then the hands of the whole community. **13:10** You must stone him to death<sup>3</sup> because he tried to entice you away from the LORD your God, who delivered you from the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. **13:11** Thus all Israel will hear and be afraid; no longer will they continue to do evil like this among you.<sup>4</sup>

### *Punishment of Community Idolatry*

**13:12** Suppose you should hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you as a place to live, that **13:13** some evil people<sup>5</sup> have departed from among you to entice the inhabitants of their cities,<sup>6</sup> saying, “Let’s go and serve other gods” (whom you have not known before).<sup>7</sup> **13:14** You must investigate thoroughly and inquire carefully. If it is indeed true that such a disgraceful thing is being done among you,<sup>8</sup> **13:15** you must by all means<sup>9</sup> slaughter the inhabitants of that city with the sword; annihilate<sup>10</sup> with the sword everyone in it, as well as the livestock. **13:16** You must gather all of its plunder into the middle of the plaza<sup>11</sup> and burn the city and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It will be an abandoned ruin<sup>12</sup> forever – it must never be rebuilt

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with the words “without fail” (cf. NIV “you must certainly put him to death”).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to put him to death,” but this is misleading in English for such an action would leave nothing for the others to do.

<sup>3</sup> **sn** Execution by means of pelting the offender with stones afforded a mechanism whereby the whole community could share in it. In a very real sense it could be done not only in the name of the community and on its behalf but by its members (cf. Lev 24:14; Num 15:35; Deut 21:21; Josh 7:25).

<sup>4</sup> **sn** Some see in this statement an argument for the deterrent effect of capital punishment (Deut 17:13; 19:20; 21:21).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “men, sons of Belial.” The Hebrew term בְּלִיַּיָּא (bēlyyā’al) has the idea of worthlessness, without morals or scruples (HALOT 133-34 s.v.). Cf. NAB, NRSV “scoundrels”; TEV, CEV “worthless people”; NLT “worthless rabble.”

<sup>6</sup> **tc** The LXX and Tg read “your” for the MT’s “their.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The translation understands the relative clause as a statement by Moses, not as part of the quotation from the evildoers. See also v. 2.

<sup>8</sup> **tc** Theodotian adds “in Israel,” perhaps to broaden the matter beyond the local village.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, indicated in the translation by the words “by all means.” Cf. KJV, NASB “surely”; NIV “certainly.”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Or “put under divine judgment. The Hebrew word כְּרַם (kherem) refers to placing persons or things under God’s judgment, usually to the extent of their complete destruction. Though primarily applied against the heathen, this severe judgment could also fall upon unrepentant Israelites (cf. the story of Achan in Josh 7). See also the note on the phrase “divine judgment” in Deut 2:34.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “street.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “mound”; NAB “a heap of ruins.” The Hebrew word תֵּל (tel) refers to this day to a ruin represented especially by a built-up mound of dirt or debris (cf. Tel Aviv, “mound of grain”).

again. **13:17** You must not take for yourself anything that has been placed under judgment.<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD will relent from his intense anger, show you compassion, have mercy on you, and multiply you as he promised your ancestors. **13:18** Thus you must obey the LORD your God, keeping all his commandments that I am giving<sup>14</sup> you today and doing what is right<sup>15</sup> before him.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Holy and the Profane*

**14:1** You are children<sup>17</sup> of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave your forehead bald<sup>18</sup> for the sake of the dead. **14:2** For you are a people holy<sup>19</sup> to the LORD your God. He<sup>20</sup> has chosen you to be his people, prized<sup>21</sup> above all others on the face of the earth. **14:3** You must not eat any forbidden<sup>22</sup> thing. **14:4** These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, **14:5** the ibex,<sup>23</sup> the gazelle,<sup>24</sup> the deer,<sup>25</sup> the wild

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Or “anything that has been put under the divine curse”; *Heb* “anything of the ban” (cf. NASB). See note on the phrase “divine judgment” in Deut 2:34.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “commanding” (so NASB, NRSV).

<sup>15</sup> **tc** The LXX and Smr add “and good” to bring the phrase in line with a familiar cliché (cf. Deut 6:18; Josh 9:25; 2 Kgs 10:3; 2 Chr 14:1; etc.). This is an unnecessary and improper attempt to force a text into a preconceived mold.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in the eyes of the LORD your God.” See note on the word “him” in v. 3.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “sons” (so NASB); TEV, NLT “people.”

<sup>18</sup> **sn** Do not cut yourselves or shave your forehead bald. These were pagan practices associated with mourning the dead; they were not to be imitated by God’s people (though they frequently were; cf. 1 Kgs 18:28; Jer 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; Hos 7:14 [LXX]; Mic 5:1). For other warnings against such practices see Lev 21:5; Jer 16:5.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Or “set apart.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “The LORD.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Or “treasured.” The Hebrew term טִמְּלָה (ṭimmlah) describes Israel as God’s choice people, those whom he elected and who are most precious to him (cf. Exod 19:4-6; Deut 14:2; 26:18; 1 Chr 29:3; Ps 135:4; Eccl 2:8 Mal 3:17). See E. Carpenter, *NIDOTTE* 3:224.

**sn** The Hebrew term translated “select” (and the whole verse) is reminiscent of the classic covenant text (Exod 19:4-6) which describes Israel’s entry into covenant relationship with the LORD. Israel must resist paganism and its trappings precisely because she is a holy people elected by the LORD from among the nations to be his instrument of world redemption (cf. Deut 7:6; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Hebrew word תּוֹעֵבָה (to’evah, “forbidden; abhorrent”) describes anything detestable to the LORD because of its innate evil or inconsistency with his own nature and character. See note on the word “abhorrent” in Deut 7:25. Cf. KJV “abominable”; NIV “detestable”; NRSV “abhorrent.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term אֵיִל (’ayyal) may refer to a type of deer (cf. Arabic ’ayyal). Cf. NAB “the red deer.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term צְבִי (tsēvi) is sometimes rendered “roebeek” (so KJV).

<sup>25</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term יַחְמור (yakhmur) may refer to a “fallow deer”; cf. Arabic yakhmur (“deer”). Cf. NAB, NIV, NCV “roe deer”; NEB, NRSV, NLT “roebeek.”

goat, the antelope,<sup>1</sup> the wild oryx,<sup>2</sup> and the mountain sheep.<sup>3</sup> **14:6** You may eat any animal that has hooves divided into two parts and that chews the cud.<sup>4</sup> **14:7** However, you may not eat the following animals among those that chew the cud or those that have divided hooves: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger.<sup>5</sup> (Although they chew the cud, they do not have divided hooves and are therefore ritually impure to you). **14:8** Also the pig is ritually impure to you; though it has divided hooves,<sup>6</sup> it does not chew the cud. You may not eat their meat or even touch their remains. **14:9** These you may eat from among water creatures: anything with fins and scales you may eat, **14:10** but whatever does not have fins and scales you may not eat; it is ritually impure to you. **14:11** All ritually clean birds you may eat. **14:12** These are the ones you may not eat: the eagle,<sup>7</sup> the vulture,<sup>8</sup> the black vulture,<sup>9</sup> **14:13** the kite, the black kite, the dayyah<sup>10</sup> after its species, **14:14** every raven after its species, **14:15** the ostrich,<sup>11</sup> the owl,<sup>12</sup> the seagull, the falcon<sup>13</sup> after its species, **14:16** the little owl, the long-eared owl, the white owl,<sup>14</sup> **14:17** the

jackdaw,<sup>15</sup> the carrion vulture, the cormorant, **14:18** the stork, the heron after its species, the hoopoe, the bat, **14:19** and any winged thing on the ground are impure to you—they may not be eaten.<sup>16</sup> **14:20** You may eat any clean bird. **14:21** You may not eat any corpse, though you may give it to the resident foreigner who is living in your villages<sup>17</sup> and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. You are a people holy to the LORD your God. Do not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.<sup>18</sup>

### The Offering of Tribute

**14:22** You must be certain to tithe<sup>19</sup> all the produce of your seed that comes from the field year after year. **14:23** In the presence of the LORD your God you must eat from the tithe of your grain, your new wine,<sup>20</sup> your olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the place he chooses to locate his name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. **14:24** When he<sup>21</sup> blesses you, if the<sup>22</sup> place where he chooses to locate his name is distant, **14:25** you may convert the tithe into money, secure the money,<sup>23</sup> and travel to the place the LORD your God chooses for himself. **14:26** Then you may spend the money however you wish for cattle, sheep, wine, beer, or whatever you desire. You and your household may eat there in the

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term דִּישׁוֹן (*dishon*) is a *hapax legomenon*. Its referent is uncertain but the animal is likely a variety of antelope (cf. NEB “white-rumped deer”; NIV, NRSV, NLT “ibex”).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term תַּאוּ (*ta’u*; a variant is תַּוּא, *ta’u*) could also refer to another species of antelope. Cf. NEB “long-horned antelope”; NIV, NRSV “antelope.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term זֶמֶר (*zemer*) is another *hapax legomenon* with the possible meaning “wild sheep.” Cf. KJV, ASV “chamois”; NEB “rock-goat”; NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT “mountain sheep.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “among the animals.” This has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term שָׁפָן (*shafan*) may refer to the “coney” (cf. KJV, NIV) or hyrax (“rock badger,” cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>6</sup> **tc** The MT lacks (probably by haplography) the phrase וְיִשְׁכַּע פְּרָקָה (v. 8) וְיִשְׁכַּע פְּרָקָה (*shosa’ shesa’ parsah*, “and is clovenfooted,” i.e., “has parted hooves”), a phrase found in the otherwise exact parallel in Lev 11:7. The LXX and Smr attest the longer reading here. The meaning is, however, clear without it.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** NEB “the griffon-vulture.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term פֶּרֶס (*peres*) describes a large vulture otherwise known as the ossifrage (cf. KJV). This largest of the vultures takes its name from its habit of dropping skeletal remains from a great height so as to break the bones apart.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term אוּנְיָה (*ozniyah*) may describe the black vulture (so NIV) or it may refer to the osprey (so NAB, NRSV, NLT), an eagle-like bird subsisting mainly on fish.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term דַּיָּיָהּ (*dayyah*). This, with the previous two terms (רַא’וֹהַ [ra’ah] and אַיָּהּ [ayyah]), is probably a kite of some species but otherwise impossible to specify.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Or “owl.” The Hebrew term בַּת הַחַיָּה אֲנָהּ (*bat hayya’anah*) is sometimes taken as “ostrich” (so ASV, NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT), but may refer instead to some species of owl (cf. KJV “owl”; NEB “desert-owl”; NIV “horned owl”).

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term תַּחְמָס (*takhmas*) is either a type of owl (cf. NEB “short-eared owl”; NIV “screech owl”) or possibly the nighthawk (so NRSV, NLT).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term נֵיזַן (*nets*) may refer to the falcon or perhaps the hawk (so NEB, NIV).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term תִּנְשֵׁמֶת (*tinshemet*) may refer to a species of owl (cf. ASV “horned owl”; NASB, NIV, NLT “white owl”) or perhaps even to the swan (so KJV); cf. NRSV “water hen.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term קָאָת (*qa’at*) may also refer to a type of owl (NAB, NIV, NRSV “desert owl”) or perhaps the pelican (so KJV, NASB, NLT).

<sup>16</sup> **tc** The MT reads the Niphal (passive) for expected Qal (“you [plural] must not eat”); cf. Smr, LXX. However, the harder reading should stand.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “gates” (also in vv. 27, 28, 29).

<sup>18</sup> **sn** Do not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. This strange prohibition – one whose rationale is unclear but probably related to pagan ritual – may seem out of place here but actually is not for the following reasons: (1) the passage as a whole opens with a prohibition against heathen mourning rites (i.e., death, vv. 1-2) and closes with what appear to be birth and infancy rites. (2) In the other two places where the stipulation occurs (Exod 23:19 and Exod 34:26) it similarly concludes major sections. (3) Whatever the practice signified it clearly was abhorrent to the LORD and fittingly concludes the topic of various breaches of purity and holiness as represented by the ingestion of unclean animals (v. 3-21). See C. M. Carmichael, “On Separating Life and Death: An Explanation of Some Biblical Laws,” *HTR* 69 (1976): 1-7; J. Milgrom, “You Shall Not Boil a Kid In Its Mother's Milk,” *BRev* 1 (1985): 48-55; R. J. Ratner and B. Zuckerman, “In Rereading the ‘Kid in Milk’ Inscriptions,” *BRev* 1 (1985): 56-58; and M. Haran, “Seething a Kid in its Mother's Milk,” *JJS* 30 (1979): 23-35.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, indicated in the translation by the words “be certain.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** This refers to wine in the early stages of fermentation. In its later stages it becomes wine (יַיִן, *yayin*) in its mature sense.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “He” in 14:2.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “way is so far from you that you are unable to carry it because the.” These words have not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons, because they are redundant.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “bind the silver in your hand.”

presence of the LORD your God and enjoy it. **14:27** As for the Levites in your villages, you must not ignore them, for they have no allotment or inheritance along with you. **14:28** At the end of every three years you must bring all the tithe of your produce, in that very year, and you must store it up in your villages. **14:29** Then the Levites (because they have no allotment or inheritance with you), the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows of your villages may come and eat their fill so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work you do.

### *Release for Debt Slaves*

**15:1** At the end of every seven years you must declare a cancellation<sup>1</sup> of debts. **15:2** This is the nature of the cancellation: Every creditor must remit what he has loaned to another person,<sup>2</sup> he must not force payment from his fellow Israelite,<sup>3</sup> for it is to be recognized as “the LORD’s cancellation of debts.” **15:3** You may exact payment from a foreigner, but whatever your fellow Israelite<sup>4</sup> owes you, you must remit. **15:4** However, there should not be any poor among you, for the LORD<sup>5</sup> will surely bless<sup>6</sup> you in the land that he<sup>7</sup> is giving you as an inheritance,<sup>8</sup> **15:5** if you carefully obey<sup>9</sup> him<sup>10</sup> by keeping<sup>11</sup> all these commandments that I am giving<sup>12</sup> you today. **15:6** For the LORD your God will bless you just as he has promised; you will lend to many nations but will not borrow from any, and you will rule over many nations but they will not rule over you.

### *The Spirit of Liberty*

**15:7** If a fellow Israelite<sup>13</sup> from one of your villages<sup>14</sup> in the land that the LORD your God is giving you should be poor, you must not harden your heart or be insensitive<sup>15</sup> to his impoverished condition.<sup>16</sup> **15:8** Instead, you must be sure to open your hand to him and generously lend<sup>17</sup> him whatever he needs.<sup>18</sup> **15:9** Be careful lest you entertain the wicked thought that the seventh year, the year of cancellation of debts, has almost arrived, and your attitude<sup>19</sup> be wrong toward your impoverished fellow Israelite<sup>20</sup> and you do not lend<sup>21</sup> him anything; he will cry out to the LORD against you and you will be regarded as having sinned.<sup>22</sup> **15:10** You must by all means lend<sup>23</sup> to him and not be upset by doing it,<sup>24</sup> for because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you attempt. **15:11** There will never cease to be some poor people in the land; therefore, I am commanding you to make sure you open<sup>25</sup> your hand to your fellow Israelites<sup>26</sup> who are needy and poor in your land.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term שְׁמִיטָה (*shemittat*), a derivative of the verb שָׁמַט (*shamat*, “to release; to relinquish”), refers to the cancellation of the debt and even pledges for the debt of a borrower by his creditor. This could be a full and final remission or, more likely, one for the seventh year only. See R. Wakely, *NIDOTTE* 4:155-60. Here the words “of debts” are not in the Hebrew text, but are implied. Cf. NAB “a relaxation of debts”; NASB, NRSV “a remission of debts.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “his neighbor,” used idiomatically to refer to another person.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “his neighbor and his brother.” The words “his brother” may be a scribal gloss identifying “his neighbor” (on this idiom, see the preceding note) as a fellow Israelite (cf. v. 3). In this case the conjunction before “his brother” does not introduce a second category, but rather has the force of “that is.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “your brother.”

<sup>5</sup> **tc** After the phrase “the LORD” many mss and versions add “your God” to complete the usual full epithet.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with “surely.” Note however, that the use is rhetorical, for the next verse attaches a condition.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “to possess.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “if listening you listen to the voice of.” The infinitive absolute is used for emphasis, which the translation indicates with “carefully.” The idiom “listen to the voice” means “obey.”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 15:4.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “by being careful to do.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “commanding” (so NASB); NAB “which I enjoin you today.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “one of your brothers” (so NASB); NAB “one of your kinsmen”; NRSV “a member of your community.” See the note at v. 2.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “gates.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “withdraw your hand.” Cf. NIV “hardhearted or tightfisted” (NRSV and NLT similar).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “from your needy brother.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute before both verbs. The translation indicates the emphasis with the words “be sure to” and “generously,” respectively.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “whatever his need that he needs for himself.” This redundant expression has been simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “your eye.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “your needy brother.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “give” (likewise in v. 10).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “it will be a sin to you.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with “by all means.”

<sup>24</sup> **tc** Heb “your heart must not be grieved in giving to him.” The LXX and Orig add, “you shall surely lend to him sufficient for his need,” a suggestion based on the same basic idea in v. 8. Such slavish adherence to stock phrases is without warrant in most cases, and certainly here.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with “make sure.”

<sup>26</sup> **tn** Heb “your brother.”

## Release of Debt Slaves

**15:12** If your fellow Hebrew<sup>1</sup> – whether male or female<sup>2</sup> – is sold to you and serves you for six years, then in the seventh year you must let that servant<sup>3</sup> go free.<sup>4</sup> **15:13** If you set them free, you must not send them away empty-handed. **15:14** You must supply them generously<sup>5</sup> from your flock, your threshing floor, and your winepress – as the LORD your God has blessed you, you must give to them. **15:15** Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore, I am commanding you to do this thing today. **15:16** However, if the servant<sup>6</sup> says to you, “I do not want to leave<sup>7</sup> you,” because he loves you and your household, since he is well off with you, **15:17** you shall take an awl and pierce a hole through his ear to the door.<sup>8</sup> Then he will become your servant permanently (this applies to your female servant as well). **15:18** You should not consider it difficult to let him go free, for he will have served you for six years, twice<sup>9</sup> the time of a hired worker; the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

<sup>1</sup> **sn** Elsewhere in the OT, the Israelites are called “Hebrews” (עִבְרִי, *ivriy*) by outsiders, rarely by themselves (cf. Gen 14:13; 39:14, 17; 41:12; Exod 1:15, 16, 19; 2:6, 7, 11, 13; 1 Sam 4:6; Jonah 1:9). Thus, here and in the parallel passage in Exod 21:2-6 the term עִבְרִי may designate non-Israelites, specifically a people well-known throughout the ancient Near East as *‘apiru* or *habiru*. They lived a rather vagabond lifestyle, frequently hiring themselves out as laborers or mercenary soldiers. While accounting nicely for the surprising use of the term here in an Israelite law code, the suggestion has against it the unlikelihood that a set of laws would address such a marginal people so specifically (as opposed to simply calling them aliens or the like). More likely עִבְרִי is chosen as a term to remind Israel that when they were “Hebrews,” that is, when they were in Egypt, they were slaves. Now that they are free they must not keep their fellow Israelites in economic bondage. See v. 15.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “your brother, a Hebrew (male) or Hebrew (female).”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “him.” The singular pronoun occurs throughout the passage.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “from you.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with “generously.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “he”; the referent (the indentured servant introduced in v. 12) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “go out from.” The imperfect verbal form indicates the desire of the subject here.

<sup>8</sup> **sn** When the bondsman’s ear was drilled through to the door, the door in question was that of the master’s house. In effect, the bondsman is declaring his undying and lifelong loyalty to his creditor. The scar (or even hole) in the earlobe would testify to the community that the slave had surrendered independence and personal rights. This may be what Paul had in mind when he said “I bear on my body the marks of Jesus” (Gal 6:17).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term כִּשְׁנַיִם (*mishneh*, “twice”) could mean “equivalent to” (cf. NRSV) or, more likely, “double” (cf. NAB, NIV, NLT). The idea is that a hired worker would put in only so many hours per day whereas a bondsman was available around the clock.

## Giving God the Best

**15:19** You must set apart<sup>10</sup> for the LORD your God every firstborn male born to your herds and flocks. You must not work the firstborn of your bulls or shear the firstborn of your flocks. **15:20** You and your household must eat them annually before the LORD your God in the place he<sup>11</sup> chooses. **15:21** If they have any kind of blemish – lameness, blindness, or anything else<sup>12</sup> – you may not offer them as a sacrifice to the LORD your God. **15:22** You may eat it in your villages,<sup>13</sup> whether you are ritually impure or clean,<sup>14</sup> just as you would eat a gazelle or an ibex. **15:23** However, you must not eat its blood; you must pour it out on the ground like water.

## The Passover-Unleavened Bread Festival

**16:1** Observe the month Abib<sup>15</sup> and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in that month<sup>16</sup> he<sup>17</sup> brought you out of Egypt by night. **16:2** You must sacrifice the Passover animal<sup>18</sup> (from the flock or the herd) to the LORD your God in the place where he<sup>19</sup> chooses to locate his name. **16:3** You must not eat any yeast with it; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast, symbolic of affliction, for you came out of Egypt hurriedly. You must do this so you will remember for the rest of your life the day you came out of the land of Egypt. **16:4** There must not be a scrap of yeast within your land<sup>20</sup> for seven days, nor can any of the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain until the next morning.<sup>21</sup> **16:5** You may not sacrifice the Passover in just any of your villages<sup>22</sup> that the LORD your God is giving you,

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “sanctify” (תִּקְדִּישׁ, *taqdish*), that is, put to use on behalf of the LORD.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” The translation uses a pronoun for stylistic reasons. See note on “he” in 15:4.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “any evil blemish”; NASB “any (+ other NAB, TEV) serious defect.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “in your gates.”

<sup>14</sup> **tc** The LXX adds ἐν σοί (*en soi*, “among you”) to make clear that the antecedent is the people and not the animals. That is, the people, whether ritually purified or not, may eat such defective animals.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** The month Abib, later called Nisan (Neh 2:1; Esth 3:7), corresponds to March-April in the modern calendar.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “in the month Abib.” The demonstrative “that” has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “sacrifice the Passover” (so NASB). The word “animal” has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” in the previous verse.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “leaven must not be seen among you in all your border.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “remain all night until the morning” (so KJV, ASV). This has been simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “gates.”

16:6 but you must sacrifice it<sup>4</sup> in the evening in<sup>2</sup> the place where he<sup>3</sup> chooses to locate his name, at sunset, the time of day you came out of Egypt. 16:7 You must cook<sup>4</sup> and eat it in the place the LORD your God chooses; you may return the next morning to your tents. 16:8 You must eat bread made without yeast for six days. The seventh day you are to hold an assembly for the LORD your God; you must not do any work on that day.<sup>5</sup>

### *The Festival of Weeks*

16:9 You must count seven weeks; you must begin to count them<sup>6</sup> from the time you begin to harvest the standing grain. 16:10 Then you are to celebrate the Festival of Weeks<sup>7</sup> before the LORD your God with the voluntary offering<sup>8</sup> that you will bring, in proportion to how he<sup>9</sup> has blessed you. 16:11 You shall rejoice before him<sup>10</sup> – you, your son, your daughter, your male and female slaves, the Levites in your villages,<sup>11</sup> the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows among you – in the place where the LORD chooses to locate his name. 16:12 Furthermore, remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and so be careful to observe these statutes.

