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# ***DEUTERONOMY***

by

Bruce Oberst

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

by Don DeWalt

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION

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SUMMARY

by Adam Clarke

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# FOREWORD

The generation in which we live is straining at every seam in its quest for more education. Never have so many people in so many nations been able, because of education, to do so many things. Yet it seems that lawlessness continues to increase. This book is designed to educate the popular mind in the ways of righteousness; to turn the lawless to the laws of God.

Much of the material in this volume was taught in the Hollywood Drive Church where it proved very useful. The author's purpose was to produce a work particularly useful—relevant to twentieth-century Christians. He has accomplished this objective. By the time each person in the class had answered and discussed the questions following each lesson he had become well acquainted with its contents. It is hoped that other churches will find these lessons profitable in the same way.

From the pages of this book the honest inquirer will surely enrich his life by gaining a deeper understanding of such subjects as purity and separation of God's people, the tithes due God that support His work, the fate of those that "wax fat" and forsake God, and many other topics equally applicable to our time.

My acquaintance with Brother Oberst over the years has been both enjoyable and profitable. He has proven himself a preacher and teacher of real worth to the Kingdom. I am happy to have passed a part of the time of this sojourn in fellowship with him. I commend to you his work on Deuteronomy.

Vernon Watkins, elder  
Hollywood Drive Church  
Anchorage, Alaska  
June, 1968

## P R E F A C E

It is believed that the present volume is versatile enough to be useful to Christians in many walks of life—not just preachers, elders, and teachers in the congregation, but every member who desires to further his knowledge of the Word. There is so much in Deuteronomy that has 20th century application. Deuteronomy is a series of *sermons*, and time and again Moses begins his remarks with the phrase, "Hear O Israel . . ." It is, very literally, a dying man's message to dying men. The pathos of Moses' soul is revealed again and again as he implores this nation to turn from its evil ways lest they be destroyed from the Land of Promise.

This volume is divided into twenty-four lessons. With few exceptions, the portion of scripture treated in the lesson progresses naturally with Deuteronomy's present form. The lessons are not precisely uniform in length, though they usually cover approximately the same number of verses. One's pace through them, therefore, should best be determined by a teacher and/or personal needs. One should avoid getting "bogged down" in details. To do so, all too often, is to miss the hortatory or sermonic nature of Moses' message. My own suggestion would be to study in the following manner:

1. Read the entire book of Deuteronomy through, *not* taking time to consult any other book. (Remember nothing, *absolutely nothing*, can replace a face-to-face contact with God's word).
2. Now read the introductory notes. Be sure to check out the scripture references.
3. As each lesson is studied:
  - a) Read carefully the text for *that lesson*, including the Amplified Version.
  - b) With your present knowledge answer the *thought questions*.
  - c) Study the comments.
  - d) Re-read the scripture text of the particular lesson (hopefully with a better understanding). This will be your third time through the scripture itself.
  - e) Reanswer the *thought questions*.
  - f) Now you should be ready for the quiz. On the questions dealing with *meaning*, it does no harm to refer back to the passage.
  - g) Check again all your answers—or check back on those you couldn't answer. The questions are not all designed to be "brain teasers". Indeed, we make no apology for asking

## P R E F A C E

many questions on the *content* of Bible text itself. What is more valuable in life than to know what the *Bible actually says* on important subjects? In a day of gross ignorance of the simple statements of *scripture*, we need more students of the *words of the Holy Spirit!*

It will be noticed that in some quotes the sources are abbreviated. Such titles are given in full in the Bibliography. (Example: I. S. B. E. for The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia).

The reader will notice some repetition of the *Amplified Bible* in the notes accompanying the scripture text. This was caused by the fact that it was decided somewhat late in the manuscript preparation to include this version in the book.

To some, these notes may appear "too detailed", for others perhaps they will seem "too shallow", but our attempt has been to find a happy medium, and to keep in mind the "busy church member" as well as the scholar. The special articles on the authorship by McGarvey and Rotherham will not be of interest to all—but we are acquainted with no finer two articles on the subject.

A special word of thanks must be given here for certain ones of the many who were especially helpful to me in the preparation of these lessons. My wife and four children have been my most encouraging "Cheerleaders" in this project, and they have made many sacrifices so that Dad might have time to write. My sister, Mrs. Ron Leighton, has typed the manuscript through twice. Mrs. Vernon C. Watkins has given much help by her patient proofreading.

Deuteronomy has soul, life, and spirit—it reveals the heart of God and the heart of Moses. Its teachings have infinite applications, and only a few are mentioned here. If these notes will be of some aid to those who seek to know and comprehend "the things that are revealed" (29:29), this servant of God shall feel truly rewarded.

Bandon, Oregon  
June, 1968

DEUTERONOMY

DEDICATION

To My Wife, Bonnie

*"Thou hast given me courage"*



# INTRODUCTION

It will be invaluable to our understanding of this book if we can see it in its proper setting. Hence the need of a few words of introduction. But even the reading of these beginning remarks would be made easier if the student, first of all, read the book through. In the final analysis, it is the *Word of God* that we want to understand and implant in our minds. Nothing can replace a constant "face-to-face" contact with the Bible itself! In this last book of the Pentateuch, we certainly have no exception to this rule.

## THE NAME

The title "Deuteronomy" is taken directly from the name it was given in the Septuagint Version—the famous Greek translation of the Old Testament made in Egypt about two hundred years before Christ. It literally signifies "*second (or repeated) law*," being derived from the Greek words *deuteros* (second) and *nomos* (law). Thus the popular definitions, "Repetition of the law," or "Second giving of the law," referring of course, to the law of Moses.

The title we have inherited is in some ways unfortunate. *Historically*, it is true, there is practically nothing new recorded in this book; most of the exceptions being the events that relate to Moses' renewal of the covenant between God and Israel, his charge to Joshua, and death—all of which occur in the closing chapters. But there is much more here than a mere repetition of the law given at Sinai as recorded for us in Exodus. For example, in Chapters 22-26 we have such items as:

1. Extirpating false prophets and idolatrous cities
2. Making a battlement around the roof of a residence
3. Expiating uncertain murder
4. Taking down "hanged" malefactors in the evening
5. Punishing rebellious children
6. Distinguishing apparel of the sexes
7. Marriage of captive women and wives of deceased brethren
8. Divorcing wives and the trial of virginity
9. Runaway servants

The above subjects are either not treated *at all* in previous books, or, if they are, are not treated in the same manner as in Deuteronomy. The list could be extended considerably, especially of those subjects that are treated or applied differently in this book, for Moses' point of reference is now vastly different than at any other time in Israel's brief history.

## DEUTERONOMY

We must remember that Deuteronomy was originally included as a part of a *single book*—"the book of the law of Moses" (Neh. 8:1) or "the book of Moses" (II Chron. 25:4)—titles which were still understood in Jesus' day to refer to the entire Pentateuch—Luke 24:27, 44; Jn. 5:46, 47. In the Hebrew manuscripts these books were connected in one unbroken roll. "At what time they were divided into five portions, each having a separate title, is not known, but it is certain that the distinction dates at or before the time of the Septuagint translation"—*Robert Jamieson*. In Hebrew the book came to be called *Elleb haddebharim*, 'These (are) the words,' taken from the first line. The modern English translation of the Hebrew ("The Torah"\*) has shortened this simply to *Dabbarim*, "words" or "discourses."

### THE OCCASION AND OVER-ALL VIEW: THE NECESSITY OF THE BOOK

There was good reason for Israel having the laws and ordinances reiterated to them at this time—with the amplifications and applications God through Moses gave to them. There was also good reason for the new ones he gave. Many of the former laws, by their very nature and importance, *needed* to be repeated—especially in view of the fact that most of the adult Israelites, (those twenty years old and upward\*\*) who were at Sinai were now dead, and the new generation now needed to be reminded and exhorted concerning their responsibilities toward God—especially as they entered the very land that was the goal of their fathers when leaving Egypt. Thus Deuteronomy is "custom made" to fit these "nomads" who were now about to go through the rigors of adjusting to a settled agricultural way of life. "Moses had before him not the men to whom by God's command he delivered the law at Sinai, but the generation following which had grown up in the wilderness. Large portions of the

\*Published by the Jewish Publication Society of America.

\*\*Joshua and Caleb were the only persons *among those that were numbered* to enter the Promised Land after leaving Egypt. In both the first (Num. 1:1-3, 45-47; 2:32, 33) and second (Num. 26:1, 2, 51, 62-65) numberings, only those men twenty years old and upward, "able to go forth to war in Israel" are numbered. The Levites were not numbered at all, nor were women, old men, children, or strangers. In Numbers 14:29 we are specifically told that the curse resulting from their rebellion at Kadesh rested only on the group that was numbered. As the "uncursed" group must have been a great multitude, many of them must surely have been alive thirty-eight years later as Israel entered the Promised Land—especially those who were under twenty years of age at the time of the first census.

## INTRODUCTION

law necessarily stood in abeyance during the years of wandering; and of his present hearers, many must have been strangers to various prescribed observances and ordinances. Now, however, on their entry into settled homes in Canaan a thorough discharge of the various obligations laid on them by the covenant would become imperative; and it is to this state of things that Moses addresses himself." (*Cook*, in *Barne's Notes*) Similarly, *Halley* states, "In Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, laws had been promulgated at intervals. Now, their wanderings over, on the even of entrance into Canaan, these laws were rehearsed and expounded, in anticipation of, and with applications to, settled life." The forward-looking nature of so many laws in this book is a chief key to its rightful understanding. Of what significance, for example, would a law demanding a battlement atop a new house (22:8), or forbidding the sowing of two kinds of seed in a vineyard (22:9), or forbidding plowing with an ass and an ox together (22:10) have to a vast horde of people in the deserts of the Sinaitic Peninsula?

*J. B. Tidwell*, writing concerning the occasion and necessity of the book, gives two good reasons Israel needed such laws at this time: "(1) A crisis had come in the life of Israel. The life of the people was to be changed from that of wandering in the wilderness to that of residence in cities and villages, and from dependence upon heavenly manna to the cultivation of the fields. Peace and righteousness would depend upon a strict observance of the laws. (2) They would be tempted by a new religion of Canaan against which they must be put on guard. The most seductive forms of idolatry would be met everywhere and there would be great danger of yielding to it. Especially would they as farmers be tempted to worship Baal, who was thought to be the god of the farm and of crops. A poor crop would tempt them to worship him and bring upon themselves the displeasure of the Lord."\*

## THE WRITER

That Moses was the writer of the basic content of the book is not only generally accepted truth, but affirmed by the book itself and reaffirmed by our Savior and the apostles. "*And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests*" (31:9). "*So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel*" (31:22). "*And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished . . .*" (31:24).

\*In *The Bible Book by Book*, Eighth Edition Revised.

## DEUTERONOMY

Being a part of the Pentateuch ("five-fold book") or Torah ("law"), Jesus includes *this* book in "The law of Moses" (Luke 24:44); "Moses" (Matt. 19: 7,8, Luke 24:27, Jn. 5:46); "his [Moses'] writings" (Jn. 5:46, 47); "the scriptures" (Luke 24:27, Jn. 5:39, etc.) and "the word of God" (Mk. 7:13).

The excellent statement of *William Evans*, in his *Outline Study of the Bible*, is here in order: "The question as to the authorship of the five books [Pentateuch] resolves itself into the question, "What think ye of the Christ?" Did he know who wrote the Pentateuch? Or was he mistaken in (supposedly) adopting the popular view which was a mistaken one? If he was in error, what becomes of his omniscience, and how much reliance may we place upon him as a Teacher from God professing to speak the word of God infallibly? Did Jesus Christ know who wrote these books, or not knowing, did he make a pretense of knowing? If so, what becomes of his sincerity; how is he then the Truth?"

Paul attributed the book to Moses' hand (Rom. 10:19) and also to *God* (Heb. 13:5). Likewise, the prophecy of Deut. 18:15-19 was attributed to Moses by Peter and Stephen (Acts 3:22-23, 7:37). To impugn Moses' authorship is to challenge not only the truthfulness of these men, but "the Spirit by which he [they] spake" (Acts 6:10).

We agree with *F. C. Cook* who said: "The alleged anachronisms, discrepancies, and difficulties admit, for the most part, of easy and complete explanation; and no serious attempt has ever been made to meet the overwhelming presumption drawn from the unanimous testimony of the ancient Jewish Church and nation that Moses is the author of this book." The objections, we believe, surely *can* be met; but destructive critics have at least made many efforts that *they* believe are "serious attempts" to discredit the Mosaic Authorship of the book—usually much of the rest of the Pentateuch as well. For those interested in exploring this subject further, the *Special Study* at the close of this volume will be found profitable. Brother C. C. Crawford's article on "*The Authorship of the Pentateuch*" in his first volume on Genesis (pp. 47-70) is also of great value, and forms an excellent preface to the reading of *any* of the first five books.

## TIME COVERED IN DEUTERONOMY

In 1:3 we have the beginning of this record on the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt. In 34:5-8 Moses dies, and is wept over for thirty days. According to Joshua 4:19 Israel crossed the Jordan under Joshua's leadership on the tenth day

## INTRODUCTION

of the first month, or two months and ten days after Moses begins his first discourse. Thus the entire book of Deuteronomy was composed in no more than two months, and Moses' three discourses could not have involved more than about a month—possibly a much shorter time. We have recorded for us, then, the history of Israel during one month before Moses' death, and another after it.

This had been a difficult year for Israel, and particularly its leading family. In the first month Miriam, Moses' sister, died (Num. 20:1). In the fifth month, on the first day, his brother Aaron died (Num. 33:38,39) at the age of one hundred and twenty three. And, so far as can be determined, Moses died at about the end of the same year (Deut. 34:7,8) being one hundred and twenty years old.

## GENERAL OUTLINE OR STRUCTURE OF DEUTERONOMY

### I. THE FIRST DISCOURSE: Review of the Journeys (1:1—4:43)

After a brief historical introduction, the speaker recapitulates the chief events of the last forty years in the wilderness. The Cities of Refuge, east of the Jordan, are set aside.

### II. THE SECOND DISCOURSE: The Law of God (4:44—26:19)

Here we have the great bulk of the book, which, in substance, is a review of the law previously given at Sinai, with a number of modifications and additions, and the whole given an "evangelistic" application.

### III. THE THIRD DISCOURSE: Future of Israel Foretold (27:1—30:20)

Moses and the elders command the people to erect the stone monument at Mt. Ebal and on it to write "all the words of this law." The curses which are to be pronounced from Ebal, and the blessings from Gerezim, are given, and the covenant is made in Moab. All of this is accompanied by solemn injunctions and promises, a prophecy concerning disobedient Israel, and warnings of the fearful and horrible consequences of breaking the covenant they had made with God.

## DEUTERONOMY

### IV. MOSES' LAST DAYS (31:1—34:12)

Knowing of his imminent death, Moses encourages the people. After Joshua is commissioned for his new post as successor to Moses, the law is delivered into the custody of the elders and Levites, with the charge that it be read every seven years before all Israel. Finally, we have the "Song of Moses," his blessing upon Israel, and his death.

### SUGGESTED LESSON UNITS

(As used with the *Comprehensive Outline*):

- Lesson One: I, A, 1-3 (pp. 13 thru 39)
- Lesson Two: I, A, 4-6 (pp. 40 thru 53)
- Lesson Three: I, A, 7-10 (pp. 54 thru 69)
- Lesson Four: I, B, 1-3 (including Appendix) (pp. 70 thru 85)
- Lesson Five: II, A, 1 (pp. 86 thru 106)
- Lesson Six: II, A, 2-5 (pp. 107 thru 117)
- Lesson Seven: II, A, 6 (pp. 118 thru 128)
- Lesson Eight: II, A, 7, 8 (pp. 129 thru 162)
- Lesson Nine: II, B, 1 (pp. 163 thru 174)
- Lesson Ten: II, B, 2 (pp. 175 thru 185)
- Lesson Eleven: II, B, 3, a, b (pp. 186 thru 192)
- Lesson Twelve: II, B, 3, c (pp. 193 thru 204)
- Lesson Thirteen: II, B, 3, d (pp. 205 thru 212)
- Lesson Fourteen: II, B, 3, e (pp. 213 thru 229)
- Lesson Fifteen: II, B, 3, f (pp. 230 thru 240)
- Lesson Sixteen: II, B, 3, g (pp. 241 thru 252)
- Lesson Seventeen: II, B, 3, h, i, j, k, l, (pp. 253 thru 273)
- Lesson Eighteen: II, B, 3, m (1)-(15) (pp. 274 thru 290)
- Lesson Nineteen: II, B, 3, m (16)-(20) (pp. 291 thru 296)
- Lesson Twenty: II, B, 3, n (pp. 297 thru 305)
- Lesson Twenty-one: III, A, B, C, D (pp. 306 thru 337)
- Lesson Twenty-two: III, E, F (pp. 338 thru 355)
- Lesson Twenty-three: IV, A, B, C (pp. 356 thru 382)
- Lesson Twenty-four: IV, D, E, F. (pp. 383 thru 411)

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD .....	v
PREFACE .....	vi
DEDICATION .....	viii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
<b>COMPREHENSIVE OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY</b>	
I. THE FIRST DISCOURSE: Review of the Journeys (1:1—4:43)	
Introduction, 1:1-5 .....	13
A. THE EVENTS FROM SINAI TO THE PRESENT (1:6—3:29)	
1. Command to leave Horeb for the Promised Land (1:6-8) ....	19
2. Civil organization under Moses (1:9-18) .....	20
3. Two failures at Kadesh-barnea (1:19-40) .....	24
a. Because of unbelief (1:19-40)	
b. Because of presumption (1:41-46)	
4. Passing through Edom (2:1-8) .....	40
5. Passing through Moab (2:9-15) .....	47
6. Passing through Ammon (2:16-23) .....	51
7. First successful conquest (2:24—3:11) .....	54
a. Over Sihon, king of Heshbon (2:24-37)	
b. Over Og, king of Bashan (3:1-11)	
"The two kings of the Amorites"	
8. Extent and division of conquered east-side lands (3:12-17) ..	62
9. Warning against settling down prematurely (3:18-20) .....	65
10. Moses denied entrance into Canaan (3:21-29) .....	66
B. SIGNIFICANCE OF PAST EVENTS (4:1-40)	
1. Blessings promised for those who heed God's all-sufficient law (4:1-8) .....	70
a. Prosperity (4:1-4)	
b. Respect of the nations (4:5-8)	
2. The temptation to forget God's unique revelation (4:9-31) ..	73
a. God appeared at Horeb by word, not by physical form (4:9-14)	

DEUTERONOMY

- b. Warning against making physical representations of God or gods (4:15-24)
- c. Punishment for idolatry: banishment from the land (4:25-28)
- d. Repentance will reveal God's grace (4:29-31)
- 3. The glory and greatness of Israel's God (4:32-40) ..... 80
  - a. His dealings with Israel are unique (4:32-34;36)
  - b. He is the only God (4:35;39)
  - c. He has loved and chosen Israel (4:37)
  - d. He has preserved them (4:38)
  - e. He offers a blessed future (4:40)
- Appendix: Appointment of eastern cities of refuge (4:41-43)

II. THE SECOND DISCOURSE: The Law of God (4:44—26:19)

Introduction (4:44-49) ..... 86

A. THE NATURE, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVENANT MADE AT SINAI (5:1—11:32)

- 1. The Ten Words reviewed (5:1—6:3) ..... 87
  - a. The commandments given (5:1-21)
  - b. Israel's reaction: fear and devotion (5:22-27)
  - c. God's response: delighted approval (5:28-31)
  - d. Purpose of observing the law: (5:32—6:3)
    - (1) to live
    - (2) to live well
    - (3) to live long
    - (4) to multiply
- 2. Love to be motive for observance—the "Shema" (6:4-9) .... 107
- 3. Teaching the law (6:7-9; 20-25) ..... 109
- 4. God not to be forgotten (6:10-15) ..... 113
- 5. God not to be tempted (6:16-19) ..... 115
- 6. Defending the faith: Necessity of the Holy War (7:1-26) .. 118
  - a. The reasons for the Holy War (7:1-16)
    - (1) The danger of corruption for Israel (7:1-5, 12-16)
    - (2) The wickedness of the Canaanites (7:5)
    - (3) Israel must be a separate and holy people (7:6-11)



## CONTENTS

b. Difficulties of the Holy War (7:17-26)	
(1) The superiority of the foe (7:17-21)	
(2) The gradual nature of the conquest (7:22)	
(3) The rewards and demands of faithfulness (7:20-21, 23-26)	
7. The threat from within (8:1—11:21) .....	129
a. The danger of prosperity (8:1-20)	
(1) Forgetfulness of past discipline (8:1-16)	
(2) Self-deification (8:17-20)	
b. How to prevent the threat (9:1—11:21) .....	138
(1) By a realistic self-evaluation (9:1—10:11)	
(2) By an abiding love (10:12-11:1)	
(3) By a constant refreshing of memory (11:2-25)	
8. The blessing and the curse (11:26-32) .....	159
B. THE LAW ("the statutes and the ordinances") (12:1—26:19)	
1. One sanctuary (12:1-28) .....	163
2. One God: death penalties for apostasy (12:29—13:18; 17:2-13) .....	175
3. One holy people, different from all others (14:1—25:29) ..	186
a. Disfigurement for the dead forbidden (14:1,2)	
b. Their diet a constant reminder (14:3-21) .....	187
c. Differences in economic practices (14:22—15:23) .....	193
(1) The tithe (14:22-29)	
(2) The year of release (15:1-6)	
(3) The poor (15:7-11)	
(4) Slavery (15:12-18)	
(5) The offering of the firstling (15:19-23)	
d. Holy Festivals (16:1-17; 21, 22; 17:1) .....	205
(1) The Passover (16:1-8)	
(2) Pentecost (16:9-12)	
(3) Tabernacles (16:13-15)	
(4) General rules for observance (16:16,17,21,22; 17:1)	
e. The leaders of God's people (16:18-20; 17:2—18:22) ..	213
(1) Judges (16:18-20; 17:2-13)	
(2) Kings (17:14-20)	
(3) Priests (18:1-8)	
(4) Prophets (18:9-22)	
f. The sanctity of life and property (19:1-21; 21:1-9) ..	230
(1) Concerning murder (19:1-13; 21:1-9)	