### *The Festival of Temporary Shelters*

16:13 You must celebrate the Festival of Temporary Shelters<sup>12</sup> for seven days, at the time

of the grain and grape harvest.<sup>13</sup> 16:14 You are to rejoice in your festival, you, your son, your daughter, your male and female slaves, the Levites, the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows who are in your villages.<sup>14</sup> 16:15 You are to celebrate the festival seven days before the LORD your God in the place he<sup>15</sup> chooses, for he<sup>16</sup> will bless you in all your productivity and in whatever you do;<sup>17</sup> so you will indeed rejoice! 16:16 Three times a year all your males must appear before the LORD your God in the place he chooses for the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Temporary Shelters; and they must not appear before him<sup>18</sup> empty-handed. 16:17 Every one of you must give as you are able,<sup>19</sup> according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you.

### *Provision for Justice*

16:18 You must appoint judges and civil servants<sup>20</sup> for each tribe in all your villages<sup>21</sup> that the LORD your God is giving you, and they must judge the people fairly.<sup>22</sup> 16:19 You must not pervert justice or show favor. Do not take a bribe, for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and distort<sup>23</sup> the words of the righteous.<sup>24</sup> 16:20 You must pursue justice alone<sup>25</sup> so that you may live and inherit the land the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “the Passover.” The translation uses a pronoun to avoid redundancy in English.

<sup>2</sup> **tc** The MT reading אֶל (*el*, “unto”) before “the place” should, following Smr, Syriac, Targums, and Vulgate, be omitted in favor of ב (*bet*; בְּמִקוֹם, *bammaqom*), “in the place.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 16:1.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The rules that governed the Passover meal are found in Exod 12:1-51, and Deut 16:1-8. The word translated “cook” (בָּשַׁל, *bashal*) here is translated “boil” in other places (e.g. Exod 23:19, 1 Sam 2:13-15). This would seem to contradict Exod 12:9 where the Israelites are told not to eat the Passover sacrifice raw or boiled. However, 2 Chr 35:13 recounts the celebration of a Passover feast during the reign of Josiah, and explains that the people “cooked (בָּשַׁל, *bashal*) the Passover sacrifices over the open fire.” The use of בָּשַׁל (*bashal*) with “fire” (אֵשׁ, *esh*) suggests that the word could be used to speak of boiling or roasting.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The words “on that day” are not in the Hebrew text; they are supplied in the translation for clarification (cf. TEV, NLT).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “the seven weeks.” The translation uses a pronoun to avoid redundancy in English.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The Hebrew phrase חַג שַׁבּוּעוֹת (*khag shavu'ot*) is otherwise known in the OT (Exod 23:16) as קַצִּיר (*qatsir*, “harvest”) and in the NT as Πεντηκοστή (*pentēchostē*, “Pentecost”).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “the sufficiency of the offering of your hand.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 16:1.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 16:1.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “gates.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The Hebrew phrase חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת (*khag hassukot*, “festival of huts” or “festival of shelters”) is traditionally known as the Feast of Tabernacles. The rendering “booths” (cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV) is now preferable to the traditional “tabernacles” (KJV, ASV, NIV) in light of the meaning of the term סֻכָּה (*sukkah*, “hut; booth”), but “booths” are frequently associated with trade shows and craft fairs in contemporary American English. Clearer is the English term “shelters” (so NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT), but this does not reflect the temporary nature of the living arrangement. This feast was a commemoration of the wanderings of the Israelites after they left Egypt, suggesting that a

translation like “temporary shelters” is more appropriate.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “when you gather in your threshing-floor and winepress.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “in your gates.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 16:1.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 16:1.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “in all the work of your hands” (so NASB, NIV); NAB, NRSV “in all your undertakings.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 16:1.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “a man must give according to the gift of his hand.” This has been translated as second person for stylistic reasons, in keeping with the second half of the verse, which is second person rather than third.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term שׁוֹטְרִים (*shoterim*), usually translated “officers” (KJV, NCV) or “officials” (NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT), derives from the verb שָׁוַר (*shoter*, “to write”). The noun became generic for all types of public officials. Here, however, it may be positionally epexegetical to “judges,” thus resulting in the phrase, “judges, that is, civil officers,” etc. Whoever the שׁוֹטְרִים are, their task here consists of rendering judgments and administering justice.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “gates.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “with judgment of righteousness”; ASV, NASB “with righteous judgment.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “twist, overturn”; NRSV “subverts the cause.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Or “innocent”; NRSV “those who are in the right”; NLT “the godly.”

<sup>25</sup> **tn** Heb “justice, justice.” The repetition is emphatic; one might translate as “pure justice” or “unadulterated justice” (cf. NLT “true justice”).

*Examples of Legal Cases*

**16:21** You must not plant any kind of tree as a sacred Asherah pole<sup>1</sup> near the altar of the LORD your God which you build for yourself. **16:22** You must not erect a sacred pillar,<sup>2</sup> a thing the LORD your God detests. **17:1** You must not sacrifice to him<sup>3</sup> a bull or sheep that has a blemish or any other defect, because that is considered offensive<sup>4</sup> to the LORD your God. **17:2** Suppose a man or woman is discovered among you – in one of your villages<sup>5</sup> that the LORD your God is giving you – who sins before the LORD your God<sup>6</sup> and breaks his covenant **17:3** by serving other gods and worshipping them – the sun,<sup>7</sup> moon, or any other heavenly bodies which I have not permitted you to worship.<sup>8</sup> **17:4** When it is reported to you and you hear about it, you must investigate carefully. If it is indeed true that such a disgraceful thing<sup>9</sup> is being done in Israel, **17:5** you must bring to your city gates<sup>10</sup> that man or woman who has done this wicked thing – that very man or woman – and you must stone that person to death.<sup>11</sup> **17:6** At the testimony of two or three witnesses they must be executed. They cannot be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. **17:7** The witnesses<sup>12</sup> must be first to begin the execution, and then all the people<sup>13</sup> are to join in afterward. In this way you will purge evil from among you.

*Appeal to a Higher Court*

**17:8** If a matter is too difficult for you to judge – bloodshed,<sup>14</sup> legal claim,<sup>15</sup> or assault<sup>16</sup> –

matters of controversy in your villages<sup>17</sup> – you must leave there and go up to the place the LORD your God chooses.<sup>18</sup> **17:9** You will go to the Levitical priests and the judge in office in those days and seek a solution; they will render a verdict. **17:10** You must then do as they have determined at that place the LORD chooses. Be careful to do just as you are taught. **17:11** You must do what you are instructed, and the verdict they pronounce to you, without fail. Do not deviate right or left from what they tell you. **17:12** The person who pays no attention<sup>19</sup> to the priest currently serving the LORD your God there, or to the verdict – that person must die, so that you may purge evil from Israel. **17:13** Then all the people will hear and be afraid, and not be so presumptuous again.

*Provision for Kingship*

**17:14** When you come to the land the LORD your God is giving you and take it over and live in it and then say, “I will select a king like all the nations surrounding me,” **17:15** you must select without fail<sup>20</sup> a king whom the LORD your God chooses. From among your fellow citizens<sup>21</sup> you must appoint a king – you may not designate a foreigner who is not one of your fellow Israelites.<sup>22</sup> **17:16** Moreover, he must not accumulate horses for himself or allow the people to return to Egypt to do so,<sup>23</sup> for the LORD has said you must never again return that way. **17:17** Furthermore, he must not marry many<sup>24</sup> wives lest his affections turn aside, and he must not accumulate much silver and gold. **17:18** When he sits on his royal throne he must make a copy of this

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “an Asherah, any tree.”

**sn** Sacred Asherah pole. This refers to a tree (or wooden pole) dedicated to the worship of Asherah, wife/sister of El and goddess of fertility. See also Deut 7:5.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** Sacred pillar. This refers to the stelae (stone pillars; the Hebrew term is *מַטְעוֹת*, *mats'evot*) associated with Baal worship, perhaps to mark a spot hallowed by an alleged visitation of the gods. See also Deut 7:5.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “to the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 16:1.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The Hebrew word *תּוֹעֵבָה* (*to'evah*, “an abomination”; cf. NAB) describes persons, things, or practices offensive to ritual or moral order. See M. Grisanti, *NIDOTTE* 4:314-18; see also the note on the word “abhorrent” in Deut 7:25.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb “gates.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “does the evil in the eyes of the LORD your God.”

<sup>7</sup> **tc** The MT reads “and to the sun,” thus including the sun, the moon, and other heavenly spheres among the gods. However, Theodotion and Lucian read “or to the sun,” suggesting perhaps that the sun and the other heavenly bodies are not in the category of actual deities.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “which I have not commanded you.” The words “to worship” are supplied in the translation for clarification.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “an abomination” (*תּוֹעֵבָה*); see note on the word “offensive” in v. 1.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “gates.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “stone them with stones so that they die” (KJV similar); NCV “throw stones at that person until he dies.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “the hand of the witnesses.” This means the two or three witnesses are to throw the first stones (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “the hand of all the people.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “between blood and blood.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “between claim and claim.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “between blow and blow.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “gates.”

<sup>18</sup> **tc** Several Greek recensions add “to place his name there,” thus completing the usual formula to describe the central sanctuary (cf. Deut 12:5, 11, 14, 18; 16:6). However, the context suggests that the local Levitical towns, and not the central sanctuary, are in the mind.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “who acts presumptuously not to listen” (cf. NASB).

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, indicated in the translation by the words “without fail.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “your brothers,” but not referring to siblings (cf. NIV “your brother Israelites”; NLT “a fellow Israelite”). The same phrase also occurs in v. 20.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “your brothers.” See the preceding note on “fellow citizens.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “in order to multiply horses.” The translation uses “do so” in place of “multiply horses” to avoid redundancy (cf. NAB, NIV).

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb “must not multiply” (cf. KJV, NASB); NLT “must not take many.”

law<sup>4</sup> on a scroll<sup>2</sup> given to him by the Levitical priests. **17:19** It must be with him constantly and he must read it as long as he lives, so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and observe all the words of this law and these statutes and carry them out. **17:20** Then he will not exalt himself above his fellow citizens or turn from the commandments to the right or left, and he and his descendants will enjoy many years ruling over his kingdom<sup>3</sup> in Israel.

#### Provision for Priests and Levites

**18:1** The Levitical priests<sup>4</sup> – indeed, the entire tribe of Levi – will have no allotment or inheritance with Israel; they may eat the burnt offerings of the LORD and of his inheritance.<sup>5</sup> **18:2** They<sup>6</sup> will have no inheritance in the midst of their fellow Israelites;<sup>7</sup> the LORD alone is their inheritance, just as he had told them. **18:3** This shall be the priests' fair allotment<sup>8</sup> from the people who offer sacrifices, whether bull or sheep – they must give to the priest the shoulder, the jowls, and the stomach. **18:4** You must give them the best of your<sup>9</sup> grain, new wine, and olive oil, as well as the best of your wool when you shear your flocks. **18:5** For the LORD your God has chosen them and their sons from all your tribes to stand<sup>10</sup> and serve in his name<sup>11</sup>

permanently. **18:6** Suppose a Levite comes by his own free will<sup>12</sup> from one of your villages, from any part of Israel where he is living,<sup>13</sup> to the place the LORD chooses **18:7** and serves in the name of the LORD his God like his fellow Levites who stand there before the LORD. **18:8** He must eat the same share they do, despite any profits he may gain from the sale of his family's inheritance.<sup>14</sup>

#### Provision for Prophetism

**18:9** When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, you must not learn the abhorrent practices of those nations. **18:10** There must never be found among you anyone who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire,<sup>15</sup> anyone who practices divination,<sup>16</sup> an omens reader,<sup>17</sup> a soothsayer,<sup>18</sup> a sorcerer,<sup>19</sup> **18:11** one who casts spells,<sup>20</sup> one who conjures up spirits,<sup>21</sup> a practitioner of the occult,<sup>22</sup> or a necromancer.<sup>23</sup> **18:12** Whoever does these things is abhorrent to the LORD and because of these detestable things<sup>24</sup>

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb "according to all the desire of his soul."

<sup>13</sup> tn Or "sojourning." The verb used here refers to living temporarily in a place, not settling down.

<sup>14</sup> tn Presumably this would not refer to a land inheritance, since that was forbidden to the descendants of Levi (v. 1). More likely it referred to some family possessions (cf. NIV, NCV, NRSV, CEV) or other private property (cf. NLT "a private source of income"), or even support sent by relatives (cf. TEV "whatever his family sends him").

<sup>15</sup> tn Heb "who passes his son or his daughter through the fire." The expression "pass...through the fire" is probably a euphemism for human sacrifice (cf. NAB, NIV, TEV, NLT). See also Deut 12:31.

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb "a diviner of divination" (קָסָם קִבְיָיִם, *qosem qesamim*). This was a means employed to determine the future or the outcome of events by observation of various omens and signs (cf. Num 22:7; 23:23; Josh 13:22; 1 Sam 6:2; 15:23; 28:8; etc.). See M. Horsnell, *NIDOTTE* 3:945-51.

<sup>17</sup> tn Heb "one who causes to appear" (מַעֲוֵן, *me'onen*). Such a practitioner was thought to be able to conjure up spirits or apparitions (cf. Lev 19:26; Judg 9:37; 2 Kgs 21:6; Isa 2:6; 57:3; Jer 27:9; Mic 5:11).

<sup>18</sup> tn Heb "a seeker of omens" (מְבַרֵּשׁ, *me'nakhesh*). This is a subset of divination, one illustrated by the use of a "divining cup" in the story of Joseph (Gen 44:5).

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb "a doer of sorcery" (מְכַשֵּׁף, *mikhashef*). This has to do with magic or the casting of spells in order to manipulate the gods or the powers of nature (cf. Lev 19:26-31; 2 Kgs 17:15b-17; 21:1-7; Isa 57:3, 5; etc.). See M. Horsnell, *NIDOTTE* 2:735-38.

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb "a binder of binding" (חֹבֵר חֹבֵר, *khover khaver*). The connotation is that of immobilizing ("binding") someone or something by the use of magical words (cf. Ps 58:6; Isa 47:9, 12).

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb "asker of a [dead] spirit" (שׂוֹאֵל אוֹבִים, *sho'el'ov*). This is a form of necromancy (cf. Lev 19:31; 20:6; 1 Sam 28:8, 9; Isa 8:19; 19:3; 29:4).

<sup>22</sup> tn Heb "a knowing [or "familiar"] [spirit]" (יֹדֵעִי, *yidd'e'oni*), i.e., one who is expert in mantic arts (cf. Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; 1 Sam 28:3, 9; 2 Kgs 21:6; Isa 8:19; 19:3).

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb "a seeker of the dead." This is much the same as "one who conjures up spirits" (cf. 1 Sam 28:6-7).

<sup>24</sup> tn Heb "these abhorrent things." The repetition is emphatic. For stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy, the same term used earlier in the verse has been translated "detestable" here.

<sup>1</sup> tn Or "instruction." The LXX reads here τὸ δευτερονόμιον τοῦτο (*to deuteronomion touto*, "this second law"). From this Greek phrase the present name of the book, "Deuteronomy" or "second law" (i.e., the second giving of the law), is derived. However, the MT's expression מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת (*mishneh hattorah hazzo't*) is better rendered "copy of this law." Here the term תּוֹרָה (*torah*) probably refers only to the book of Deuteronomy and not to the whole Pentateuch.

<sup>2</sup> tn The Hebrew term סֵפֶר (*sefer*) means a "writing" or "document" and could be translated "book" (so KJV, ASV, TEV). However, since "book" carries the connotation of a modern bound book with pages (an obvious anachronism) it is preferable to render the Hebrew term "scroll" here and elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> tc Heb "upon his kingship." Smr supplies כִּסֵּא (*kise'*, "throne") so as to read "upon the throne of his kingship." This overliteralizes what is a clearly understood figure of speech.

<sup>4</sup> tn The MT places the terms "priests" and "Levites" in apposition, thus creating an exegetical construction in which the second term qualifies the first, i.e., "Levitical priests." This is a way of asserting their legitimacy as true priests. The Syriac renders "to the priest and to the Levite," making a distinction between the two, but one that is out of place here.

<sup>5</sup> sn Of his inheritance. This is a figurative way of speaking of the produce of the land the LORD will give to his people. It is the LORD's inheritance, but the Levites are allowed to eat it since they themselves have no inheritance among the other tribes of Israel.

<sup>6</sup> tn Heb "he" (and throughout the verse).

<sup>7</sup> tn Heb "brothers," but not referring to actual siblings. Cf. NASB "their countrymen"; NRSV "the other members of the community."

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb "judgment"; KJV, NASB, NRSV "the priest's due."

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb "the firstfruits of your..." (so NIV).

<sup>10</sup> tc Smr and some Greek texts add "before the LORD your God" to bring the language into line with a formula found elsewhere (Deut 10:8; 2 Chr 29:11). This reading is not likely to be original, however.

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb "the name of the LORD." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

the LORD your God is about to drive them out<sup>4</sup> from before you. **18:13** You must be blameless before the LORD your God. **18:14** Those nations that you are about to dispossess listen to omen readers and diviners, but the LORD your God has not given you permission to do such things.

**18:15** The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you – from your fellow Israelites;<sup>2</sup> you must listen to him. **18:16** This accords with what happened at Horeb in the day of the assembly. You asked the LORD your God: “Please do not make us hear the voice of the LORD our<sup>3</sup> God any more or see this great fire any more lest we die.” **18:17** The LORD then said to me, “What they have said is good. **18:18** I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them whatever I command. **18:19** I will personally hold responsible<sup>4</sup> anyone who then pays no attention to the words that prophet<sup>5</sup> speaks in my name.

**18:20** “But if any prophet presumes to speak anything in my name that I have not authorized<sup>6</sup> him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die. **18:21** Now if you say to yourselves,<sup>7</sup> ‘How can we tell that a message is not from the LORD?’<sup>8</sup> – **18:22** whenever a prophet speaks in my<sup>9</sup> name and the prediction<sup>10</sup> is not fulfilled,<sup>11</sup> then I have<sup>12</sup> not spoken it;<sup>13</sup> the prophet has presumed to speak it, so you need not fear him.”

### Laws Concerning Manslaughter

**19:1** When the LORD your God destroys the nations whose land he<sup>14</sup> is about to give you and you dispossess them and settle in their cities and houses, **19:2** you must set apart for yourselves three cities<sup>15</sup> in the middle of your land that the LORD your God is giving you as a possession. **19:3** You shall build a roadway and divide into thirds the whole extent<sup>16</sup> of your land that the LORD your God is providing as your inheritance; anyone who kills another person should flee to the closest of these cities. **19:4** Now this is the law pertaining to one who flees there in order to live,<sup>17</sup> if he has accidentally killed another<sup>18</sup> without hating him at the time of the accident.<sup>19</sup> **19:5** Suppose he goes with someone else<sup>20</sup> to the forest to cut wood and when he raises the ax<sup>21</sup> to cut the tree, the ax head flies loose<sup>22</sup> from the handle and strikes<sup>23</sup> his fellow worker<sup>24</sup> so hard that he dies. The person responsible<sup>25</sup> may then flee to one of these cities to save himself.<sup>26</sup> **19:6** Otherwise the blood avenger will chase after the killer in the heat of his anger, eventually overtake him,<sup>27</sup> and kill him,<sup>28</sup> though this is not a capital case<sup>29</sup> since he did not hate him at the time of the accident. **19:7** Therefore, I am commanding you to set apart for yourselves three cities. **19:8** If the LORD your God enlarges your borders as he promised your ancestors<sup>30</sup> and gives you all the land he pledged to them,<sup>31</sup> **19:9** and then you are careful to observe all these commandments<sup>32</sup> I am giving<sup>33</sup> you today

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The translation understands the Hebrew participial form as having an imminent future sense here.

<sup>2</sup> **tc** The MT expands here on the usual formula by adding “from among you” (cf. Deut 17:15; 18:18; Smr; a number of Greek texts). The expansion seems to be for the purpose of emphasis, i.e., the prophet to come must be not just from Israel but an Israelite by blood.

**tn** “from your brothers,” but not referring to actual siblings. Cf. NAB “from among your own kinsmen”; NASB “from your countrymen”; NRSV “from among your own people.” A similar phrase occurs in v. 17.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the collective singular in this verse: “my God...lest I die.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “will seek from him”; NAB “I myself will make him answer for it”; NRSV “will hold accountable.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (the prophet mentioned in v. 18) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Or “commanded” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “in your heart.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “know the word which the LORD has not spoken.” The issue here is not understanding the meaning of the message, but distinguishing a genuine prophetic word from a false one.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD’s.” See note on the word “his” in v. 5.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the word,” but a predictive word is in view here. Cf. NAB “his oracle.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “does not happen or come to pass.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD has.” See note on the word “his” in v. 5.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “that is the word which the LORD has not spoken.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** These three cities, later designated by Joshua, were Kedesh of Galilee, Shechem, and Hebron (Josh 20:7-9).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “border.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and this is the word pertaining to the one who kills who flees there and lives.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “who strikes his neighbor without knowledge.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “yesterday and a third (day)” (likewise in v. 6). The point is that there was no animosity between the two parties at the time of the accident and therefore no motive for the killing. Cf. NAB “had previously borne no malice”; NRSV “had not been at enmity before.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “his neighbor” (so NAB, NIV); NASB “his friend.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and he raises his hand with the iron.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the iron slips off.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “finds.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* “his neighbor.”

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (the person responsible for his friend’s death) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and live.”

<sup>27</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and overtake him, for the road is long.”

<sup>28</sup> **tn** *Heb* “smite with respect to life,” that is, fatally.

<sup>29</sup> **tn** *Heb* “no judgment of death.”

<sup>30</sup> **tn** *Heb* “fathers.”

<sup>31</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he said to give to your ancestors.” The pronoun has been used in the translation instead for stylistic reasons.

<sup>32</sup> **tn** *Heb* “all this commandment.” This refers here to the entire covenant agreement of the Book of Deuteronomy as encapsulated in the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-5).

<sup>33</sup> **tn** *Heb* “commanding”; NAB “which I enjoin on you today.”



(namely, to love the LORD your God and to always walk in his ways), then you must add three more cities<sup>1</sup> to these three. **19:10** You must not shed innocent blood<sup>2</sup> in your land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, for that would make you guilty.<sup>3</sup> **19:11** However, suppose a person hates someone else<sup>4</sup> and stalks him, attacks him, kills him,<sup>5</sup> and then flees to one of these cities. **19:12** The elders of his own city must send for him and remove him from there to deliver him over to the blood avenger<sup>6</sup> to die. **19:13** You must not pity him, but purge out the blood of the innocent<sup>7</sup> from Israel, so that it may go well with you.

#### Laws Concerning Witnesses

**19:14** You must not encroach on your neighbor's property,<sup>8</sup> which will have been defined<sup>9</sup> in the inheritance you will obtain in the land the LORD your God is giving you.<sup>10</sup>

**19:15** A single witness may not testify<sup>11</sup> against another person for any trespass or sin that he commits. A matter may be legally established<sup>12</sup> only on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **19:16** If a false<sup>13</sup> witness testifies against another person and accuses him of a crime,<sup>14</sup> **19:17** then both parties to the controversy must stand before the LORD, that is, before the priests and judges<sup>15</sup> who will be in office in

those days. **19:18** The judges will thoroughly investigate the matter, and if the witness should prove to be false and to have given false testimony against the accused,<sup>16</sup> **19:19** you must do to him what he had intended to do to the accused. In this way you will purge<sup>17</sup> evil from among you. **19:20** The rest of the people will hear and become afraid to keep doing such evil among you. **19:21** You must not show pity; the principle will be a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot.<sup>18</sup>

#### Laws Concerning War with Distant Enemies

**20:1** When you go to war against your enemies and see chariotry<sup>19</sup> and troops<sup>20</sup> who outnumber you, do not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, is with you. **20:2** As you move forward for battle, the priest<sup>21</sup> will approach and say to the soldiers,<sup>22</sup> **20:3** "Listen, Israel! Today you are moving forward to do battle with your enemies. Do not be fainthearted. Do not fear and tremble or be terrified because of them, **20:4** for the LORD your God goes with you to fight on your behalf against your enemies to give you victory."<sup>23</sup> **20:5** Moreover, the officers are to say to the troops,<sup>24</sup> "Who among you<sup>25</sup> has built a new house and not dedicated<sup>26</sup> it? He may go

<sup>1</sup> **sn** You will add three more cities. Since these are alluded to nowhere else and thus were probably never added, this must be a provision for other cities of refuge should they be needed (cf. v. 8). See P. C. Craigie, *Deuteronomy* (NICOT), 267.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "innocent blood must not be shed." The Hebrew phrase נָקִי דָּם (*dam naqiy*) means the blood of a person to whom no culpability or responsibility adheres because what he did was without malice aforethought (*HALOT* 224 s.v. דָּם 4.b).

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb "and blood will be upon you" (cf. KJV, ASV); NRSV "thereby bringing bloodguilt upon you."

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "his neighbor."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb "rises against him and strikes him fatally."

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The אֱלֹהֵי הַדָּם (*go'el haddam*, "avenger of blood") would ordinarily be a member of the victim's family who, after due process of law, was invited to initiate the process of execution (cf. Num 35:16-28). See R. Hubbard, *NIDOTTE* 1:789-94.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** Purge out the blood of the innocent. Because of the corporate nature of Israel's community life, the whole community shared in the guilt of unavenged murder unless and until vengeance occurred. Only this would restore spiritual and moral equilibrium (Num 35:33).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb "border." Cf. NRSV "You must not move your neighbor's boundary marker."

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb "which they set off from the beginning."

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes "to possess it." This phrase has been left untranslated to avoid redundancy.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb "rise up" (likewise in v. 16).

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb "may stand."

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb "violent" (רָחֹק, *khamas*). This is a witness whose motivation from the beginning is to do harm to the accused and who, therefore, resorts to calumny and deceit. See I. Swart and C. VanDam, *NIDOTTE* 2:177-80.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Or "rebellion." Rebellion against God's law is in view (cf. NAB "of a defection from the law").

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The appositional construction ("before the LORD, that is, before the priests and judges") indicates that these human agents represented the LORD himself, that is, they stood in his place (cf. Deut 16:18-20; 17:8-9).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb "his brother" (also in the following verse).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "you will burn out" (בִּעָרָה, *bi'arta*). Like a cancer, unavenged sin would infect the whole community. It must, therefore, be excised by the purging out of its perpetrators who, presumably, remained unrepentant (cf. Deut 13:6; 17:7, 12; 21:21; 22:21-22, 24; 24:7).

<sup>18</sup> **sn** This kind of justice is commonly called *lex talionis* or "measure for measure" (cf. Exod 21:23-25; Lev 24:19-20). It is likely that it is the principle that is important and not always a strict application. That is, the punishment should fit the crime and it may do so by the payment of fines or other suitable and equitable compensation (cf. Exod 22:21; Num 35:31). See T. S. Frymer-Kensky, "Tit for Tat: The Principle of Equal Retribution in Near Eastern and Biblical Law," *BA* 43 (1980): 230-34.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb "horse and chariot."

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb "people."

<sup>21</sup> **sn** The reference to the priest suggests also the presence of the ark of the covenant, the visible sign of God's presence. The whole setting is clearly that of "holy war" or "Yahweh war," in which God himself takes initiative as the true commander of the forces of Israel (cf. Exod 14:14-18; 15:3-10; Deut 3:22; 7:18-24; 31:6, 8).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb "and he will say to the people." Cf. NIV, NCV, CEV "the army"; NRSV, NLT "the troops."

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Or "to save you" (so KJV, NASB, NCV); or "to deliver you."

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb "people" (also in vv. 8, 9).

<sup>25</sup> **tn** Heb "Who [is] the man" (also in vv. 6, 7, 8).

<sup>26</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term יָחַד (*khanakh*) occurs elsewhere only with respect to the dedication of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 8:63 = 2 Chr 7:5). There it has a religious connotation which, indeed, may be the case here as well. The noun form (יָחַד, *khanukah*) is associated with the consecration of the great temple altar (2 Chr 7:9) and of the postexilic wall of Jerusalem (Neh 12:27). In Maccabean times the festival of Hanukkah was introduced to celebrate the rededication of the temple following its desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (1 Macc 4:36-61).

home, lest he die in battle and someone else<sup>1</sup> dedicate it. **20:6** Or who among you has planted a vineyard and not benefited from it? He may go home, lest he die in battle and someone else benefit from it. **20:7** Or who among you<sup>2</sup> has become engaged to a woman but has not married her? He may go home, lest he die in battle and someone else marry her.” **20:8** In addition, the officers are to say to the troops, “Who among you is afraid and fainthearted? He may go home so that he will not make his fellow soldier’s<sup>3</sup> heart as fearful<sup>4</sup> as his own.” **20:9** Then, when the officers have finished speaking,<sup>5</sup> they must appoint unit commanders<sup>6</sup> to lead the troops.

**20:10** When you approach a city to wage war against it, offer it terms of peace. **20:11** If it accepts your terms<sup>7</sup> and submits to you, all the people found in it will become your slaves.<sup>8</sup> **20:12** If it does not accept terms of peace but makes war with you, then you are to lay siege to it. **20:13** The LORD your God will deliver it over to you<sup>9</sup> and you must kill every single male by the sword. **20:14** However, the women, little children, cattle, and anything else in the city – all its plunder – you may take for yourselves as spoil. You may take from your enemies the plunder that the LORD your God has given you. **20:15** This is how you are to deal with all those cities located far from you, those that do not belong to these nearby nations.

#### *Laws Concerning War with Canaanite Nations*

**20:16** As for the cities of these peoples that<sup>10</sup> the LORD your God is going to give you as an inheritance, you must not allow a single living thing<sup>11</sup> to survive. **20:17** Instead you must utterly annihilate them<sup>12</sup> – the Hittites,<sup>13</sup> Amorites,<sup>14</sup>

Canaanites,<sup>15</sup> Perizzites,<sup>16</sup> Hivites,<sup>17</sup> and Jebusites<sup>18</sup> – just as the LORD your God has commanded you, **20:18** so that they cannot teach you all the abhorrent ways they worship<sup>19</sup> their gods, causing you to sin against the LORD your God. **20:19** If you besiege a city for a long time while attempting to capture it,<sup>20</sup> you must not chop down its trees,<sup>21</sup> for you may eat fruit<sup>22</sup> from them and should not cut them down. A tree in the field is not human that you should besiege it!<sup>23</sup> **20:20** However, you may chop down any tree you know is not suitable for food,<sup>24</sup> and you may use it to build siege works<sup>25</sup> against the city that is making war with you until that city falls.

#### *Laws Concerning Unsolved Murder*

**21:1** If a homicide victim<sup>26</sup> should be found lying in a field in the land the LORD your God is giving you,<sup>27</sup> and no one knows who killed<sup>28</sup> him, **21:2** your elders and judges must go out and measure how far it is to the cities in the vicinity of the corpse.<sup>29</sup> **21:3** Then the elders of the city

(Amurru), the Amorites appear to have migrated into Canaan beginning in 2200 b.c. or thereabouts.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** *Canaanite*. These were the indigenous peoples of the land of Palestine, going back to the beginning of recorded history (ca. 3000 b.c.). The OT identifies them as descendants of Ham (Gen 10:6), the only Hamites to have settled north and east of Egypt.

<sup>16</sup> **sn** *Perizzite*. This probably refers to a subgroup of Canaanites (Gen 13:7; 34:30).

<sup>17</sup> **sn** *Hivite*. These are usually thought to be the same as the Hurrians, a people well-known in ancient Near Eastern texts. They are likely identical to the Horites (see note on “Horites” in Deut 2:12).

<sup>18</sup> **tc** The LXX adds “Girgashites” here at the end of the list in order to list the full (and usual) complement of seven (see note on “seven” in Deut 7:1).

**sn** *Jebusite*. These people inhabited the hill country, particularly in and about Jerusalem (cf. Num 13:29; Josh 15:8; 2 Sam 5:6; 24:16).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to do according to all their abominations which they do for their gods.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to fight against it to capture it.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “you must not destroy its trees by chopping them with an iron” (i.e., an ax).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “you may eat from them.” The direct object is not expressed; the word “fruit” is supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to go before you in siege.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* “however, a tree which you know is not a tree for food you may destroy and cut down.”

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* “[an] enclosure.” The term מַטְסוֹר (*matsor*) may refer to encircling ditches or to surrounding stagings. See R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 238.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** *Heb* “slain [one].” The term כְּהָלָה (*khala*) suggests something other than a natural death (cf. Num 19:16; 23:24; Jer 51:52; Ezek 26:15; 30:24; 31:17-18).

<sup>27</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “to possess it,” but this has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>28</sup> **tn** *Heb* “struck,” but in context a fatal blow is meant; cf. NLT “who committed the murder.”

<sup>29</sup> **tn** *Heb* “surrounding the slain [one].”

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “another man.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* “Who [is] the man.”

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “his brother’s.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “melted.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “to the people,” but this phrase has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “princes of hosts.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “if it answers you peace.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “become as a vassal and will serve you.” The Hebrew term translated *slaves* (עַבְד, *mas*) refers either to Israelites who were pressed into civil service, especially under Solomon (1 Kgs 5:13; 9:15, 21; 12:18), or (as here) to foreigners forced as prisoners of war to become slaves to Israel. The Gibeonites exemplify this type of servitude (Josh 9:3-27; cf. Josh 16:10; 17:13; Judg 1:28, 30-35; Isa 31:8; Lam 1:1).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to your hands.”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The antecedent of the relative pronoun is “cities.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “any breath.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation seeks to reflect with “utterly.” Cf. CEV “completely wipe out.”

**sn** The Hebrew verb refers to placing persons or things so evil and/or impure as to be irredeemable under God’s judgment, usually to the extent of their complete destruction. See also the note on the phrase “the divine judgment” in Deut 2:34.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** *Hittite*. The center of Hittite power was in Anatolia (central modern Turkey). In the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 b.c.) they were at their zenith, establishing outposts and colonies near and far. Some elements were obviously in Canaan at the time of the Conquest (1400-1350 b.c.).

<sup>14</sup> **sn** *Amorite*. Originally from the upper Euphrates region

nearest to the corpse<sup>4</sup> must take from the herd a heifer that has not been worked – that has never pulled with the yoke – 21:4 and bring the heifer down to a wadi with flowing water;<sup>2</sup> to a valley that is neither plowed nor sown.<sup>3</sup> There at the wadi they are to break the heifer's neck. 21:5 Then the Levitical priests<sup>4</sup> will approach (for the LORD your God has chosen them to serve him and to pronounce blessings in his name,<sup>5</sup> and to decide<sup>6</sup> every judicial verdict<sup>7</sup>) 21:6 and all the elders of that city nearest the corpse<sup>8</sup> must wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley.<sup>9</sup> 21:7 Then they must proclaim, "Our hands have not spilled this blood, nor have we<sup>10</sup> witnessed the crime.<sup>11</sup> 21:8 Do not blame<sup>12</sup> your people Israel whom you redeemed, O LORD, and do not hold them accountable for the bloodshed of an innocent person."<sup>13</sup> Then atonement will be made for the bloodshed. 21:9 In this manner you will purge out the guilt of innocent blood from among you, for you must do what is right before<sup>14</sup> the LORD.

#### Laws Concerning Wives

21:10 When you go out to do battle with your enemies and the LORD your God allows you to prevail<sup>15</sup> and you take prisoners, 21:11 if you should see among them<sup>16</sup> an attractive woman whom you wish to take as a wife, 21:12 you may bring her back to your house. She must shave her head,<sup>17</sup> trim her nails, 21:13 discard the clothing she was wearing when captured,<sup>18</sup> and

stay<sup>19</sup> in your house, lamenting for her father and mother for a full month. After that you may have sexual relations<sup>20</sup> with her and become her husband and she your wife. 21:14 If you are not pleased with her, then you must let her go<sup>21</sup> where she pleases. You cannot in any case sell<sup>22</sup> her;<sup>23</sup> you must not take advantage of<sup>24</sup> her, since you have already humiliated<sup>25</sup> her.

#### Laws Concerning Children

21:15 Suppose a man has two wives, one whom he loves more than the other,<sup>26</sup> and they both<sup>27</sup> bear him sons, with the firstborn being the child of the less loved wife. 21:16 In the day he divides his inheritance<sup>28</sup> he must not appoint as firstborn the son of the favorite wife in place of the other<sup>29</sup> wife's son who is actually the firstborn. 21:17 Rather, he must acknowledge the son of the less loved<sup>30</sup> wife as firstborn and give him the double portion<sup>31</sup> of all he has, for that son is

<sup>1</sup> tn Heb "slain [one]."

<sup>2</sup> tn The combination "a wadi with flowing water" is necessary because a wadi (נַחַל, *nakhāl*) was ordinarily a dry stream or riverbed. For this ritual, however, a perennial stream must be chosen so that there would be fresh, rushing water.

<sup>3</sup> sn The unworked heifer, fresh stream, and uncultivated valley speak of ritual purity – of freedom from human contamination.

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb "the priests, the sons of Levi."

<sup>5</sup> tn Heb "in the name of the LORD." See note on Deut 10:8. The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>6</sup> tn Heb "by their mouth."

<sup>7</sup> tn Heb "every controversy and every blow."

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb "slain [one]."

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb "wadi," a seasonal watercourse through a valley.

<sup>10</sup> tn Heb "our eyes." This is a figure of speech known as synecdoche in which the part (the eyes) is put for the whole (the entire person).

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb "seen"; the implied object (the crime committed) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb "Atone for."

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb "and do not place innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel."

<sup>14</sup> tn Heb "in the eyes of" (so ASV, NASB, NIV).

<sup>15</sup> tn Heb "gives him into your hands."

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb "the prisoners." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy.

<sup>17</sup> sn This requirement for the woman to shave her head may symbolize the putting away of the old life and customs in preparation for being numbered among the people of the LORD. The same is true for the two following requirements.

<sup>18</sup> tn Heb "she is to...remove the clothing of her captivity" (cf. NASB); NRSV "discard her captive's garb."

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb "sit"; KJV, NASB, NRSV "remain."

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb "go unto," a common Hebrew euphemism for sexual relations.

<sup>21</sup> sn Heb "send her off." The Hebrew term שִׁלְחָהּ (*shillakh-tah*) is a somewhat euphemistic way of referring to divorce, the matter clearly in view here (cf. Deut 22:19, 29; 24:1, 3; Jer 3:1; Mal 2:16). This passage does not have the matter of divorce as its principal objective, so it should not be understood as endorsing divorce generally. It merely makes the point that if grounds for divorce exist (see Deut 24:1-4), and then divorce ensues, the husband could in no way gain profit from it.

<sup>22</sup> tn The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates by the words "in any case."

<sup>23</sup> tn The Hebrew text includes "for money." This phrase has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>24</sup> tn Or perhaps "must not enslave her" (cf. ASV, NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT); Heb "[must not] be tyrannical over."

<sup>25</sup> sn You have humiliated her. Since divorce was considered rejection, the wife subjected to it would "lose face" in addition to the already humiliating event of having become a wife by force (21:11-13). Furthermore, the Hebrew verb translated "humiliated" here (עָנָה, *'anah*), commonly used to speak of rape (cf. Gen 34:2; 2 Sam 13:12, 14, 22, 32; Judg 19:24), likely has sexual overtones as well. The woman may not be enslaved or abused after the divorce because it would be double humiliation (see also E. H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* [NAC], 291).

<sup>26</sup> tn Heb "one whom he loves and one whom he hates." For the idea of שָׂנְאָה (*sane'*, "hate") meaning to be rejected or loved less (cf. NRSV "disliked"), see Gen 29:31, 33; Mal 1:2-3. Cf. A. Konkel, *NIDOTTE* 3:1256-60.

<sup>27</sup> tn Heb "both the one whom he loves and the one whom he hates." On the meaning of the phrase "one whom he loves and one whom he hates" see the note on the word "other" earlier in this verse. The translation has been simplified for stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy.

<sup>28</sup> tn Heb "when he causes his sons to inherit what is his."

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb "the hated."

<sup>30</sup> tn See note on the word "other" in v. 15.

<sup>31</sup> tn Heb "measure of two." The Hebrew expression פִּי שְׁנַיִם (*piy shenayim*) suggests a two-thirds split; that is, the elder gets two parts and the younger one part. Cf. 2 Kgs 2:9; Zech 13:8. The practice is implicit in Isaac's blessing of Jacob (Gen 25:31-34) and Jacob's blessing of Ephraim (Gen 48:8-22).

the beginning of his father's procreative power<sup>1</sup> – to him should go the right of the firstborn.

**21:18** If a person has a stubborn, rebellious son who pays no attention to his father or mother, and they discipline him to no avail,<sup>2</sup> **21:19** his father and mother must seize him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his city. **21:20** They must declare to the elders<sup>3</sup> of his city, "Our son is stubborn and rebellious and pays no attention to what we say – he is a glutton and drunkard." **21:21** Then all the men of his city must stone him to death. In this way you will purge out<sup>4</sup> wickedness from among you, and all Israel<sup>5</sup> will hear about it and be afraid.

#### *Disposition of a Criminal's Remains*

**21:22** If a person commits a sin punishable by death and is executed, and you hang the corpse<sup>6</sup> on a tree, **21:23** his body must not remain all night on the tree; instead you must make certain you bury<sup>7</sup> him that same day, for the one who is left exposed<sup>8</sup> on a tree is cursed by God.<sup>9</sup> You must not defile your land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

#### *Laws Concerning Preservation of Life*

**22:1** When you see<sup>10</sup> your neighbor's<sup>11</sup> ox or sheep going astray, do not ignore it;<sup>12</sup> you must

return it without fail<sup>13</sup> to your neighbor. **22:2** If the owner<sup>14</sup> does not live<sup>15</sup> near you or you do not know who the owner is,<sup>16</sup> then you must corral the animal<sup>17</sup> at your house and let it stay with you until the owner looks for it; then you must return it to him. **22:3** You shall do the same to his donkey, his clothes, or anything else your neighbor<sup>18</sup> has lost and you have found; you must not refuse to get involved.<sup>19</sup> **22:4** When you see<sup>20</sup> your neighbor's donkey or ox fallen along the road, do not ignore it;<sup>21</sup> instead, you must be sure<sup>22</sup> to help him get the animal on its feet again.<sup>23</sup>

**22:5** A woman must not wear men's clothing,<sup>24</sup> nor should a man dress up in women's clothing, for anyone who does this is offensive<sup>25</sup> to the LORD your God.

**22:6** If you happen to notice a bird's nest along the road, whether in a tree or on the ground, and there are chicks or eggs with the mother bird sitting on them,<sup>26</sup> you must not take the mother from the young.<sup>27</sup> **22:7** You must be sure<sup>28</sup> to let the mother go, but you may take the young for yourself. Do this so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life.

**22:8** If you build a new house, you must construct a guard rail<sup>29</sup> around your roof to avoid being culpable<sup>30</sup> in the event someone should fall from it.

#### *Illustrations of the Principle of Purity*

**22:9** You must not plant your vineyard with two kinds of seed; otherwise the entire yield, both of the seed you plant and the produce of the

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb "his generative power" (אוֹן, 'on; cf. HALOT 22 s.v.). Cf. NAB "the first fruits of his manhood"; NRSV "the first issue of his virility."

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "and he does not listen to them."

<sup>3</sup> **tc** The LXX and Smr read "to the men," probably to conform to this phrase in v. 21. However, since judicial cases were the responsibility of the elders in such instances (cf. Deut 19:12; 21:3, 6; 25:7-8) the reading of the MT is likely original and correct here.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term בְּעֵרְתָהּ (*bi'artah*), here and elsewhere in such contexts (cf. Deut 13:5; 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:9), suggests God's anger which consumes like fire (thus בָּעַר, *ba'ar*, "to burn"). See H. Ringgren, *TDOT* 2:203-4.

<sup>5</sup> **tc** Some LXX traditions read הַנִּשְׁאָרִים (*hannish'arim*, "those who remain") for the MT's יִשְׂרָאֵל (*yisra'el*, "Israel"), understandable in light of Deut 19:20. However, the more difficult reading found in the MT is more likely original.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb "him."

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates by "make certain."

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb "hung," but this could convey the wrong image in English (hanging with a rope as a means of execution). Cf. NCV "anyone whose body is displayed on a tree."

<sup>9</sup> **sn** The idea behind the phrase *cursed by God* seems to be not that the person was impaled because he was cursed but that to leave him exposed there was to invite the curse of God upon the whole land. Why this would be so is not clear, though the rabbinic idea that even a criminal is created in the image of God may give some clue (thus J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* [JPSTC], 198). Paul cites this text (see Gal 3:13) to make the point that Christ, suspended from a cross, thereby took upon himself the curse associated with such a display of divine wrath and judgment (T. George, *Galatians* [NAC], 238-39).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb "you must not see," but, if translated literally into English, the statement is misleading.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb "brother's" (also later in this verse). In this context it is not limited to one's siblings, however; cf. NAB "your kinsman's."

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb "hide yourself."

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with the words "without fail."

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "your brother" (also later in this verse).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb "is not." The idea of "residing" is implied.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb "and you do not know him."

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "it"; the referent (the ox or sheep mentioned in v. 1) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb "your brother" (also in v. 4).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb "you must not hide yourself."

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb "you must not see." See note at 22:1.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb "and (must not) hide yourself from them."

<sup>22</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with "be sure."

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb "help him to lift them up." In keeping with English style the singular is used in the translation, and the referent ("the animal") has been specified for clarity.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb "a man's clothing."

<sup>25</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term תּוֹעֵבָה (*to'evah*, "offense") speaks of anything that runs counter to ritual or moral order, especially (in the OT) to divine standards. Cross-dressing in this covenant context may suggest homosexuality, fertility cult ritual, or some other forbidden practice.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** Heb "and the mother sitting upon the chicks or the eggs."

<sup>27</sup> **tn** Heb "sons," used here in a generic sense for offspring.

<sup>28</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation seeks to reflect with "be sure."

<sup>29</sup> **tn** Or "a parapet" (so NAB, NIV, NRSV); KJV "a battlement"; NLT "a barrier."

<sup>30</sup> **tn** Heb "that you not place bloodshed in your house."

vineyard, will be defiled.<sup>1</sup> **22:10** You must not plow with an ox and a donkey harnessed together. **22:11** You must not wear clothing made with wool and linen meshed together.<sup>2</sup> **22:12** You shall make yourselves tassels<sup>3</sup> for the four corners of the clothing you wear.