## DEUTERONOMY

- (2) Concerning landmarks (19:14)
- (3) Concerning witnesses and judgment (19:15-21; 17:2-7)
- g. Rules for conducting the Holy War (20:1-20; 21:10-14; 23:9-14) ..... 241
  - (1) Encouragement of the priest (20:1-4)
  - (2) Exemptions (20:5-9)
  - (3) Treatment of cities of far-off nations (20:10-15)
  - (4) Treatment of Canaanite cities (20:16-18)
  - (5) Respect for natural resources (20:19,20)
  - (6) Marrying women captives (21:10-14)
  - (7) Uncleanness (23:9-14)
- h. Family regulations (21:15-21) ..... 253
  - (1) The right of the first-born (21:15-17)
  - (2) Treatment of stubborn sons (21:18-20)
- i. The sanctity of the land: man hanged on a tree (21:22, 23) ..... 255
- j. Life in the New Land: Various laws (21:1-12) ..... 256
  - (1) Lost possessions (22:1-4)
  - (2) Appropriate clothing for the sex (22:5)
  - (3) Nesting birds (22:6,7)
  - (4) Battlements for new buildings (22:8)
  - (5) Forbidden mixtures (22:9-11)
  - (6) Fringed garments (22:12)
- k. Sex offenses (22:13-30) ..... 262
  - (1) Virginity of a bride (22:13-21)
  - (2) Defilement of a maiden betrothed (22:28,29)
  - (3) Defilement of a maiden not betrothed (22:28,29)
  - (4) Impurity toward a father's wife (22:30)
- l. Exclusion from the congregation (23:1-8) ..... 269
  - (1) Permanent exclusion for the sexually mutilated, children born of illegitimate union and certain enemy people (23:1-6)
  - (2) Temporary exclusion for Egyptians, Moabites and physically unclean (23:7-14)
- m. Laws of society and domestic relations (23:15—25:16) ..... 274
  - (1) Treatment of escaped servants (23:15,16)
  - (2) Morally illegitimate practices and wages (23:17,18)
  - (3) Interest on loans (23:19,20)

## CONTENTS

- (4) Making and keeping vows (23:21-23)
- (5) Partaking of a neighbor's crop (23:24,25)
- (6) Divorce and remarriage (24:1-4)
- (7) Bridegroom exempt from warfare (24:5)
- (8) Millstones not to be taken in pledge (24:6)
- (9) Kidnapping a fellow-Israelite (24:7)
- (10) Laws of leprosy to be observed (24:8,9)
- (11) Pledge for a loan (24:10-13)
- (12) Paying the poor hired servant (24:14,15)
- (13) Transgressors to bear own guilt (24:16)
- (14) Justice to the indigent (24:17,18)
- (15) Needy to be considered at harvest time (24:19-22)
- (16) Judging and punishing men in controversy (25:1-3)
- (17) Ox to work unmuzzled (25:4)
- (18) The family name: levirate marriage (25:5-10)
- (19) Protection from another's wife (25:11,12)
- (20) Just weights and measures (25:13-16)
- n. Laws of national import (25:17—26:16) ..... 297
  - (1) Responsibility to exterminate the Amalekites (25:17-19)
  - (2) Offering the first-fruits (26:1-11)
  - (3) Tithes of the third year (26:12-15)
  - (4) Concluding exhortation to carry out commitments to God and his law (26:16-19)

### III. THE THIRD DISCOURSE: Future of Israel Foretold (27:1—30:20)

- A. ALTAR TO BE BUILT UPON MT. EBAL FOR THE RECORDING OF GOD'S LAW (27:1-8) ..... 306
- B. CURSES TO BE REPEATED FROM MT. EBAL (27:9-26) ..... 308
- C. BLESSINGS TO BE REPEATED FROM MT. GERIZIM (28:1-14) ..... 314
- D. FEARFUL CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE FORETOLD (28:15-68) ..... 318
- E. REMINDERS OF GOD'S BLESSINGS (29:1-13) ..... 338
  - 1. The present law to be enforced (29:1)
  - 2. The providence of God (29:2-9)
  - 3. The purpose of God (29:10-13)

## DEUTERONOMY

F. SOLEMN WARNINGS AND REMINDERS (29:14—30:20) ..	341
1. Covenant all-inclusive (29:14-21)	
2. Israel's coming wickedness: the judgment of future generations and foreigners (29:22-29)	
3. Jehovah's blessings assured whenever Israel repents (30:1-10)	
4. Obedience not impossible (30:11-14)	
5. Final encouragement to choose the path of blessing rather than the curse (30:15-20)	
 IV. MOSES' LAST DAYS (31:1—34:12)	
A. CHARGE TO JOSHUA (31:1-23) .....	356
1. Joshua presented to the people (31:1-8)	
2. Law delivered to the priests; commanded to be read before all Israel every seven years (31:9-13)	
3. Joshua commissioned (31:14-23)	
a. God confers with Moses and Joshua (31:14,15)	
b. Moses commanded to write song as a witness against Israel (31:16-22)	
c. Joshua charged and encouraged (31:23)	
 B. THE PRESERVATION OF THE BOOK (31:24-29) .....	365
1. The words of the law finished (31:24)	
2. The words of the law preserved (31:25,26)	
3. The words of the law a witness to Israel (31:27-29)	
 C. THE SONG OF MOSES (31:30—32:47) .....	368
 D. MOSES COMMANDED TO ASCEND MOUNT NEBO (32:48-52) .....	383
 E. THE BLESSING OF MOSES (33:1-29) .....	385
 F. THE DEATH OF MOSES (34:1-12) .....	405
1. Moses shown the Promised Land from Mount Nebo, dies, and is buried (34:1-8)	
2. Joshua assumes leadership; a final tribute to Moses (34:9-12)	
 THE AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY—Rotherham .....	412
THE AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY—McGarvey .....	419
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	449

## LESSON ONE 1:1-46

### I. THE FIRST DISCOURSE

Review of the Journeys (1:1—4:43)

#### INTRODUCTION 1:1-5

1:1 These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah over against Suph, between Paran and Tophel, and Paban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2 It is eleven days *journey*\* from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea. 3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that Jehovah had given him in commandment unto them; 4 after he had smitten Sihon the King of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who dwelt in Ashtaroth, at Edrei. 5 Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:1-5

1. Why was it necessary for Moses to speak to all Israel at this particular time?
2. Locate on a map the particular place from which this speech was given.
3. What possible purpose could be served in indicating the distance of "eleven days journey"?
4. How could Moses remember "all that Jehovah had given him in commandment unto them"?
5. Read Numbers 21:21-35 for an understanding of verse 4.
6. What is the meaning of the term "beyond the Jordan" in verse 5 and verse 1?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:1-5

These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel, [still] on the [east] side of the Jordan [River] in the wilderness, in the Arabah [that is, the deep valley running north and south from the eastern arm of the Red Sea to beyond the Dead Sea] over near Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

\*In the American Standard Version, used throughout this volume unless otherwise indicated, italicized words in the scripture text are meant to convey thoughts which seem necessary for a clear translation but not actually in the original.

2 It is [only] eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea [on Canaan's border; yet Israel took forty years to get beyond it].

3 And in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the Israelites according to all that the Lord had given him in commandment to them,

4 After he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth *and* Endrei.

5 Beyond [east of] the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying,

### COMMENT 1:1-5

Israel, now virtually on the eastern banks of the Jordan after forty years in the wilderness, is to receive final exhortations and solemn injunctions before crossing the river under Joshua's leadership. Moses, their leader up to this hour, is soon to pass from the scene. Thus the exhortations he is about to give constitute his farewell address—and a touching scene it must have been!

The location of Israel is precisely given:

BEYOND THE JORDAN—a phrase understood only by the context. Verse 5 specifies that in this case it is "in the land of Moab"—i.e., on the *east* side of the Jordan. More often than not, this is the meaning of the phrase—Gen. 50:10, 11; Josh. 9:10; Num. 22:1—"eastward, toward the sunrising" (Num. 34:15). But at other times the phrase has reference to the west side—["Mounts Gerizim and Ebal] are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun?" (Deut. 11:30). At first it might seem that the standpoint of the writer or speaker would be the chief factor in determining whether "beyond" refers to the east or west side. But this assumption (while normally true) also has its difficulties, for sometimes "beyond the Jordan" refers to the *same side* as the speaker: Deut. 3:8; Josh. 5:1, 9:1. The solution to this varied use of "beyond" apparently lies in the correct understanding of the Hebrew preposition (*eber*), and the flexibility of its translation. After showing that *eber* may refer to either the same side of the river as the speaker, or the other side, J. W. McGarvey points out: "These examples demonstrate that the Hebrew preposition (*eber*) translated 'beyond' does not, by its own force, locate its object on the opposite side from him who uses it. They demonstrate that the opening words of Deuteronomy, 'These be the words which Moses

spake to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness,' may have been written by Moses as certainly as by any other writer . . ." Again, "It is impossible that a Hebrew preposition whose object is sometimes located on the same side of the river with the person who uses it, can be uniformly translated 'beyond.' Yet this is what the revisers of our English version have attempted. For example, they make Moses say in Deut. 3:8, 'We took at that time out of the hands of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was beyond Jordan from the river Arnon to Mount Hermon,' though the land mentioned was not beyond Jordan, but on the same side with Moses. They make Joshua say to the two and a half tribes before they crossed the river, 'Your wives, your little ones and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond Jordan,' [Josh. 1:14] when it was not beyond, but on the same side of the river with themselves; and they make the author of the Book of Joshua, who unquestionably wrote in the country west of the river, speak of 'all the kings which were *beyond* the Jordan westward" [Josh. 12:7]. They were not beyond Jordan, but on the same side with himself.

King James' translators recognized the ambiguity of this Hebrew preposition, and wisely attempted no uniformity in rendering. They ascertained as best they could from the context, the only source of information in case of ambiguous words, on which side of the river the speaker or writer stood, and translated accordingly. They render it *on this side*, *on the other side*, or *beyond*, as the context requires, and in no instance have they made their renderings contradict the facts . . .

This translation has the opening sentence of Deuteronomy rendered, 'These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness' (verse 1), and 'on this side Jordan in the land of Moab' (verse 5 [see also 3:29]); and thus it locates the writer of the book on the same side of the river with Moses. This is certainly correct if either Moses or one of his contemporaries wrote this preface.\* The question of "editing" is taken up later in this volume. For the present, let it be seen that the word "beyond" (*eber*) does not, in and of itself, determine the location of the writer or speaker or even the object spoken of.

Here, the context absolutely demands that the writer and speaker be located on the east side of the Jordan. The above understanding of the use of "*beyond*" will help unravel several "contradictory" passages as we progress in our study of Deuteronomy.

\*The Authorship of Deuteronomy, p. 106-111.

IN THE WILDERNESS, IN THE ARABAH—The Arabah is the valley or hollow that includes the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea, and sometimes the depression that extends southward to the Gulf of Aqaba, an arm of the Red Sea. The Jordan valley is sometimes referred to as the *Ghor*, an Arab name meaning "hollow." Its width varies, but at the "plains of the Jordan" where the river flows into the Salt Sea, it is approximately fourteen miles wide. This wide area is also called "the plains of Moab" (34:1) and "the Plain of the valley of Jericho" (34:3). Our words Arab and Arabian are related to "Arabah"—all being from a root word meaning arid, sterile, dry (*Gesenius*).

OVER AGAINST SUPH, BETWEEN PARAN, AND TOPHEL, AND LABAN, AND HAZEROTH, AND DIZAHAB—4:46 adds, "in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites." Thus the *general* area of all these locations is known. "And they [Israel] journeyed from the mountains of Abarim, and encamped in the Plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho." (Num. 33:48)

It is questionable as to whether Paran should be identified with "the wilderness of Paran" (Num. 13:26), "mount Paran" (Deut. 33:2), or considered a town by the same name. "Some place named Paran would seem to be referred to in Deut. 1:1; but no trace of such a city has yet been found."—*I.S.B.E.* See also I Kings 11:18.

The travelling time from Horeb (Sinai) to Kadesh-barnea, at the southern edge of the promised land, was only eleven days (verse 2).

OVER AGAINST SUPH—the Authorized Version's reading "over against the Red Sea," is regrettable. The word "sea" is not in the original at all (it occurs later in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions), and they were now farther from the Red Sea than they ever had been! The Hebrew word SUPH should have been left untranslated (as in the American Standard and Revised Standard versions), as it undoubtedly is a city or town in the vicinity of Israel's camp. Ptolemy mentions a people named *Sophonites* that dwelt in *Arabia Petraea*, and it is possible that they took their name from this city.

IT IS ELEVEN DAYS' JOURNEY FROM HOREB BY THE WAY OF MOUNT SEIR UNTO KADESH-BARNEA—Kadesh is located on the southern edge of the promised land (Num. 13:25, 26; 34:4), but it took Israel thirty-eight years to get far beyond it! The Decalogue was given about three months after leaving Egypt (Ex. 19:1) at Sinai. At the foot



of this mountain, the tabernacle was reared up in the first month of the second year (Ex. 40:17). When Israel was first numbered in the wilderness (Num. 1:1) they were thirteen months out of Egypt. On the twentieth day of that month, they set forth from the Mount (Num. 10:11, 12). But it obviously took them longer than the standard journey-time from Sinai to Kadesh via the Mount Seir road (Num. 10:33; 11:3, 19, 20, 35; 12:16; 13:25, 26). It must have taken several months, for in Deut. 2:14 we are told, "And the days in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, were thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were consumed from the midst of the camp, as Jehovah sware unto them." We have, then, approximately a two year period between Egypt and Kadesh. This, added to the thirty-eight between the first visit at Kadesh and the crossing of the Zered river (which flows into the southeastern shore of the Dead Sea) gives us forty years. When we add the time it took Israel to proceed up the east side and conquer the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, we have "The fortieth year in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month" as the time Moses began our present discourse.

The curse given at Kadesh for Israel's failure to obey God's injunction to lay hold of his promise was, in a sense, retroactive. "After the number of days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation" (Num. 14:34).

But we cannot leave this passage without asking another question: Why does the sacred writer insert this matter of distances and traveling time? It seems obvious, that it is to show how simply and easily God's chosen people *could* have entered into the land God had assured them *if* they would have marched forth with courage and confidence at Kadesh! It was only "eleven days from Horeb, by way of Mount Seir,—as far as Kadesh-barnea" (*Rotherdam*)—but there the discouraging report of the spies (except Joshua and Caleb) caused the congregation to cower and "made the heart of the people melt" (John. 14:8), causing them to cry, "wherefore doth Jehovah bring us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: were it not better for us to return to Egypt?" (Num. 14:3). Failure to capitalize upon the promises, opportunities, and privileges God grants to us cannot but have harmful and regrettable results—both to us and our children. The comment of *C. H. Mackintosh* here is excellent: "It

is only too like ourselves. How slowly we get over the ground! What windings and turnings! How often we have to go back and travel over the same ground again and again! We are slow travelers, because we are slow learners . . . We, like them, are kept back by our unbelief and slowness of heart; but there is far less excuse for us than for them, inasmuch as our privileges are so very much higher. Our God is a faithful and wise as well as a gracious and patient Teacher. He will not permit us to pass cursorily over our lessons. Sometimes, perhaps, we think we have mastered a lesson, and we attempt to move on to another; but our wise Teacher knows better, and He sees the need of deeper ploughing. He will not have us mere theorists or smatterers: He will keep us, if need be, year after year at our scales until we learn to sing."

AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE FORTIETH YEAR, IN THE ELEVENTH MONTH, ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH THAT MOSES SPAKE UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, ACCORDING UNTO ALL THAT JEHOVAH HAD GIVEN HIM IN COMMANDMENT UNTO THEM—Thus the faithful servant of God communicated exactly what God had *given him* to communicate! Not his own theories or whims, nor his own speculations or fancies. See I Pet. 1:19-21, Jn. 5:19. He gives it *all*—"all that Jehovah had given him." The responsibility of the true servant of God today has not basically changed. God's word—all of it—*must* be communicated to his people if they are to be guided and directed aright. ". . . the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever" (29:29)—and we must *know* them and be *reminded* of them if we are to "do all the words of this law."

AFTER HE HAD SMITTEN SIHON THE KING OF THE AMORITES, WHO DWELT IN HESHBON, AND OG THE KING OF BASHAN, WHO DWELT IN ASHTAROTH, AT EDREI (v. 4)—The two main conquests of Israel on the east of the Dead Sea. We'll read more about Sihon's defeat in 2:26-37 and a detailed account is also found in Num. 21:21-31. His kingdom's borders were the Arnon river on the south and the Jabbok river on the north. We'll read more about Og of Bashan, just north of Sihon's kingdom, in 3:1-17. An account of his defeat is also found in Num. 21:33-35. These kings both dwelt in their capital cities, Heshbon and Ashtaroth, respectively. Ashtaroth is the plural form of Ashtareth, the Canaanite goddess and counterpart of Baal. Thus the place was probably early associated with her worship.

They combined to battle Israel but were defeated at Erdei—one of the cities of Og (3:10) and not far from Ashtaroth.

## A. THE EVENTS FROM SINAI TO THE PRESENT

(1:6—3:29)

1. COMMAND TO LEAVE HOREB FOR THE  
PROMISED LAND (1:6-8)

1:6 Jehovah our God spake unto us in Horeb saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain: 7 turn you, and take your journey, and go to the hill-country of the Amorites, and unto all *the places* nigh there-unto, in the Arabah, in the hill-country, and in the lowland, and in the South, and by the sea-shore, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. 8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:6-8

7. Where is "Horeb"? Are we to understand that God asked them to conquer Canaan even before they left Sinai?
8. Just what is involved in the act of faith i.e., what is God's part and what is man's part?
9. Please locate on the map the following places: (1) Arabah, (2) the land of the Canaanites and Lebanon, (3) the great river.
10. Read Numbers 34:1-29.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:6-8

6 The Lord our God said to us in Horeb, You have dwelt long enough on this mountain;

7 Turn and take up your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites, and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country, in the lowland, in the South [the Negeb], and on the coast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.

8 Behold, I have set the land before you; go in and take possession of the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their descendants after them.

## COMMENT 1:6-8

Here we have the command to conquer given before Israel ever arrives at Kadesh. All they had to do was to *believe and obey*—to launch out in total faith and confidence in the promise and assurance

of God. He had given a similar faith-demanding command some months before. When the Israelites attempted to cross the Red Sea, God had said to Moses "speak unto the children of Israel, **THAT THEY GO FORWARD.**" (Ex. 14:15) The command of God was heeded, "and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea" (that took some faith, too) "upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." (Ex. 14:22) Israel's whole journey, whether crossing the Red Sea or the Jordan, whether fighting with fierce Canaanites or depending on Providence for food and water, was an operation of *faith!* Implicitly trusting God *always* meant eventual success; disbelief meant failure every single time. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days." (Heb. 11:29, 30) **How** many times has God told *us*, "Go in and possess the land" and we have *not!* Opportunities to learn his will, to witness, to help, to encourage, to inspire, to strengthen, to serve, all too often go begging because we are content to wander in the deserts of doubt, distrust, hesitancy, and indecision. After Israel had received God's commands and instructions at Sinai, it was time to "get going!" "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain"—You have my law now; you know what to do; your tabernacle is now ready. Its time now to *proceed*, to do, to act, to obey. Once a man *understands* his Lord's commands, (and he needs to bend every effort toward that end) it becomes a matter of character, morality, and faithfulness that he now place himself in the hands of God and *act* on what he knows! "But the righteous [note, the *righteous*] shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:17)

## 2. CIVIL ORGANIZATION UNDER MOSES (1:9-18)

1:9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: 10 Jehovah your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 Jehovah, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you! 12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known, according to your tribes, and I will make them heads over you. 14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good *for us* to do. 15 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise men and known, and made them heads over you, captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and

captains of fifties, and captains of tens and officers, according to your tribes. 16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the sojourner that is with him. 17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and the great alike; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; For the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you ye shall bring unto me, and I will hear it. 18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:9-18

11. At what time did Moses say "I am not able to bear you myself alone:"? Cf. Ex. 18:13-27.
12. What promise was fulfilled in verse 10? Ff. Genesis 15:5.
13. Has the promise (or benediction) of verse 11 been fulfilled? How?
14. Please notice carefully the words of verse 13 as an example for the selection of elders and deacons for today. "wise, understanding, known."
15. According to the arrangement described in verse 15, how many judges were there to be in 1,000 Israelites?
16. What is meant by the expression "sojourner"—from where would they come?
17. What are the causes for "respect of persons"? Name two.
18. What makes one man "small" and another man "great"?
19. Try to approximate the circumstance of judgment when the judge would be sorely tempted to "fear the face of man."
20. What is meant by the phrase, "For the judgment is God's." If the judgment is God's how could a case be too hard for the judge?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:9-18

9 I said to you at that time, I am not able to bear you alone;

10 The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of the heavens for multitude.

11 May the Lord, the God of your fathers make you 1,000 times as many as you are, and bless you, as He has promised you!

12 How can I bear alone the weariness and pressure and burden of you and your strife?

13 Choose wise, understanding, experienced and respected men, according to your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.

14 And you answered me, The thing which you have spoken is good for us to do.

15 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise, experienced *and* respected men, and made them heads over you, commanders of thousands, and hundreds, and fifties and tens, and officers according to your tribes.

16 And I charged your judges at that time, Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger or sojourner who is with him.

17 You shall not be partial in judgment; but you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's; and the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.

18 And I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do.

### COMMENT 1:9-18

See also the original record of this event in Ex. 18:13-27. The procedure here described was adopted at the suggestion of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. The Exodus account portrays him as a God-fearing man, though he did not join Israel.

Moses here invokes an astounding blessing upon God's people: "God . . . make you a thousand times as many as ye are . . ." But has it not come to pass? There were nearly six hundred and two thousand *numbered* Israelites at that time (Num. 26:51). This number would probably be *at least* two or three million when the unnumbered children, priests, etc. were included (See the *Introduction*, II footnote). What is their number now, throughout the world? Will the goodness of God ever lead them to repentance? The Jews have wandered far from God, and his Son who came to save them. Yet, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Ecc. 8:11)

(The very fact that such a great horde of people, wandering about that barren wasteland, *kept alive*, was miraculous in every way—and the result of God's goodness. And so it has been down through the years with God toward this people. As these words are being penned, Israel has just returned from a devastating victory over Jordan [in the face of *overwhelming* odds!], regaining much of their former land. How long will these people whom God has blessed beyond all measure refuse His grace and goodness?)