### *Purity in the Marriage Relationship*

**22:13** Suppose a man marries a woman, has sexual relations with her,<sup>4</sup> and then rejects<sup>5</sup> her, **22:14** accusing her of impropriety<sup>6</sup> and defaming her reputation<sup>7</sup> by saying, “I married this woman but when I had sexual relations<sup>8</sup> with her I discovered she was not a virgin!” **22:15** Then the father and mother of the young woman must produce the evidence of virginity<sup>9</sup> for the elders of the city at the gate. **22:16** The young woman’s father must say to the elders, “I gave my daughter to this man and he has rejected<sup>10</sup> her. **22:17** Moreover, he has raised accusations of impropriety by saying, ‘I discovered your daughter was not a virgin,’ but this is the evidence of my daughter’s virginity!” The cloth must then be spread out<sup>11</sup> before the city’s elders. **22:18** The elders of that city must then seize the man and punish<sup>12</sup> him. **22:19** They will fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the young woman’s father, for the man who made the accusation<sup>13</sup> ruined the reputation<sup>14</sup> of an

Israelite virgin. She will then become his wife and he may never divorce her as long as he lives.

**22:20** But if the accusation is true and the young woman was not a virgin, **22:21** the men of her city must bring the young woman to the door of her father’s house and stone her to death, for she has done a disgraceful thing<sup>15</sup> in Israel by behaving like a prostitute while living in her father’s house. In this way you will purge<sup>16</sup> evil from among you.

**22:22** If a man is caught having sexual relations with<sup>17</sup> a married woman<sup>18</sup> both the man who had relations with the woman and the woman herself must die; in this way you will purge<sup>19</sup> evil from Israel.

**22:23** If a virgin is engaged to a man and another man meets<sup>20</sup> her in the city and has sexual relations with<sup>21</sup> her, **22:24** you must bring the two of them to the gate of that city and stone them to death, the young woman because she did not cry out though in the city and the man because he violated<sup>22</sup> his neighbor’s fiancée;<sup>23</sup> in this way you will purge<sup>24</sup> evil from among you. **22:25** But if the man came across<sup>25</sup> the engaged woman in the field and overpowered her and raped<sup>26</sup> her, then only the rapist<sup>27</sup> must die. **22:26** You must not do anything to the young woman – she has done nothing deserving of death. This case is the same as when someone attacks another person<sup>28</sup> and murders him, **22:27** for the man<sup>29</sup> met her in the field and the engaged woman cried out, but there was no one to rescue her.

**22:28** Suppose a man comes across a virgin who is not engaged and overpowers and rapes<sup>30</sup> her and they are discovered. **22:29** The man who has raped her must pay her father fifty shekels of

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “set apart.” The verb קָדַשׁ (*qadash*) in the Qal verbal stem (as here) has the idea of being holy or being treated with special care. Some take the meaning as “be off-limits, forfeited,” i.e., the total produce of the vineyard, both crops and grapes, have to be forfeited to the sanctuary (cf. Exod 29:37; 30:29; Lev 6:18, 27; Num 16:37-38; Hag 2:12).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term שֵׁטָנָה (*sha’atnez*) occurs only here and in Lev 19:19. HALOT 1610-11 s.v. takes it to be a contraction of words (שֵׁשׁ [*shash*, “headdress”] + אֲטָנָה [*atnaz*, “strong”]). BDB 1043 s.v. שֵׁטָנָה offers the translation “mixed stuff” (cf. NEB “woven with two kinds of yarn”; NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT “woven together”). The general meaning is clear even if the etymology is not.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “twisted threads” (גְּדִלִים, *gdilim*) appears to be synonymous with צִיצִית (*tsitsit*) which, in Num 15:38, occurs in a passage instructing Israel to remember the covenant. Perhaps that is the purpose of the tassels here as well. Cf. KJV, ASV “fringes”; NAB “twisted cords.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “goes to her,” a Hebrew euphemistic idiom for sexual relations.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “hate.” See note on the word “other” in Deut 21:15. Cf. NAB “comes to dislike”; NASB “turns against”; TEV “decides he doesn’t want.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “deeds of things”; NRSV “makes up charges against her”; NIV “slanders her.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “brings against her a bad name”; NIV “gives her a bad name.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “drew near to her.” This is another Hebrew euphemism for having sexual relations.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** In light of v. 17 this would evidently be blood-stained sheets indicative of the first instance of intercourse. See E. H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (NAC), 302-3.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “hated.” See note on the word “other” in Deut 21:15.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “they will spread the garment.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “discipline.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “for he”; the referent (the man who made the accusation) has been specified in the translation to avoid confusion with the young woman’s father, the last-mentioned male.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “brought forth a bad name.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term נְבִלָה (*nvalah*) means more than just something stupid. It refers to a moral lapse so serious as to jeopardize the whole covenant community (cf. Gen 34:7; Judg 19:23; 20:6, 10; Jer 29:23). See C. Pan, *NIDOTTE* 3:11-13. Cf. NAB “she committed a crime against Israel.”

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “burn.” See note on Deut 21:21.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lying with” (so KJV, NASB), a Hebrew idiom for sexual relations.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “a woman married to a husband.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “burn.” See note on the phrase “purge out” in Deut 21:21.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “finds.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lies with.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “humbled.”

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* “wife.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* “burn.” See note on the phrase “purge out” in Deut 21:21.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* “found,” also in vv. 27, 28.

<sup>26</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lay with” here refers to a forced sexual relationship, as the accompanying verb “seized” (חָזַק, *khazaq*) makes clear.

<sup>27</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the man who lay with her, only him.”

<sup>28</sup> **tn** *Heb* “his neighbor.”

<sup>29</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he”; the referent (the man who attacked the woman) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>30</sup> **tn** *Heb* “lies with.”

silver and she must become his wife because he has violated her; he may never divorce her as long as he lives.

**22:30** (23:1)<sup>1</sup> A man may not marry<sup>2</sup> his father's former<sup>3</sup> wife and in this way dishonor his father.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Purity in Public Worship*

**23:1** A man with crushed<sup>5</sup> or severed genitals<sup>6</sup> may not enter the assembly of the LORD.<sup>7</sup> **23:2** A person of illegitimate birth<sup>8</sup> may not enter the assembly of the LORD; to the tenth generation no one related to him may do so.<sup>9</sup>

**23:3** An Ammonite or Moabite<sup>10</sup> may not enter the assembly of the LORD; to the tenth generation none of their descendants shall ever<sup>11</sup> do so,<sup>12</sup> **23:4** for they did not meet you with food and water on the way as you came from Egypt, and furthermore, they hired<sup>13</sup> Balaam son of Beor of Pethor in Aram Naharaim to curse you.

<sup>1</sup> **sn** Beginning with **22:30**, the verse numbers through **23:25** in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with **22:30** ET = **23:1** HT, **23:1** ET = **23:2** HT, **23:2** ET = **23:3** HT, etc., through **23:25** ET = **23:26** HT. With **24:1** the verse numbers in the ET and HT are again the same.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* "take." In context this refers to marriage, as in the older English expression "take a wife."

<sup>3</sup> **sn** This presupposes either the death of the father or their divorce since it would be impossible for one to marry his stepmother while his father was still married to her.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* "uncover his father's skirt" (so ASV, NASB). This appears to be a circumlocution for describing the dishonor that would come to a father by having his own son share his wife's sexuality (cf. NAB, NIV "dishonor his father's bed").

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* "bruised by crushing," which many English versions take to refer to crushed testicles (NAB, NRSV, NLT); TEV "who has been castrated."

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* "cut off with respect to the penis"; KJV, ASV "hath his privy member cut off"; English versions vary in their degree of euphemism here; cf. NAB, NRSV, TEV, NLT "penis"; NASB "male organ"; NCV "sex organ"; CEV "private parts"; NIV "emasculated by crushing or cutting."

<sup>7</sup> **sn** The Hebrew term translated "assembly" (קהל, *qahal*) does not refer here to the nation as such but to the formal services of the tabernacle or temple. Since emasculated or other sexually abnormal persons were commonly associated with pagan temple personnel, the thrust here may be primarily polemical in intent. One should not read into this anything having to do with the mentally and physically handicapped as fit to participate in the life and ministry of the church.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Or "a person born of an illegitimate marriage."

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* "enter the assembly of the LORD." The phrase "do so" has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** An Ammonite or Moabite. These descendants of Lot by his two daughters (cf. Gen 19:30-38) were thereby the products of incest and therefore excluded from the worshiping community. However, these two nations also failed to show proper hospitality to Israel on their way to Canaan (v. 4).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term translated "ever" (עַד-עוֹלָם, *ad-olam*) suggests that "tenth generation" (vv. 2, 3) also means "forever." However, in the OT sense "forever" means not "for eternity" but for an indeterminate future time. See A. Tomasino, *NIDOTTE* 3:346.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* "enter the assembly of the LORD." The phrase "do so" has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* "hired against you."

**23:5** But the LORD your God refused to listen to Balaam and changed<sup>14</sup> the curse to a blessing, for the LORD your God loves<sup>15</sup> you. **23:6** You must not seek peace and prosperity for them through all the ages to come. **23:7** You must not hate an Edomite, for he is your relative;<sup>16</sup> you must not hate an Egyptian, for you lived as a foreigner<sup>17</sup> in his land. **23:8** Children of the third generation born to them<sup>18</sup> may enter the assembly of the LORD.

#### *Purity in Personal Hygiene*

**23:9** When you go out as an army against your enemies, guard yourselves against anything impure.<sup>19</sup> **23:10** If there is someone among you who is impure because of some nocturnal emission,<sup>20</sup> he must leave the camp; he may not reenter it immediately. **23:11** When evening arrives he must wash himself with water and then at sunset he may reenter the camp.

**23:12** You are to have a place outside the camp to serve as a latrine.<sup>21</sup> **23:13** You must have a spade among your other equipment and when you relieve yourself<sup>22</sup> outside you must dig a hole with the spade<sup>23</sup> and then turn and cover your excrement.<sup>24</sup> **23:14** For the LORD your God walks about in the middle of your camp to deliver you and defeat<sup>25</sup> your enemies for you. Therefore your camp should be holy, so that he does not see anything indecent<sup>26</sup> among you and turn away from you.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the LORD your God changed." The phrase "the LORD your God" has not been included in the translation here for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy. Moreover, use of the pronoun "he" could create confusion regarding the referent (the LORD or Balaam).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The verb אָהַב (*ahav*, "love") here and commonly elsewhere in the Book of Deuteronomy speaks of God's elective grace toward Israel. See note on the word "loved" in Deut 4:37.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* "brother."

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* "sojourner."

<sup>18</sup> **sn** Concessions were made to the Edomites and Egyptians (as compared to the others listed in vv. 1-6) because the Edomites (i.e., Esauites) were full "brothers" of Israel and the Egyptians had provided security and sustenance for Israel for more than four centuries.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* "evil." The context makes clear that this is a matter of ritual impurity, not moral impurity, so it is "evil" in the sense that it disbars one from certain religious activity.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* "nocturnal happening." The Hebrew term קָרָה (*qareh*) merely means "to happen" so the phrase here is euphemistic (a "night happening") for some kind of bodily emission such as excrement or semen. Such otherwise normal physical functions rendered one ritually unclean whether accidental or not. See Lev 15:16-18; 22:4.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* "so that one may go outside there." This expression is euphemistic.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* "sit." This expression is euphemistic.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** *Heb* "with it"; the referent (the spade mentioned at the beginning of the verse) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* "what comes from you," a euphemism.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** *Heb* "give [over] your enemies."

<sup>26</sup> **tn** *Heb* "nakedness of a thing"; NLT "any shameful thing." The expression עֶרְוַת דָּבָר (*ervat davar*) refers specifically to sexual organs and, by extension, to any function associated with them. There are some aspects of human life that are so personal and private that they ought not be publicly paraded. Cultically speaking, even God is offended by such impropriety

*Purity in the Treatment of the Nonprivileged*

**23:15** You must not return an escaped slave to his master when he has run away to you.<sup>1</sup> **23:16** Indeed, he may live among you in any place he chooses, in whichever of your villages<sup>2</sup> he prefers; you must not oppress him.

*Purity in Cultic Personnel*

**23:17** There must never be a sacred prostitute<sup>3</sup> among the young women<sup>4</sup> of Israel nor a sacred male prostitute<sup>5</sup> among the young men<sup>6</sup> of Israel. **23:18** You must never bring the pay of a female prostitute<sup>7</sup> or the wage of a male prostitute<sup>8</sup> into the temple of the LORD your God in fulfillment of any vow, for both of these are abhorrent to the LORD your God.

*Respect for Others' Property*

**23:19** You must not charge interest on a loan to your fellow Israelite,<sup>9</sup> whether on money, food, or anything else that has been loaned with interest. **23:20** You may lend with interest to a foreigner, but not to your fellow Israelite; if you keep this command the LORD your God will bless you in all you undertake in the land you are about to enter to possess. **23:21** When you make a vow to the LORD your God you must not delay in fulfilling it, for otherwise he<sup>10</sup> will surely<sup>11</sup> hold you accountable as a sinner.<sup>12</sup>

(cf. Gen 9:22-23; Lev 18:6-12, 16-19; 20:11, 17-21). See B. SeEVERS, *NIDOTTE* 3:528-30.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes "from his master," but this would be redundant in English style.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "gates."

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term translated "sacred prostitute" here (קִדְשָׁה [q<sup>d</sup>dashah], from קֹדֶשׁ [qadesh, "holy"]; cf. NIV "shrine prostitute"; NASB "cult prostitute"; NRSV, TEV, NLT "temple prostitute") refers to the pagan fertility cults that employed female and male prostitutes in various rituals designed to evoke agricultural and even human fecundity (cf. Gen 38:21-22; 1 Kgs 14:24; 15:12; 22:47; 2 Kgs 23:7; Hos 4:14). The Hebrew term for a regular, noncultic (i.e., "secular") female prostitute is זֹנָה (*zonah*).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "daughters."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The male cultic prostitute was called קִדְשָׁה (*qadesh*; see note on the phrase "sacred prostitute" earlier in this verse). The colloquial Hebrew term for a "secular" male prostitute (i.e., a sodomite) is the disparaging epithet כֶּלֶב (*kelev*, "dog") which occurs in the following verse (cf. KJV, ASV, NAB, NASB).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb "sons."

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Here the Hebrew term זֹנָה (*zonah*) refers to a noncultic (i.e., "secular") female prostitute; see note on the phrase "sacred prostitute" in v. 17.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb "of a dog." This is the common Hebrew term for a noncultic (i.e., "secular") male prostitute. See note on the phrase "sacred male prostitute" in v. 17.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb "to your brother" (likewise in the following verse). Since this is not limited to actual siblings, "fellow Israelite" is used in the translation (cf. NAB, NASB "countrymen").

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb "the LORD your God." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which is reflected in the translation by "surely."

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb "and it will be a sin to you"; NIV, NCV, NLT "be guilty of sin."

**23:22** If you refrain from making a vow, it will not be sinful. **23:23** Whatever you vow, you must be careful to do what you have promised, such as what you have vowed to the LORD your God as a freewill offering. **23:24** When you enter the vineyard of your neighbor you may eat as many grapes as you please,<sup>13</sup> but you must not take away any in a container.<sup>14</sup> **23:25** When you go into the ripe grain fields of your neighbor you may pluck off the kernels with your hand,<sup>15</sup> but you must not use a sickle on your neighbor's ripe grain.

**24:1** If a man marries a woman and she does not please him because he has found something offensive<sup>16</sup> in her, then he may draw up a divorce document, give it to her, and evict her from his house. **24:2** When she has left him<sup>17</sup> she may go and become someone else's wife. **24:3** If the second husband rejects<sup>18</sup> her and then divorces her,<sup>19</sup> gives her the papers, and evicts her from his house, or if the second husband who married her dies, **24:4** her first husband who divorced her is not permitted to remarry<sup>20</sup> her after she has become ritually impure, for that is offensive to the LORD.<sup>21</sup> You must not bring guilt on the land<sup>22</sup> which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

**24:5** When a man is newly married, he need not go into<sup>23</sup> the army nor be obligated in any way; he must be free to stay at home for a full year and bring joy to<sup>24</sup> the wife he has married.

**24:6** One must not take either lower or upper millstones as security on a loan, for that is like taking a life itself as security.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb "grapes according to your appetite, your fullness."

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "in your container"; NAB, NIV "your basket."

<sup>15</sup> **sn** For the continuation of these practices into NT times see Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb "nakedness of a thing." The Hebrew phrase עֶרְוַת דָּבָר (*ervat davar*) refers here to some gross sexual impropriety (see note on "indecent" in Deut 23:14). Though the term usually has to do only with indecent exposure of the genitals, it can also include such behavior as adultery (cf. Lev 18:6-18; 20:11, 17, 20-21; Ezek 22:10; 23:29; Hos 2:10).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "his house."

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb "hates." See note on the word "other" in Deut 21:15.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb "writes her a document of divorce."

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb "to return to take her to be his wife."

<sup>21</sup> **sn** The issue here is not divorce and its grounds *per se* but prohibition of remarriage to a mate whom one has previously divorced.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb "cause the land to sin" (so KJV, ASV).

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb "go out with."

<sup>24</sup> **tc** For the MT's reading Piel שִׂמְחָה (*simmakh*, "bring joy to"), the Syriac and others read עִנְיָה (*samakh*, "enjoy").

<sup>25</sup> **sn** Taking millstones as security on a loan would amount to taking the owner's own life in pledge, since the millstones were the owner's means of earning a living and supporting his family.

**24:7** If a man is found kidnapping a person from among his fellow Israelites,<sup>1</sup> and regards him as mere property<sup>2</sup> and sells him, that kidnapper<sup>3</sup> must die. In this way you will purge<sup>4</sup> evil from among you.

*Respect for Human Dignity*

**24:8** Be careful during an outbreak of leprosy to follow precisely<sup>5</sup> all that the Levitical priests instruct you; as I have commanded them, so you should do. **24:9** Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam<sup>6</sup> along the way after you left Egypt.

**24:10** When you make any kind of loan to your neighbor, you may not go into his house to claim what he is offering as security.<sup>7</sup> **24:11** You must stand outside and the person to whom you are making the loan will bring out to you what he is offering as security.<sup>8</sup> **24:12** If the person is poor you may not use what he gives you as security for a covering.<sup>9</sup> **24:13** You must by all means<sup>10</sup> return to him at sunset the item he gave you as security so that he may sleep in his outer garment and bless you for it; it will be considered a just<sup>11</sup> deed by the LORD your God.

**24:14** You must not oppress a lowly and poor servant, whether one from among your fellow Israelites<sup>12</sup> or from the resident foreigners who are living in your land and villages.<sup>13</sup> **24:15** You must pay his wage that very day before the sun sets, for he is poor and his life depends on it. Otherwise he will cry out to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

**24:16** Fathers must not be put to death for what their children<sup>14</sup> do, nor children for what their fathers do; each must be put to death for his own sin.

**24:17** You must not pervert justice due a resident foreigner or an orphan, or take a widow's garment as security for a loan. **24:18** Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do all this. **24:19** Whenever you reap your harvest in your field and leave some unraked grain there,<sup>15</sup> you must not return to get it; it should go to the resident foreigner, orphan, and widow so that the LORD your God may bless all the work you do.<sup>16</sup> **24:20** When you beat your olive tree you must not repeat the procedure;<sup>17</sup> the remaining olives belong to the resident foreigner, orphan, and widow. **24:21** When you gather the grapes of your vineyard you must not do so a second time;<sup>18</sup> they should go to the resident foreigner, orphan, and widow. **24:22** Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt; therefore, I am commanding you to do all this.

**25:1** If controversy arises between people,<sup>19</sup> they should go to court for judgment. When the judges<sup>20</sup> hear the case, they shall exonerate<sup>21</sup> the innocent but condemn<sup>22</sup> the guilty. **25:2** Then,<sup>23</sup> if the guilty person is sentenced to a beating,<sup>24</sup> the judge shall force him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of blows his wicked behavior deserves.<sup>25</sup> **25:3** The judge<sup>26</sup> may sentence him to forty blows,<sup>27</sup> but no more. If he is struck with more than these, you might view your fellow Israelite<sup>28</sup> with contempt.

**25:4** You must not muzzle your<sup>29</sup> ox when it is treading grain.

<sup>1</sup> *tn* Heb "from his brothers, from the sons of Israel." The terms "brothers" and "sons of Israel" are in apposition; the second defines the first more specifically.

<sup>2</sup> *tn* Or "and enslaves him."

<sup>3</sup> *tn* Heb "that thief."

<sup>4</sup> *tn* Heb "burn." See note on the word "purge" in Deut 19:19.

<sup>5</sup> *tn* Heb "to watch carefully and to do."

<sup>6</sup> *sn* What the LORD your God did to Miriam. The reference is to Miriam's having contracted leprosy because of her in-temperate challenge to Moses' leadership (Num 12:1-15). The purpose for the allusion here appears to be the assertion of the theocratic leadership of the priests who, like Moses, should not be despised.

<sup>7</sup> *tn* Heb "his pledge." This refers to something offered as pledge of repayment, i.e., as security for the debt.

<sup>8</sup> *tn* Heb "his pledge."

<sup>9</sup> *tn* Heb "may not lie down in his pledge." What is in view is the use of clothing as guarantee for the repayment of loans, a matter already addressed elsewhere (Deut 23:19-20; 24:6; cf. Exod 22:25-26; Lev 25:35-37). Cf. NAB "you shall not sleep in the mantle he gives as a pledge"; NRSV "in the garment given you as the pledge."

<sup>10</sup> *tn* The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation seeks to reflect with "by all means."

<sup>11</sup> *tn* Or "righteous" (so NIV, NLT).

<sup>12</sup> *tn* Heb "your brothers," but not limited only to actual siblings; cf. NASB "your (+ own NAB) countrymen."

<sup>13</sup> *tn* Heb "who are in your land in your gates." The word "living" is supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>14</sup> *tn* Heb "sons" (so NASB; twice in this verse). Many English versions, including the KJV, read "children" here.

<sup>15</sup> *tn* Heb "in the field."

<sup>16</sup> *tn* Heb "of your hands." This law was later applied in the story of Ruth who, as a poor widow, was allowed by generous Boaz to glean in his fields (Ruth 2:1-13).

<sup>17</sup> *tn* Heb "knock down after you."

<sup>18</sup> *tn* Heb "glean after you."

<sup>19</sup> *tn* Heb "men."

<sup>20</sup> *tn* Heb "they"; the referent (the judges) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>21</sup> *tn* Heb "declare to be just"; KJV, NASB "justify the righteous"; NAB, NIV "acquitting the innocent."

<sup>22</sup> *tn* Heb "declare to be evil"; NIV "condemning the guilty (+ party NAB)."

<sup>23</sup> *tn* Heb "and it will be."

<sup>24</sup> *tn* Heb "if the evil one is a son of smiting."

<sup>25</sup> *tn* Heb "according to his wickedness, by number."

<sup>26</sup> *tn* Heb "he"; the referent (the judge) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>27</sup> *tn* Heb "Forty blows he may strike him"; however, since the judge is to witness the punishment (v. 2) it is unlikely the judge himself administered it.