No one can justly challenge the wisdom and prudence involved in this decision and the procedure here described. It meant a much more efficient and effective judicial system for Israel—a system not entirely unlike that presently existing in democratic countries throughout the world.

Exodus 18:23 would appear to indicate that God endorsed and blessed this plan. The more difficult cases were still brought to Moses, who brought them before God, v. 17. (See also Ex. 18:19, 20. Compare Numbers 9:8, 27:5, etc.) With God's blessing upon the entire arrangement, and the final cases coming before him through Moses, the law-giver could rightly say, "the judgement is God's" (v. 17).

Certain critics\* have found a contradiction in the two accounts in trying to maintain that Moses here asserts that the plan originated with himself, while the Exodus account has the proposal originating with Jethro. But it is not said here that the plan *originated* with Moses. If this *had* been said, it would have been a contradiction. McGarvey comments pointedly, "Does this conflict with the statement in Exodus that Jethro had just suggested the plan to Moses before he submitted it to the people? If it does, then, should the President of the United States submit a measure to Congress, and should it afterward be discovered that it was suggested to him by one of his secretaries, our modern scientific critics would find here an irreconcilable inconsistency! The President, as everybody knows, is not bound to tell whether the measure which he proposes originated with himself or with some of his advisors; neither was Moses obliged to tell the people that his judiciary scheme originated with Jethro. As Jethro was not an Israelite, there may have been prudence in withholding from them this information until they themselves expressed approval of the measure."\*\*

The delegating of responsibility has always been a necessity for the smooth functioning of God's work—in whatever age (Acts 6:1-6, Eph. 4:11). Moses, like Christ (see 18:15-19 and notes) was God's chosen law-giver and leader—but he needed help!

It is significant that the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses and Aaron on the very issue of delegated authority was *after* this appointment of judges. "Ye take too much upon you . . .

\*Driver, *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, p. XXV (1895). Wellhausen completely confuses matters by denying that Moses stayed at Mount Sinai as described in Exodus, and declares that Jethro's advice was given, not at Mount Sinai, but "at the well of Kadesh." (Article, "Israel," *Encyclopedia Britannica*.) He gives no reason for falsifying the Biblical history.

\*\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, pp. 83, 84.

wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of Jehovah?" (Num. 16:1-3). Thus any leader among God's people, who stands on the authority of his sacred Word, runs the risk of such accusations as Moses received—though he be ever so careful to avoid such.

Note the charge of impartiality given to the judges. "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and great alike; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man . . ." (v. 17) Cf. 16:18-20, 24:17. Impartiality is a characteristic of God (10:17, II Pet. 2:4, etc.) and thus salvation and all its blessings are available to all people, Acts 10:28, 34, 35. "To have respect of persons in judgement is not good" (Prov. 24:23)—so in the Old Testament, so in all ages. Paul told Timothy, "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice (Margin, *preference*), doing nothing by partiality." (I Tim. 5:21). See also Ex. 23:1-3, Lev. 19:15-18.

God judges us individually and impartially (Rom. 2:5-11, II Cor. 5:10). "And if ye call on him as father, who without respect of persons judgeth each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear" (I Pet. 1:17). Is he not our perfect example? Will not he, through Christ, be our judge on the last day (Jn. 5:22, Acts 10:40-42, 17:31)?

There is a great moral and spiritual lesson for all of us to learn here in the exhortation God through Moses gave to the judges. Partiality and preference is condemned everywhere in the Word of God—Old Testament and New. "Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man"—*that* is the great and constant danger! Fear of men is the greatest enemy of impartiality, and "the fear of man worketh a snare" (Prov. 29:25). "Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man"—though that face be ever so threatening, disapproving, and fierce in its look. "A wicked man hardeneth his face; But as for the upright, he establisheth his ways." (Prov. 21:29) Let us remember that God, whose face is to be respected far above man's, is ever watching and observing, and "If God is for us who is [successfully] against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Let us be Godlike! Let our judgments toward others be impartial, fair, and just.

### 3. TWO FAILURES AT KADESH-BARNEA (1:19-46)

#### a. BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF (1:19-40)

1:19 And we journeyed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which ye saw, by the way to the hill-country of the Amorites, as Jehovah our God commanded us; and we



came to Kadesh-barnea. 20 And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the hill-country of the Amorites, which Jehovah our God giveth unto us. 21 Behold Jehovah thy God hath set the land before thee: go up, take possession, as Jehovah the God of thy fathers, hath spoken unto thee; fear not, neither be dismayed. 22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, Let us send men before us, that they may search the land for us, and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up, and the cities unto which we shall come. 23 And the thing pleased me well; and I took twelve men of you, one man for every tribe: 24 and they turned and went up into the hill-country, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. 25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which Jehovah our God giveth unto us.

26 Yet ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah your God: 27 and ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because Jehovah hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Whither are we going up? Our brethren have made our heart to melt, saying, The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there. 29 Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. 30 Jehovah your God who goeth before you, he will fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that Jehovah thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came unto this place. 32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe Jehovah your God, 33 who went before you in the way, to seek you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way we should go, and in the cloud by day.

34 And Jehovah heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see the good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, 36 save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it; and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed Jehovah. 37 Also Jehovah was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither: 38 Joshua the son of Nun, who standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage thou him; for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, and your

children, that this day have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.  
40 But as for you, turn you, and take your Journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:19-40

21. Locate Kadesh-barnea on the map.
22. Was it wrong to send out the twelve spies?
23. Was God punishing the Amorites at the same time He gave possession to the Israelites? Discuss.
24. Try to share in the feelings of the faithless Israelites; what capacity in their faith was lacking? Was it courage? Memory? Love? Obedience?
25. Caleb and Joshua believed. What made them different? Isn't there encouragement for all in the fact that out of the same background God raised up two grand leaders? Discuss.
26. There is irony in verse 39, what is it?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:19-40

19 And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea.

20 And I said to you, You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God gives us.

21 Behold, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has said to you; fear not, neither be dismayed.

22 Then you all came near to me and said, Let us send men before us, that they may search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we should go up, and the cities into which we shall come.

23 The thing pleased me well, and I took twelve men of you, one for each tribe.

24 And they turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol and spied it out.

25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down to us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God gives us.

26 Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God;

27 You were peevish *and* discontented in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us He brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

28 To what are we going up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, The people are bigger and taller than we are; the cities are great and fortified to the heavens; and moreover we have seen the [giant-like] sons of the Anakim there.

29 Then I said to you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them.

30 The Lord your God Who goes before you, He will fight for you just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes,

31 And in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God bore you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.

32 Yet in spite of this word you did not believe [trust, rely on and remain steadfast to] the Lord your God;

33 Who went in the way before you to search out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night, to show you by what way you should go, and in the cloud by day.

34 And the Lord heard your words, and was angered, and He swore,

35 Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land which I swore to give to your fathers,

36 Except [Joshua, of course; and] Caleb son of Jephunneh, he shall see it, and to him and to his children I will give the land upon which he has walked, because he has wholly followed the Lord.

37 The Lord was angry with me also for your sakes, and said, You also shall not enter Canaan.

38 But Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

39 Moreover your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who at this time cannot discern between good and evil, they shall enter Canaan, and to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.

40 But as for you, turn and journey into the wilderness by way of the Red Sea.

### COMMENT 1:19-40

The parallel account is in Numbers 13:1—14:25. We have said this was a failure because of *unbelief*, for this was the underlying cause of their disobedience. ". . . ye did not believe in Jehovah your God" (v. 32). "And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this

people despise me? and how long<sup>4</sup> will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought against them?" (Num. 14:11). Faith, on the other hand, was the crowning virtue of Caleb and Joshua, and their confidence in God stood in marked contrast to the doubting fearful response of the other spies and the congregation. "Let us go up at once," Caleb said upon returning from their mission, "and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (Num. 13:30) And these two men joined in saying, "If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us . . . only rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is removed from over them . . ." (Num. 14:8, 9). Faith in God and his promises always has been and ever shall be a prerequisite for conquering his enemies. There are no limits to his power—or what his people can do when they believe *in* his power!

KADESH-BARNEA (v. 19)—(See also under v. 1 and v. 46). This station was, more than any other one place, "home base" or headquarters" for the Israelites during their wanderings. In Num. 33:36 we are told Israel "encamped in the wilderness of Zin (the same is Kadesh)"—a statement that lends credence to the idea held by many students, that the term included an area much larger than a town. Others, however, would translate that passage, "the wilderness of Zin—namely Kadesh" (Berkeley. The R.S.V., Moffatt, Meek, and the Torah are similar). This latter translation is more in harmony with Num. 20:1: "And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month [this is their second visit, in the fortieth year]: and the people abode in Kadesh . . ." Kadesh was such a leading oasis of that area that it was *the* encampment in the wilderness of Zin. Thus it was almost a synonym for it. The wilderness of Paran, a much larger area, contained both Kadesh and the wilderness of Zin (Num. 13:26).

THAT GREAT AND TERRIBLE WILDERNESS—Indeed it was, and still is! ". . . *wherein were* fiery serpents and scorpions, and thirsty ground where there was no water" (8:15). "He found him a desert land, And in the waste howling wilderness . . ." (32:10. See also Jer. 2:6. McGarvey, after visiting this area in 1897 could say, "it is still, and it was anciently, 'a waste howling wilderness,' almost totally uninhabited, and seldom traversed even by the Bedawin Arabs."\* And eighty years later a modern writer can say. "In recent times this whole area [of the

\*Lands of the Bible, pp. 494, 495.

wanderings] has not been able to support more than about seven thousand underfed wanderers." What a wilderness it must have been in those ancient days to almost a hundred times that many people, completely inexperienced in the rigors of this arid steppe! As in Bible times, there are still long waterless stretches, with infrequent brackish wells, any one of which may have been Marah. One tempting oasis of palm trees and clear, good water still exists, which is probably biblical Elim."\*

THE HILL-COUNTRY OF THE AMORITES, WHICH JEHOVAH OUR GOD GIVETH UNTO US (v. 20)—a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, Genesis 15:16. We'll learn more about the Amorites and their conflicts with Israel in chapter three.

22 AND YE CAME NEAR UNTO ME EVERY ONE OF YOU AND SAID, LET US SEND MEN BEFORE US, THAT THEY MAY SEARCH THE LAND FOR US, AND BRING US WORD AGAIN OF THE WAY BY WHICH WE MUST GO UP, AND THE CITIES UNTO WHICH WE SHALL COME. 23 AND THE THING PLEASSED ME WELL; AND I TOOK TWELVE MEN OF YOU, ONE MAN FOR EVERY TRIBE: 24 AND THEY TURNED AND WENT UP INTO THE HILL-COUNTRY, AND CAME UNTO THE VALLEY OF ESHCOL, AND SPIED IT OUT.

The destructive critics have attacked these verses in much the same manner as they have the appointment of the judges (verses 12-14). They find a discrepancy in the fact that while the record here speaks of the *people* recommending the sending forth of spies, in Num. 13:1-3 it is *God* issuing the command and working directly through Moses. And though here the spies are said to have gone as far north as the valley of Eschol (Hebron), v. 24, in Numbers 13:21 they are said to have gone as far north as "the entrance of Hamath"—a much farther distance.

The rebuttal by McGarvey is excellent; "Nothing in the experience of the people addressed by Moses could have been more familiar than this piece of history; for it furnished the reason why, instead of entering the promised land within less than two years after they left Egypt, they had been kept out of it for more than thirty-eight years longer. It explained the deplorable fact that all the fathers and mothers\*\* of the persons addressed, to the number of more than a million, had

\**Story of the Bible World*, by Nelson Beecher Keys, p. 28. The Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, N.Y.

\*\*See footnote under number II in the Introduction. Only the numbered Israelites were cursed.

perished in the wilderness. In referring to it, therefore, as a warning, Moses could with perfect propriety mention such parts of the story as suited his horatatory purpose, and omit all others, without the slightest appearance of ignoring them, much less of denying their existence. He accordingly treats the whole subject in the space of *twenty-four verses* (1:24-46), whereas the original account in Numbers contains seventy-eight. He abbreviates by omitting many well-remembered incidents. He omits the names of the twelve spies and those of the tribes which they respectively represented (4-16); he omits the whole of the long list of directions which he gave them (17-20); he omits the season of the year in which they were sent (21); he omits the names of the giants whose people were found at Hebron (21, 22); he omits the number of days that were occupied in the journey (25); he omits the detailed account the spies gave of the location of the different tribes in the land (29); he omits the thrilling incidents of himself and Aaron falling on their faces before the people, of the urgent pleadings by Caleb and Joshua, and the proposal of the people to stone these four men (14:5-10); he omits his own long and earnest pleading with God against the latter's proposal to slay the whole multitude and raise up a people from Moses to "inherit the land" (11-21); he omits the greater part of the final sentence upon the rebels (28-35); and he omits the fact that the ten false spies died of a plague (36, 37). In the midst of such a multitude of omissions, why should it be thought strange that he omitted to state the whole distance that the spies journeyed, and the fact that God directed him to send them? To look all the facts in the face is all that is necessary to see the impertinence and absurdity of the charge of contradiction." The admission of Driver is then cited.

"No doubt the two representations are capable, in the abstract, of being harmonized: Moses, it might be supposed, approving personally 'of the purpose (Deut. 1:23), desired to know if it had Jehovah's sanction; and the command in Numbers (xiii. 1-3) is really the answer to his inquiry.'

What could be more reasonable than this, especially as Moses was not in the habit of adopting measures that might involve the lives of a dozen eminent men without God's approval?"\*

THE SONS OF THE ANAKIM (v. 28)—See under 9:2.

\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, pp. 88-90.

JEHOVAH YOUR GOD, WHO GOETH BEFORE YOU, HE WILL FIGHT FOR YOU—(v. 30)—cf. 3:22, 20:4. When God is on our side—"the Lord of hosts"—we are unconquerable. If *God* be for us, who can be against us? He who created the world and all it contains; he who made *us*—how can we *insult* him by limiting his power and might? *His* kingdom shall stand forever (Dan. 2:44) and the gates of hades shall *not* prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

But suppose God is *not* on your side—*not* undergirding you with his strength, not filling you with his Spirit, not directing you by his word. What then? "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (Jas. 4:8). But what of those who draw *away* from him and *reject* his counsels? "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

YET IN THIS THING YE DID NOT BELIEVE JEHOVAH YOUR GOD (v. 32)—Their trouble all along, time after time in the wilderness. "Take heed, brethren," the writer of Hebrews exhorts us, "lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called Today; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end: while it is said,

Today if ye shall hear his voice.

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

For who, when they heard, did provoke? Nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? And with whom was he displeased forty years? Was it not with them that sinned, who bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in **BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF**" (Heb. 3:12-19). That was it exactly, for "the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard" (Heb. 4:2). **THEY** were not able to enter in because of unbelief—**WE** cannot enter in to the antitype, heaven, with an unbelieving heart, for "without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing *unto him*; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11:6). Israel exercised faith at the beginning: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up" (Heb. 11:29). That was a fine *beginning*. And the next verse in Hebrews gives us another example

of Israel's faith—forty years later! "*By faith*, the walls of Jerocho fell down . . ." Where was the faith in the interim? The "hall of faith" has no illustration from Israel during this period! The reason is, "with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were over-thrown in the wilderness" (I Cor. 10:5). Will we learn? Will we see the lesson in these things for us? Will we ever recognize that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning . . ." (Rom. 15:4)? Far too often, "A servant will not be corrected by words; For though he understand, he will not give heed" (Prov. 29:19). Must we, like Israel, be chastized with God's rod before we begin to heed his will? Is not his *word* enough? "Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they *were written* for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." (I Cor. 10:11).

CALEB . . . HATH WHOLLY FOLLOWED JEHOVAH—A wonderful compliment to any child of God! Our Lord demands one hundred percent—will accept nothing less. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service" (Rom. 12:1). This is demanded of every true disciple. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man [note that: *ANY* man!] would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [Luke adds, "daily"], and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). And if such consecration is needed in all, it is surely a "must" among today's spiritual leaders. What Paul told Timothy he would tell all the servants of Christ: "Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all" (I Tim. 4:15).

THOU [MOSES] SHALT NOT GO IN THITHER—Moses' exclusion from the promised land was in punishment for his sin of rebellion and unbelief in response to the striving and murmuring of Israel because of the lack of water (See Num. 20:1-13). Aaron was excluded for the same reason. The basic sin is stated in Numbers 20:12: "Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of Israel . . ." Proper action at that time on Moses' part would have exalted, glorified, and elevated God in the eyes of Israel. This lack of trust—disbelief—caused him to do all sorts of wrong things:

1. Moses *said* the wrong thing: "Hear now, ye rebels, shall *we* bring you forth water out of this rock?" (v. 10). "Possibly Moses was not aware of the significance of what he had been ordered to do, but God held him responsible for not obeying him exactly, nevertheless. Obedience to his will is vitally important, whether we understand his



purpose or not, 'God's will, nothing more; nothing less; nothing else; at any cost,' would have been priceless to Moses and Aaron that day, if they had only followed it."\*

God had said, Speak to the *rock*: Moses spoke to the *people*.

"They angered him also at the waters of Meribah,  
So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes;  
Because they were rebellious against his spirit,  
And he spake unadvisedly [*Rotherham*, rashly] with his lips."  
(Ps. 106:32, 33).

And when he spoke, it was with a question mark: "Shall we bring you forth water. . .?" A question was not involved in God's *command*.

2. In addition, instead of speaking to it, as instructed, he smote it twice! Speaking to it wasn't enough—so he didn't speak to it *at all*, but rather struck it savagely twice! At Rephidim, at the foot of Horeb, Moses was commanded to smite the rock (Ex. 17:6).\*\* He may have *assumed* such a commandment here—but we cannot *assume* God's will to be other than that which he has already spoken! He struck the rock twice, "which certainly in this case indicates a great perturbation of spirit and want of attention to the presence of God" (Clarke).

Through this entire incident, then, Moses failed to sanctify God in the eyes of the people—and this "Because ye believed not in me." Why would Moses and Aaron, God's great chosen leaders, lack faith? One need not go far for the answer. It is found in the pressing and distressing circumstances of the hour—and the fact that they were becoming exasperated, exhausted, and disgusted with the everlasting complaining of the multitudes.

From a purely *human* standpoint, we would *excuse* Moses. We would say, "Surely God will not keep this great man from the promised land just for loosing his temper this one time!" But that is *human* reasoning, not divine. God *despises* sin, and his ways are not our ways. Uzzah was killed for staying the ark with his hand; Nadab and Abihu were killed for offering strange fire; Achan was executed, along with his family, for stealing a few articles of the consecrated booty; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed up by the earth for murmuring against God's chosen leadership; Ananias and Saphira were struck dead for lying about their offering to the church—and so on and on could we extend this list. But what is the lesson for us all? That God

\*Amplified Old Testament, comment under Numbers 20:11.

\*\*But never is he instructed to strike it twice.

*despises sin*—hates disobedience to his commands, and abhors the faithless heart!

Moses, the Man of meekest heart,  
 Lost Caanan by Self-Will,—  
 To show where grace has done its part  
 How sin defiles us still.

MOREOVER YOUR LITTLE ONES, THAT YE SAID SHOULD BE A PREY, AND YOUR CHILDREN, THAT THIS DAY HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD OR EVIL, THEY SHALL GO IN THITHER, AND UNTO THEM WILL I GIVE IT, AND THEY SHALL POSSESS IT. (v. 39)—And now, as they were poised on the east of the Jordan, this very prophecy (see Numbers 14:1-3, 26-33) was being fulfilled. The children were not under the curse, as they were not numbered. It is difficult to estimate their number. There were 603,550 *numbered* Israelites after a little over a year in the wilderness (Num. 1:46), and 601,730 as they entered Canaan (Num. 26:51). Between these numberings, the older generation of numbered Israelites died, except Joshua and Caleb. We have already pointed out (see the *Introduction*) that these numberings did not include many people in Israel's camp. Levites (Num. 2:33, 26:62), women, children (all those under twenty years old), strangers, and the physically unfit were not counted, for the counted ones (and therefore the recipients of the curse) were only those "from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' houses, ALL THAT ARE ABLE TO GO FORTH TO WAR IN ISRAEL" (Num. 26:2). This is why we have the divine record worded as it is in Deut. 2:14 ". . . thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the MEN OF WAR were consumed from the camp, as Jehovah sware unto them."

BUT AS FOR YOU, TURN YOU, AND TAKE YOUR JOURNEY INTO THE WILDERNESS BY THE WAY OF THE RED SEA (v. 40)—This is the "wandering" part of Israel's journeys—roughly thirty-eight years. Kadesh was more or less "home base" at this time (see v. 26, Cf. under v. 19). "Now the Amalekite and the Canaanite dwelt in the valley: tomorrow turn ye, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea" (Num. 14:25).

#### b. BECAUSE OF PRESUMPTION (1:41-46)

1:41 Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against Jehovah, we will go up and fight, according to all that Jehovah our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons

of war, and were forward to go up into the hill-country. 42 and Jehovah said unto me; Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. 43 So I spake unto you, and ye hearkened not; but ye rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah, and were presumptuous, and went up into the hill-country. 44 And the Amorites, that dwelt in that hill-country, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and beat you down in Seir, even unto Hormah, 45 And ye returned and wept before Jehovah; but Jehovah hearkened not to your voice, nor gave ear unto you. 46 So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode *there*.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:41-46

27. There is a vast difference between remorse and repentance; discuss that difference as indicated in these verses.
28. What is involved in the sin of presumption?
29. Why didn't the Lord pity these people and forgive them?
30. How could they abide in Kadesh and yet wander for thirty eight years in the wilderness?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:41-46

41 Then you said to me, We have sinned against the Lord; we will go up and fight, as the Lord our God commanded us. And you girded on every man his battle weapons and thought it a simple matter to go up into the hill country.

42 And the Lord said to me, Say to them, Do not go up or fight, for I am not among you; lest you be dangerously hurt by your enemies.

43 So I spoke to you; and you would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and were presumptuous and went up into the hill country.