<sup>28</sup> *tn* Heb "your brothers" but not limited only to an actual sibling; cf. NAB) "your kinsman"; NRSV, NLT "your neighbor."

<sup>29</sup> *tn* Heb "an." By implication this is one's own animal.



*Respect for the Sanctity of Others*

**25:5** If brothers live together and one of them dies without having a son, the dead man's wife must not remarry someone outside the family. Instead, her late husband's brother must go to her, marry her,<sup>1</sup> and perform the duty of a brother-in-law.<sup>2</sup> **25:6** Then<sup>3</sup> the first son<sup>4</sup> she bears will continue the name of the dead brother, thus preventing his name from being blotted out of Israel. **25:7** But if the man does not want to marry his brother's widow, then she<sup>5</sup> must go to the elders at the town gate and say, "My husband's brother refuses to preserve his brother's name in Israel; he is unwilling to perform the duty of a brother-in-law to me!" **25:8** Then the elders of his city must summon him and speak to him. If he persists, saying, "I don't want to marry her," **25:9** then his sister-in-law must approach him in view of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, and spit in his face.<sup>6</sup> She will then respond, "Thus may it be done to any man who does not maintain his brother's family line!"<sup>7</sup> **25:10** His family name will be referred to<sup>8</sup> in Israel as "the family<sup>9</sup> of the one whose sandal was removed."<sup>10</sup>

**25:11** If two men<sup>11</sup> get into a hand-to-hand fight, and the wife of one of them gets involved to help her husband against his attacker, and she reaches out her hand and grabs his genitals,<sup>12</sup>

**25:12** then you must cut off her hand – do not pity her.

**25:13** You must not have in your bag different stone weights,<sup>13</sup> a heavy and a light one.<sup>14</sup>

**25:14** You must not have in your house different measuring containers,<sup>15</sup> a large and a small one.

**25:15** You must have an accurate and correct<sup>16</sup> stone weight and an accurate and correct measuring container, so that your life may be extended in the land the LORD your God is about to give you.

**25:16** For anyone who acts dishonestly in these ways is abhorrent<sup>17</sup> to the LORD your God.

*Treatment of the Amalekites*

**25:17** Remember what the Amalekites<sup>18</sup> did to you on your way from Egypt, **25:18** how they met you along the way and cut off all your stragglers in the rear of the march when you were exhausted and tired; they were unafraid of God.<sup>19</sup> **25:19** So when the LORD your God gives you relief from all the enemies who surround you in the land he<sup>20</sup> is giving you as an inheritance,<sup>21</sup> you must wipe out the memory of the Amalekites from under heaven<sup>22</sup> – do not forget!<sup>23</sup>

*Presentation of the First Fruits*

**26:1** When<sup>24</sup> you enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you occupy it and live in it, **26:2** you must take the first of all the ground's produce you harvest from the land the LORD your God is

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* "take her as wife"; NRSV "taking her in marriage."

<sup>2</sup> **sn** This is the so-called "levirate" custom (from the Latin term *levir*, "brother-in-law"), an ancient provision whereby a man who died without male descendants to carry on his name could have a son by proxy, that is, through a surviving brother who would marry his widow and whose first son would then be attributed to the brother who had died. This is the only reference to this practice in an OT legal text but it is illustrated in the story of Judah and his sons (Gen 38) and possibly in the account of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 2:8; 3:12; 4:6).

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* "and it will be that."

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the firstborn." This refers to the oldest male child.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* "want to take his sister-in-law, then his sister in law." In the second instance the pronoun ("she") has been used in the translation to avoid redundancy.

<sup>6</sup> **sn** The removal of the sandal was likely symbolic of the relinquishment by the man of any claim to his dead brother's estate since the sandal was associated with the soil or land (cf. Ruth 4:7-8). Spitting in the face was a sign of utmost disgust or disdain, an emotion the rejected widow would feel toward her uncooperative brother-in-law (cf. Num 12:14; Lev 15:8). See W. Bailey, *NIDOTTE* 2:544.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* "build the house of his brother"; TEV "refuses to give his brother a descendant"; NLT "refuses to raise up a son for his brother."

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* "called," i.e., "known as."

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* "house."

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Cf. NIV, NCV "The Family of the Unsandaled."

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a man and his brother."

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* "shameful parts." Besides the inherent delicacy of what she has done, the woman has also threatened the progenerative capacity of the injured man. The level of specificity given this term in modern translations varies: "private parts" (NAB, NIV, CEV); "genitals" (NASB, NRSV, TEV); "sex organs" (NCV); "testicles" (NLT).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a stone and a stone." The repetition of the singular noun here expresses diversity, as the following phrase indicates. See *IBHS* 116 §7.2.3c.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* "a large and a small," but since the issue is the weight, "a heavy and a light one" conveys the idea better in English.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "an ephah and an ephah." An ephah refers to a unit of dry measure roughly equivalent to five U.S. gallons (just under 20 liters). On the repetition of the term to indicate diversity, see *IBHS* 116 §7.2.3c.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Or "just"; *Heb* "righteous."

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term translated here "abhorrent" (רועיה, *to'evah*) speaks of attitudes and/or behaviors so vile as to be reprehensible to a holy God. See note on the word "abhorrent" in Deut 7:25.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* "what Amalek" (so NAB, NRSV). Here the individual ancestor, the namesake of the tribe, is cited as representative of the entire tribe at the time Israel was entering Canaan. Consistent with this, singular pronouns are used in v. 18 and the singular name appears again in v. 19. Since readers unfamiliar with the tribe of Amalekites might think this refers to an individual, the term "Amalekites" and the corresponding plural pronouns have been used throughout these verses (cf. NIV, NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>19</sup> **sn** See Exod 17:8-16.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the LORD your God." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes "to possess it."

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Or "from beneath the sky." The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated "heaven(s)" or "sky" depending on the context.

<sup>23</sup> **sn** This command is fulfilled in 1 Sam 15:1-33.

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* "and it will come to pass that."

giving you, place it in a basket, and go to the place where he<sup>1</sup> chooses to locate his name.<sup>2</sup> 26:3 You must go to the priest in office at that time and say to him, “I declare today to the LORD your<sup>3</sup> God that I have come into the land that the LORD<sup>4</sup> promised<sup>5</sup> to our ancestors<sup>6</sup> to give us.” 26:4 The priest will then take the basket from you<sup>7</sup> and set it before the altar of the LORD your God. 26:5 Then you must affirm before the LORD your God, “A wandering<sup>8</sup> Aramean<sup>9</sup> was my ancestor,<sup>10</sup> and he went down to Egypt and lived there as a foreigner with a household few in number,<sup>11</sup> but there he became a great, powerful, and numerous people. 26:6 But the Egyptians mistreated and oppressed us, forcing us to do burdensome labor. 26:7 So we cried out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and he<sup>12</sup> heard us and saw our humiliation, toil, and oppression. 26:8 Therefore the LORD brought us out of Egypt with tremendous strength and power,<sup>13</sup> as well as with great awe-inspiring signs and wonders. 26:9 Then he brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. 26:10 So now, look! I have brought the first of the ground’s produce that you, LORD, have given me.” Then you must set it down before the LORD your God and worship before him.<sup>14</sup> 26:11 You

will celebrate all the good things that the LORD your God has given you and your family,<sup>15</sup> along with the Levites and the resident foreigners among you.

#### *Presentation of the Third-year Tithe*

26:12 When you finish tithing all<sup>16</sup> your income in the third year (the year of tithing), you must give it to the Levites, the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows<sup>17</sup> so that they may eat to their satisfaction in your villages.<sup>18</sup> 26:13 Then you shall say before the LORD your God, “I have removed the sacred offering<sup>19</sup> from my house and given it to the Levites, the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows just as you have commanded me.<sup>20</sup> I have not violated or forgotten your commandments. 26:14 I have not eaten anything when I was in mourning, or removed any of it while ceremonially unclean, or offered any of it to the dead;<sup>21</sup> I have obeyed you<sup>22</sup> and have done everything you have commanded me. 26:15 Look down from your holy dwelling place in heaven and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us, just as you promised our ancestors – a land flowing with milk and honey.”

#### *Narrative Interlude*

26:16 Today the LORD your God is commanding you to keep these statutes and ordinances, something you must do with all your heart and soul.<sup>23</sup> 26:17 Today you have declared the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in his ways, keep his statutes, commandments, and ordinances, and obey him. 26:18 And today the LORD has declared you to be his special people (as he already promised you) so you may keep all his commandments. 26:19 Then<sup>24</sup> he will

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>2</sup> **sn** *The place where he chooses to locate his name.* This is a circumlocution for the central sanctuary, first the tabernacle and later the Jerusalem temple. See Deut 12:1-14 and especially the note on the word “you” in v. 14.

<sup>3</sup> **tc** For the MT reading “your God,” certain LXX MSS have “my God,” a contextually superior rendition followed by some English versions (e.g., NAB, NASB, TEV). Perhaps the text reflects dittography of the *kaf* (כ) at the end of the word with the following preposition כי (*ki*).

<sup>4</sup> **tc** The Syriac adds “your God” to complete the usual formula.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “swore on oath.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “fathers” (also in vv. 7, 15).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “your hand.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Though the Hebrew term אָוֵד (*avad*) generally means “to perish” or the like (*HALOT* 2-3 s.v.; BDB 1-2 s.v.; cf. KJV “a Syrian ready to perish”), a meaning “to go astray” or “to be lost” is also attested. The ambivalence in the Hebrew text is reflected in the versions where LXX Vaticanus reads ἀπέβαλεν (*apebalen*, “lose”) for a possibly metathesized reading found in Alexandrinus, Ambrosianus, ἀπέλαβεν (*apelaben*, “receive”); others attest κατέλειπεν (*kateleipen*, “leave, abandon”). “Wandering” seems to suit best the contrast with the sedentary life Israel would enjoy in Canaan (v. 9) and is the meaning followed by many English versions.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** *A wandering Aramean.* This is a reference to Jacob whose mother Rebekah was an Aramean (Gen 24:10; 25:20, 26) and who himself lived in Aram for at least twenty years (Gen 31:41-42).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* “father.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “sojourning there few in number.” The words “with a household” have been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons and for clarity.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 26:2.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “by a powerful hand and an extended arm.” These are anthropomorphisms designed to convey God’s tremendously great power in rescuing Israel from their Egyptian bondage. They are preserved literally in many English versions (cf. KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in 26:2.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Or “household” (so NASB, NIV, NLT); *Heb* “house” (so KJV, NRSV).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* includes “the tithes of.” This has not been included in the translation to avoid redundancy.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The terms “Levite, resident foreigner, orphan, and widow” are collective singulars in the Hebrew text (also in v. 13).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “gates.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the sacred thing.” The term הַקְּדֹשִׁים (*haqqodesh*) likely refers to an offering normally set apart for the LORD but, as a third-year tithe, given on this occasion to people in need. Sometimes this is translated as “the sacred portion” (cf. NASB, NIV, NRSV), but that could sound to a modern reader as if a part of the house were being removed and given away.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “according to all your commandment that you commanded me.” This has been simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>21</sup> **sn** These practices suggest overtones of pagan ritual, all of which the confessor denies having undertaken. In Canaan they were connected with fertility practices associated with harvest time. See E. H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (NAC), 335-36.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD my God.” See note on “he” in 26:2.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Or “mind and being”; cf. NCV “with your whole being”; TEV “obey them faithfully with all your heart.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** *Heb* “so that.” Verses 18-19 are one sentence in the Hebrew text, but the translation divides it into three sentences for stylistic reasons. The first clause in verse 19 gives a result of the preceding clause. When Israel keeps God’s law, God will bless them with fame and honor (cf. NAB “he will then raise you high in praise and renown and glory”; NLT “And

elevate you above all the nations he has made and you will receive praise, fame, and honor.<sup>1</sup> You will<sup>2</sup> be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he has said.

*The Assembly at Shechem*

**27:1** Then Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people: “Pay attention to all the commandments<sup>3</sup> I am giving<sup>4</sup> you today. **27:2** When you cross the Jordan River<sup>5</sup> to the land the LORD your God is giving you, you must erect great stones and cover<sup>6</sup> them with plaster. **27:3** Then you must inscribe on them all the words of this law when you cross over, so that you may enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors,<sup>7</sup> said to you. **27:4** So when you cross the Jordan you must erect on Mount Ebal<sup>8</sup> these stones about which I am commanding you today, and you must cover them with plaster. **27:5** Then you must build an altar there to the LORD your God, an altar of stones – do not use an iron tool on them. **27:6** You must build the altar of the LORD your God with whole stones and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. **27:7** Also you must offer fellowship offerings and eat them there, rejoicing before the LORD your God. **27:8** You must inscribe on the stones all the words of this law, making them clear.”

**27:9** Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel: “Be quiet and pay attention, Israel. Today you have become the people of the LORD your God. **27:10** You must obey him<sup>9</sup> and keep his commandments and statutes that I am giving you today.” **27:11** Moreover, Moses commanded the people that day: **27:12** “The

following tribes<sup>10</sup> must stand to bless the people on Mount Gerizim when you cross the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. **27:13** And these other tribes must stand for the curse on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

*The Covenant Curses*

**27:14** “The Levites will call out to every Israelite<sup>11</sup> with a loud voice: **27:15** ‘Cursed is the one<sup>12</sup> who makes a carved or metal image – something abhorrent<sup>13</sup> to the LORD, the work of the craftsman<sup>14</sup> – and sets it up in a secret place.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’<sup>15</sup> **27:16** ‘Cursed<sup>16</sup> is the one who disrespects<sup>17</sup> his father and mother.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:17** ‘Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor’s boundary marker.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:18** ‘Cursed is the one who misleads a blind person on the road.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:19** ‘Cursed is the one who perverts justice for the resident foreigner, the orphan, and the widow.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:20** ‘Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with<sup>18</sup> his father’s former wife,<sup>19</sup> for he dishonors his father.’<sup>20</sup> Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:21** ‘Cursed is the one who commits bestiality.’<sup>21</sup> Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:22** ‘Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with his sister, the daughter of either his father or mother.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:23** ‘Cursed is the one who has sexual relations with his mother-in-law.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:24** ‘Cursed is the one who

if you do, he will make you greater than any other nation”).

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “for praise and for a name and for glory.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb “and to be.” A new sentence was started here for stylistic reasons.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “the whole commandment.” See note at 5:31.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “commanding”; NAB “which I enjoin on you today” (likewise in v. 10).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The word “River” is not in the Hebrew text but has been supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “plaster” (so KJV, ASV; likewise in v. 4). In the translation “cover” has been used for stylistic reasons.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “fathers.”

<sup>8</sup> **tc** Smr reads “Mount Gerizim” for the MT reading “Mount Ebal” to justify the location of the Samaritan temple there in the postexilic period. This reading is patently self-serving and does not reflect the original. In the NT when the Samaritan woman of Sychar referred to “this mountain” as the place of worship for her community she obviously had Gerizim in mind (cf. John 4:20).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “listen to the voice of the LORD your God.” Here “listen” (NAB “hearken”) means “obey” (cf. KJV, ASV, NASB). The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The word “tribes” has been supplied here and in the following verse in the translation for clarity.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “Israelite man.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “man,” but in a generic sense here.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term translated here “abhorrent” (רוֹעֵבָה, *to’evah*) speaks of attitudes and/or behaviors so vile as to be reprehensible to a holy God. See note on the word “abhorrent” in Deut 7:25.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “craftsman’s hands.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Or “So be it!” The term is an affirmation expressing agreement with the words of the Levites.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The Levites speak again at this point; throughout this pericope the Levites pronounce the curse and the people respond with “Amen.”

<sup>17</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term גָּלַח (*galah*) means to treat with disdain or lack of due respect (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV “dishonors”; NLT “despises”). It is the opposite of כָּבַד (*kaved*, “to be heavy,” that is, to treat with reverence and proper deference). To treat a parent lightly is to dishonor him or her and thus violate the fifth commandment (Deut 5:16; cf. Exod 21:17).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “who lies with” (so NASB, NRSV); also in vv. 22, 23. This is a Hebrew idiom for having sexual relations (cf. NIV “who sleeps with”; NLT “who has sexual intercourse with”).

<sup>19</sup> **tn** See note at Deut 22:30.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Heb “he uncovers his father’s skirt” (NASB similar). See note at Deut 22:30.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “lies with any animal” (so NASB, NRSV). “To lie with” is a Hebrew euphemism for having sexual relations with someone (or in this case, some animal).

kills<sup>4</sup> his neighbor in private.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:25** ‘Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to kill an innocent person.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’ **27:26** ‘Cursed is the one who refuses to keep the words of this law.’ Then all the people will say, ‘Amen!’

### *The Covenant Blessings*

**28:1** “If you indeed<sup>2</sup> obey the LORD your God and are careful to observe all his commandments I am giving<sup>3</sup> you today, the LORD your God will elevate you above all the nations of the earth. **28:2** All these blessings will come to you in abundance<sup>4</sup> if you obey the LORD your God: **28:3** You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the field.<sup>5</sup> **28:4** Your children<sup>6</sup> will be blessed, as well as the produce of your soil, the offspring of your livestock, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks. **28:5** Your basket and your mixing bowl will be blessed. **28:6** You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.<sup>7</sup> **28:7** The LORD will cause your enemies who attack<sup>8</sup> you to be struck down before you; they will attack you from one direction<sup>9</sup> but flee from you in seven different directions. **28:8** The LORD will decree blessing for you with respect to your barns and in everything you do – yes, he will bless you in the land he<sup>10</sup> is giving you. **28:9** The LORD will designate you as his holy people just as he promised you, if you keep his commandments<sup>11</sup> and obey him.<sup>12</sup> **28:10** Then all the peoples of the earth will see that you belong to the LORD,<sup>13</sup> and they will respect you. **28:11** The LORD will greatly multiply your children,<sup>14</sup> the offspring of your livestock, and the produce of your soil in the land which he<sup>15</sup> promised your ancestors<sup>16</sup> he

would give you. **28:12** The LORD will open for you his good treasure house, the heavens, to give you rain for the land in its season and to bless all you do;<sup>17</sup> you will lend to many nations but you will not borrow from any. **28:13** The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always end up at the top and not at the bottom, if you obey his<sup>18</sup> commandments which I am urging<sup>19</sup> you today to be careful to do. **28:14** But you must not turn away from all the commandments I am giving<sup>20</sup> you today, to either the right or left, nor pursue other gods and worship<sup>21</sup> them.

### *Curses as Reversal of Blessings*

**28:15** “But if you ignore<sup>22</sup> the LORD your God and are not careful to keep all his commandments and statutes I am giving you today, then all these curses will come upon you in full force.<sup>23</sup> **28:16** You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the field. **28:17** Your basket and your mixing bowl will be cursed. **28:18** Your children<sup>24</sup> will be cursed, as well as the produce of your soil, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks. **28:19** You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.<sup>25</sup>

### *Curses by Disease and Drought*

**28:20** “The LORD will send on you a curse, confusing you and opposing you<sup>26</sup> in everything you undertake<sup>27</sup> until you are destroyed and quickly perish because of the evil of your deeds, in that you have forsaken me.<sup>28</sup> **28:21** The LORD will plague you with deadly diseases<sup>29</sup> until he has completely removed you from the land you are about to possess. **28:22** He<sup>30</sup> will afflict you with weakness,<sup>31</sup> fever, inflammation, infec-

<sup>1</sup> tn Or “strikes down” (so NRSV).

<sup>2</sup> tn The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with “indeed.”

<sup>3</sup> tn Heb “commanding”; NAB “which I enjoin on you today” (likewise in v. 15).

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb “come upon you and overtake you” (so NASB, NRSV); NIV “come upon you and accompany you.”

<sup>5</sup> tn Or “in the country” (so NAB, NIV, NLT). This expression also occurs in v. 15.

<sup>6</sup> tn Heb “the fruit of your womb” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>7</sup> sn Come in...go out. To “come in” and “go out” is a figure of speech (merism) indicating all of life and its activities.

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb “who rise up against” (so NIV).

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb “way” (also later in this verse and in v. 25).

<sup>10</sup> tn Heb “the LORD your God.” Because English would not typically reintroduce the proper name following a relative pronoun (“he will bless...the LORD your God is giving”), the pronoun (“he”) has been employed here in the translation.

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb “the commandments of the LORD your God.” See note on “he” in the previous verse.

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb “and walk in his ways” (so NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb “the name of the Lord is called over you.” The Hebrew idiom indicates ownership; see 2 Sam 12:28; Isa 4:1, as well as BDB 896 s.v. נִקְרָא Niph. 2.d.(4).

<sup>14</sup> tn Heb “the fruit of your womb” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV); CEV “will give you a lot of children.”

<sup>15</sup> tn Heb “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 28:8.

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “fathers” (also in vv. 36, 64).

<sup>17</sup> tn Heb “all the work of your hands.”

<sup>18</sup> tn Heb “the LORD your God’s.” See note on “he” in 28:8.

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb “commanding” (so NRSV); NASB “which I charge you today.”

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb “from all the words which I am commanding.”

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb “in order to serve.”

<sup>22</sup> tn Heb “do not hear the voice of.”

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb “and overtake you” (so NIV, NRSV); NAB, NLT “and overwhelm you.”

<sup>24</sup> tn Heb “the fruit of your womb” (so NAB, NIV, NRSV).

<sup>25</sup> sn See note on the similar expression in v. 6.

<sup>26</sup> tn Heb “the curse, the confusion, and the rebuke” (NASB and NIV similar); NRSV “disaster, panic, and frustration.”

<sup>27</sup> tn Heb “in all the stretching out of your hand.”

<sup>28</sup> tc For the MT first person common singular suffix (“me”), the LXX reads either “Lord” (Lucian) or third person masculine singular suffix (“him”; various codices). The MT’s more difficult reading probably represents the original text.

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb “the evil of your doings wherein you have forsaken me”; CEV “all because you rejected the Lord.”

<sup>30</sup> tn Heb “will cause pestilence to cling to you.”

<sup>31</sup> tn Heb “The LORD.” See note on “he” in 28:8.

<sup>32</sup> tn Or perhaps “consumption” (so KJV, NASB, NRSV). The term is from a verbal root that indicates a weakening of one’s physical strength (cf. NAB “wasting”; NIV, NLT “wasting disease”).

tion,<sup>1</sup> sword,<sup>2</sup> blight, and mildew; these will attack you until you perish. **28:23** The<sup>3</sup> sky<sup>4</sup> above your heads will be bronze and the earth beneath you iron. **28:24** The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; it will come down on you from the sky until you are destroyed.

#### *Curses by Defeat and Deportation*

**28:25** “The LORD will allow you to be struck down before your enemies; you will attack them from one direction but flee from them in seven directions and will become an object of terror<sup>5</sup> to all the kingdoms of the earth. **28:26** Your carcasses will be food for every bird of the sky and wild animal of the earth, and there will be no one to chase them off. **28:27** The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, eczema, and scabies, all of which cannot be healed. **28:28** The LORD will also subject you to madness, blindness, and confusion of mind.<sup>6</sup> **28:29** You will feel your way along at noon like the blind person does in darkness and you will not succeed in anything you do;<sup>7</sup> you will be constantly oppressed and continually robbed, with no one to save you. **28:30** You will be engaged to a woman and another man will rape<sup>8</sup> her. You will build a house but not live in it. You will plant a vineyard but not even begin to use it. **28:31** Your ox will be slaughtered before your very eyes but you will not eat of it. Your donkey will be stolen from you as you watch and will not be returned to you. Your flock of sheep will be given to your enemies and there will be no one to save you. **28:32** Your sons and daughters will be given to another people while you look on in vain all day, and you will be powerless to do anything about it.<sup>9</sup> **28:33** As for the produce of your land and all your labor, a people you do not know will consume it, and you will be nothing but oppressed and crushed for the rest of your lives. **28:34** You will go insane from seeing all this. **28:35** The LORD will afflict you in your knees and on your legs with painful, incurable boils – from the soles of your feet to the top of your head. **28:36** The LORD will

force you and your king<sup>10</sup> whom you will appoint over you to go away to a people whom you and your ancestors have not known, and you will serve other gods of wood and stone there. **28:37** You will become an occasion of horror, a proverb, and an object of ridicule to all the peoples to whom the LORD will drive you.