44 Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and struck you down in Seir as far as Hormah,

45 And you returned and wept before the Lord; but the Lord would not heed your voice or listen to you.

46 So you remained in Kadesh; many days you remained there.

### COMMENT 1:41-46

Here we have the second failure of Israel at Kadesh—and in some ways this is more pitiable than the first. Trapped now by the curse of the Lord—he who had before promised to fight *for* and *with* them in

all their battles—they suddenly decided to put on a show of repentance and courage!

THEN YE ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO ME, WE HAVE SINNED AGAINST JEHOVAH, WE WILL GO UP AND FIGHT, ACCORDING TO ALL THAT JEHOVAH OUR GOD COMMANDED US (v. 41)—How useless! God was not with them. "Except Jehovah build the house, They labor in vain that build it: Except Jehovah keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1). How can we ever hope to accomplish the Lord's *will* and *purpose* in life, without the Lord's *blessing*? "I can do all things *in him that strengtheneth me*" (Philippians 4:13). And we will find it hard, as Saul did, to kick against the goads—especially the goads of God! No, Israel could not fight the very enemies of God without his blessing and oversight—nor can *we*! "It was quite impossible for Jehovah to accompany them along the path of self-will and rebellion; and, most assuredly, Israel, without the divine presence, could be no match for the Amorites. If God be for us and with us, all must be victory; but we cannot count on God if we are not treading the path of obedience. It is simply the height of folly to imagine that we have God with us if our ways are not right. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.' But if we are not walking in practical righteousness, it is wicked presumption to talk of having the Lord as our strong tower."—*Mackintosh*

SAY UNTO THEM, GO NOT UP, NEITHER FIGHT: FOR I AM NOT AMONG YOU; LEST YE BE SMITTEN BEFORE YOUR ENEMIES (v. 42)—Now proud, haughty, and rebellious, the advice was summarily rejected, and matters were taken into their own hands. This *always* means disaster—it cannot be otherwise, in that age or this! To go contrary to the Lord's appointed purpose is, in essence, to be found "fighting against God" (Acts 5:39). No one fights against our Maker and wins!

YE HEARKENED NOT: BUT YE REBELLED AGAINST THE COMMANDMENT OF JEHOVAH, AND WERE PRESUMPTUOUS, AND WENT UP INTO THE HILL COUNTRY (v. 43)—The Hebrew word for presumptuous (*Zud* or *Zid*) is from a root meaning *to boil, to boil over* (speaking of water). It is onomatopetic, as the English *to seethe*, the Greek *Zeo*, the German *sieden*. Gesenius states, "Like the Gr. *Zeo* and Lat. *ferveo*, it is transferred to the *violence* or *fierceness* of a passionate mind . . . and thus to *insolence* and *wickedness*," giving the meaning here as "*to act insolently, fiercely, wickedly*, especially in speaking of those who sin knowingly and purposely against the precepts of God."

Acting upon such a rebellious impulse, the will of God was cast aside: "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Jas. 1:20).

AND THE AMORITES, THAT DWELT IN THE HILL-COUNTRY, CAME OUT AGAINST YOU, AS BEES DO, AND BEAT YOU DOWN IN SEIR, EVEN UNTO HORMAH (v. 44)—the inevitable result of their rebellion and presumption. See Numbers 14:40-45. The Ark of God, the symbol of his presence, did not leave the camp. These men were strictly on their own—without the endorsement, encouragement, or blessing of God. All such enterprises must fail! Israel was God's chosen nation and his beloved people, but they could not accomplish his grand purpose for them without resting their all upon his divine authority. And though they confessed their guilt in their first rebellion ("we have sinned," v. 41, cf. Num. 14:40), they only sinned *again* by supposing they could assault the Amorites without divine direction. Mere confession of guilt does not relieve one of his responsibilities toward God! Even when they "wept before Jehovah" (v. 45) their curse was not retracted. Again and again God had endured their murmurings and rebellion. But though he was longsuffering, Israel continued to disobey. ". . . all those men that have seen my glory, and my signs, which I wrought in the wilderness, yet have tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice" (Num. 14:22). Besides, their confession and weeping seems to be much more of an emotional outburst from those who were totally unqualified to carry out God's purposes, than true repentance. "Such people are rejected not because God is unmoved by pity but because they can never successfully fight his battles."—*Francisco*

SO YE ABODE IN KADESH MANY DAYS (v. 46)—See also our comments under v. 19. If we understand "and we came to Kadesh-barnea" (v. 19) to refer to Israel's *first* arrival at that place, and the present statement to be a *general* one (including the many days spent there after the return from the approximate thirty-eight years in the wilderness, we have no trouble taking up in chapter two in the *fortieth* year after Israel's exodus from Egypt, (Note carefully our comments and the quote from McGarvey under 2:1 of the next lesson, where the problem of harmonizing the chronology of Numbers and Deuteronomy is more fully discussed).

From Numbers 20:1 we learn that Israel did not begin its circuit of Mt. Seir until after their second visit to that place. They "came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month: [of the fortieth year, as the

consequent context will show] and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there." Before Israel leaves Kadesh he requests and is refused passage through Edom (Num. 20:20). Then, "they journeyed from Kadesh" (Num. 20:22). The vast period of time between being repulsed by the Amorites (Deut. 1:44, 45) and the journey around Edom (2:1) is not surprising when we remember two things: (1) Very little is said about this nearly thirty-eight year period between visits at Kadesh in *any* of the accounts; and (2) it simply was not important to Moses' present purposes of exhortation. We know that from the first visit to Kadesh until their arrival at the brook Zered at the southeast corner of the Dead Sea, was thirty-eight years (2:14).

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE

*Introduction to the book, 1, 2. Moses addresses the people in the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt, 3-5; and shows how God had spoken to them in Horeb, and the directions he gave them, 6-8. How, at the commandment of the Lord, he had appointed officers, judges, &c., to share the government with him, 9-18. Of their travels in the terrible wilderness, 19-21. The people's request to have spies sent to search out the land, 22-25. Of their murmuring and rebellion when they heard the report of the spies, 26-28. How Moses encouraged them, 29-33. The displeasure of the Lord against them because of their murmurings, and his purpose to exclude them from the good land, and give it to their children only, 34-40. How they repented, and yet, without the authority of God, went against the Amorites, by whom they were defeated, 41-44. Their return to Kadesh, where they abode many days, 45, 46.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON ONE (1:1-46)

### ON THE INTRODUCTION . . .

1. Have you read Deuteronomy completely through before beginning this study?
2. Explain the meaning of "Deuteronomy."
3. Explain why the concept of a book that simply duplicates certain laws of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers is so erroneous?
4. Deuteronomy is a part of what was at first a single book or scroll. Give a *Bible* name for this entire book.
5. Explain how the situation in Israel now justified the words and unique message of Deuteronomy.

6. Specifically, upon whom did the curse (of exclusion from the promised land) rest? Among those who left Egypt, who entered Canaan?
7. Does Deuteronomy claim to be from the hand of Moses? Where?
8. Show that Jesus believed Moses to be the writer of Deuteronomy.
9. Chronologically, where are we in Israel's history as the book begins? About how much time is covered in the book itself?
10. Summarize the *basic* outline of the book, including the scripture limitations for the four main divisions.

OVER CHAPTER ONE . . .

11. How can we know the meaning of "beyond the Jordan" in Chapter 1? What is the basic rule for understanding this phrase?
12. What is the Arabah?
13. Be as exact as you can in giving these times:
  - (a) From Egypt to Kadesh-barnea;
  - (b) From Kadesh-barnea to the Brook Zered;
  - (c) From the Brook Zered to the Plains of Moab.
14. What basic trait of a Godly life was shown to be lacking when the eleven spies and the multitude failed to go up and take the promised land as directed? Explain.
15. The breakdown of authority among the judges involved captains over \_\_\_\_ (highest number), \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_ (lowest number).
16. With what moral responsibility were the judges charged?
17. How did Moses fit into this new judiciary system?
18. In what way was Kadesh-barnea so important in Israel's wilderness history?
19. Who would fight for Israel (v. 20)?
20. Finish: "Yet in this thing ye did not \_\_\_\_\_ Jehovah your God" (v. 33).
21. What reason is given here (v. 36) for Caleb entering the promised land with Israel?
22. Why did not God go with Israel in battle, after they said, "we have sinned against Jehovah" (v. 41)?

## LESSON TWO 2:1-23

### 4. PASSING THROUGH EDOM (2:1-8)

Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea, as Jehovah spake unto me; and we compassed mount Seir many days. 2 And Jehovah spake unto me, saying, 3 Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward. 4 And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the border of your brethren the children of Esau, that dwell in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore; 5 contend not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. 6 Ye shall purchase food of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink. 7 For Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee in all the work of thy hand; he hath known thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years Jehovah thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing. 8 So we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, that dwell in Seir, from the way of the Arabah from Elath and from Eziongeber.

And we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 2:1-8

31. Please notice the time element in 2:1, "Then we turned,"—when?
32. Trace on the map the journey here mentioned.
33. How many years from the time that Jacob and Esau parted company until the day when Israel was to pass through the territory of Esau?
34. Was there some reason for the fear of the children of Esau?
35. Why had Jehovah blessed Esau? In what manner?
36. Where did Israel obtain the money for purchase of food and water?
37. Give two events that occurred on their way from Kadesh to Zered.
38. How is it that the attitude of Esau has changed so radically?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 2:1-8

Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord directed me; and for many days we journeyed around Mount Seir.

2 And the Lord spoke to me [Moses], saying,



3 You have roamed around this mountain country long enough; turn northward.

4 And command the Israelites, You are to pass through the territory of your kinsmen the sons of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So watch yourselves carefully;

5 Do not provoke *or* stir them up; for I will not give you of their land, no, not enough for the sole of your foot to tread on, for I have given Mount Seir to Esau for a possession.

6 You shall buy food of them for money, that you may eat, and you shall also buy water of them for money, that you may drink.

7 For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand; He knows your walking through this great wilderness; these forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.

8 So we passed on from our brethren the sons of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, away from the Arabah (wilderness) and from Elath, and from Ezion-geber. We turned and went by the way of the wilderness of Moab.

### COMMENT 2:1-8

THEN WE TURNED (v. 1)—That is, from Kadesh (v. 46). Now the "punishment" period of Israel's stay in the wilderness is over. They are not now wandering about from camp to camp, but given definite direction to proceed toward their promised home in Canaan.

We have treated the statement of Moses in 1:46, "So ye abode in Kadesh many days," as a summary statement which is not intended to tell all that went on *at* Kadesh, or how many times Israel encamped there. The fact of the matter is, that there is an approximate thirty-seven\* year interim between chapters one and two of Deuteronomy. The reason for omitting the details of that long wandering period is simple: it does not suit the hortatory nature of Moses' address to Israel. The "many days" at Kadesh include a prolonged stay upon the first visit, a return to it after years of wandering, and another prolonged stay. Chapter two, which begins Israel's journey around Edom, comes at the conclusion of their wilderness journeys and at the end of their second stay at Kadesh. This is such an important concept in the chronology that we feel compelled to include McGarvey's excellent treatment of the case. The design of his remarks are primarily to refute certain "Higher Critic's" charges that the account in Numbers concerning the length of stay in Kadesh *differs* with the record of Deuteronomy—

\*Thirty-eight by the time Israel reaches the Zered river. See 2:14 and notes.

hence showing different authorship. His refutation is also a very competent *explanation* of Deut. 1:46—2:1. The reader will do well to follow it carefully.

"It is universally assumed by destructive critics that the stay of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea is represented in Numbers as lasting thirty-eight years; while in Deuteronomy, contrary to this, they spent the thirty-eight years circling Mount Seir . . .\*

The only way to determine the reality of this alleged contradiction is to trace carefully the representations in the two books separately, and then compare them to see their differences, if any appear. We begin with that in Numbers. In xiv. 25, after the sentence has been pronounced on the men of that generation, God issues the command, 'Tomorrow turn ye, and get you into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.' Driver says of this, 'Whether they did this, is not stated;' and it is true that it is not stated; but the command was given, and Moses, who was the leader and commander of the host, always moved at God's command; and the pillar of cloud, which guided every movement, undoubtedly did the same. It is not necessary, then, that the text should say that they did move. On the contrary, it would require a statement of the text that they did not move, to justify us in supposing that they did not. But this inference, plain as it is, is not our only ground for concluding that they obeyed the command. In later verses of the same chapter (32, 33) God says to the people: 'Your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness. And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be consumed in the wilderness.' How could they be 'wanderers in the wilderness forty years' if they remained thirty-eight years at Kadesh? It is necessarily implied that they were to leave Kadesh and wander about. [In Deuteronomy, this entire period of wandering (i.e. the period of punishment or curse after their refusal to go up and conquer the land) is covered in six verses—1:40-46.]

\*Statements by Driver and Wellhauser are then cited. In part, Driver's statement is, ". . . the representation in Deut. ii. 1, 14, according to which the thirty-eight years of the wanderings are occupied entirely with circling Mount Seir, will be irreconcilable with JE (that is, with Numbers)." He has followed Wellhauser who said the emigrants "settled" at Kadesh, remaining there for "many years".

The narrative next proceeds through chapters xv.-xix. of Numbers, with a group of new statutes (xv. 1-41); the account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (xvi. 40); the punishment of those who murmured over the fate of these men and their fellow conspirators (41-50); the confirmation of Aaron's priesthood (xvii. 1-13); some new statutes in reference to the priesthood and the Levites (xviii. 1-32); and the statute in reference to the ashes of the red heifer (xix. 1-22). Then comes the statement: 'And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there' (xx. 1). How could it be here said that after these intervening events 'they came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month, and abode in Kadesh,' if they had been in Kadesh during the whole intervening time? Undoubtedly, this is a *return* to Kadesh; and the assertion that they 'abode in Kadesh,' [also in Deut. 1:46] grossly misinterpreted as referring to the whole thirty-eight years, clearly refers to the stay there *after this return*. The first month here mentioned, as all parties agree, is the first month of the fortieth year. We need not go outside the Book of Numbers, then, the very book which is charged with teaching that Israel abode at Kadesh thirty-eight years, to see that by necessary implications it shows that they left Kadesh after the affair of the spies, wandered in the wilderness until all but the last of the forty years had expired, and then returned again to Kadesh.

This conclusion, drawn from the course of events, is sustained by the evidence of the itinerary of the wilderness wanderings, also recorded in Numbers. In this itinerary (Num. xxxiii.) Kadesh is mentioned only once, it being the intention of the writer to name the forty-two places of formal encampment, without regard to the number of times that Israel may have encamped at any one place. When Kadesh is mentioned, it is, as we have seen, in connection with the arrival there in the first month of the fortieth year. But they reached that place [the first time], and sent forth the twelve spies at the time of the first ripe grapes in the second year out of Egypt (xiii. 20). Hazeroth is the last camping-place mentioned in the account of the journey before reaching Kadesh (xii. 16,

cf. xiii. 26); but in the itinerary there are between Hazeroth and Kadesh *nineteen* encampments. This could not have been true of the first arrival in Kadesh: consequently we must conclude that these nineteen encampments were made between the first and second arrival in that place, or during the wanderings of thirty-eight years, of which we know but little. Thus it appears, from every point of view furnished by the Book of Numbers, that this interval of thirty-eight years was not spent at Kadesh, but at encampments lying in between the first and second visit to that place.

Now let us turn to Deuteronomy, and see if there is anything there to contradict this conclusion. Here in (ii. 14), Moses says to the people: 'And the days in which we came from Kadesh-Barnea, until all the generation of the men of war were consumed from the midst of the camp, as Jehovah swore unto them.' The terms here employed show that he is counting from the time that Jehovah swore this; that is, from the first visit to Kadesh. This is made equally clear by the fact that the places of encampment since the last visit to that place are named in Num. xxxiii. 38-44, and they are only five in number. The first of them, Mount Hor, was reached in the fifth month of the last year of the wanderings (xxxiii. 38), and the others were passed a little later in the same year. The 'many days' that were passed in compassing Mount Seir (the land of Edom), which Driver understands as including the thirty-eight years, were spent after leaving Kadesh the last time; for Moses says: 'So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according to the days that ye abode there. Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea, as Jehovah spake to me: and we compassed mount Seir many days' (Deut. i. 46—ii. 1). The circuit occupied many days compared with the small space around which they had to pass. The many days which they spent in Kadesh included the forty spent by the spies in their march through Canaan, together with some days previous, and some days after this march, and, during the last visit, the days of mourning for Miriam, probably thirty, [cf. Num. 20:29, Deut. 34:8] and much the greater part of the time from the first month to the fifth, in which they reached Mount Hor (Num. xx. 1, 22 [and 33:38, 39])."\*

\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, pp. 91-94. Our additions are in brackets.

AND TOOK OUR JOURNEY INTO THE WILDERNESS BY THE WAY TO THE RED SEA (v. 1)—A glance at the map will show that their journey brought them next to the northeast arm of the Red Sea, the gulf of Aqaba, in their journey around mount Seir.

AND WE COMPASSED MOUNT SEIR MANY DAYS (v. 1)—"This was literally true. Commencing their journey at Kadesh on the west, they travelled along the western side of the mountain range of Seir or Edom to Ezion-geber; then they turned and passed close to its southern border; then they turned again and traversed the wilderness of Arabia, close to the eastern border; and they finally entered and marched across Moab on its northern border."\*

This was the land of Esau or Edom (cf. v. 8, Num. 21:4, Gen. 32:3). The Number's account of this journey (21:4-9) indicates an especially difficult one, for "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way," and they "spake against God, and against Moses." The result was the sending of the fiery serpents and "much people of Israel died." The Apostle Paul therefore exhorts us, "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer" (I Cor. 10:10). A fiery serpent of brass was made at the command of God, and set upon a standard, "and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived" (Num. 21:9)—a blessed figure of Christ himself: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life" (Jn. 3:14, 15).

Unfortunately, this brazen serpent was later worshipped as an idol. It was finally destroyed during Hezekiah's reign (II K. 18:4).

On the time involved in this journey, see under v. 14.

YE ARE TO PASS THROUGH THE BORDER OF YOUR BRETHREN THE CHILDREN OF ESAU (v. 4)—Compare this statement with verse eight, "So we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau . . ." That is, they went *through* the *east side* of Edom, thus, in a sense, went "by" them.\*\* They bypassed mount Seir as such. Israel had previously attempted to go through by entering from the southwest, sending messengers from Kadesh (Num. 20:14-22), but this was neither the will of Edom nor of God. ". . . And Edom came out against him with

\*Josiah L. Porter, in *The New Self-Interpreting Bible Library*

\*\*Others understand verse eight to mean simply, "so we got by (past) our other brethren the children of Esau"—i.e., without any trouble or battle. Nevertheless, Israel's course was "through" part of their country.

much people, and with a strong hand Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him." (Num. 20:20, 21) Had God intended for Israel to take this route, defeat of the Edomites would have been no problem. But his directions were otherwise. Moses' record states, "Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea, *as Jehovah spake unto me . . .*" (v. 1). One observes God's specific directions all through this passage. And their bitter defeat at Hormah (1:44) when they attempted to battle the Amorites without God's approval, must still have been in the minds of the very few of the older generation that were still alive.

The first route would have been much shorter and easier, for it was to be along "the king's highway" (Num. 20:17) whereas this route was extremely difficult, "and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way" (Num. 21:4). But Israel was always blessed when God's directions were followed—even if such obedience meant difficulties.

Their first attempt to pass through this country, prior to encompassing the land, had been flatly refused (Num. 20:14-21) This was after the nearly thirty-eight years of punishment, for their return to Kadesh was on the first month of the fortieth year (Num. 20:1). Israel's offer at that time was generous and kind enough: "Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy land: we will not pass through field or through vineyard, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go along the king's highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy border. . . . And if we drink of thy water, I and my cattle, then will I give the price thereof: let me only, without *doing* anything *else*, pass through on my feet" (Num. 20:17, 19). Edom's answer was an armed troop that came out against Israel. ". . . wherefore Israel turned away from him . . . And they journeyed from Kadesh"—a statement that coincides exactly with Deut. 1:46—2:1. Then follows (in Numbers) the death of Aaron at mount Hor, mourning for him for thirty days, a victory over the Canaanites at Hormah, and the long discouraging circuit of mount Seir, with the murmuring and the punishment by serpents.

Finally, God is able to say "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward" (v. 3). And now, after "many days," somehow Edom's whole disposition toward Israel has drastically changed! The very privileges Edom had previously refused, are now

allowed. Water and food are purchased (v. 6). "So we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau" (v. 8).

Why the great change in Edom's attitude? Why the kindness now, where there had been hostility and enmity? Simply because God had now decided that his people were to go through. In his own good time, God decrees the blessings that are appropriate for his people—and no earthly power is able to thwart *his* designs. Nebuchadnezzar expressed this very truth when he said of God, ". . . he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. 4:35); and Daniel himself could say to Belshazzar that "the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, . . . he setteth up over it whosoever he will" (Dan. 5:21).

### 5. PASSING THROUGH MOAB (2:8-15)

And we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab. 9 And Jehovah said unto me, Vex not Moab, neither contend with them in battle; for I will not give thee of this land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. 10 (The Emim dwelt therein aforetime, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim: 11 these also are accounted Rephaim, as the Anakim; but the Moabites call them Emim. 12 The Horites also dwelt in Seir aforetime, but the children of Esau succeeded them; and they destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which Jehovah gave unto them.) 13 Now rise up, and get you over the brook Zered. And we went over the brook Zered. 14 And the days in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, were thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were consumed from the midst of the camp, as Jehovah sware unto them. 15 Moreover the hand of Jehovah was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp, until they were consumed.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 2:8-15

39. From whence came the Moabites? Cf. Gen. 19:30-38.
40. There are three names for giants; what are they?
41. What and where is "Ar"?
42. Compare Numbers 13:33 with Deuteronomy 2:10 and state the significance.
43. How did Moses know of this history of the Rephaim and Horites?

44. Is there a time when the mercy of God ends and judgment begins?  
At what point?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 2:9-15

9 And the Lord said to me, Do not trouble or assault Moab or contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot for a possession.

10 (The Emim dwelt there in times past, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim;

11 These also are known as Rephaim [of giant stature], as are the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim.