#### *The Curse of Reversed Status*

**28:38** “You will take much seed to the field but gather little harvest, because locusts will consume it. **28:39** You will plant vineyards and cultivate them, but you will not drink wine or gather in grapes, because worms will eat them. **28:40** You will have olive trees throughout your territory but you will not anoint yourself with olive oil, because the olives will drop off the trees while still unripe.<sup>11</sup> **28:41** You will bear sons and daughters but not keep them, because they will be taken into captivity. **28:42** Whirring locusts<sup>12</sup> will take over every tree and all the produce of your soil. **28:43** The foreigners<sup>13</sup> who reside among you will become higher and higher over you and you will become lower and lower. **28:44** They will lend to you but you will not lend to them; they will become the head and you will become the tail!

**28:45** All these curses will fall on you, pursuing and overtaking you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping his commandments and statutes that he has given<sup>14</sup> you. **28:46** These curses<sup>15</sup> will be a perpetual sign and wonder with reference to you and your descendants.<sup>16</sup>

#### *The Curse of Military Siege*

**28:47** “Because you have not served the LORD your God joyfully and wholeheartedly with the abundance of everything you have, **28:48** instead in hunger, thirst, nakedness, and poverty<sup>17</sup> you will serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you. They<sup>18</sup> will place an iron yoke on your neck until they have destroyed

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb “hot fever”; NIV “scorching heat.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Or “drought” (so NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>3</sup> **tc** The MT reads “Your.” The LXX reads “Heaven will be to you.”

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Or “heavens” (also in the following verse). The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>5</sup> **tc** The meaningless MT reading זַעֲוָה (*za'avah*) is clearly a transposition of the more commonly attested Hebrew noun זַעֲוָה (*z'ava'ah*, “terror”).

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb “heart” (so KJV, NASB).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb “you will not cause your ways to prosper.”

<sup>8</sup> **tc** For MT reading שָׁגַל (*shagal*, “ravish; violate”), the Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate presume the less violent שָׁכַב (*shakhav*, “lie with”). The unexpected counterpart to betrothal here favors the originality of the MT.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** Heb “and there will be no power in your hand”; NCV “there will be nothing you can do.”

<sup>10</sup> **tc** The LXX reads the plural “kings.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “your olives will drop off” (נָשַׁל, *nashal*), referring to the olives dropping off before they ripen.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term denotes some sort of buzzing or whirring insect; some have understood this to be a type of locust (KJV, NIV, CEV), but other insects have also been suggested: “buzzing insects” (NAB); “the cricket” (NASB); “the cicada” (NRSV).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “the foreigner.” This is a collective singular and has therefore been translated as plural; this includes the pronouns in the following verse, which are also singular in the Hebrew text.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb “commanded”; NAB, NIV, TEV “he gave you.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb “they”; the referent (the curses mentioned previously) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb “seed” (so KJV, ASV).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “lack of everything.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “he” (also later in this verse). The pronoun is a collective singular referring to the enemies (cf. CEV, NLT). Many translations understand the singular pronoun to refer to the LORD (cf. NAB, NASB, NIV, NCV, NRSV, TEV).

you. **28:49** The LORD will raise up a distant nation against you, one from the other side of the earth<sup>1</sup> as the eagle flies,<sup>2</sup> a nation whose language you will not understand, **28:50** a nation of stern appearance that will have no regard for the elderly or pity for the young. **28:51** They<sup>3</sup> will devour the offspring of your livestock and the produce of your soil until you are destroyed. They will not leave you with any grain, new wine, olive oil, calves of your herds,<sup>4</sup> or lambs of your flocks<sup>5</sup> until they have destroyed you. **28:52** They will besiege all of your villages<sup>6</sup> until all of your high and fortified walls collapse – those in which you put your confidence throughout the land. They will besiege all your villages throughout the land the LORD your God has given you. **28:53** You will then eat your own offspring,<sup>7</sup> the flesh of the sons and daughters the LORD your God has given you, because of the severity of the siege<sup>8</sup> by which your enemies will constrict you. **28:54** The man among you who is by nature tender and sensitive will turn against his brother, his beloved wife, and his remaining children. **28:55** He will withhold from all of them his children's flesh that he is eating (since there is nothing else left), because of the severity of the siege by which your enemy will constrict<sup>9</sup> you in your villages. **28:56** Likewise, the most<sup>10</sup> tender and delicate of your women, who would never think of putting even the sole of her foot on the ground because of her daintiness,<sup>11</sup> will turn against her beloved husband, her sons and daughters, **28:57** and will secretly eat her afterbirth<sup>12</sup> and her newborn children<sup>13</sup> (since she has nothing else),<sup>14</sup> because of the severity of the siege by which your enemy will constrict you in your villages.

### *The Curse of Covenant Termination*

**28:58** “If you refuse to obey<sup>15</sup> all the words of this law, the things written in this scroll, and refuse to fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God, **28:59** then the LORD will

increase your punishments and those of your descendants – great and long-lasting afflictions and severe, enduring illnesses. **28:60** He will infect you with all the diseases of Egypt<sup>16</sup> that you dreaded, and they will persistently afflict you.<sup>17</sup> **28:61** Moreover, the LORD will bring upon you every kind of sickness and plague not mentioned in this scroll of commandments,<sup>18</sup> until you have perished. **28:62** There will be very few of you left, though at one time you were as numerous as the stars in the sky,<sup>19</sup> because you will have disobeyed<sup>20</sup> the LORD your God. **28:63** This is what will happen: Just as the LORD delighted to do good for you and make you numerous, he<sup>21</sup> will take delight in destroying and decimating you. You will be uprooted from the land you are about to possess. **28:64** The LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, gods of wood and stone. **28:65** Among those nations you will have no rest nor will there be a place of peaceful rest for the soles of your feet, for there the LORD will give you an anxious heart, failing eyesight, and a spirit of despair. **28:66** Your life will hang in doubt before you; you will be terrified by night and day and will have no certainty of surviving from one day to the next.<sup>22</sup> **28:67** In the morning you will say, ‘If only it were evening!’ And in the evening you will say, ‘I wish it were morning!’ because of the things you will fear and the things you will see. **28:68** Then the LORD will make you return to Egypt by ship, over a route I said to you that you would never see again. There you will sell yourselves to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.”

### *Narrative Interlude*

**29:1** (28:69)<sup>23</sup> These are the words of the covenant that the LORD commanded Moses to

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “from the end of the earth.”

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Some translations understand this to mean “like an eagle swoops down” (e.g., NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT), comparing the swift attack of an eagle to the attack of the Israelites’ enemies.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “it” (so NRSV), a collective singular referring to the invading nation (several times in this verse and v. 52).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “increase of herds.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “growth of flocks.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “gates,” also in vv. 55, 57.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the fruit of your womb” (so NAB, NRSV); NASB “the offspring of your own body.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “siege and stress.”

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “besiege,” redundant with the noun “siege.”

<sup>10</sup> **tc** The LXX adds σφόδρα (*sphodra*, “very”) to bring the description into line with v. 54.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** *Heb* “delicateness and tenderness.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* includes “that which comes out from between her feet.”

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “her sons that she will bear.”

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* includes “in her need for everything.”

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “If you are not careful to do.”

<sup>16</sup> **sn** These are the plagues the LORD inflicted on the Egyptians prior to the exodus which, though they did not fall upon the Israelites, must have caused great terror (cf. Exod 15:26).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “will cling to you” (so NIV); NLT “will claim you.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term תורה (*torah*) can refer either (1) to the whole Pentateuch or, more likely, (2) to the book of Deuteronomy or even (3) only to this curse section of the covenant text. “Scroll” better reflects the actual document, since “book” conveys the notion of a bound book with pages to the modern English reader. Cf. KJV, NASB, NRSV “the book of this law”; NIV, NLT “this Book of the Law”; TEV “this book of God’s laws and teachings.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Or “heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** *Heb* “have not listened to the voice of.”

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* “the LORD.” See note on “he” in 28:8.

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “you will not be confident in your life.” The phrase “from one day to the next” is implied by the following verse.

<sup>23</sup> **sn** Beginning with **29:1**, the verse numbers through **29:29** in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (*BHS*), with **29:1** ET = **28:69** HT, **29:2** ET = **29:1** HT, **29:3** ET = **29:2** HT, etc., through **29:29** ET = **29:28** HT. With **30:1** the verse numbers in the ET and HT are again the same.

make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb.<sup>1</sup>

*The Exodus, Wandering, and Conquest Reviewed*

**29:2** Moses proclaimed to all Israel as follows: “You have seen all that the LORD did<sup>2</sup> in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, all his servants, and his land. **29:3** Your eyes have seen the great judgments,<sup>3</sup> those signs and mighty wonders. **29:4** But to this very day the LORD has not given you an understanding mind, perceptive eyes, or discerning ears!<sup>4</sup> **29:5** I have led you through the desert for forty years. Your clothing has not worn out<sup>5</sup> nor have your sandals<sup>6</sup> deteriorated. **29:6** You have eaten no bread and drunk no wine or beer – all so that you might know that I<sup>7</sup> am the LORD your God! **29:7** When you came to this place King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan came out to make war and we defeated them. **29:8** Then we took their land and gave it as an inheritance to Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

*The Present Covenant Setting*

**29:9** “Therefore, keep the terms<sup>8</sup> of this covenant and obey them so that you may be successful in everything you do. **29:10** You are standing today, all of you, before the LORD your God – the heads of your tribes,<sup>9</sup> your elders, your officials, every Israelite man, **29:11** your infants, your wives, and the<sup>10</sup> foreigners living in your encampment, those who chop wood and those who carry water – **29:12** so that you may enter by oath into the covenant the LORD your God is making with you today.<sup>11</sup> **29:13** Today he will affirm that you are his people and that he is

your God,<sup>12</sup> just as he promised you and as he swore by oath to your ancestors<sup>13</sup> Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **29:14** It is not with you alone that I am making this covenant by oath, **29:15** but with whoever stands with us here today before the LORD our God as well as those not with us here today.<sup>14</sup>

*The Results of Disobedience*

**29:16** “(For you know how we lived in the land of Egypt and how we crossed through the nations as we traveled. **29:17** You have seen their detestable things<sup>15</sup> and idols of wood, stone, silver, and gold.)<sup>16</sup> **29:18** Beware that the heart of no man, woman, clan, or tribe among you turns away from the LORD our God today to pursue and serve the gods of those nations; beware that there is among you no root producing poisonous and bitter fruit.<sup>17</sup> **29:19** When such a person<sup>18</sup> hears the words of this oath he secretly<sup>19</sup> blesses himself<sup>20</sup> and says, “I will have peace though I continue to walk with a stubborn spirit.”<sup>21</sup> This will destroy<sup>22</sup> the watered ground with the parched.<sup>23</sup> **29:20** The LORD will be unwilling to forgive him, and his intense anger<sup>24</sup> will rage<sup>25</sup> against that man; all the curses<sup>26</sup> written in this

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb “in order to establish you today to him for a people and he will be to you for God.” Verses 10-13 are one long sentence in Hebrew. The translation divides this into two sentences for stylistic reasons.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb “fathers” (also in v. 25).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** This is interpreted by some English versions as a reference to generations not yet born (cf. TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term שִׁקוּץ (*shiqus*) refers to anything out of keeping with the nature and character of Yahweh and therefore to be avoided by his people Israel. It is commonly used with or as a synonym for תִּרְבִּיבָה (*to'evah*, “detestable, abhorrent”; 2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 16:18; Ezek 5:11; 7:20; 11:18, 21; see note on the term “abhorrent” in Deut 7:25). See M. Grisanti, *NIDOTTE* 4:243-46.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “which were with them.” Verses 16-17 constitute a parenthetical comment.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb “yielding fruit poisonous and wormwood.” The Hebrew noun לְבַבֵּי (*la'anah*) literally means “wormwood” (so KJV, ASV, NAB, NASB), but is used figuratively for anything extremely bitter, thus here “fruit poisonous and bitter.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb “he”; the referent (the subject of the warning in v. 18) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb “in his heart.”

<sup>20</sup> **tn** Or “invokes a blessing on himself.” A formalized word of blessing is in view, the content of which appears later in the verse.

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Heb “heart.”

<sup>22</sup> **tn** Heb “thus destroying.” For stylistic reasons the translation begins a new sentence here.

<sup>23</sup> **tn** Heb “the watered with the parched.” The word “ground” is implied. The exact meaning of the phrase is uncertain although it appears to be figurative. This appears to be a proverbial observation employing a figure of speech (a merism) suggesting totality. That is, the Israelite who violates the letter and even spirit of the covenant will harm not only himself but everything he touches – “the watered and the parched.” Cf. CEV “you will cause the rest of Israel to be punished along with you.”

<sup>24</sup> **tn** Heb “the wrath of the LORD and his zeal.” The expression is a hendiadys, a figure in which the second noun becomes adjectival to the first.

<sup>25</sup> **tn** Heb “smoke,” or “smolder.”

<sup>26</sup> **tn** Heb “the entire oath.”

<sup>1</sup> **sn** Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai (which some English versions substitute here for clarity, cf. NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “to your eyes,” but this is redundant in English style (cf. the preceding “you have seen”) and is omitted in the translation.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb “testings.” This is a reference to the plagues; see note at 4:34.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb “a heart to know, eyes to see and ears to hear” (NASB similar); NAB, NRSV “a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear.”

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “on you.” This has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “from on your feet.”

<sup>7</sup> **tc** The LXX reads “that he is the LORD your God.”

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Heb “words.”

<sup>9</sup> **tc** Heb “your heads, your tribes.” The Syriac presupposes either “heads of your tribes” or “your heads, your judges,” etc. (reading שְׂפִיכֵיכֶם [*shof'tiekhem*] for שְׂבִיטֵיכֶם [*shiv'tekhem*]). Its comparative difficulty favors the originality of the MT reading. Cf. KJV “your captains of your tribes”; NRSV “the leaders of your tribes”; NLT “your tribal leaders.”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb “your.”

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Heb “for you to pass on into the covenant of the LORD your God and into his oath, which the LORD your God is cutting with you today.”

scroll will fall upon him<sup>1</sup> and the LORD will obliterate his name from memory.<sup>2</sup> **29:21** The LORD will single him out<sup>3</sup> for judgment<sup>4</sup> from all the tribes of Israel according to all the curses of the covenant written in this scroll of the law. **29:22** The generation to come – your descendants who will rise up after you, as well as the foreigner who will come from distant places – will see<sup>5</sup> the afflictions of that land and the illnesses that the LORD has brought on it. **29:23** The whole land will be covered with brimstone, salt, and burning debris; it will not be planted nor will it sprout or produce grass. It will resemble the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the LORD destroyed in his intense anger.<sup>6</sup> **29:24** Then all the nations will ask, “Why has the LORD done all this to this land? What is this fierce, heated display of anger<sup>7</sup> all about?” **29:25** Then people will say, “Because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. **29:26** They went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods they did not know and that he did not permit them to worship.<sup>8</sup> **29:27** That is why the LORD’s anger erupted against this land, bringing on it all the curses<sup>9</sup> written in this scroll. **29:28** So the LORD has uprooted them from their land in anger, wrath, and great rage and has deported them to another land, as is clear today.” **29:29** Secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those that are revealed belong to us and our descendants<sup>10</sup> forever, so that we might obey all the words of this law.

### *The Results of Covenant Reaffirmation*

**30:1** “When you have experienced all these things, both the blessings and the curses<sup>11</sup> I have set before you, you will reflect upon them<sup>12</sup> in all the nations where the LORD your God has banished you. **30:2** Then if you and your descendants<sup>13</sup> turn to the LORD your God and obey him

with your whole mind and being<sup>14</sup> just as<sup>15</sup> I am commanding you today, **30:3** the LORD your God will reverse your captivity and have pity on you. He will turn and gather you from all the peoples among whom he<sup>16</sup> has scattered you. **30:4** Even if your exiles are in the most distant land,<sup>17</sup> from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. **30:5** Then he<sup>18</sup> will bring you to the land your ancestors<sup>19</sup> possessed and you also will possess it; he will do better for you and multiply you more than he did your ancestors. **30:6** The LORD your God will also cleanse<sup>20</sup> your heart and the hearts of your descendants<sup>21</sup> so that you may love him<sup>22</sup> with all your mind and being and so that you may live. **30:7** Then the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies, on those who hate you and persecute you. **30:8** You will return and obey the LORD, keeping all his commandments I am giving<sup>23</sup> you today. **30:9** The LORD your God will make the labor of your hands<sup>24</sup> abundantly successful and multiply your children,<sup>25</sup> the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For the LORD your God will once more<sup>26</sup> rejoice over you to make you prosperous<sup>27</sup> just as he rejoiced over your ancestors. **30:10** If you obey the LORD your God and keep his commandments and statutes that are written in this scroll of the law. But you must turn to him<sup>28</sup> with your whole mind and being.

### *Exhortation to Covenant Obedience*

**30:11** “This commandment I am giving<sup>29</sup> you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it too remote. **30:12** It is not in heaven, as though one must say, “Who will go up to heaven to get it for us and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?”

<sup>1</sup> tn Or “will lie in wait against him.”

<sup>2</sup> tn Heb “blot out his name from under the sky.”

<sup>3</sup> tn Heb “set him apart.”

<sup>4</sup> tn Heb “for evil”; NAB “for doom”; NASB “for adversity”; NIV “for disaster”; NRSV “for calamity.”

<sup>5</sup> tn Heb “will say and see.” One expects a quotation to appear, but it seems to be omitted. To avoid confusion in the translation, the verb “will say” is omitted.

<sup>6</sup> tn Heb “the anger and the wrath.” This construction is a hendiadys intended to intensify the emotion.

<sup>7</sup> tn Heb “this great burning of anger”; KJV “the heat of this great anger.”

<sup>8</sup> tn Heb “did not assign to them”; NASB, NRSV “had not allotted to them.”

<sup>9</sup> tn Heb “the entire curse.”

<sup>10</sup> tn Heb “sons” (so NASB); KJV, ASV, NIV, NRSV “children.”

<sup>11</sup> tn Heb “the blessing and the curse.”

<sup>12</sup> tn Heb “and you bring (them) back to your heart.”

<sup>13</sup> tn Heb “sons” (so NASB); KJV, ASV, NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT “children.”

<sup>14</sup> tn Or “heart and soul” (also in vv. 6, 10).

<sup>15</sup> tn Heb “according to all.”

<sup>16</sup> tn Heb “the LORD your God.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>17</sup> tn Heb “are at the farthest edge of the heavens.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>18</sup> tn Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on the second occurrence of the word “he” in v. 3.

<sup>19</sup> tn Heb “fathers” (also later in this verse and in v. 9, 20).

<sup>20</sup> tn Heb “circumcise” (so KJV, NAB, NIV, NRSV); TEV “will give you and your descendants obedient hearts.” See note on the word “cleanse” in Deut 10:16.

<sup>21</sup> tn Heb “seed” (so KJV, ASV).

<sup>22</sup> tn Heb “the LORD your God.” See note on the second occurrence of the word “he” in v. 3.

<sup>23</sup> tn Heb “commanding”; NAB “which I now enjoin on you.”

<sup>24</sup> tc The MT reads “hand” (singular). Most versions read the plural.

<sup>25</sup> tn Heb “the fruit of your womb” (so NAB, NIV); NRSV “of your body.”

<sup>26</sup> tn Heb “return and.” The Hebrew verb is used idiomatically here to indicate the repetition of the following action.

<sup>27</sup> tn The Hebrew text includes “for good.”

<sup>28</sup> tn Heb “to the LORD your God.” See note on the second occurrence of the word “he” in v. 3.

<sup>29</sup> tn Heb “commanding”; NAB “which I enjoin on you.”



**30:13** And it is not across the sea, as though one must say, “Who will cross over to the other side of the sea and get it for us and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” **30:14** For the thing is very near you – it is in your mouth and in your mind<sup>1</sup> so that you can do it.

**30:15** “Look! I have set before you today life and prosperity on the one hand, and death and disaster on the other. **30:16** What<sup>2</sup> I am commanding you today is to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to obey his commandments, his statutes, and his ordinances. Then you will live and become numerous and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you are about to possess.<sup>3</sup> **30:17** However, if you<sup>4</sup> turn aside and do not obey, but are lured away to worship and serve other gods, **30:18** I declare to you this very day that you will certainly<sup>5</sup> perish! You will not extend your time in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.<sup>6</sup> **30:19** Today I invoke heaven and earth as a witness against you that I have set life and death, blessing and curse, before you. Therefore choose life so that you and your descendants may live! **30:20** I also call on you<sup>7</sup> to love the LORD your God, to obey him and be loyal to him, for he gives you life and enables you to live continually<sup>8</sup> in the land the LORD promised to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

#### *Succession of Moses by Joshua*

**31:1** Then Moses went<sup>9</sup> and spoke these words<sup>10</sup> to all Israel. **31:2** He said to them, “Today I am a hundred and twenty years old. I am no longer able to get about,<sup>11</sup> and the LORD has said to me, ‘You will not cross the Jordan.’ **31:3** As for the LORD your God, he is about to cross over before you; he will destroy these nations before you and dispossess them. As for Joshua,

he is about to cross before you just as the LORD has said. **31:4** The LORD will do to them just what he did to Sihon and Og, the Amorite kings, and to their land, which he destroyed. **31:5** The LORD will deliver them over to you and you will do to them according to the whole commandment I have given you. **31:6** Be strong and courageous! Do not fear or tremble before them, for the LORD your God is the one who is going with you. He will not fail you or abandon you!” **31:7** Then Moses called out to Joshua<sup>12</sup> in the presence of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you will accompany these people to the land that the LORD promised to give their ancestors,<sup>13</sup> and you will enable them to inherit it. **31:8** The LORD is indeed going before you – he will be with you; he will not fail you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged!”

#### *The Deposit of the Covenant Text*

**31:9** Then Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who carry the ark of the LORD’s covenant, and to all Israel’s elders. **31:10** He<sup>14</sup> commanded them: “At the end of seven years, at the appointed time of the cancellation of debts,<sup>15</sup> at the Feast of Temporary Shelters,<sup>16</sup> **31:11** when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place he chooses, you must read this law before them<sup>17</sup> within their hearing. **31:12** Gather the people – men, women, and children, as well as the resident foreigners in your villages – so they may hear and thus learn about and fear the LORD your God and carefully obey all the words of this law. **31:13** Then their children, who have not known this law,<sup>18</sup> will also hear about and learn to fear the LORD your God for as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “heart.”