12 The Horites also formerly lived in Seir, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the Lord gave to them.)

13 Now rise up, and go over the brook Zered. So we went over the brook Zered.

14 And the time from our leaving Kadesh-barnea until we had come over the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until the whole generation of the men of war had perished from the camp, as the Lord had sworn to them.

15 Moreover the hand of the Lord was against them, to exterminate them from the midst of the camp, until they were all gone.

### COMMENT 2:8-15

Numbers 21:10-13 supplies us with a geographical link between this passage and the former. "And the children of Israel journeyed, and encamped in Oboth" (v. 10). Oboth (meaning *water skins*) is located near the south end of the Dead Sea and east of Edom. After Oboth they encamped at Iye-abarim (Literally, *ruins of Abarim*) "in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising" (v. 11). Num. 33:44 simply refers to the latter station as "in the border of Moab."

VEX NOT MOAB (v. 9)—Moab and Ammon were the incestuous sons of Lot, Abraham's nephew, (Gen. 11:27, 28; 19:30-38). Thus as in v. 8 the Edomites as "our brethren the children of Esau" (because Esau was Jacob's brother) were not to be molested, so here "the children of Lot," whom God had given this land, were not to be attacked in battle.



BECAUSE I HAVE GIVEN AR UNTO THE CHILDREN OF LOT FOR A POSSESSION (v. 9)—In v. 18 Ar is called "the border of Moab," and is apparently "the city of Moab," Num. 22:36, where we have the additional statement, "which is on the border of the Arnon which is in the utmost part of the [eastern] border." "Ar of Moab" (Num. 21:28, Isa. 15:1) was a leading city on the upper reaches of the Arnon river. It appears from both this context and the various happenings in the closing chapters of Numbers, that at this period the northern boundary of Moab extended along the northeast shore of the Dead Sea to the mouth of the Jordan (Num. 33:49). They are still in "the plains of Moab" and "the land of Moab" as Deuteronomy closes (34:1, 5-8).

THE EMIM DWELT THEREIN AFORETIME, A PEOPLE GREAT, AND MANY, AND TALL, AS THE ANAKIM: THESE ALSO ARE ACCOUNTED REPHAIM, AS THE ANAKIM; BUT THE MOABITES CALLED THEM EMIM. (v. 10, 11)—The Rephaim, an ancient race of large stature, dwelt in quite an extensive area surrounding the Dead Sea. The Moabites called them Emim, but the Ammonites called them Zamzummim (v. 20). We first encounter them in the seige of Chedorlaomer (Gen. 14:5), and God had pledged their land to Abraham's seed (Gen. 15:18-21). The word is rendered "giant" with reference to Goliath in I Chron. 20:4. "It appears that the *Emim*, the *Anakim*, and the *Rephaim*, were probably the same people, called by different names in the different countries where they dwelt; for they appear originally to have been a kind of wandering free-booters, who lived by plunder."—*Clarke*

Such persons had originally struck terror into the heart of the spies and then the people (Num. 13:33). But now Israel goes forth to conquer the same gigantic race!

THE HORITES ALSO DWELT IN SEIR AFORETIME, BUT THE CHILDREN OF ESAU SUCCEEDED THEM . . . AS ISRAEL DID UNTO THE LAND OF HIS POSSESSION, WHICH JEHOVAH GAVE UNTO THEM (v. 12—If Moses wrote these words on the plains of Moab as stated in 1:1 (cf. 34:1; see also 31:9, 24), there is no need to suppose this passage to be the work of some editor or redactor. But even if this, and other brief historical passages we will meet in this book, be the work of a later editor, the inspiration and veracity of Deuteronomy is not altered one iota. It was universally accepted by the Jews that Ezra was the writer of these historical notes, and he was just as inspired as Moses.\*

\*See the article on the authorship at the conclusion of this volume.

Israel had, indeed by that time dispossessed many of the native inhabitants east of the Jordan. "And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all of the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the towns thereof . . . So they smote him [Sihon, king of the Amorites at Heshbon], and his sons and all his people, until there was none left him remaining: and they possessed his land" (Num. 21:25, 35).

AND WE WENT OVER THE BROOK ZERED (v. 13)—Later, the natural boundary between Edom and Moab, flowing northwesterly into the Dead Sea at its southern extremity.

AND THE DAYS IN WHICH WE CAME FROM KADESH-BARNEA, UNTIL WE WERE COME OVER THE BROOK ZERED, WERE THIRTY AND EIGHT YEARS; UNTIL ALL THE GENERATION OF THE MEN OF WAR WERE CONSUMED (v. 14)—That is, from their *first* visit at Kadesh, mentioned in 1:19. See notes under 1:46 and 2:1. It had only been a matter of months from their second visit to that place, for their second arrival was in the first month of the fortieth year (Num. 20:1). After that, Miriam died. (mourned for thirty days?), the incident at Meribah takes place, and Israel is refused passage through Edom (Num. 20:2-21). Then "they journeyed from Kadesh" (Num. 20:22), stopping soon at Mount Hor, where Aaron died and was mourned for thirty days (Num. 20:22-29). His death was on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year (Num. 33:38). Then follows a victory over the Canaanite king Arad (Num. 21:1-3), the discouraging trip around mount Seir just mentioned (which includes the Brazen Serpent incident) and finally their arrival at the Zered river. And by the time Moses begins this discourse just east of the Jordan, it is "the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month" (1:3). Thus though we do not know how long a time is covered by the "many' days" of v. 1, we *do* know that from Aaron's death and mourning period (40<sup>th</sup> year, 6<sup>th</sup> month) till their arrival at the Zered river was a period of six months.

MOREOVER, THE HAND OF JEHOVAH WAS AGAINST THEM (v. 15)—That is, his decree (that the numbered Israelites be destroyed) was to be fulfilled before Israel could enter their promised country. All the men of war were dead by the time they crossed the northeastern border of Moab (v. 16-18).

## 6. PASSING THROUGH AMMON (2:16-23)

16 So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, 17 that Jehovah spake unto me, saying, 18 Thou art this day to pass over Ar, the border of Moab; 19 and when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, vex them not, nor contend with them; for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon for a possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession. 20 (That also is accounted a land of Rephaim: Rephaim dwelt therein aforetime; but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, 21 a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim; but Jehovah destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead; 22 as he did for the children of Esau, that dwell in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day: 23 and the Avvim, that dwelt in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, that came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 2:16-23

45. Whence came the Ammonites?
46. Locate and identify the Zamzummim, the Avvim, the Cophtorim.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 2:16-23

16 So when all the men of war had died from among the people.

17 The Lord spoke to me [Moses], saying,

18 You are this day to pass through Ar, the border of Moab.

19 But when you come near the territory of the sons of Ammon, do not trouble or assault them, or provoke or stir them up, for I will not give you any of the land of the Ammonites for a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot for a possession.

20 (That also is known as the land of Rephaim [of giant stature]; Rephaim dwelt there formerly, but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim,

21 A people great and many, and tall as the Anakim; but the Lord destroyed them before [Israel]; and they dispossessed them and settled in their stead;

22 As He did for the sons of Esau, who dwell in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them, and they dispossessed them, and settled in their stead even to this day.

23 As for the Avvim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)

### COMMENT 2:16-23

VEX THEM NOT (v. 19)—See under v. 9.

AND THE AVVIM, THAT DWELT IN VILLAGES AS FAR AS GAZA, THE CAPHTORIM, THAT CAME FORTH OUT OF CAPHTOR, DESTROYED THEM, AND DWELT IN THEIR STEAD (v. 23)—Concluding the explanatory historical note that began with v. 20 and that is similar to vv. 10-12. The historian is explaining how various original inhabitants were dispossessed by other peoples—or how it happened that certain older tribes were still in evidence as the children of Israel advanced through the east-side countries. The Edomites had taken over the Horites, the Moabites and Ammonites, “children of Lot,” from the Rephaim—known locally as the Emim or Zamzummim, respectively; and the Caphtorim from the Avvim.

The Avvim were the early inhabitants of the southwestern extremity of Canaan afterward occupied by the Philistines (John. 13:3, 4). *Hurlbut* states: “South of the Canaanites, on the Maritime Plain, were the Philistines. ‘Emigrants’ is the meaning of the word, supporting the view that they came from Caphtor, or Crete, which was the capital of an empire embracing the isles and surroundings of the Aegean Sea prior to 2000 B.C. They were related to the Egyptians, and hence were of Hamitic stock [See Gen. 10:13, 14; I Chron. 1:11, 12]. They came to the land before the time of Abraham, drove out and subdued the earlier Avim (Deut. 2:23), or Avites, and had frequent dealings with Abraham and Isaac.”\* See also Jer. 47:4, Amos 9:7.

### QUESTIONS, LESSON TWO (2:1-23)

1. From what geographical point does 2:1 begin?
2. In what year of Israel's history do the events of this lesson take place?
3. How long between Aaron's death on mount Hor and the arrival of Israel at the brook Zered?
4. *Briefly*, show how the “wandering” period as such is *not* repre-

\*Bible Atlas, p. 23.

## QUESTIONS ON LESSON TWO

sented in Numbers and Deuteronomy as a single encampment at Kadesh when the two accounts are properly harmonized.

5. How many years between the first and second stay at Kadesh?
6. How do you explain the change in Edom's attitude toward Israel?
7. Why not vex Moab or Ammon?
8. Who dispossessed the following peoples:
  - (a) Horites?
  - (b) Avvim?
  - (c) Rephaim?
9. What significant historical fact is noted as Israel arrives at the brook Zered?

## LESSON THREE 2:24—3:29

### 7. FIRST SUCCESSFUL CONQUESTS (2:24—3:11)

#### a. OVER SIHON KING OF HESHBON (2:24-37)

24 Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the valley of the Arnon: behold, I have given into thy hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. 25 This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the peoples that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.

26 And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, 27 Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the highway, I will turn neither unto the right hand nor to the left. 28 Thou shalt sell me food for money, that I may eat: and give me water for money, that I may drink: only let me pass through on my feet; 29 as the children of Esau that dwell in Seir, and the Moabites that dwell in Ar, did unto me; until I shall pass over the Jordan into the land which Jehovah our God giveth us. 30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for Jehovah thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as at this day. 31 And Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have begun to deliver up Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land. 32 Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, unto battle at Jahaz. 33 And Jehovah our God delivered him up before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. 34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed every inhabited city, with the women and the little ones; we left none remaining: 35 only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we had taken. 36 From Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and *from* the city that is in the valley, even unto Gilead, there was not a city too high for us; Jehovah our God delivered up all before us: 37 only to the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not near; all the side of the river Jabbok, and the cities of the hill-country, and wheresoever Jehovah our God forbade us.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 2:24-37

47. Are we to conclude from the record here that God is in control of the thoughts and decisions of evil men?

48. What specific actions of the Israelites cast fear into the hearts of their enemies?
49. Why send messenger to Sihon if Moses already knew he would not harken unto him?
50. In what sense was Sihon responsible for the hardening of his heart? In what sense was God responsible?
51. When Sihon was defeated, how much of the territory on the east of the Jordan was conquered?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 2:24-37

24 Rise up, take your journey, and pass over the valley of the Arnon; behold, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle.

25 This day will I begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples that are under the whole heavens, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.

26 So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying,

27 Let me pass through your land; I will go only by the road, turning aside neither to the right nor to the left.

28 You shall sell me food to eat, and sell me water to drink; only let me walk through,

29 As the sons of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me, until I go over the Jordan into the land which the Lord our God gives us.

30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for the Lord your God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that He might give him into your hand, as at this day.

31 And the Lord said to me [Moses], Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you; begin to take possession, that you may succeed him and occupy his land.

32 Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz.

33 And the Lord our God gave him over to us; and we defeated him and his sons and all his people.

34 At the same time we took all his cities, and utterly destroyed every city, men, women, and children; we left none to remain.

35 Only the cattle we took as booty for ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we had captured.

36 From Aroer, which is on the edge of the Arnon valley, and from the city that is in the valley, as far as Gilead, there was no city too high and strong for us; the Lord our God delivered all to us.

37 Only you did not go near the land of the Ammonites, that is, to any bank of the river Jabbok and the cities of the hill country, and wherever the Lord our God had forbidden us.

### COMMENT 2:24-37

PASS OVER THE VALLEY OF THE ARNON (v. 24)—proceeding now up the east side of the Dead Sea. If we have located Ar (v. 18)\* correctly on the edge of the Arnon, the command to cross the river and the order to pass by the Ammonites (v. 19) are to be considered as one and the same—or at least issued at the same time.

SIHON THE AMORITE, KING OF HESHBON (v. 24)—The Amorites were spread out over a wide area of Canaan (See 1:44 cf. Gen. 14:13, 15:16, 21; 48:22, etc.) They *generally* dwelt in the hill country (Num. 13:29, Josh. 10:5). Sihon and Og, "the two kings of the Amorites" Israel defeated, ruled an extensive area from the Arnon river to mount Hermon (Deut. 3:8). Israel was hearing the words of this very discourse on the property formerly ruled by Sihon (Deut. 4:44-49). His land extended from "the Arnon to the Jabbok" rivers, but his attempt to oppose Israel's passage through his kingdom ended in complete defeat. See Numbers 21:21-31.

FOR JEHOVAH THY GOD HARDENED HIS SPIRIT, AND MADE HIS HEART OBSTINATE, THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER HIM INTO THY HAND (v. 30)—an incident that reminds us of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. We do not have a case here or in Exodus of God taking a good man and causing him to be lost. Rather, we have a case in both instances of God using an already godless and sinful king and manipulating him to his glory and the advantage of his people. The following comment by *James R. McMorrow* applies equally well to Pharaoh or Og. "The Bible plainly states that God hardened Pharaoh's heart: 'The Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart' (Exo. 10:1); 'But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go' (Exo. 10:20). Also read Exo. 10:27; 11:10 . . .

\*Some locate Ar on the southern bank of the Arnon river—others as far as twenty-five miles south of it. We *do* know that it was on the northeastern border of Moab, separating it from Ammon (vv. 18, 19).



Did God harden Pharaoh's heart, and, thus, 'cause him to be lost' . . .? No, not at all. Pharaoh had already killed thousands of innocent babies. He had already opposed the people of God year in and year out. Pharaoh was already a sinner of the deepest dye. No person or power could do anything to this man to cause him to be lost, for he was already in that condition . . .

God knew what kind of man Pharaoh was and that this wicked old king would never come to repentance. God's decision was: 'I am going to make him stubborn to accomplish several things.' God, in this act, showed Israel that he was greater than the oppressor. Again, God used Pharaoh as an example to show what would happen to those who would not obey . . .

It is plain to see that God was honored by hardening Pharaoh's heart and bringing about his destruction. If God could not get honor in the ruler's life by repentance, He will get honor by destruction of his body."\*

We believe when God hardened the spirit of Sihon, and "made his heart obstinate" his purposes were similar to those he had when he hardened Pharaoh's heart. "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth. So then he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth . . . Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" (Rom. 9:17,18,21). It is significant to note how God thus showed his power over a wicked king, both as Israel was getting *out* of his land of bondage, and as he was getting *into* his land of promise.

This was their first armed battle, and so important both to the *encouragement* of a people so very unused to war as they were, and for the *discouragement* of the neighboring tribes round about (Note v. 25). By the time the spies were sent to Jericho, Rahab could very truly say, "I know that Jehovah hath given you the land, and that the fear of you is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you" (Josh. 2:9).

AND I SENT MESSENGERS OUT OF THE WILDERNESS OF KEDEMOTH (v. 26)—"a town on the eastern border of Moab, and the pasture grounds around it were called "the wilderness (*midbar*) Kedemoth" Josiah Porter.

\*From the Voice of Evangelism, March 3, 1951

THOU SHALT SELL ME FOOD . . . WATER . . . AS THE CHILDREN OF ESAU THAT DWELL IN SEIR, AND THE MOABITES THAT DWELL IN AR, DID UNTO ME (vv. 28,29)—We have seen the great change in the attitude of the Edomites (v. 6) from the first refusal (Num. 20:21). The Moabites are here said to have sold Israel food and water, but it appears from 23:3-6 that it was not a willing service, and that nation, along with Ammon, was severely cursed for their lack of hospitality. Later, they showed outright antagonism toward Israel. See the account in Num. 31:10-20, and the evil schemes of Balaam and Balak in Num. 22-25.

JAHAZ (v. 32)—Num. 21:23 tells us Sihon "went out against Israel into the wilderness, and came to Jahaz; and he fought against Israel"—thus the city must have been some distance from the more civilized areas. Its location is uncertain, but we know it was north of the Arnon river (Num. 21:13).

ONLY TO THE LAND OF THE CHILDREN OF AMMON THOU CAMEST NOT NEAR; ALL THE SIDE OF THE RIVER JABBOK, AND THE CITIES OF THE HILL COUNTRY, AND WHERESOEVER JEHOVAH OUR GOD FORBADE US (v. 37)—Better, "But you did not encroach upon the land of the Ammonites, all along the wadi Jabbok and the towns of the hill country, just as the Lord our God had commanded"—*The Torah*. "God gave them their commission; and those only were to be cut off, the cup of whose iniquity was full. Though the Moabites and Ammonites were thus spread, they requited good with evil, for they [later] fought against the Israelites, and cast them out of their possessions, Judg. xi. 4,5; II Chron. xx. 1, & c., and committed the most shocking cruelties; see Amos 1:13. Hence God enacted a law, that none of these people should enter into the congregation of the Lord even to their tenth generation: see chapter xxiii. 3-6"—*Clarke*. But see also our notes under the passage. The curse itself was specifically for their mistreatment of Israel as they came out of the wilderness.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO

*Moses continues to relate how they compassed Mount Seir, 1. And the commands they received not to meddle with the descendants of Esau, 2-8; nor to distress the Moabites, 9. Of the Emims, 10, 11; the Horims, 12. Their passage of the brook Zered, 13. The time they spent between Kadesh-barnea and Zered, 14; during which all the men of war that came out of Egypt were consumed, 15, 16. The command not to dis-*

ness the Ammonites, 17-19. Of the Zamzummims, 20, the Anakims, 21, the Horims, 22, the Avims and Caphiorims, all destroyed by the Ammonites, 23. They are commanded to cross the river Arnon, and are promised the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, 24, 25. Of the message sent to Sihon, to request a passage through his territories, 26-29. His refusal, 30. The consequent war, 31, 32. His total overthrow, 33; and extermination of his people, 34. The spoils that were taken, 35. And his land possessed from Aroer to Arnon by the Israelites, 36; who took care, according to the command of God, not to invade any part of the territories of the Ammonites, 37.

#### b. CONQUEST OF OG, KING OF BASHAN (3:1-11)

Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, unto battle at Edrei. 2 and Jehovah said unto me, Fear him not; for I have delivered him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon. 3 So Jehovah our God delivered into our hand Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. 4 And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we took not from them; threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5 All these were cities fortified with high walls, gates, and bars; besides the unwallied towns a great many. 6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying every inhabited city, with the women and the little ones. 7 But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey unto ourselves. 8 And we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, from the valley of the Arnon unto mount Hermon; 9 (which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir;) 10 all the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 11 (For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the Rephaim; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.)

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:1-11

52. It is very important that each of the places mentioned be located by the student on the map. Locate: Edrei; Heshbon; Bashan.
53. Was Og a giant? How large?

54. Be specific about the conquest of Og, his people, his cities, villages, women, children, and cattle.
55. Mark out on the map the details of the area conquered.
56. Give at least two possible measurements of Og's bedstead.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 3:1-11

Then we turned, and went up the road to Bashan; and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

2 And the Lord said to me, Do not fear him; for I have given him and all his people and his land into your hand; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon.

3 So the Lord our God gave into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people; and we smote him until not one was left to him.

4 And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them, sixty cities, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

5 All these cities were fortified with high and haughty walls, gates, and bars; besides a great many unwalled villages.

6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying every city, men, women, and children.

7 But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for booty for ourselves.

8 So we took the land at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, from the valley of the Arnon to Mount Hermon.

9 (The Sidonians call Hermon, Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir),

10 All the cities of the plain and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

11 or only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the [gigantic] Rephaim; behold, his bedstead was of iron; is it not in Rabbah of the Ammonites? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its breadth, using the cubit of a man [the forearm to the end of the middle finger].

### COMMENT 3:1-11

THEN WE TURNED, AND WENT UP THE WAY TO BASHAN (v. 1)—See also Num. 21:33-35. Israel proceeds northward. Bashan is basically located

in the area of the Yarmuk (Warmuk or Hieromax) river drainage, particularly its northern part. These were highlands, used especially for pasture, and soon to be occupied by the half tribe of Manasseh. This was as far north as Israel went on the east side.

OG THE KING OF BASHAN (v. 1)—One of "the two kings of the Amorites" (v. 8). His kingdom extended beyond Bashan proper, northward to the slopes of mount Hermon (v. 8b, Josh. 12:4,5). (On his stature, see below). Israel battled these people at Edrei, located in the area of Hauran near Bashan's southern border on the upper reaches of the Yarmuk.

THREESCORE CITIES, ALL THE REGION OF THE ARGOB, THE KINGDOM OF OG IN BASHAN (v. 4)—cf. v. 13. The precise limits of Argob have not been determined. "We may take it that Argob lay in the land of Bashan; beyond this, on available data, we cannot certainly go . . . The soil [of Bashan] is very fertile, composed of lava detritus. In almost every district might have been found the threescore cities."—I.S.B.E.

UNWALLED TOWNS—Probably better "unwalled villages" (R.S.V. Amplified O.T., Berkeley, etc.)—in contrast to the well fortified cities just described. "Besides many an open hamlet" (Moffatt); "besides country towns exceeding many" (Rotherham).

HERMON . . . SIRON, SENIR (v. 9)—All names for the mountain whose melting snows form a chief source of the Jordan river. SION (v. 48) is another name. This mountain reaches a height of nine thousand two hundred feet, and extends sixteen to twenty miles north and south. "Hermon" is supposed to signify "sacred mountain," "Sirion" "breast-plate" (probably from its gleaming appearance), "Senir"\* "coat of mail" (apparently for the same reason as the former), and "Sion" "lifted up," probably from its height.

FOR ONLY OG KING OF BASHAN REMAINED OF THE REMNANT OF THE REPHAIM (v. 11)—The giant tribe that formerly occupied this territory (See 2:10,11 and *notes*). This king was so large that his "custom made" bedstead\*\* was nine by four cubits "after the cubit of a man"—

\*I Chron. 5:23 and Song of Sol. 4:8 seem to lend weight to the idea that Senir was also the name of a *specific peak* on mount Hermon. The latter is sometimes used with reference to the entire anti-Lebanon range.

\*\*Some translators have sarcophagus. But this seems so unlikely in view of the context: Israel did not have great "funeral services" (let alone elaborate coffins) for the heathen kings it defeated; "eres, bedstead, literally curving, is a bed upon which one reclines for rest, Amos iii. 12; vi. 4; Ps. vi. 6"—Lange.

that is, from the elbow to the end of the middle finger. If the cubit is here figured on a basis of eighteen inches, his bed was  $13\frac{1}{2}$  x 6 ft. But this is an arbitrary figure, and Og's bed size is still uncertain to modern readers. The so-called Royal Cubit was approximately 20.6 inches, and seems to be the more ancient measurement. But most think, with *Lange*, "thirteen and a half feet long and six feet broad, if not smaller since it is the common Hebrew cubit from the elbow downwards which is here meant."

Concerning this victory *Mackintosh* well writes, "The remembrance of the Lord's dealing with us in the past should strengthen our confidence in going on. The One who had given His people such a victory over the Amorites, who had destroyed such a formidable foe as Og, king of Bashan, and given into their hands all the land of the giants, what could He not do for them? They could hardly expect to encounter in all the land of Canaan any enemy more powerful than Og, whose bedstead was of such enormous dimensions as to call for the special notice of Moses; but what was he in the presence of his almighty creator? Dwarfs and giants are all alike to Him. The grand point is to keep God Himself ever before our eyes; then difficulties vanish. If He covers the eyes, we can see nothing else; and this is the true secret of peace, and the real power of progress. 'Thine eyes have seen all that the Lord your God hath done.' And *as* He has done, *so* He will do. He *hath* delivered, and he *doth* deliver, and He *will* deliver. Past, present, and future are all marked by divine deliverance."\*

## 8. EXTENT AND DIVISION OF CONQUERED EAST-SIDE LANDS (3:12-17)

12 And this land we took in possession at that time: from Aroer, which is by the valley of the Arnon, and half the hill-country of Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites: 13 and the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half-tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, even all Bashan. (The same is called the land of Rephaim. 14 Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Macathites, and called them, even Bashan, after his own name, Havvoth-jair, unto this day.) 15 And I gave Gilead unto Machir. 16 And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the valley of the Arnon, the middle of the valley, and the border thereof, even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of

\*Notes on Deuteronomy. pp. 151, 152

Ammon; 17 the Arabah also, and the Jordan and the border *thereof*, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah eastward.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:12-17

57. Please refer to Numbers 22 through 33 for additional events in this period.
58. Upon what condition were the two-and-half tribes granted their inheritance before the other tribes? Cf. verses 18-20 and Numbers 32:16-27.
59. Please refer to a map of the twelve tribes and memorize the location of the tribes.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 3:12-17

12 When we took possession of this land, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, and half the hill country of Gilead and its cities;

13 The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, that is, all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh. It is called the land of Rephaim [of giant stature].

14 Jair son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Ma-acathites, and called the villages after his own name, Havvoth-jair, so called to this day.

15 And I gave Gilead to Mechir [son of Manasseh].

16 And to the Reubenites and Gadites I gave from Gilead even to the valley of the Arnon, with the middle of the valley as the boundary of it, as far over as the river Jabbok, the boundary of the Ammonites.

17 The Arabah also, with the Jordan as its boundary, from Chinnereth as far as the sea of the Arabah, the Salt [Dead] Sea, under the cliffs [of the headlands] of Pisgah on the east.

### COMMENT 3:12-17

The student should be locating the various geographical names of this chapter, and establishing the proper event with the proper place. So here we have Aroer, the Arnon river, Gilead, Bashan (Argob, see above), the Jabbok river, the Arabah, Chinnereth (either the sea of that name [i.e. the sea of Galilee] Num. 34:11, Josh. 13:27, or the town near the sea, Josh. 19:35), the Salt (Dead) Sea, mount Pisgah (a shoulder

of mount Nebo)—all mentioned in describing the boundaries of the east-side tribes: Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.\* The basic boundaries of these tribes should be committed to memory—it will help you time and again in your Bible study.

Moses omits much of Israel's recent history here—but it was all doubtless fresh in the minds of his hearers. In Numbers 22:1, after Sihon and Og were smitten, we are told, "And the children of Israel journeyed, and encamped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at "Jericho" (See also 33:47-49)—a statement that ties right in with Deut. 1:1, 32:49, 34:1, 5 & 8 in locating Israel on the plains of Moab. The account of Balaam (the Mesopotamian seer) as he tried to carry out the wishes of Balak, king of Moab—a country in league with Midian against Israel—is in Numbers 22-24. His curses were turned into blessings.

Fearing the result of open war, the allied nations now undertook to corrupt Israel by their friendship and by seduction. Numbers 25:1 reads, "And Israel abode in Shittim [very near or the same as their present location]; and the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab," and many Israelites "bowed down to their gods" (v. 2). Many people perished by the plague that fell on the nation as a penalty (Chap. 25). After the numbering of the people (Chap. 26), the daughters of Zelophehad (descendants of Manasseh) are granted their inheritance (27:1-11); then follows God's command to Moses to ascend mount Abarim (Pisgah) (27:12-14), Joshua's appointment as leader of Israel (27:15-23), laws for various offerings (Ch. 28), offerings for the seventh month (Ch. 29), the law of vows (Ch. 30), the slaughter of the Midianites (Ch. 31) and the settling of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh on the east side (Ch. 32), Chapter 33 gives an itinerary of Israel's encampments to their present one ". . . in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho . . . from Beth-jeshimoth even unto Abel-shittim" (vv. 48,49). The exhortations and instructions of Moses from 33:50 to the end of Numbers are, like those in Deuteronomy, given with a view to their settlement in Canaan.

We are making no attempt in this volume at closely harmonizing, chronologically, the events of Numbers (after Chapter 22) with those of Deuteronomy—only to say that they occurred at approximately the same time and in the same general area—the plains of Moab, not far from the mouth of the Jordan.

\*And this half-tribe also had an area of the west side, north of Ephraim, extending from the plain of Sharon to the Jordan—the inheritance of the daughters of Zelophehad, Num. 27:1-11, Josh. 17



JAIR THE SON OF MANASSETH TOOK ALL THE REGION OF THE ARGOB (v. 14)—Naming them HAVVOTH-JAIR, that is, the towns of Jair. He was a descendant of Manasseh, being the son of Segub (I Chron. 2:21-22).

### 9. WARNING AGAINST SETTLING DOWN PREMATURELY (3:18-20)

18 And I commanded you at that time, saying, Jehovah your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all the men of valor. 19 But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, (I know that ye have much cattle,) shall abide in your cities which I have given you, 20 until Jehovah give rest unto your brethren, as unto you, and they also possess the land which Jehovah your God giveth them beyond the Jordan: then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:18-20

60. How sad to possess so little when we could conquer so much. Did the 2½ tribes fulfill their part of the agreement? Cf. Joshua 4:12, 13. What about the 9½ tribes? Cf. Joshua 13:1.
61. Besides the lack of faith, what one thing contributed most to the failure to conquer?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 3:18-20

18 And I commanded you at that time, saying, The Lord your God has given you this land to possess it; you [Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh] shall go over [the Jordan] armed before your brethren the other Israelites, all that are able for war.

19 But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle (I know that you have many cattle) shall remain in your cities which I have given you,

20 Until the Lord has given rest to your brethren, as to you, and until they also possess the land which the Lord your God has given them beyond Jordan; then shall you return every man to his possession, which I have given you.

### COMMENT 3:18-20

This is the command to the east-side tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. See also Num. 32:16-27. They were to go over the Jordan

and assist their brethren in exterminating the Canaanite tribes before returning to their families on the east. "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). These men complied with the order (Josh. 4:12, 13) but Israel did not fully expel the native people before these men returned. When Joshua was "old and well stricken in years," there still "remaineth yet very much land to be possessed" (Josh. 13:1).

### 10. MOSES DENIED ENTRANCE INTO CANAAN (3:21-29)

21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that Jehovah your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall Jehovah do unto all the kingdoms whither thou goest over. 22 Ye shall not fear them; for Jehovah your God, he it is that fighteth for you.

23 And I besought Jehovah at that time, saying, 24 O Lord Jehovah, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness, and thy strong hand: for what god is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy mighty acts? 25 Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. 26 But Jehovah was wroth with me for your sakes, and hearkened not unto me: and Jehovah said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. 27 Get thee up unto the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. 28 But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see. 29 So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 3:21-29

62. Read Numbers 27:15-23 for a better understanding of Moses words to Joshua.
63. Since God has specifically told Moses he could not go into the promised land, why did Moses make the request he did in these verses?
64. Is Moses saying in verse 26 that it was not his fault that Jehovah was angry with him?
65. Our Lord requires unselfishness on the part of His leaders. Note the implications of verse 28.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 3:21-29

21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Your own eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings [Sihon and Og]; so shall the Lord do to all the kingdoms into which you are going over [the Jordan].

22 You shall not fear them, for the Lord your God shall fight for you.

23 And I besought the Lord at that time, saying,

24 O Lord God, You have only begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand; for what god is there in Heaven or on earth, that can do according to Your works, and according to Your might?

25 I pray You, [will you not just] let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain country [with Hermon], and Lebanon?

26 But the Lord was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me; and the Lord said to me, That is enough; say no more to Me about it.

27 Get up to the top of Pisgah, and lift up your eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with your eyes; for you shall not go over this Jordan.

28 But charge Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to possess the land which you shall see.

29 So we remained in the valley opposite Beth-peor.

## COMMENT 3:21-29

Vv. 21 and 22 refer to Moses' commission to Joshua, discussed more fully in Ch. 31:7,8, 14-23 and Num. 27:15-23.

JEHOVAH . . . FIGHTETH FOR YOU (v. 22)—See ch. 1:29:33; 42 and notes.

LET ME GO OVER (v. 25)—See also 1:37 and notes on the refusal of Moses' request.

THAT GOODLY MOUNTAIN (v. 25)—The marginal reading, *hill country* is preferred by modern translators.

GET THEE UP UNTO THE TOP OF PISGAH (v. 27)—See 32:49 where this same mountain is also called Nebo and "this mountain of Abarim" (cf. Num. 27:12). Num. 33:47 & 48 speaks of Israel encamping "in the

mountains of Abarim, before Nebo." The term Abarim seems to refer to the whole range of mountains east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan. Nebo was a smaller range within this one, or more specifically, jutting out to the west from it. 34:1 tells us Moses went up "from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against [i.e. east of] Jericho."

On this entire passage, the moral lesson drawn by Mackintosh is excellent. "Now, it is most edifying to hear all this confession from the lips of Moses himself. It teaches us a fine lesson, if only we are willing to learn it. Some of us find it very hard indeed to confess that we have done or said anything wrong—very hard to own before our brethren that we have entirely missed the Lord's mind in any particular case. We are careful of our reputation; we are touchy and tenacious. And yet, with strange inconsistency, we admit, or seem to admit, in general terms, that we are poor, feeble, erring creatures; and that, if left to ourselves, there is nothing too bad for us to say or do. But it is one thing to make a most humiliating general [confession,] and another thing altogether to own that, in some given case, we have made a gross mistake. The latter is a confession which very few have grace to make."\*

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THREE

*The war with Og, king of Bashan, 1, 2. He is defeated, 3. Sixty fortified cities with many unwallied towns taken, 4, 5. The utter destruction of the people, 6. The spoils, 7; and extent of the land taken, 8-10. Account of Og's iron bedstead, 11. The land given to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, 12, 13. Jair takes the country of Argob, 14. Gilead is given unto Machir, 15. And the rest of the land possessed by the Reubenites and Gadites, 16, 17. The directions given to those tribes, 18-20. The counsel given to Joshua, 21, 22. Moses's prayer to God for permission to go into the promised land, 23-25; and God's refusal, 26. He is commanded to go up to Mount Pisgah to see it, 27; and to encourage Joshua, 28. They continue in the valley opposite to Beth-peor, 29.*

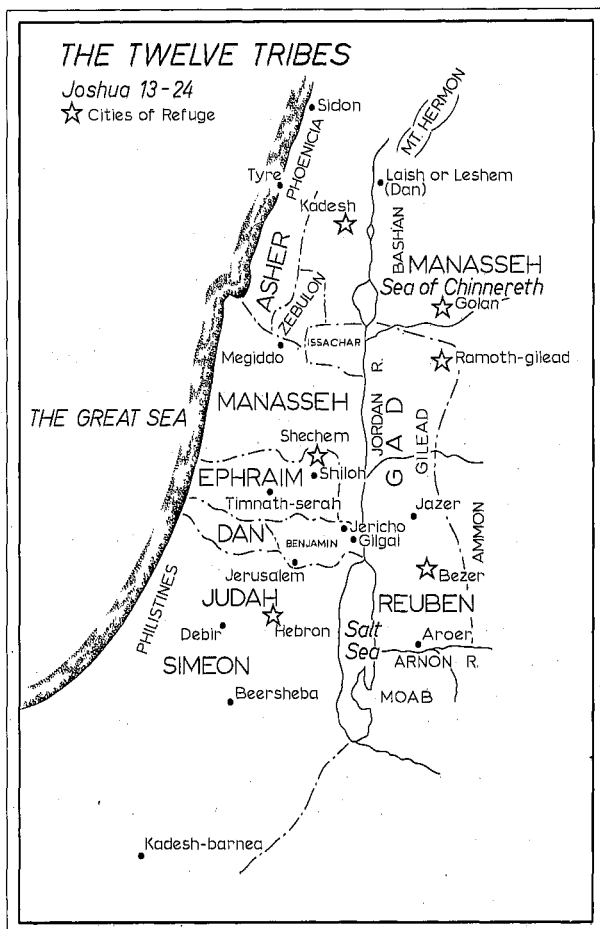
## QUESTIONS, LESSON THREE (2:24—3:29)

1. Who were "the two kings of the Amorites" and over what kingdoms did they rule? (Complete before proceeding)
2. Why did God harden Sihon's spirit?

\*Notes on Deuteronomy, Vol. I, p. 156.

### QUESTIONS ON LESSON THREE

3. Who or what was Argob?
4. Why do you suppose the divine historian takes space in the Sacred Volume to mention the size of Og's bedstead?
5. Give the *basic* locations of the three east-side tribes.
6. What special assistance were these tribes to render the rest of Israel?
7. What admirable quality is revealed in Moses in this lesson?



## LESSON FOUR 4:1-43

### B. SIGNIFICANCE OF PAST EVENTS (4:1-40)

#### 1. BLESSINGS PROMISED FOR THOSE WHO HEED GOD'S ALL-SUFFICIENT LAW (4:1-8)

##### a. PROSPERITY (4:1-4)

And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them; that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, giveth you. 2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you. 3 Your eyes have seen what Jehovah did because of Baal-peor; for all the men that follow Baal-peor, Jehovah thy God hath destroyed them from the midst of thee. 4 But ye that did cleave unto Jehovah your God are alive every one of you this day.

##### b. RESPECT OF THE NATIONS (4:5-8)

5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as Jehovah my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the midst of the land whither ye go in to possess it. 6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. 7 For what great nation is there, that hath a god so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is whensoever we call upon him? 8 And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:1-8

66. What relationship was there between the statutes of Jehovah and the possession of the land?
67. Name two possible reasons (excuses) for adding to the word of God.
68. Who was "Baal-peor"? What happened to him?
69. How did Moses accomplish the monumental task of teaching the whole nation of Israel?
70. What was the cause or reason for the respect from other nations? Name three nations thus affected.
71. What one quality of Jehovah especially appealed to the other nations?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:1-8

Now listen and give heed, O Israel, to the statutes and ordinances which I teach you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, gives you.

2 You shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

3 Your eyes still see what the Lord did because of Baal-peor; for all the men who followed the Baal of Peor the Lord your God has destroyed from among you; [Num. 25:1-9.]

4 But you who clung fast to the Lord your God are alive, every one of you, this day.

5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land which you are entering to possess.

6 So keep them and do them; for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

7 For what great nation is there who has a god so near to them as the Lord our God is to us in all things for which we call upon Him?

8 And what large and important nation has statutes and ordinances so upright and just as all this law which I set before you today?

## COMMENT 4:1-8

Prosperity and the respect of the nations round about—what else could a nation desire for its faithfulness? It was all promised—and during those relatively few years in Israel's history when they *did* turn wholeheartedly to God, these blessings immediately followed. But how much more often was Israel rather in near poverty, and the laughing-stock of the nations—all because of his disobedience and faithlessness!

How our own nation needs to heed this lesson. Recently, many reports have come back to our country of the low esteem with which our country is held by other nations. A Russian leader, upon visiting Hollywood, said his atheistic country had higher morals than ours. American tourists and servicemen abroad are known, far too often, for their licentiousness and immorality rather than their devotion to the Christ of God. Can America any longer be called, even by stretching the imagination, a "Christian" nation? Obviously not. And yet, this is our

hypocritical claim. There is only one possible end of such a nation—the curse of God and degradation in the eyes of other nations. May we, too, remember that Israel became “a hiss and a byword” of the nations round about. And why? Because God’s law and works were *forgotten!*

HEARKEN . . . DO THEM: THAT YE MAY LIVE (v. 1)—A necessity for God’s smile upon our lives, whether under the Old Testament or New. We must first give diligence to *know* and *understand* God’s law; but after that we have a *moral* and *spiritual* responsibility of OBEDIENCE. Again and again is this responsibility enjoined in Deuteronomy. Moses’ words were more than those of a mere informative lecture—he was preaching a sermon!

YE SHALL NOT ADD UNTO THE WORD . . . NEITHER DIMINISH (v. 2)  
—Cf. 12:32. This has been God’s law in all ages: Prov. 30:5,6, Rev. 22:18,19. His law is perfect and complete: Ps. 19:7, 119:160, II Tim. 3:16,17; Jas. 1:25, supplying, through Christ, “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (II Pet. 1:3). To add to it is to mar its perfection—and to usurp the place of God, the giver of light and truth.

YOUR EYES HAVE SEEN WHAT JEHOVAH DID BECAUSE OF BAAL-PEOR (v. 3)—See Num. 25:1-13. The memory of that recent event, with the plague that followed killing twenty-four thousand Israelites, must surely have been fresh in their minds.

Baal, the sun god, was worshipped in the Canaanite countries “under two aspects, beneficent and destructive. On the one hand he gave light and warmth to his worshippers; on the other hand the fierce heats of summer destroyed the vegetation he had himself brought into being. Hence human victims were sacrificed to him in order to appease his anger in time of plague or other trouble, the victim being usually the firstborn of the sacrificer and being burnt alive” (I.S.B.E.).

The names of Baal took on different forms in different localities, as also did his worship. Each locality had its own Baal or divine “Lord” who often took his name from the city or place to which he belonged. So here we have Baal-Peor, the god of the Moabite mountains, who took his name from mount Peor (Num. 23:28). His worship, as often in the case of idolatry, was accompanied by sensual rites. As recorded in Numbers, Moab and Midian were in league against Israel at this time. The Midianitish women, through the counsel of Balaam, the backslidden prophet, had induced many men of Israel to sin. Thus Moses says, “Have ye saved all the [Midianitish] women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against Jehovah



in the matter of Peor, and so the plague was among the congregation of Jehovah<sup>b</sup> (Num. 31:15,16).

KEEP THEREFORE AND DO THEM; FOR THIS IS YOUR WISDOM AND YOUR UNDERSTANDING IN THE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLES (v. 6)—Even nations that would themselves reject the law Israel espoused, would nevertheless respect the people who faithfully kept it. They would say, SURELY THIS GREAT NATION IS A WISE AND UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE (v. 6)—*if* they kept the law of God and served him with all their heart (6:5).

## 2. THE TEMPTATION TO FORGET GOD'S UNIQUE REVELATION (4:9-31)

### a. GOD APPEARED AT HOREB BY WORD, NOT BY PHYSICAL FORM (4:9-14)

9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes saw, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but make them known unto thy children and thy children's children; 10 the day that thou stoodest before Jehovah thy God in Horeb, when Jehovah said unto me, Assemble me the people, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. 12 And Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form; only *ye heard* a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14 And Jehovah commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:9-14

72. How would one fulfill the injunction to "keep thy soul diligently"?
73. Is there a difference between "the soul" and "the heart"? Discuss.
74. What is meant in the expression "they may learn to *fear* me"?
75. Why was it necessary to use the physical manifestations of darkness, cloud, fire, earthquake.
76. How shall we understand references to God's "face" and "back" in Numbers 33:17-23, i.e., in light of the fact that God has not form?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:9-14

9 Only take heed, and guard your life diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen and lest they depart from your [mind and] heart all the days of your life; teach them to your children, and your children's children;

10 Especially how on the day that you stood before the Lord your God in Horeb, the Lord said to me, Gather the people together to Me, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn (reverently) to fear Me all the days they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.

11 And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire to the heart of Heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick gloom.

12 And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the voice of the words, but saw no form; there was only a voice.

13 And He declared to you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, the ten commandments; and He wrote them on two tables of stone.

14 And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and precepts, that you might do them in the land which you are going over to possess.

## COMMENT 4:9-14

TAKE HEED TO THYSELF, AND KEEP THY SOUL DILIGENTLY (v. 9)—  
Note the personal responsibility! "Take heed to thyself . . ." (I Tim. 4:16, Cf. Acts 20:28).

LEST THOU FORGET THE THINGS WHICH THINE EYES SAW (v. 9)—  
Another exhortation that is also given time and again as we proceed in this book. How easy to forget the blessings and chastisements of God, simply by not being *reminded* of them, or not making them known to the present generation.

These people had *seen* and *experienced* many miraculous and wonderful blessings from God. Their clothes and shoes did not wear out; their food was provided by God each day; the ones who had been young when they left Egypt had seen his powerful hand as they crossed the Red Sea, and again as they were encamped at mount Sinai (v. 10). The plagues God brought upon them for their disobedience should also have been vividly remembered. But how very quickly it was all forgotten! See II Pet. 1:9, 13 3:1.