<sup>2</sup> **tc** A number of LXX MSS insert before this verse, “if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God,” thus translating אָשֶׁר (*asher*) as “which” and the rest as “I am commanding you today, to love,” etc., “then you will live,” etc.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “which you are going there to possess it.” This has been simplified in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “your heart,” as a metonymy for the person.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with “certainly.”

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to go there to possess it.”

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The words “I also call on you” are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons. In the Hebrew text vv. 19-20 are one long sentence, which the translation divides into two.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he is your life and the length of your days to live.”

<sup>9</sup> **tc** For the MT reading וָיָחַד (*vayyehlek*, “he went”), the LXX and Qumran have וָיָכַח (*vaykhal*, “he finished”): “So Moses finished speaking,” etc. The difficult reading of the MT favors its authenticity.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** In the MT this refers to the words that follow (cf. NIV, NCV).

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Or “am no longer able to lead you” (NIV, NLT); *Heb* “am no longer able to go out and come in.”

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “and said to him.” This has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “fathers” (also in v. 20).

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* “Moses.” The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term שִׁמְיָה (*shemittah*), a derivative of the verb שָׁמַת (*shamat*, “to release; to relinquish”), refers to the procedure whereby debts of all fellow Israelites were to be canceled. Since the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated God’s own deliverance of and provision for his people, this was an appropriate time for Israelites to release one another. See note on this word at Deut 15:1.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The Hebrew phrase חֹמֹת הַחֹמֹת (*khag hassukot*, “[festival of] huts” [or “shelters”]) is traditionally known as the Feast of Tabernacles. See note on the name of the festival in Deut 16:13.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** For the regulations on this annual festival see Deut 16:13-15.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “before all Israel.”

<sup>19</sup> **tn** The phrase “this law” is not in the Hebrew text, but English style requires an object for the verb here. Other translations also supply the object which is otherwise implicit (cf. NIV “who do not know this law”; TEV “who have never heard the Law of the Lord your God”).

*The Commissioning of Joshua*

**31:14** Then the LORD said to Moses, “The day of your death is near. Summon Joshua and present yourselves in the tent<sup>1</sup> of meeting<sup>2</sup> so that I can commission him.”<sup>3</sup> So Moses and Joshua presented themselves in the tent of meeting. **31:15** The LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud that<sup>4</sup> stood above the door of the tent. **31:16** Then the LORD said to Moses, “You are about to die,<sup>5</sup> and then these people will begin to prostitute themselves with the foreign gods of the land into which they<sup>6</sup> are going. They<sup>7</sup> will reject<sup>8</sup> me and break my covenant that I have made with them.<sup>9</sup> **31:17** At that time<sup>10</sup> my anger will erupt against them<sup>11</sup> and I will abandon them and hide my face from them until they are devoured. Many disasters and distresses will overcome<sup>12</sup> them<sup>13</sup> so that they<sup>14</sup> will say at that time, ‘Have not these disasters<sup>15</sup> overcome us<sup>16</sup> because our<sup>17</sup> God is not among us<sup>18</sup>?’

**31:18** But I will certainly<sup>19</sup> hide myself at that time because of all the wickedness they<sup>20</sup> will have done by turning to other gods. **31:19** Now write down for yourselves the following song and teach it to the Israelites. Put it into their very mouths so that this song may serve as my witness against the Israelites! **31:20** For after I have brought them<sup>21</sup> to the land I promised to their<sup>22</sup> ancestors – one flowing with milk and honey – and they<sup>23</sup> eat their fill<sup>24</sup> and become fat, then they<sup>25</sup> will turn to other gods and worship them; they will reject me and break my covenant. **31:21** Then when<sup>26</sup> many disasters and distresses overcome them<sup>27</sup> this song will testify against them,<sup>28</sup> for their<sup>29</sup> descendants will not forget it.<sup>30</sup> I know the<sup>31</sup> intentions they have in mind<sup>32</sup> today, even before I bring them<sup>33</sup> to the land I have promised.” **31:22** So on that day Moses wrote down this song and taught it to the Israelites. **31:23** and the LORD<sup>34</sup> commissioned Joshua son of Nun, “Be strong and courageous, for you will take the Israelites to the land I have promised them, and I will be with you.”<sup>35</sup>

*Anticipation of Disobedience*

**31:24** When Moses finished writing on a scroll the words of this law in their entirety,

**1 tc** The LXX reads “by the door of the tent” in line with v. 10 but also, perhaps, as a reflection of its tendency to avoid over-familiarity with Yahweh and his transcendence.

**2 tn** Heb “tent of assembly” (בֵּית־אֱלֹהִים, *’ohel mo’ed*); this is not always the same as the tabernacle, which is usually called מִשְׁכָּן (mishkan, “dwelling-place”), a reference to its being invested with God’s presence. The “tent of meeting” was erected earlier than the tabernacle and was the place where Yahweh occasionally appeared, especially to Moses (cf. Exod 18:7-16; 33:7-11; Num 11:16, 24, 26; 12:4).

**3 tn** Heb “I will command him.”

**4 tn** Heb “and the pillar of cloud.” This phrase was not repeated in the translation; a relative clause was used instead.

**5 tn** Heb “lie down with your fathers” (so NASB); NRSV “ancestors.”

**6 tn** Heb “he.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “they,” which is necessary in any case in the translation because of contemporary English style. The third person singular also occurs in the Hebrew text twice more in this verse, three times in v. 17, once in v. 18, five times in v. 20, and four times in v. 21. Each time it is translated as third person plural for stylistic reasons.

**7 tn** Heb “he.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “they.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**8 tn** Or “abandon” (TEV, NLT).

**9 tn** Heb “him.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “them.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**10 tn** Heb “on that day.” This same expression also appears later in the verse and in v. 18.

**11 tn** Heb “him.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “them.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**12 tn** Heb “find,” “encounter.”

**13 tn** Heb “him.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “them.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**14 tn** Heb “he.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “they.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**15 tn** Heb “evils.”

**16 tn** Heb “me.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “us,” which is necessary in any case in the translation because of contemporary English style.

**17 tn** Heb “my.”

**18 tn** Heb “me.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “us,” which is necessary in any case in the translation because of contemporary English style.

**19 tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with “certainly.”

**20 tn** Heb “he.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “they.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**21 tn** Heb “him.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “them.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**22 tn** Heb “his.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “their.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**23 tn** Heb “he.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “they.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**24 tn** Heb “and are satisfied.”

**25 tn** Heb “he.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “they.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**26 tn** Heb “Then it will come to pass that.”

**27 tn** Heb “him.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “them.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**28 tn** Heb “him.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “them.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**29 tn** Heb “his.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “their.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**30 tn** Heb “it will not be forgotten from the mouth of his seed.”

**31 tn** Heb “his.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “their.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**32 tn** Heb “which he is doing.”

**33 tn** Heb “him.” Smr, LXX, and the Targums read the plural “them.” See note on the first occurrence of “they” in v. 16.

**34 tn** Heb “his.” Since the pronoun could be taken to refer to Moses, the referent has been specified as “the LORD” in the translation for clarity. See also the note on the word “you” later in this verse.

**35 tc** The LXX reads, “as the LORD promised them, and he will be with you.” This resolves the problem of Moses apparently promising to be with Joshua as the MT reads on the surface (“I will be with you”). However, the reading of the LXX is clearly an attempt to clarify an existing obscurity and therefore is unlikely to reflect the original.

31:25 he<sup>4</sup> commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the LORD's covenant, 31:26 "Take this scroll of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. It will remain there as a witness against you, 31:27 for I know about your rebellion and stubbornness.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, even while I have been living among you to this very day, you have rebelled against the LORD; you will be even more rebellious after my death!<sup>3</sup> 31:28 Gather to me all your tribal elders and officials so I can speak to them directly about these things and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them. 31:29 For I know that after I die you will totally<sup>4</sup> corrupt yourselves and turn away from the path I have commanded you to walk. Disaster will confront you in the days to come because you will act wickedly<sup>5</sup> before the LORD, inciting him to anger because of your actions."<sup>6</sup> 31:30 Then Moses recited the words of this song from start to finish in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel.

### Invocation of Witnesses

32:1 Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.  
 32:2 My teaching will drop like the rain, my sayings will drip like the dew,<sup>7</sup> as rain drops upon the grass, and showers upon new growth.  
 32:3 For I will proclaim the name<sup>8</sup> of the LORD; you must acknowledge the greatness of our God.  
 32:4 As for the Rock,<sup>9</sup> his work is perfect, for all his ways are just. He is a reliable God who is never unjust, he is fair<sup>10</sup> and upright.  
 32:5 His people have been unfaithful<sup>11</sup> to him;

they have not acted like his children<sup>12</sup> – this is their sin.<sup>13</sup>  
 They are a perverse<sup>14</sup> and deceitful generation.  
 32:6 Is this how you repay<sup>15</sup> the LORD, you foolish, unwise people? Is he not your father, your Creator? He has made you and established you.  
 32:7 Remember the ancient days; bear in mind<sup>16</sup> the years of past generations.<sup>17</sup>  
 Ask your father and he will inform you, your elders, and they will tell you.  
 32:8 When the Most High<sup>18</sup> gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided up humankind,<sup>19</sup> he set the boundaries of the peoples, according to the number of the heavenly assembly.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb "Moses." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "stiffness of neck" (cf. KJV, NAB, NIV). See note on the word "stubborn" in Deut 9:6.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb "How much more after my death?" The Hebrew text has a sarcastic rhetorical question here; the translation seeks to bring out the force of the question.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with "totally."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb "do the evil."

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb "the work of your hands."

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Or "mist," "light drizzle." In some contexts the term appears to refer to light rain, rather than dew.

<sup>8</sup> **tc** Smr and Tg read "in the name."

<sup>9</sup> **tc** The LXX reads Θεός (*theos*, "God") for the MT's "Rock."

**sn** The Hebrew term depicts God as a rocky summit where one may find safety and protection. Within a covenantal context it serves as a reminder to the people that their God has committed himself to their protection in return for their allegiance.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Or "just" (KJV, NAB, NRSV, NLT) or "righteous" (NASB).

<sup>11</sup> **tc** The 3rd person masculine singular שָׁחַת (*shakhat*) is rendered as 3rd person masculine plural by Smr, a reading supported by the plural suffix on מוֹמ (mum, "defect") as well as the plural of בָּנִים (*ben*, "sons").

**tn** Heb "have acted corruptly" (so NASB, NIV, NLT); NRSV "have dealt falsely."

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb "(they are) not his sons."

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb "defect" (so NASB). This highly elliptical line suggests that Israel's major fault was its failure to act like God's people; in fact, they acted quite the contrary.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "twisted," "crooked." See Pss 18:26.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Or "treat" (TEV).

<sup>16</sup> **tc** The Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read 2nd person masculine singular whereas the MT has 2nd person masculine plural. The former is preferred, the latter perhaps being a misreading (בִּינִי [*binu*] for בִּינִי [*binah*]). Both the preceding ("remember") and following ("ask") imperatives are singular forms in the Hebrew text.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "generation and generation." The repetition of the singular noun here singles out each of the successive past generations. See *IBHS* 116 §7.2.3b.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term עֵלְיוֹן (*elyon*) is an abbreviated form of the divine name *El Elyon*, frequently translated "God Most High" (so here NCV, CEV) or something similar. This full name (or epithet) occurs only in Gen 14, though the two elements are parallel in Pss 73:11; 107:11; etc. Here it is clear that Elyon has to do with the nations in general whereas in v. 9, by contrast, Yahweh relates specifically to Israel. See T. Fretheim, *NIDOTTE* 1:400-401. The title depicts God as the sovereign ruler of the world, who is enthroned high above his dominion.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb "the sons of man" (so NASB); or "the sons of Adam" (so KJV).

<sup>20</sup> **tc** Heb "the sons of Israel." The idea, perhaps, is that Israel was central to Yahweh's purposes and all other nations were arranged and distributed according to how they related to Israel. See S. R. Driver, *Deuteronomy* (ICC), 355-56. For the MT בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים (*bene' elohim*, "sons of Israel") a Qumran fragment has "sons of God," while the LXX reads ἀγγελῶν θεῶν (*angelōn theou*, "angels of God"), presupposing בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים (*bene' elohim*) or בְּנֵי אֱלִים (*bene' elim*). "Sons of God" is undoubtedly the original reading; the MT and LXX have each interpreted it differently. MT assumes that the expression "sons of God" refers to Israel (cf. Hos. 1:10), while LXX has assumed that the phrase refers to the angelic heavenly assembly (Pss 29:1; 89:6; cf. as well Ps 82). The phrase is also attested in Ugaritic, where it refers to the high god El's divine assembly. According to the latter view, which is reflected in the translation, the Lord delegated jurisdiction over the nations to his angelic host (cf. Dan. 10:13-21), while reserving for himself Israel, over whom he rules directly. For a defense of the view taken here, see M. S. Heiser, "Deuteronomy 32:8 and the Sons of God," *BSac* 158 (2001): 52-74.

**32:9** For the LORD's allotment is his people,  
Jacob is his special possession.<sup>1</sup>  
**32:10** The LORD<sup>2</sup> found him<sup>3</sup> in a desolate  
land,  
in an empty wasteland where animals  
howl.<sup>4</sup>  
He continually guarded him<sup>5</sup> and taught  
him;<sup>6</sup>  
he continually protected him<sup>7</sup> like the  
pupil<sup>8</sup> of his eye.  
**32:11** Like an eagle that stirs up<sup>9</sup> its nest,  
that hovers over its young,  
so the LORD<sup>10</sup> spread out his wings and  
took him.<sup>11</sup>  
he lifted him up on his pinions.  
**32:12** The LORD alone was guiding him,<sup>12</sup>  
no foreign god was with him.

<sup>1</sup> **tc** *Heb* "the portion of his inheritance." The LXX and Smr add "Israel" and BHS suggests the reconstruction: "The LORD's allotment is Jacob, the portion of his inheritance is Israel" (cf. NAB). While providing good parallelism, it destroys a fine chiasmic structure: "allotment" (a), "his people" (b), "Jacob" (b), and "inheritance" (a).

<sup>2</sup> **tn** *Heb* "he." The referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** The reference is to "his people/Jacob" (cf. v. 9), that is, Israel (using a collective singular). The singular pronouns are replaced by plural ones throughout vv. 10-14 by some English versions as an aid to the modern reader (cf. NAB, NCV, TEV, NLT).

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* "in an empty, howling wasteland." The word "howling" is derived from a verbal root that typically refers to the wailing of mourners. Here it likely refers to the howling of desert animals, or perhaps to the howling wind, in which case one may translate, "in an empty, windy wasteland."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* "was surrounding him." The distinctive form of the suffix on this verb form indicates that the verb is an imperfect, not a preterite. As such it draws attention to God's continuing care during the period in view. See A. F. Rainey, "The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarnah Canaanite," *Hebrew Studies* 27 (1986): 15-16.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** *Heb* "he gave him understanding." The form of the suffix on this verb form indicates that the verb is a preterite, not an imperfect. As such it simply states the action factually. See A. F. Rainey, "The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarnah Canaanite," *Hebrew Studies* 27 (1986): 15-16.

<sup>7</sup> **tn** The distinctive form of the suffix on this verb form indicates that the verb is an imperfect, not a preterite. As such it draws attention to God's continuing protection during the period in view. See A. F. Rainey, "The Ancient Hebrew Prefix Conjugation in the Light of Amarnah Canaanite," *Hebrew Studies* 27 (1986): 15-16.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* "the little man." The term אִישׁוֹן (*ishon*) means literally "little man," perhaps because when one looks into another's eyes he sees himself reflected there in miniature. See A. Harman, *NIDOTTE* 1:391.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The prefixed verbal form is an imperfect, indicating habitual or typical behavior. The parallel verb (cf. "hovers" in the next line) is used in the same manner.

<sup>10</sup> **tn** *Heb* "he"; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The form of the suffix on this and the following verb forms (cf. "lifted him up") indicates that the verbs are preterites, not imperfects. As such they simply state the action factually. The use of the preterite here suggests that the preceding verb (cf. "spread out") is preterite as well.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** The distinctive form of the suffix on this verb form indicates that the verb is an imperfect, not a preterite. As such it draws attention to God's continuing guidance during the period in view.

**32:13** He enabled him<sup>13</sup> to travel over the  
high terrain of the land,  
and he ate of the produce of the fields.  
He provided honey for him from the  
cliffs,<sup>14</sup>  
and olive oil<sup>15</sup> from the hardest of<sup>16</sup> rocks,<sup>17</sup>  
**32:14** butter from the herd  
and milk from the flock,  
along with the fat of lambs,  
rams and goats of Bashan,  
along with the best of the kernels of  
wheat;  
and from the juice of grapes you drank  
wine.

### *Israel's Rebellion*

**32:15** But Jeshurun<sup>18</sup> became fat and  
kicked,  
you<sup>19</sup> got fat, thick, and stuffed!  
Then he deserted the God who made him,  
and treated the Rock who saved him with  
contempt.

**32:16** They made him jealous with other  
gods,<sup>20</sup>  
they enraged him with abhorrent idols.<sup>21</sup>  
**32:17** They sacrificed to demons, not God,  
to gods they had not known;  
to new gods who had recently come  
along,  
gods your ancestors<sup>22</sup> had not known  
about.

**32:18** You have forgotten<sup>23</sup> the Rock who  
fathered you,  
and put out of mind the God who gave  
you birth.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** The form of the suffix on this verbal form indicates that the verb is a preterite, not an imperfect. As such it simply states the action factually. Note as well the preterites with *vav* (ו) consecutive that follow in the verse.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** *Heb* "he made him suck honey from the rock."

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* "oil," but this probably refers to olive oil; see note on the word "rock" at the end of this verse.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* "flinty."

<sup>17</sup> **sn** *Olive oil from rock* probably suggests olive trees growing on rocky ledges and yet doing so productively. See E. H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (NAC), 415; cf. TEV "their olive trees flourished in stony ground."

<sup>18</sup> **tn** To make the continuity of the referent clear, some English versions substitute "Jacob" here (NAB, NRSV) while others replace "Jeshurun" with "Israel" (NCV, CEV, NLT) or "the Lord's people" (TEV).

**sn** *Jeshurun* is a term of affection derived from the Hebrew verb יָשַׁר (*yashar*, "be upright"). Here it speaks of Israel "in an ideal situation, with its 'uprightness' due more to God's help than his own efforts" (M. Mulder, *TDOT* 6:475).

<sup>19</sup> **tc** The LXX reads the third person masculine singular ("he") for the MT second person masculine singular ("you"), but such alterations are unnecessary in Hebrew poetic texts where subjects fluctuate frequently and without warning.

<sup>20</sup> **tc** *Heb* "with strange (things)." The Vulgate actually supplies *diis* ("gods").

<sup>21</sup> **tn** *Heb* "abhorrent (things)" (cf. NRSV). A number of English versions understand this as referring to "idols" (NAB, NIV, NCV, CEV), while NLT supplies "acts."

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* "your fathers."

<sup>23</sup> **tc** The Hebrew text is corrupt here; the translation follows the suggestion offered in HALOT 1477 s.v. שָׁחַ. Cf. NASB, NLT "You neglected"; NIV "You deserted"; NRSV "You were un mindful of."

*A Word of Judgment*

**32:19** But the LORD took note and despised them

because his sons and daughters enraged him.

**32:20** He said, "I will reject them,<sup>1</sup>

I will see what will happen to them; for they are a perverse generation, children<sup>2</sup> who show no loyalty.

**32:21** They have made me jealous<sup>3</sup> with false gods,<sup>4</sup>

enraging me with their worthless gods;<sup>5</sup> so I will make them jealous with a people they do not recognize,<sup>6</sup> with a nation slow to learn<sup>7</sup> I will enrage them.

**32:22** For a fire has been kindled by my anger, and it burns to lowest Sheol,<sup>8</sup> it consumes the earth and its produce, and ignites the foundations of the mountains.

**32:23** I will increase their<sup>9</sup> disasters, I will use up my arrows on them.

**32:24** They will be starved by famine, eaten by plague, and bitterly stung;<sup>10</sup> I will send the teeth of wild animals against them,

along with the poison of creatures that crawl in the dust.

**32:25** The sword will make people childless outside, and terror will do so inside; they will destroy<sup>11</sup> both the young man and the virgin,

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb "I will hide my face from them."

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "sons" (so NAB, NASB); TEV "unfaithful people."

<sup>3</sup> **sn** They have made me jealous. The "jealousy" of God is not a spirit of pettiness prompted by his insecurity, but righteous indignation caused by the disloyalty of his people to his covenant grace (see note on the word "God" in Deut 4:24). The jealousy of Israel, however (see next line), will be envy because of God's lavish attention to another nation. This is an ironic wordplay. See H. Peels, *NIDOTTE* 3:938-39.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "what is not a god," or a "nondeity."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb "their empty (things)." The Hebrew term used here to refer pejoratively to the false gods is הֶבֶל (*hevel*, "futile" or "futility"), used frequently in Ecclesiastes (e.g., Eccl 1:1, "Futile! Futile!" laments the Teacher, "Absolutely futile! Everything is futile!").

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb "what is not a people," or a "nonpeople." The "nonpeople" (גֵּוִים, *lo'-am*) referred to here are Gentiles who someday would become God's people in the fullest sense (cf. Hos 1:9; 2:23).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb "a foolish nation" (so KJV, NAB, NRSV); NIV "a nation that has no understanding"; NLT "I will provoke their fury by blessing the foolish Gentiles."

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Or "to the lowest depths of the earth"; cf. NAB "to the depths of the nether world"; NIV "to the realm of death below"; NLT "to the depths of the grave."

<sup>9</sup> **sn** Sheol refers here not to hell and hell-fire – a much later concept – but to the innermost parts of the earth, as low down as one could get. The parallel with "the foundations of the mountains" makes this clear (cf. Pss 9:17; 16:10; 139:8; Isa 14:9; 15; Amos 9:2).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** Heb "upon them."

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term גָּזַח (*qetev*) is probably metaphorical here for the sting of a disease (*HALOT* 1091-92 s.v.).

<sup>12</sup> **tn** A verb is omitted here in the Hebrew text; for purposes of English style one suitable to the context is supplied.

the infant and the gray-haired man.

*The Weakness of Other Gods*

**32:26** "I said, 'I want to cut them in pieces.'<sup>12</sup>

I want to make people forget they ever existed.

**32:27** But I fear the reaction<sup>13</sup> of their enemies, for<sup>14</sup> their adversaries would misunderstand

and say, "Our power is great,<sup>15</sup> and the LORD has not done all this!"

**32:28** They are a nation devoid of wisdom, and there is no understanding among them.

**32:29** I wish that they were wise and could understand this, and that they could comprehend what will happen to them."

**32:30** How can one man chase a thousand of them,<sup>16</sup>

and two pursue ten thousand; unless their Rock had delivered them up,<sup>17</sup> and the LORD had handed them over?

**32:31** For our enemies'<sup>18</sup> rock is not like our Rock, as even our enemies concede.

**32:32** For their vine is from the stock<sup>19</sup> of Sodom,

and from the fields of Gomorrah.<sup>20</sup> Their grapes contain venom, their clusters of grapes are bitter.

**32:33** Their wine is snakes' poison, the deadly venom of cobras.

**32:34** "Is this not stored up with me?" says the LORD,<sup>21</sup>

"Is it not sealed up in my storehouses?"