BUT MAKE THEM KNOWN UNTO THY CHILDREN (v. 9)—See 6:4-9, 11:18-21

AND THE MOUNTAIN [SINAI] BURNED WITH FIRE UNTO THE HEART OF HEAVEN (v. 11)—See 5:5, Ex. 19:18, 20:18, Heb. 12:18.

YE HEARD THE VOICE OF WORDS, BUT YE SAW NO FORM (v. 12, see also v. 15)—No one has ever seen God, who is spirit: Jn. 1:18, 6:46, I Tim. 6:16, Heb. 11:27, I Jn. 4:12,13. The above scriptures are plain and outspoken on this point, and we take such expressions as God's "face" and "back" with reference to the events on Sinai (Ex. 33:17-23) to be anthropomorphic or figurative—especially when the Holy Spirit *here* expressly states with reference to it that "ye saw no form."

b. WARNING AGAINST MAKING PHYSICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GOD OR GODS (4:15-24)

15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of form on the day that Jehovah spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; 16 lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flieth in the heavens, 18 the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth; 19 and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, thou be drawn away and worship them, and serve them, which Jehovah thy God hath allotted unto all the peoples under the whole heaven. 20 But Jehovah hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as at this day. 21 Furthermore Jehovah was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over the Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance: 22 but I must die in this land, I must not go over the Jordan; but ye shall go over, and possess that good land. 23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image in the form of any thing which Jehovah thy God hath forbidden thee. 24 For Jehovah thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:15-24

77. After hearing Jehovah God and participating in His power and provision, how could these people possibly make a likeness of man or woman and worship it?
78. Why was Moses so elaborate in his prohibitions against idolatry?
79. What is involved in the expression "iron furnace"? Does this mean the Israelites worked in iron furnaces in Egypt?
80. Once again: Does Moses blame Israel for his sin? Cf. Verse 21.
81. What promised punishment was given for those who forget the covenant of God? Cf. verse 24.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:15-24

15 Therefore take good heed to yourselves; since you saw no form of Him on the day the Lord spoke to you on Horeb out of the midst of the fire,

16 Beware lest you become corrupt by making for yourself [to worship] a graven image in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female,

17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, or of any winged fowl that flies in the air,

18 The likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, or of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth.

19 And beware lest you lift up your eyes to the heavens, and when you see the sun, moon, and stars, even all the host of the heavens, you be drawn away and worship them and serve them, things which the Lord your God has allotted to all nations under the whole heavens.

20 But the Lord has taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be to Him a people of his own possession, as this day.

21 Furthermore the Lord was angry with me because of you, and He swore that I should not go over the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land, which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.

22 But I must die in this land, I must not cross the Jordan; but you shall go over and possess that good land.

23 Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which He made with you, and make you a graven image in the form of anything, which the Lord your God has forbidden you.

24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

## COMMENT 4:15-24

YE SAW NO MANNER OF FORM (v. 15)—See under v. 12.

LEST YE CORRUPT YOURSELVES, AND MAKE YOU A GRAVEN IMAGE IN THE FORM OF ANY FIGURE (v. 16)—They saw no form of any kind—no physical representation of God whatever—thus were given no “excuse” for making any type of image.

Note the list of living things and other objects Israel is forbidden to worship (vv. 16-19):

(1) “the likeness of male or female” (v. 16)—idols were often of both sexes; e.g. in Egypt, Osiris and Isis; in Canaan, Baal and Astarte.

(2) “the likeness of any beast” (v. 17)—How could Israel forget the golden calf at Sinai? And the calves of Jeroboam are a later example.

(3) “the likeness of any winged bird” (v. 17)—Horus, the hawk, was worshipped in ancient Egypt. The ibis and the crane were also deified.

(4) “. . . the likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground” (v. 18)—the crocodile, frog, and beetle were worshipped in Egypt. The serpent was frequently worshipped in ancient times—“the most universally revered of all creatures” (I.S.B.E.). Israel’s brazen serpent was erected at God’s command to stay the plague (Num. 21:8). But when it later became an object of worship, Hezekiah destroyed it (II K. 18:1-8).

(5) “the likeness of any fish” (v. 18)—In Egypt, all the fish of the Nile river were deified. And the Philistine’s god Dagon was represented in figures that were half man, half fish.

(6) “sun . . . moon . . . stars” (v. 19)—Objects of worship in many ancient nations: “in the earliest Egyptian texts the sun appears as divine and the moon as “the bull among the stars” (I.S.B.E.). Ra was the sun-god, and in other forms worshipped as Khepera and Atmu. Then there was Nut, the god of the heavens, and her husband Geb; Shu, the god of space, etc. Similar gods existed among the Babylonians, while Baal was the sun-god of Canaan and surrounding nations. The name “Sunday” comes to us from the Teutons, who held the first day of the week as sacred to the sun. The ancient Greeks believed that the sun god Apollo drove the sun chariot through the sky . . . So we could continue through the cultures of the Incas of Peru, Persia, northern India, Scandanavia, the Mayas, peoples of Central and South America, and the American Indian. For obvious reasons, the sun seems especially to have been worshipped by agricultural peoples.

The worship of the moon is prominently illustrated in Ur of the

Chaldees, where the Ziggurat, the huge temple-tower erected for its worship, has been unearthed by archaeologists.

BROUGHT YOU FORTH OUT OF THE IRON FURNACE, OF EGYPT (v. 20)  
 —See also I K. 8:51, Jer. 11:4. "From this mention of the word *iron furnace* there can be little doubt that the Israelites were employed in Egypt in the most laborious works of *metallurgy*. Digging, smelting, and forging of *iron* in so hot a climate must have been oppressive work indeed" (Clarke). Others would make this "iron furnace figurative. 'The 'iron furnace' is used metaphorically for affliction, chastisement (Deut. 4:20; Ezek. 22:18-22)"—I.S.B.E. We do, indeed have brass and iron used figuratively of barrenness in 28:23, 24, and a "yoke of iron" is used in 28:48 to picture slavery or bondage. But even if we have here a figurative expression, it must have been a figure with which Israel was familiar. The argument that iron was not a well-known metal at this time is not valid. In 3:11 we saw that Og's bedstead was cast of iron, and Josh. 17:16, 18 the Canaanites are not only said to have had chariots of iron, but to have had them in great numbers.

I MUST NOT GO OVER THE JORDAN (v. 22)—See under 1:37.

c. PUNISHMENT FOR IDOLATRY: BANISHMENT  
 FROM THE LAND (4:25-28)

25 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have been long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image in the form of any thing, and shall do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, to provoke him to anger; 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over the Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. 27 And Jehovah will scatter you among the peoples, and ye shall be left few in number among the nations, whither Jehovah shall lead you away. 28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat nor smell.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:25-28

82. Please notice the use of the words "corrupt yourselves," as related to the wholeness of man. To depart from God is to involve oneself in the deterioration of the whole self.
83. Are we to conclude that physical prosperity is a by-product of obedience to God? Discuss.

84. Isn't there irony in vs. 28? i.e. in the object of the service of God's people.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:25-28

25 When children shall be born to you, and children's children, and you have grown old in the land, if you corrupt yourselves by making a graven image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the Lord your God, provoking Him to anger.

26 I call Heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you shall soon utterly perish from off the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess; you will not live long upon it, but will be utterly destroyed.

27 And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations to which the Lord will drive you.

28 There you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

COMMENT 4:25-28

JEHOVAH WILL SCATTER YOU AMONG THE PEOPLES (v. 27)—Cf. 28:64, 29:25-28. See also our comments and more complete discussion under 28:7 ff.

YE SHALL SERVE GODS, THE WORK OF MEN'S HANDS, WOOD AND STONE (v. 28)—In contrast to the one, true, invisible, *living* God, who is spirit (Jn. 4:24). Moses had just emphasized the living nature of the invisible God, v. 12 (where see references), v. 15.

d. REPENTANCE WILL REVEAL GOD'S GRACE (4:29-31)

29 But from thence ye shall seek Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt find him, when thou searchest after him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. 30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days thou shalt return to Jehovah thy God, and hearken unto his voice: 31 for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God; he will not fail thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:29-31

85. Are verses 25-28 a prophesy of banishment from Palestine? Are verses 29-31 a promise of return? When fulfilled?
86. Just what is meant in vs. 29 in the expression "finding God"?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:29-31

29 But if from there you will seek [inquire of and require as necessity] the Lord your God, you will find Him, if you [truly] seek Him with all your heart (and mind) and soul and life.

30 When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, if you turn to the Lord your God, and are obedient to His voice,

31 For the Lord your God is a merciful God, he will not fail you, or destroy you, or forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

## COMMENT 4:29-31

WITH ALL THY HEART AND WITH ALL THY SOUL (v. 29)—Such has always and ever will be necessary before the Lord is pleased. God demands the *entire being*—every fibre—and is never satisfied with anything less. Note that this is an *Old Testament concept* as well as New, See 6:4, 5; 10:12, 13; Cf. Luke 10:27, Rom. 12:1.

### 3. THE GLORY AND GREATNESS OF ISRAEL'S GOD (4:32-40)

32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been *any such thing* as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? 33 Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? 34 Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that Jehovah your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is God; there is none else beside him. 36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he made thee to see his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt; 38 to drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as at this day. 39 Know therefore this day, and lay it to thy heart, that



Jehovah he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else. 40 And thou shalt keep his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days in the land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, for ever.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:32-40

87. Why "ask now for the days that are past"?
88. What was peculiarly unique about God's dealings with Israel? Name three.
89. What several purposes were accomplished in delivering Israel from Egypt?
90. The giving of the law on mount Sinai is very graphically described here, please note verse 36.
91. Please review your own past life and review three incidents that encourage you to trust God for the future.
92. What benefits occur to the faithful? Read verse 40 for an answer.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:32-40

32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of the heavens to the other, whether any such a great thing as this has ever occurred or been heard of anywhere?

33 Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you heard, and live?

34 Or has God ever tried to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 To you it was shown, that you might realize and have personal knowledge that the Lord is God; there is no other besides Him.

36 Out of Heaven He made you hear His voice, that He might correct, discipline and admonish you; and on earth He made you see His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire.

37 And because He loved your fathers, He chose their descendants after them, and brought you out with His own presence, by His mighty power from Egypt,

38 Driving out nations from before you, greater and mightier than yourselves, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as this day;

39 Know, recognize and understand therefore this day, and turn your [mind and] heart to it, that the Lord is God in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath; there is no other.

40 Therefore you shall keep His statutes and His commandments, which I command you this day, that it may go well with you and your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God gives you for ever.

### COMMENT 4:32-40

God's glory and greatness are revealed here in several ways:

- a. His dealings with Israel are unique (vv. 32-34, 36)
- b. He is the *only* true and living God (vv. 35, 39)
- c. He has loved and chosen Israel (v. 37)
- d. He has preserved them (v. 38)
- e. He offers a blessed future (v. 40)

All of these truths argued for Israel's faithfulness! No other nation had such advantages and blessings as *they*. With every blessing and advantage God gives us, a divine responsibility is in our hands to use such to his glory. It was so then, it is so now.

ASK NOW OF THE DAYS THAT ARE PAST (v. 32)—Cf. 32:7. Look back into your own history, yea, go back even to the creation of man, and *see* how he has dealt with his own people. It will do you good. It will edify your soul. You will see that God's own people have always been the object of special privileges, mercies, and blessings.

Such meditation and reflection is also profitable for every Christian. "Ask now of the days that are past"—look back into the pages of scripture, and then down through history, and even into your *own* past, and see if it is not true that you have not been blessed abundantly by the hand of God.

DID EVER A PEOPLE HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD SPEAKING . . . AND LIVE? (v. 33)—"It seems to have been a general belief that if God *appeared* to men, it was for the purpose of destroying them; and indeed most of the extraordinary manifestations of God were in the way of *judgment*; but here it was different; God did appear in a sovereign and extra-ordinary manner; but it was for the deliverance and support of the people. 1. They heard his voice speaking with them in a distinct, articulate manner. 2. They saw the fire, the symbol of his presence, the appearances of which demonstrated it to be supernatural. 3. Notwithstanding God appeared so terrible, yet no person was destroyed, for he came, not to *destroy*, but to *save*." (Clarke)

UNTO THEE IT WAS SHOWED, THAT THOU MIGHTEST KNOW THAT JEHOVAH HE IS GOD: THERE IS NONE ELSE (v. 35)—Note also v. 39. This conclusion *should* have been obvious from all the many wonderful and mighty works God had performed in their presence, from the time of their deliverance from Egypt to the present hour. Both the Egyptians and Israel should have seen the uniqueness and power of the one true God when Israel was delivered from bondage (Ex. 8:10, 9:14). And when one thinks of the constant and continual display of miracles from God Israel viewed in the wilderness, we stand amazed that they would no sooner cross the Jordan than be engrossed in the basest idolatry. But has it changed much today? How often and how quickly have those who have received the greatest blessings gone back to the pit from which they were digged and the rock from whence they were hewn!

THAT THOU MAYEST PROLONG THY DAYS IN THE LAND (v. 40)—That is, that they as a nation would not be conquered or exterminated by a foreign power. See 5:33. Moses has primary reference here to a long *national* life, rather than a long *individual* life. But, (as in 4:1, 5:16; Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:3) the concept of a long individual life may also be implied. The whole idea of the above verses is that if Israel would be *obedient*, there would be peace, prosperity, and health for God's people. This thought is expressed often in Deuteronomy (8:1, 16:20, etc.)

### APPENDIX: APPOINTMENT OF EASTERN CITIES OF REFUGE (4:41-43)

41 Then Moses set apart three cities beyond the Jordan toward the sunrising; 42 that the manslayer might flee thither, that slayeth his neighbor unawares, and hated him not in time past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live: 43 *namely*, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, for the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, for the Manassites.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:41-43

93. Read Numbers 35:9-15 and Deuteronomy 19:1-13 and Joshua 20:1-6 to help in understanding these verses.
94. In what sense are these verses an appendix?
95. State briefly the reason for the cities of refuge.
96. Do we have a city of refuge for protection against spiritual death?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:41-43

41 Then Moses set apart three cities [of refuge] beyond the Jordan to the east,

42 That the manslayer might flee there, who slay his neighbor unintentionally, and had not previously been at enmity with him, that fleeing to one of the cities he might save his life:

43 Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland for the Reubenites, and Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

COMMENT<sup>r</sup> 4:41-43

We have called this section an appendix because of its obvious parenthetical nature. Moses gives instruction concerning all six of the cities of refuge in Chapter 19, and from what is said *there* it appears that that passage comes before this one chronologically. The phrase "Then Moses set apart . . ." etc. would then simply be understood to mean *at the time Israel was still on the plains of Moab* and before their leader's death, the east side refuge-cities were set aside.

As the above verses stand, however, it certainly appears that the phrase "Then Moses set apart . . ." etc. is where it is for an obvious reason—to specify that at *this* time (between the first and second discourses) these cities were set apart by Moses.

Many suppose that not only these verses, but vv. 44-49 are the work of a later editor. Clarke states: "I SUPPOSE the last nine verses of this chapter to have been added by either Joshua or Ezra." (See the special studies at the conclusion of this volume on the subject of "editing.") There is nothing to *necessitate*, however, the assumption that some other than Moses wrote these lines. The fact that he speaks of himself does not pose as a barrier, for he does this throughout the book (v. 44, 5:1, 27:1, 11, etc.) unless, of course, we consider all such statements "editorial additions."

The reason for the appointment of these cities is given in 19:1-13 and Num. 35:9-15. There were three on each side of the Jordan. They were not designed for the permanent exile of murderer, but as a refuge till he could stand before the congregation for judgment. After the death of the high priest, the man who slayed another "unwittingly" could return to his own city (Ex. 21:13, Josh. 20:1-6).

The west-side cities are named in Josh. 20:7: Kedesh in Galilee of Naphtail, Shechem in Ephraim, and Kiriath-Arba (Hebron) in Judah.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR

*Exhortations to obedience, 1. Nothing to be added to or taken from the testimonies of God, 2. The people are exhorted to recollect how God had destroyed the ungodly among them, 3; and preserved those who were faithful, 4. The excellence of the Divine law, 5, 6. No nation in the world could boast of any such statutes, judgments, &c., 7, 8. They are exhorted to obedience by the wonderful manifestations of God in their behalf, 9-13. Moses exhorts them to beware of idolatry, and to make no likeness of any thing in heaven or earth as an object of adoration, 14-20. He informs them that he must die in that land as God had refused to let him go into the promised land, being angry with him on their account, 21, 22. Repeats his exhortation to obedience, 23, 24. Predicts the judgments of God against them, should they turn to idolatry, 25-28. Promises of God's mercy to the penitent, 29-31. The grand and unparalleled privileges of the Israelites, 32-40. Moses severs three cities on the east side of Jordan for cities of refuge, 41, 42. Their names, 43. When and where Moses gave these statutes and judgments to Israel, 44-49.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON FOUR (4:1-43)

1. In the forepart of this lesson (vv. 1-8) two great blessings are promised if Israel is obedient. Do you remember them?
2. What was the Baal-peor incident, and how was it punished?
3. What did Israel *not* see when they heard the voice of God at Sinai?
4. In this lesson Israel was forbidden to worship all sorts of things in the heavens or upon the earth. Which of the various forms of idolatry mentioned, do you think offered the strongest temptation? Why?
5. God's graciousness toward Israel was assured if they would repent. Repent to *what extent* (v. 29)?
6. In vv. 32-40 we discussed how the glory and greatness of God was revealed to Israel. Five ways were mentioned. Can you recall at least three?
7. What effect should the miracles have had upon Israel (v. 34, 35)?
8. What baseless fear did Israel have when they heard the voice of God?
9. Explain the true purpose of the cities of refuge.

## LESSON FIVE 4:44—6:3

### II. THE SECOND DISCOURSE

The Law of God (4:44—26:19)

#### INTRODUCTION (4:44-49)

##### POSITION OF ISRAEL; SUMMARY OF CONQUESTS

44 And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel: 45 these are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, when they came forth out of Egypt, 46 beyond the Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, when they came forth out of Egypt. 47 And they took his land in possession, and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan toward the sunrising; 48 from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, even unto mount Sion (the same is Hermon), 49 and all the Arabah beyond the Jordan eastward, even unto the sea of the Arabah, under the slopes of Pisgah.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:44-49

97. What is the purpose of these verses?
98. Please notice that verses 44, 45 introduce and 46 to 49 review. What is introduced? What is reviewed?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:44-49

44 This is the law which Moses set before the Israelites;

45 These are the testimonies, and the laws and the precepts, which Moses spoke to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt,

46 Beyond the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the Israelites smote when they came out of Egypt.

47 And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, who lived beyond the Jordan to the east;

48 From Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, as far as Mount Sirion (that is, Hermon),

49 And all the Arabah (lowlands) beyond the Jordan eastward, as far as the Sea of Arabah [The Dead Sea], under the slopes and springs of Pisgah.

## COMMENT 4:44-49

IN THE VALLEY OVER AGAINST BETH-PEOR (v. 46)—See 1:1, 5; 3:29. Literally, the name signifies "house of Peor"—i.e. Baal-Peor. The name is in memory of the Moabite god, in whose lascivious worship Israel was earlier involved. See notes under 3:12-17.

ALL THE ARABAH (v. 49)—See 1:1, notes. Here the section of that area is specified as "beyond Jordan eastward . . ."

SEA OF ARABAH (v. 49)—That is, the Dead or Salt Sea.

UNDER THE SLOPES OF PISGAH (v. 49)—Or Nebo, Cf. 34:1. See notes under 3:17, 27.

Israel's conquests over Og and Sihon, given here in summary form, are described more fully in 2:26-3:22. You should review that section if you are not already familiar with it.

## A. THE NATURE, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVENANT MADE AT SINAI (5:1—11:32)

### 1. THE TEN WORDS REVIEWED (5:1—6:3)

#### a. THE COMMANDMENTS GIVEN (5:1-21)

And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Hear O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and observe to do them. 2 Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. 4 Jehovah spake with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, 5 (I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to show you the word of Jehovah: for ye were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the mount:) saying,

6 I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

7 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

8 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, *nor* any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 9 thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and

upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me; 10 and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

11 Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain: for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that take this name in vain.

12 Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee. 13 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

16 Honor thy father and thy mother, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee; that thy days may be long, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

17 Thou shalt not kill.

18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

19 Neither shalt thou steal.

20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor.

21 Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's wife; neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbor's.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:1-21

99. Please read Exodus the twentieth chapter to give an adequate background for this text.
100. What distinction is there in "statutes, ordinances, and commandments"?
101. Who is involved in the pronoun "us" in verse 27?
102. Jehovah did give the ten commandments to the fathers of the very persons to whom Moses spoke. How are we to understand verse 3?
103. Read the account in Exodus to provide an understanding of just how we are to understand the expression "spake with you face to face . . . out of the midst of the fire."
104. What one great lesson did God want to teach Israel by their sojourn in "the house of bondage"?



105. Examine carefully every word of the first commandment as an example: "Thou"—who is involved here? Is this just a commandment for the nation of Israel? "shalt have" does this mean they had formerly worshiped more than one God? etc.
106. Is there some difference between an "image" and a "likeness"? Just what is a *graven* image?
107. Is the second commandment a prohibition against all sculpture? Discuss.
108. How is iniquity associated with idol worship?
109. Is verse nine natural or supernatural in the promise of punishment?
110. Someone said, "I do not even know when I am cursing; it has become such a part fo my vocabulary that I use it unconsciously." Is this a violation of the third commandment?
111. Why did God command Israel to keep the Sabbath day?
112. Does the Christian have any reason for keeping the Sabbath day? Discuss.
113. How could longevity possibly be linked with honoring parents?
114. Does God forbid killing under any and all conditions?
115. Are all forms of stealing condemned?
116. What is a briefer form of stating commandment number nine?
117. It would be interesting to list these same ten commandments in a positive form; instead of "Thou shalt not" try "Thou shalt."
118. Does the tenth commandment forbid lustful thoughts concerning thy neighbor's wife?
119. Which commandment would be the easiest to observe?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 5:1-21

And Moses called all Israel, and said to them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances which I speak in your hearing this day, that you may learn them, and take heed and do them.

2 The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

3 The Lord made this covenant not with our fathers, with us, who are all of us here alive this day.

4 The Lord spoke with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire.

5 I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the mount. He said,

6 I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

7 You shall have no other gods before Me or besides me.

8 You shall not make for yourself [to worship] a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

9 You shall not bow down yourself to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

10 And showing mercy and steadfast love to thousands and to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

11 You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in falsehood or without purpose.

12 Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.