<sup>12</sup> **tc** The LXX reads "I said I would scatter them." This reading is followed by a number of English versions (e.g., KJV, ASV, NIV, NCV, NRSV, NLT, CEV).

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb "anger."

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "lest."

<sup>15</sup> **tn** Heb "Our hand is high." Cf. NAB "Our own hand won the victory."

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The words "man" and "of them" are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "sold them" (so NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>18</sup> **tn** Heb "their," but the referent (enemies) is specified in the translation for the sake of clarity.

<sup>19</sup> **tn** Heb "vine."

<sup>20</sup> **sn** Sodom...Gomorrah. The term "vine" is a reference to the pagan deities which, the passage says, find their ultimate source in Sodom and Gomorrah, that is, in the soil of perversion exemplified by these places (cf. Gen 18:20; 19:4-28; Isa 1:10; 3:9; Jer 23:14; Lam 4:6; Ezek 16:44-52; Matt 10:15; 11:23-24).

<sup>21</sup> **tn** Verses 34-35 appear to be a quotation of the LORD and so the introductory phrase "says the LORD" is supplied in the translation.

**32:35** I will get revenge and pay them back at the time their foot slips;  
for the day of their disaster is near,  
and the impending judgment<sup>1</sup> is rushing upon them!”

**32:36** The LORD will judge his people,  
and will change his plans concerning<sup>2</sup> his servants;  
when he sees that their power has disappeared,  
and that no one is left, whether confined or set free.

**32:37** He will say, “Where are their gods,  
the rock in whom they sought security,

**32:38** who ate the best of their sacrifices,  
and drank the wine of their drink offerings?

Let them rise and help you;  
let them be your refuge!

### *The Vindication of the LORD*

**32:39** “See now that I, indeed I, am he!”  
says the LORD,<sup>3</sup>

“and there is no other god besides me.

I kill and give life,

I smash and I heal,

and none can resist<sup>4</sup> my power.

**32:40** For I raise up my hand to heaven,  
and say, ‘As surely as I live forever,

**32:41** I will sharpen my lightning-like sword,

and my hand will grasp hold of the weapon of judgment;<sup>5</sup>

I will execute vengeance on my foes,

and repay those who hate me!<sup>6</sup>

**32:42** I will make my arrows drunk with blood,

and my sword will devour flesh –  
the blood of the slaughtered and captured,  
the chief<sup>7</sup> of the enemy’s leaders!”

**32:43** Cry out, O nations, with his people,  
for he will avenge his servants’ blood;  
he will take vengeance against his enemies,

and make atonement for his land and people.

### *Narrative Interlude*

**32:44** Then Moses went with Joshua<sup>8</sup> son of Nun and recited all the words of this song to the people. **32:45** When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel **32:46** he said to them, “Keep in mind all the words I am solemnly proclaiming to you today; you must command your children to observe carefully all the words of this law. **32:47** For this is no idle word for you – it is your life! By this word you will live a long time in the land you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

### *Instructions about Moses’ Death*

**32:48** Then the LORD said to Moses that same day, **32:49** “Go up to this Abarim<sup>9</sup> hill country, to Mount Nebo (which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho<sup>10</sup>) and look at the land of Canaan that I am giving to the Israelites as a possession. **32:50** You will die<sup>11</sup> on the mountain that you ascend and join your deceased ancestors,<sup>12</sup> just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor<sup>13</sup> and joined his deceased ancestors, **32:51** for both of you<sup>14</sup> rebelled against me among the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the desert of Zin when you did not show me proper respect<sup>15</sup> among the Israelites. **32:52** You will see the land before you, but you will not enter the land that I am giving to the Israelites.”

### *Introduction to the Blessing of Moses*

**33:1** This is the blessing Moses the man of God pronounced upon the Israelites before his death. **33:2** He said:

<sup>1</sup> **tn** *Heb* “prepared things,” “impending things.” See BDB 800 s.v. *קָרַב*.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** The translation understands the verb in the sense of “be grieved, relent” (cf. *HALOT* 689 s.v. *נָחַם* hitp 2); cf. KJV, ASV “repent himself”; NLT “will change his mind.” Another option is to translate “will show compassion to” (see BDB 637 s.v. *נָחַם*); cf. NASB, NIV, NRSV.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Verses 39-42 appear to be a quotation of the LORD and so the introductory phrase “says the LORD” is supplied in the translation for clarity.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “deliver from” (so NRSV, NLT).

<sup>5</sup> **tn** *Heb* “judgment.” This is a metonymy, a figure of speech in which the effect (judgment) is employed as an instrument (sword, spear, or the like), the means, by which it is brought about.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term *שָׂנְאָה* (*sane’*, “hate”) in this covenant context speaks of those who reject Yahweh’s covenant overtures, that is, who disobey its stipulations (see note on the word “rejecting” in Deut 5:9; also see Deut 7:10; 2 Chr 19:2; Ps 81:15; 139:20-21).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Or “head” (the same Hebrew word can mean “head” in the sense of “leader, chieftain” or “head” in the sense of body part).

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “Hoshea” (so KJV, ASV), another name for the same individual (cf. Num 13:8, 16).

<sup>9</sup> **sn** *Abarim*. This refers to the high plateau region of the Transjordan, the highest elevation of which is Mount Pisgah (or Nebo; cf. Deut 34:1). See also the note on the name “Pisgah” in Deut 3:17.

<sup>10</sup> **map** For the location of Jericho see Map5-B2; Map6-E1; Map7-E1; Map8-E3; Map10-A2; Map11-A1.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** In the Hebrew text the forms translated “you will die... and join” are imperatives, but the actions in view cannot really be commanded. The imperative is used here in a rhetorical, emphatic manner to indicate the certainty of Moses’ death on the mountain. On the rhetorical use of the imperative see *IBHS* 572 §34.4c.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “be gathered to your people.” The same phrase occurs again later in this verse.

<sup>13</sup> **sn** *Mount Hor*. See note on the name “Moserah” in Deut 10:6.

<sup>14</sup> **tn** The use of the plural (“you”) in the Hebrew text suggests that Moses and Aaron are both in view here, since both had rebelled at some time or other, if not at Meribah Kadesh then elsewhere (cf. Num 20:24; 27:14).

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “did not esteem me holy.” Cf. NIV “did not uphold my holiness”; NLT “failed to demonstrate my holiness.”

*A Historical Review*

The LORD came from Sinai  
and revealed himself<sup>2</sup> to Israel<sup>2</sup> from  
Seir.

He appeared in splendor<sup>3</sup> from Mount  
Paran,  
and came forth with ten thousand holy  
ones.<sup>4</sup>

With his right hand he gave a fiery law<sup>5</sup>  
to them.

33:3 Surely he loves the people;<sup>6</sup>  
all your holy ones<sup>7</sup> are in your power.<sup>8</sup>

And they sit<sup>9</sup> at your feet,  
each receiving<sup>10</sup> your words.

33:4 Moses delivered to us a law,<sup>11</sup>  
an inheritance for the assembly of Jacob.

33:5 The LORD<sup>12</sup> was king over Jeshurun,<sup>13</sup>  
when the leaders of the people assem-  
bled,  
the tribes of Israel together.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Or “rose like the sun” (NCV, TEV).

<sup>2</sup> **tc** *Heb* “to him.” The LXX reads “to us” (לָנוּ [*lanu*] for לָמוֹ [*lamo*]), the reading of the MT is acceptable since it no doubt has in mind Israel as a collective singular.

**tn** *Heb* “him”; the referent (Israel) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Or “he shone forth” (NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>4</sup> **tc** With slight alteration מִמְרִיבַת קִדְשׁ [*mimirivat qadesh*] for the MT’s מִמְרִיבַת קִדְשׁ [*merivivot qodesh*] the translation would be “from Meribah Kadesh” (cf. NAB, NLT; see Deut 32:51). However, the language of holy war in the immediate context favors the reading of the MT, which views the Lord as accompanied by angelic hosts.

<sup>5</sup> **tc** The mispointed Hebrew term אֶשְׁדָּת (*eshdat*) should perhaps be construed as אֶשְׁהָת (*eshhat*) with Smr.

<sup>6</sup> **tc** *Heb* “peoples.” The apparent plural form is probably a misunderstood singular (perhaps with a pronominal suffix) with enclitic *mem* (ם). See HALOT 838 s.v. עַם B.2.

<sup>7</sup> **tc** *Heb* “his holy ones.” The third person masculine singular suffix of the Hebrew MT is problematic in light of the second person masculine singular suffix on בְּיָדְךָ (*b’yadekha*, “your hands”). The LXX versions by Lucian and Origen read, therefore, “the holy ones.” The LXX version by Theodotion and the Vulgate, however, presuppose third masculine singular suffix on בְּיָדָיו (*b’yadayv*, “his hands”), and thus retain “his holy ones.” The efforts to bring pronominal harmony into the line is commendable but unnecessary given the Hebrew tendency to be untroubled by such grammatical inconsistencies. However, the translation harmonizes the first pronoun with the second so that the referent (the Lord) is clear.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** *Heb* “hands.” For the problem of the pronoun see note on the term “holy ones” earlier in this verse.

<sup>9</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term יָתָבוּ (*tukv*) probably Pual perfect of תָּכַח, (*takhah*) is otherwise unknown. The present translation is based on the reference to feet and, apparently, receiving instruction in God’s words (cf. KJV, ASV). Other options are as follows: NIV “At your feet they all bow down” (cf. NCV, CEV); NLT “They follow in your steps” (cf. NAB, NASB); NRSV “they marched at your heels.”

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The singular verbal form in the Hebrew text (lit. “he lifts up”) is understood in a distributive manner, focusing on the action of each individual within the group.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term תּוֹרָה (*torah*) here should be understood more broadly as instruction.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** *Heb* “he was king.” The present translation avoids the sudden shift in person and the mistaken impression that Moses is the referent by specifying the referent as “the LORD.”

<sup>13</sup> **sn** *Jeshurun* is a term of affection referring to Israel, derived from the Hebrew verb יָשָׁר (*yashar*, “be upright”). See note on the term in Deut 32:15.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** The following blessing is given to the tribes in order, al-

*Blessing on Reuben*

33:6 May Reuben live and not die,  
and may his people multiply.<sup>15</sup>

*Blessing on Judah*

33:7 And this is the blessing<sup>16</sup> to Judah. He  
said,

Listen, O LORD, to Judah’s voice,  
and bring him to his people.

May his power be great,  
and may you help him against his foes.

*Blessing on Levi*

33:8 Of Levi he said:

Your Thummim and Urim<sup>17</sup> belong to  
your godly one,<sup>18</sup>

whose authority you challenged at Mas-  
sah,<sup>19</sup>

and with whom you argued at the waters  
of Meribah.<sup>20</sup>

33:9 He said to his father and mother, “I  
have not seen him.”<sup>21</sup>

and he did not acknowledge his own  
brothers

or know his own children,  
for they kept your word,

and guarded your covenant.

33:10 They will teach Jacob your ordi-  
nances

and Israel your law;

they will offer incense as a pleasant odor,  
and a whole offering on your altar.

33:11 Bless, O LORD, his goods,

and be pleased with his efforts;

undercut the legs<sup>22</sup> of any who attack him,  
and of those who hate him, so that they  
cannot stand.

though the tribe of Simeon is curiously missing from the list.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and [not] may his men be few” (cf. KJV, NASB, NIV).

<sup>16</sup> **tn** The words “the blessing” are supplied in the translation for clarity and stylistic reasons.

<sup>17</sup> **sn** *Thummim and Urim*. These terms, whose meaning is uncertain, refer to sacred stones carried in a pouch on the breastplate of the high priest and examined on occasion as a means of ascertaining God’s will or direction. See Exod 28:30; Lev 8:8; Num 27:21; 1 Sam 28:6. See also C. Van Dam, *NIDOTTE* 1:329-31.

<sup>18</sup> **tn** *Heb* “godly man.” The reference is probably to Moses as representative of the whole tribe of Levi.

<sup>19</sup> **sn** *Massah* means “testing” in Hebrew; the name is a wordplay on what took place there. Cf. Exod 17:7; Deut 6:16; 9:22; Ps 95:8-9.

<sup>20</sup> **sn** *Meribah* means “contention, argument” in Hebrew; this is another wordplay on the incident that took place there. Cf. Num 20:13, 24; Ps 106:32.

<sup>21</sup> **sn** This statement no doubt alludes to the Levites’ destruction of their own fellow tribesmen following the golden calf incident (Exod 32:25-29).

<sup>22</sup> **tn** *Heb* “smash the sinews [or “loins,” so many English versions].” This part of the body was considered to be center of one’s strength (cf. Job 40:16; Ps 69:24; Prov 31:17; Nah 2:2, 11). See J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPSTC), 325.

*Blessing on Benjamin*

**33:12** Of Benjamin he said:  
The beloved of the LORD will live safely  
by him;  
he protects him all the time,  
and the LORD<sup>1</sup> places him on his chest.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessing on Joseph*

**33:13** Of Joseph he said:  
May the LORD bless his land  
with the harvest produced by the sky,<sup>3</sup>  
by the dew,  
and by the depths crouching beneath;  
**33:14** with the harvest produced by the  
daylight<sup>4</sup>  
and by<sup>5</sup> the moonlight;<sup>6</sup>  
**33:15** with the best<sup>7</sup> of the ancient moun-  
tains  
and the harvest produced by the age-old  
hills;  
**33:16** with the harvest of the earth and its  
fullness  
and the pleasure of him who resided in  
the burning bush.<sup>8</sup>  
May blessing rest on Joseph's head,  
and on the top of the head of the one set  
apart<sup>9</sup> from his brothers.  
**33:17** May the firstborn of his bull bring  
him honor,  
and may his horns be those of a wild ox;  
with them may he gore all peoples,  
all the far reaches of the earth.  
They are the ten thousands of Ephraim,<sup>10</sup>  
and they are the thousands of Manasseh.

*Blessing on Zebulun and Issachar*

**33:18** Of Zebulun he said:  
Rejoice, Zebulun, when you go outside,  
and Issachar, when you are in your tents.

**33:19** They will summon peoples to the  
mountain,  
there they will sacrifice proper<sup>11</sup> sacri-  
fices;  
for they will enjoy<sup>12</sup> the abundance of the  
seas,  
and the hidden treasures of the shores.<sup>13</sup>

*Blessing on Gad*

**33:20** Of Gad he said:  
Blessed be the one who enlarges Gad.  
Like a lioness he will dwell;  
he will tear at an arm – indeed, a scalp.<sup>14</sup>  
**33:21** He has selected the best part for  
himself,  
for the portion of the ruler<sup>15</sup> is set aside<sup>16</sup>  
there;  
he came with the leaders<sup>17</sup> of the people,  
he obeyed the righteous laws of the LORD  
and his ordinances with Israel.

*Blessing on Dan*

**33:22** Of Dan he said:  
Dan is a lion's cub;  
he will leap forth from Bashan.<sup>18</sup>

*Blessing on Naphtali*

**33:23** Of Naphtali he said:  
O Naphtali, overflowing with favor,  
and full of the LORD's blessing,  
possess the west and south.

*Blessing on Asher*

**33:24** Of Asher he said:  
Asher is blessed with children,  
may he be favored by his brothers  
and may he dip his foot in olive oil.<sup>19</sup>  
**33:25** The bars of your gates<sup>20</sup> will be  
made of iron and bronze,  
and may you have lifelong strength.

<sup>1</sup> **tn** Heb "he"; the referent (the LORD) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Heb "between his shoulders." This suggests the scene in John 13:23 with Jesus and the Beloved Disciple.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** Heb "from the harvest of the heavens." The referent appears to be good crops produced by the rain that falls from the sky.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** Heb "goings forth of the sun."

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Heb "and from the harvest of the yield of." This has been simplified in the translation to avoid redundancy.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Heb "the moon." Many English versions regard this as a reference to "months" ("moons") rather than the moon itself (cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV, NLT).

<sup>7</sup> **tn** Heb "head" or "top."

<sup>8</sup> **tn** The expression "him who resided in the bush" is frequently understood as a reference to the appearance of the Lord to Moses at Sinai from a burning bush (so NIV, NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT; cf. Exod 2:2-6; 3:2, 4). To make this reference clear the word "burning" is supplied in the translation.

<sup>9</sup> **sn** This apparently refers to Joseph's special status among his brothers as a result of his being chosen by God to save the family from the famine and to lead Egypt.

<sup>10</sup> **sn** Ephraim and Manasseh were the sons of Joseph who became founders of the two tribes into which Joseph's descendants were split (Gen 48:19-20). Jacob's blessing granted favored status to Ephraim; this is probably why Ephraim is viewed here as more numerous than Manasseh.

<sup>11</sup> **tn** Or "acceptable"; Heb "righteous" (so NASB).

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Heb "suck."

<sup>13</sup> **tn** Heb "of the sand" (so NRSV, NLT); CEV "the sandy beach."

<sup>14</sup> **tn** Heb "forehead," picturing Gad attacking prey.

<sup>15</sup> **tn** The Hebrew term כֹּהֵן (m<sup>h</sup>khoqeq; Poel participle of כָּתַב, khaqaq, "to inscribe") reflects the idea that the recorder of allotments (the "ruler") is able to set aside for himself the largest and best. See E. H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy* (NAC), 444-45.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** Heb "covered in" (if from the root סָפַן, safan; cf. HALOT 764-65 s.v. סָפַן qal).

<sup>17</sup> **tn** Heb "heads" (in the sense of chieftains).

<sup>18</sup> **sn** He will leap forth from Bashan. This may refer to Dan's conquest of Laish, a region just to the west of Bashan (Judg 18:27-28).

<sup>19</sup> **sn** Dip his foot in olive oil. This is a metaphor for prosperity, one especially apt in light of the abundance of olive groves in the area settled by Asher. The Hebrew term refers to olive oil, which symbolizes blessing in the OT. See R. Way, *NIDOTTE* 4:171-73.

<sup>20</sup> **tn** The words "of your gates" have been supplied in the translation to clarify the referent of "bars."



*General Praise and Blessing*

**33:26** There is no one like God, O Jeshurun,<sup>1</sup>

who rides through the sky<sup>2</sup> to help you,  
on the clouds in majesty.

**33:27** The everlasting God is a refuge,  
and underneath you are his eternal arms;<sup>3</sup>  
he has driven out enemies before you,  
and has said, “Destroy!”

**33:28** Israel lives in safety,  
the fountain of Jacob is quite secure,<sup>4</sup>  
in a land of grain and new wine;  
indeed, its heavens<sup>5</sup> rain down dew.<sup>6</sup>

**33:29** You have joy, Israel! Who is like  
you?

You are a people delivered by the LORD,  
your protective shield  
and your exalted sword.

May your enemies cringe before you;  
may you trample on their backs.

*The Death of Moses*

**34:1** Then Moses ascended from the deserts of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho.<sup>7</sup> The LORD showed him the whole land – Gilead to Dan, **34:2** and all of Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the distant<sup>8</sup> sea, **34:3** the Negev, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of the date palm trees, as far as Zoar. **34:4** Then the LORD said to him, “This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’<sup>9</sup> I have let you see it,<sup>10</sup> but you will not cross over there.”

**34:5** So Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab as the LORD had said.

**34:6** He<sup>11</sup> buried him in the land of Moab near Beth Peor, but no one knows his exact burial place to this very day. **34:7** Moses was 120 years old when he died, but his eye was not dull<sup>12</sup> nor had his vitality<sup>13</sup> departed. **34:8** The Israelites mourned for Moses in the deserts of Moab for thirty days; then the days of mourning for Moses ended.

*The Epitaph of Moses*

**34:9** Now Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had placed his hands on him;<sup>14</sup> and the Israelites listened to him and did just what the LORD had commanded Moses.

**34:10** No prophet ever again arose in Israel like Moses, who knew the LORD face to face.<sup>15</sup> **34:11** He did<sup>16</sup> all the signs and wonders the LORD had sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, all his servants, and the whole land, **34:12** and he displayed great power<sup>17</sup> and awesome might in view of all Israel.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **sn** *Jeshurun* is a term of affection referring to Israel, derived from the Hebrew verb יָשַׁר (*yashar*, “be upright”). See note on the term in Deut 32:15.

<sup>2</sup> **tn** Or “(who) rides (on) the heavens” (cf. NIV, NRSV, NLT). This title depicts Israel’s God as sovereign over the elements of the storm (cf. Ps 68:33). The use of the phrase here may be polemical; Moses may be asserting that Israel’s God, not Baal (called the “rider of the clouds” in the Ugaritic myths), is the true divine king (cf. v. 5) who controls the elements of the storm, grants agricultural prosperity, and delivers his people from their enemies. See R. B. Chisholm, Jr., “The Polemic against Baalism in Israel’s Early History and Literature,” *BSac* 151 (1994): 275.

<sup>3</sup> **tn** *Heb* “and from under, arms of perpetuity.” The words “you” and “his” are supplied in the translation for clarification. Some have perceived this line to be problematic and have offered alternative translations that differ significantly from the present translation: “He spread out the primeval tent; he extended the ancient canopy” (NAB); “He subdues the ancient gods, shatters the forces of old” (NRSV). These are based on alternate meanings or conjectural emendations rather than textual variants in the mss and versions.

<sup>4</sup> **tn** *Heb* “all alone.” The idea is that such vital resources as water will some day no longer need protection because God will provide security.

<sup>5</sup> **tn** Or “skies.” The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (*shamayim*) may be translated “heaven(s)” or “sky” depending on the context.

<sup>6</sup> **tn** Or perhaps “drizzle, showers.” See note at Deut 32:2.

<sup>7</sup> **sn** For the geography involved, see note on the term “Pisgah” in Deut 3:17.

**map** For the location of Jericho see Map5-B2; Map6-E1; Map7-E1; Map8-E3; Map10-A2; Map11-A1.

<sup>8</sup> **tn** Or “western” (so NAB, NASB, NIV, NRSV); *Heb* “latter,” a reference to the Mediterranean Sea (cf. NCV, TEV, CEV, NLT).

<sup>9</sup> **tn** *Heb* “seed” (so KJV, ASV).

<sup>10</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text includes “with your eyes,” but this is redundant in English and is left untranslated.

<sup>11</sup> **tc** Smr and some LXX mss read “they buried him,” that is, the Israelites. The MT reads “he buried him,” meaning in the context that “the LORD buried him.” This understanding, combined with the statement at the end of the verse that Moses’ burial place is unknown, gave rise to traditions during the intertestamental period that are reflected in the NT in Jude 9 and in OT pseudepigraphic works like the *Assumption of Moses*.

<sup>12</sup> **tn** Or “dimmed.” The term could refer to dull appearance or to dimness caused by some loss of visual acuity.

<sup>13</sup> **tn** *Heb* “sap.” That is, he was still in possession of his faculties or liveliness.

<sup>14</sup> **sn** See Num 27:18.

<sup>15</sup> **sn** See Num 12:8; Deut 18:15-18.

<sup>16</sup> **tn** *Heb* “to,” “with respect to.” In the Hebrew text vv. 10-12 are one long sentence. For stylistic reasons the translation divides this into two, using the verb “he did” at the beginning of v. 11 and “he displayed” at the beginning of v. 12.

<sup>17</sup> **tn** *Heb* “strong hand.”

<sup>18</sup> **tn** The Hebrew text of v. 12 reads literally, “with respect to all the strong hand and with respect to all the awesome greatness which Moses did before the eyes of all Israel.”