13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work;

14 But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the stranger or sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.

15 And (earnestly) remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe and take heed to the sabbath day.

16 Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

17 You shall not murder.

18 Neither shall you commit adultery.

19 Neither shall you act slyly or steal.

20 Neither shall you witness falsely against your neighbor.

21 Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife, nor desire your neighbor's house, his field, his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

### COMMENT 5:1-21

This section cannot properly be appreciated without reviewing the first giving of these commandments at Sinai, as recorded in Exodus 20.

Much of what we could say by way of comment (on the ten commandments, particularly) belongs more correctly, perhaps, in a study of Exodus. However, these words have particular significance *in view of Israel's present condition and location*, (See the Introduction, II.), and it is with this in mind that the remarks below are offered.

**JEHOVAH . . . MADE A COVENANT WITH US IN HOREB (v. 2)**—The reference is primarily to the ten commandments, 4:12, 13. Along with these were "statutes and ordinances" (2:14, 5:1)—a more inclusive term (See Ex. 21:1). In what way was it "with us"? The previous generation of numbered Israelites had died (2:14). The covenant nevertheless applied to *all Israel*. Israel was assembled at Sinai, Israel was assembled on the plains of Moab.

**JEHOVAH MADE NOT THIS COVENANT WITH OUR FATHERS (v. 3)**—What fathers? Obviously, the law *had* been given to their literal fathers, for most of those now hearing Moses' words were the sons and daughters of those who had died in the wilderness. "Fathers" sometimes refers to "forefathers" in the scripture, and it could have such significance here. Moffatt and Meek translate "not with our forefathers . . ." The law given at Sinai had *not* been given to their progenitors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.\* "Fathers" *can* refer back several generations and often does in Deuteronomy. See 1:8, 4:37, 9:5, 10:22, 29:13, 30:20 (where note that the Abrahamic covenant *was* made with their "fathers"—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That covenant was made with their forefathers; this one was not). See also such passages as Josh. 24:15 and Jn. 8:39. Moses then is saying, God made this covenant with *you* (Israel)—and not with your forefathers. You were its first recipients. See Neh. 9:13-15, and notes below.

Another explanation, however, is preferred by many. That is, to understand v. 3 to be simply saying, "Jehovah *not only* made this covenant with your own fathers, but with *us*, even *us*—we who are all here alive this very day." The covenant was, indeed, *made* with their literal fathers and mothers. "But," Moses is saying "not just with *them*. It was also made with every one of you!" The covenant was with

\*This is obvious in scripture—in spite of the insistence of some that such commandments as keeping the sabbath were given long before the exodus. ". . . the sabbath was kept by Adam in his innocense in holy Eden; by Adam, fallen yet repentant, when he was driven from his happy estate. It was kept by all the patriarchs, from Abel to righteous Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob. When the chosen people were in bondage in Egypt, many, in the midst of prevailing idolatry, lost their knowledge of God's law . . ." (*The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White, p. 51 Pacific Press, 1944 edition.)

Israel as a nation, not just its original recipients. "He [Moses] means, Jehovah made a covenant not with our fathers only, or specially, but with us also" (McGarvey). (Clarke's rendering is almost identical.) Instructions or commandments to their fathers were instructions or commandments to *them*. So in v. 15 he could say to the *present* generation, "thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt" etc. And 6:20-24 ". . . We were Pharaoh's bondmen" etc.

JEHOVAH SPAKE WITH YOU FACE TO FACE IN THE MOUNT (v. 4) —A figurative expression for God's miraculous manifestations to Israel at Sinai (Ex. 19:9-11, 16-19; 20:18-21. Cf. Deut. 4:33, 36). No other nation had such a privilege.

NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME (v. 7)—Margin, *besides me*. Not no other gods ahead of me, for that infers that Jehovah God tolerates others, just so he is first. "Ye shall not make *other gods* with me; gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you" (Ex. 20:23). It might be well to note here that the New Testament forbids making a god or object of worship of *anything earthly*: Philip. 3:18, 19; Col. 3:5, I Tim. 6:10, 17; I Cor. 6:12-14.

VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN, AND UPON THE THIRD AND UPON THE FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME (v. 9)—Cf. Ex. 34:6, 7. This passage is not speaking of *final* or *eternal* guilt. It is speaking of the effect of one's sin through several generations. It was a civil law in Israel that "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (24:16). Will God have a less equitable sense of justice in the final day? Our Righteous Father judges as we *should* judge—individually. This is abundantly taught in such passages as Ezek. the 18th chapter, and in the New Testament, in Matt. 16:27, II Cor. 5:10, Eph. 6:7-9, Col. 3:22-25, I Pet. 1:17, Rom. 14:10-12.

How, then do we explain the righteousness of God in such cases as his commanding Israel to execute Achan's entire family (Josh. 7:22-26), including "his sons and his daughters"? We do not know, in that case, but that his family was an accomplice in his crime. The "loot" was hidden in the family tent—rather hard to conceal!

God, however, *did* sometimes punish entire groups with death. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were destroyed with "their wives, and their sons, and their little ones" (Num. 16:25-35). And we have just read how Israel was commanded to destroy the native tribes "with the women

and the little ones" (2:34). These latter verses, I believe, form a parallel to the passage now under consideration. Many who were destroyed in Korah's rebellion and in the extermination of the Canaanite tribes were probably *innocent* themselves—but suffered *physical death* because of their parent's sin. The Canaanite tribes were being banished for their *own* evil, as well as "making way" for Israel (Gen. 15:16, and under 9:4).

We conclude that through the ages and even to the present day, children and other innocent parties may suffer physical death as a result of their parent's or other's sins. This may be the will of God. But final and eternal judgment is on a strictly individual basis, and no one will be in hell eternally who has not gone there *on their own volition*. See further under 24:16.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF JEHOVAH THY GOD IN VAIN (v. 11)—Not here a prohibition of swearing by or to Jehovah's name *per se*, but of using his honorable name with lightness, levity, or without keeping an oath made to him. See 6:13, 10:20. But Jesus taught "Swear not at all . . ." (Matt. 5:33-37), and James taught, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment" (Jas. 5:12).

The Hebrew word for "vain" (*SHAV*) is rendered by Baumgartner's Lexicon here as meaning "name a name without reason, vainly; misuse a name," and by Gesenius' Lexicon as "specifically *falsehood, a lie*," translating here: 'utter not the name of Jehovah upon a falsehood,' do not swear falsely, compare Psalms 24:4, Isa. 1:13.

This commandment, of course, has broad and far-reaching implications relative to our use of the name of God. Adam Clarke's comment, made many years ago of conditions in Britain, is still very much in order: "Is it necessary to say to any truly spiritual mind, that all such interjections as *God! my God! good Heavens! & c., & c.*, are formal positive breaches of this law? How many pass for *Christians* are highly criminal here!"

OBSERVE THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY (v. 12)—a law that had the most severe punishment if broken, Ex. 16:29, 30; 31:14-17, 35:2, 3; Num. 15:32-36. Present day sabbath-day advocates must, of necessity, keep the sabbath *as the Bible directs*, or not keep it at all. Anything less is inconsistent. See below.

AND THOU SHALT REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A SERVANT IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND JEHOVAH . . . BROUGHT THEE OUT . . . THEREFORE JEHOVAH THY GOD COMMANDED THEE TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY (v. 15)—One of many scriptures which shows this law was only given to *Israel*. See also v. 2 and notes. The sabbath was *in commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt*. Thus, its observance by the Patriarchs (v. 2) was *impossible*—for the historical event it commemorated had not yet come to pass! Nor would its observance have any significance to *any other* nation! The sabbath was a *national* law of Israel “made known” at Sinai as an institution (Neh. 9:13, 14) and *never* observed before Exodus 16 in the wilderness of Sin. Cf. also 4:12, 13. To Israel, and Israel alone was this law given—Ex. 31:13, Ezek. 20:10-12. The word “sabbath” is not mentioned before the 16th chapter of Exodus, and it is obvious from the above phrase that no people were commanded to keep it who were not Israelites! How could the sabbath commemorate deliverance from Egypt before such a deliverance was a fact?

In Genesis 2:3, Moses, writing from somewhere in the wilderness or perhaps on these very plains of Moab, can say that “God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.” *When* was it hallowed? Some (Alexander Campbell was among them) think it was hallowed *then*—that is, at creation. But in the light of *this* verse, as well as v. 2 and what is said in Exodus, such a position becomes untenable. Genesis 2:3, we believe, is a literary prolepsis. The statement made by Moses in Genesis was written after it had become historical fact at Sinai. It was now a fact—a very recent and prominent one in Israel’s history. And Moses tells us the seventh day was chosen because God rested on that day or epoch when the world was being formed. (See C. C. Crawford’s first volume on Genesis, pp. 362-370 in this very series). The Jewish people needed to know why God chose to memorialize the seventh day of the week rather than one of the other six days. And it was to be observed as a *memorial* of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Crawford puts it “We have in Genesis *the reason why the particular day of the week was chosen!* We have in Deuteronomy *what the day was chosen for*, that is, what it was divinely intended to memorialize.” In regard to the phrase, “And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah brought you out . . . Therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day” (v. 15). McGarvey states, “The motive presented for

keeping the sabbath, that Jehovah had delivered them from servitude in Egypt, was an appeal to their sense of gratitude. It was not given as the reason why God had sanctified the seventh day, but as a reason why *Israel should observe it*: 'therefore Jehovah thy God *commanded thee* to keep the sabbath day.' The reason why God had *blessed* the seventh day, because in creation he had rested on the seventh day, had been given in Exodus [Ex. 20:11] and so far as it furnished a reason for keeping the sabbath, it was a reason applicable to all men. Moses, without repeating that, gives Israel a special reason why they should keep it, whether others did or not; and the reason is, gratitude to God for giving them rest from the servitude in Egypt. It was easy for every one who heard him, and who had ever heard or read the original commandment [as given at Sinai], to see that at this point he was not quoting the commandment, but adding a motive for its observance."\*

And, as we have just seen, Israel was, in fact, the only *nation* divinely instructed to keep the sabbath. If others (strangers or foreigners) *joined* Israel, they, too, would be under Israel's law—the law of God. See 31:12, 13, but especially Num. 9:14, 15:14-16, 29, Lev. 24:22. This would, of course, include the keeping of the sabbath. But other nations, as such, were never given the sabbath. *They could not commemorate a miraculous deliverance from Egypt*, as Israel could.

No other nation had been dealt with as Israel had; no one been given the laws he had been given. See 4:7, 8; 32-39, II Sam. 7:23, I Chron. 17:21.

"He showeth his word unto Jacob,  
His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel.  
He hath not dealt so with any nation:  
And as for his ordinances, they have not known them.  
Praise ye Jehovah.

—Psalms 147:19, 20

"So I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness . . . Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth them" (Ezek. 20:10, 12).

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER (v. 16)—Cf. Eph. 6:2. "Honor" (Hebrew, *kabed*) literally signifies *heavy* or *weighty*—i. e., their parents were not to be regarded *lightly*, *carelessly*, or with indifference. Rather, proper respect, reverence, thoughtfulness, and obed-

\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, pp. 80, 81.

ience should be rendered them. This law carried with it the severest punishment if broken—21:18-21; 27:16, Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:9. Let us, as Christians, not forget that the Son of God was in subjection to his earthly parents as a child, Luke 2:51.

Today, more perhaps than any other time in all the history of the western world, parents are not honored. Rather, there is disrespect, back-talk, scowls, sneers and contradiction. But what is being done about it by the *parents themselves*? By their *own* lives and conduct, they frequently encourage rebellion and disrespect! When there is no regular teaching in the home, (both by *word* and by *example*) and when parents so flaunt the law of Christ *themselves*, how can they expect respect, reverence, and obedience from their children? As the homes go, so goes the nation. Disrespect of parents becomes, in the minds of a youngster, the spawning ground for disrespect in *all* walks of life—of school teachers, law enforcement officers, Christian leaders, and, worst of all, of Christ and his word.

Before leaving the ten commandments, we must ask the question, what is a *Christian's* relationship to this covenant? In what way or manner are these laws binding on the child of God today? What is his responsibility to them? Is he bound to some, and not bound to others?

The answer is simply this: We are no longer bound *in covenant relationship* to ANY of the Mosaic law—including the ten commandments. This law was given to Israel *alone* (v. 3, 15) and the covenant was between God and that nation only. This answer may come as a shock to many, but it is plainly taught in the New Covenant scriptures.

Jesus taught that he came to fulfill the law and the prophets, and that "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished" (Matt. 5:17-19). "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." What does that mean to you? Christ was the very *essence* of the Mosaic dispensation, keeping the law perfectly—the only one who ever did. He lived and died under that economy. How, then, could he say he came to "destroy" it? He came to bring it to its *culmination*, to *completion*, and hence to its termination! "I did not come to abolish but to complete . . ." (Berkeley). Thus, Jesus taught that *while he was yet alive* the law (including the ten commandments) should be *kept*. Note Luke 10:25-28, where loving God (Deut. 6:5) and your neighbor (Lev. 19:18) are both cited as a part of "the law." (In fact, "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" [Matt. 22:40]—



i.e., love for God and one's neighbor was at the *center* and *core* of *all* the writings in the law and prophets.)

Again, in another instance, a certain ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus' answer was a reference to the ten commandments as well as an exhortation to sell all he had, distribute it to the poor, and follow Christ (Luke 18:18-22).

Jesus' teachings (whether promulgated by himself or his inspired apostles) were being spread while he lived. But his new covenant could not be officially binding on all mankind until after his death, "For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth" (Heb. 9:16, 17). The new covenant is not some kind of hodge-podge combination of Old Testament and New. Not at all. To think of it as such is only to confuse and befuddle the mind. Rather, it is a BRAND NEW covenant, and it is only *binding* as a testament between us and its testator. It has certain stipulations and demands to qualify for its promised rewards—*these* must be met. ". . . he [Christ] is the mediator of a NEW covenant" (Heb. 9:15). Trying to mix or combine our covenant responsibilities is like putting a piece of undressed cloth [not shrunk] upon an old garment, or putting new wine in old wineskins. So taught Jesus, himself, Matt. 9:16, 17. Yet this is the very position (and an *awkward* position it is!) that those who propose to keep the decalogue today find themselves. The law, of course, must be kept *as given by God*, or not kept at all. Let us suppose, then, that we were to keep the sabbath, the seventh day, as specified in the law of Moses. (" . . . the law is good, if a man use it lawfully," I Tim. 1:8). Here are a few things that we would have to keep in mind:

1. Not to boil or bake (Ex. 16:23)
2. No fires to be built (Ex. 35:3) (A rather difficult command to keep in cold or Arctic climates! But *not* impossible for Israel to keep.)
3. Two male lambs, a year old, to be offered (Num. 28:9)
4. A meal-offering and drink-offering to be given (Num. 28:9, 10)
5. Not to pick up sticks. Those doing so to be stoned to death (Num. 15:32-36)
6. ". . . the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest unto Jehovah: whosoever doeth ANY work therein shall be put to death" (Ex. 35:2). ". . . in it thou shalt not

do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates" (Ex. 20:10).

7. Must be kept according to Jewish time (sunset Friday to sunset Saturday). How would our brethren in Fairbanks, Alaska keep this law in mid-summer? The sun doesn't go down! *Israel*, to whom this law was exclusively given, would not be faced with such a problem.

8. Death penalty for profaning the sabbath (Ex. 31:14). (I have yet to witness a blackslidden or careless sabbath-keeper executed or punished in the manner specified. Yet the very law that teaches sabbath observance also teaches that those who defile it must be put to death). Is it the duty of Christians to put to death those who "desecrate" the seventh day? If yes, who will be the public executioner? Shall it be by stoning, as commanded in the law? If no, what do we do with the law just cited (Ex. 35:2)?

9. The weekly sabbath is not the only sabbath to be kept, but also the sabbath of the seventh year, and the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:1-22). If Christians are required to keep the weekly sabbath as Israel did, why are they not also required to keep *these* "sabbaths"? By what authority do we keep the law in one instance and relegate it to obscurity in another?

No, the sabbath, and all old-covenant laws are *done away* in Christ. Read carefully II Cor. 3:1-18, Col. 2:13-17, Gal. 3:7-14, 23-27; 5:1-4. Christ was the perfect essence, the very embodiment of the law itself, and his death signified the death of the law.

When Christ was alive, he could say to one, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," or to another, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." But when he died, his new covenant was sealed—ratified by his own blood. Now, if we are to be the beneficiaries of his "last will and testament," we must comply with its stipulations.

Some one will now ask, but are we not bound to keep such commands as "Thou shalt not kill," etc. The answer is still no—not as a covenant. I do not kill, not because the Old Testament forbids it, but because *Christ* forbids, not only killing, but its source, hate. We have in the New Covenant a higher standard all the way through:

#### Mosaic Law

1. No other gods before me

#### New Covenant

"... there is no God but one" (I Cor. 8:4) "... to us there is one God, the Father, of whom all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 8:6)

## Mosaic Law

## 2. No graven image

## 3. Not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain

## 4. Observe the sabbath day

## 5. Honor thy father and mother

## 6. Thou shalt not kill

## New Covenant

"My little children, guard yourselves from idols" (I Jn. 5:21)  
 "Neither be ye idolators" (I Cor. 10:7) "flee from idolatry" (I Cor. 10:14) See also Rom. 1:21-23, Col. 3:5

"Swear not at all" (Matt. 5:34)  
 "Let your speech be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one" (Matt. 5:37) ". . . every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36)

"There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest [heaven] for the people of God (Heb. 4:9) (Sunday, "the Lord's day" of Rev. 1:10 is not commanded to be a day of rest, but is a day of worship: Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:1, 2.)

"Honor thy father and mother" (Eph. 6:2) "let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents" (I Tim. 5:4)

". . . every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire" (Matt. 5:22) "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I Jn. 3:15)

## Mosaic Law

## New Covenant

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 7. Not commit adultery                         | “. . . every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28) “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are <i>these</i> : fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness . . .” (Gal. 5:19) “. . . <i>men</i> that count it pleasure to revel in the daytime, spots and blemishes . . . having eyes full of adultery” (II Pet. 2:13, 14) |
| 8. Not steal                                   | “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need” (Eph. 4:28)  |
| 9. Not bear false witness against thy neighbor | “Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor” (Eph. 4:25). “. . . lie not one to another . . .” (Col. 3:9)  |
| 10. Not covet                                  | “Put to death . . . covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5). “But godliness with contentment is great gain . . . having food and covering we shall be therewith content” (I Tim. 6:8)  |

We could, of course, extend the New Testament list considerably; but the above references are sufficient to illustrate the point: By observing the *new* covenant, (whose standards are always higher) the old law is no longer *observed as a covenant*.

Why then study the Old Testament? I Cor. 10:11, Rom. 15:4, and II Tim. 3:16 have the answer. Inasmuch as the Mosaic law supplied God's *will* to God's *people* of a past age, there is much there for learning, instruction, comfort, and example, for us. And one can continually ask himself, "Are my standards *as high* as these standards

God's people had under the OLD covenant? (A good test on this one is found in Deut. 6:4 and Lev. 19:18). Further, *much* in the old (both by way of *type* and *prophecy*) foretells the new. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of the feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's" (Col. 2:16, 17). See also Heb. 8.

#### b. ISRAEL'S REACTION; FEAR AND DEVOTION (5:22-27)

22 These words Jehovah spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them unto me. 23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders: 24 and ye said, Behold, Jehovah our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth speak with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of Jehovah our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that Jehovah our God shall speak unto thee: and we will hear it, and do it.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:22-27

120. Who wrote the words on the two tablets of stone?
121. Did God speak the ten commandments to the people before they were written?
122. Why did God use fire, smoke, earthquake, darkness in manifesting Himself to Israel? Is there an example in this for us today?
123. Why speak of dying, as in verses 25, 26?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 5:22-27

22 These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He spoke not again—added no more. He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me [Moses].

23 And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders;

24 And you said, Behold, the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire; we have this day seen that God speaks with man and man still lives.

25 Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die.

26 For who is there of all flesh, who has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire, as we have, and lived?

27 Go near [Moses], and hear all that the Lord our God will say and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you; and we will hear and do it.

### COMMENT 5:22-27

THESE WORDS JEHOVAH SPAKE UNTO ALL YOUR ASSEMBLY (v. 22)—It appears God *spoke* the words of the Decalogue to the congregation before they were engraven on the tables of stone. Hence their fear (v. 23, 29).

AND HE WROTE THEM UPON TWO TABLES OF STONE, AND GAVE THEM UNTO ME (v. 22)—God is said to have written the ten commandments in both instances (4:13, 10:1-4). See also Ex. 31:18, 32:15, 16 (first set). Compare Ex. 34:1 (second set—hewed out by Moses). But so is Moses: Ex. 24:4, 34:27, 28. Our conclusion is, that what God instructed Moses to write, he *did* write—He wrote precisely and exactly what he was *told* to. Thus the first tablets were said to have been written "by the finger of God" even though Moses did the writing. Regarding the statements of God writing and Moses writing, Francisco states, "How is this to be interpreted? Do the statements contradict one another? Not if it is seen that when Moses wrote, it was just as if God was writing it with his own finger. Moses wrote the Decalogue word for word as God dictated it. It has been delivered by Moses just as it came from God."

Others would explain the passages concerning the writing and engraving thus: *God* wrote the ten commandments, *Moses* wrote the words in "the book of the covenant" (Ex. 24:7) and other laws and ordinances. But Ex. 34:28 specifically tells us *Moses* wrote the ten

commandments upon the tables of stone—unless the “he” refers to God in that passage. Rotherham translates that scripture “and He [God] wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten words.” The Newberry Study Bible also refers the “he” to Jehovah, citing Deut. 10:4. If the latter translations are accurate, it would erase the difficulty. But whether God wrote *with* or *without* human instrumentality, his writings nevertheless represent his *will*.

NOW THEREFORE WHY SHOULD WE DIE (v. 25)—Such an overwhelming demonstration (fire, quaking of the mountain, God's own voice speaking) they supposed to mean death. There was apparently a widely held view in Israel that any such revelation of God's glory and might meant death to the observers.

#### c. GOD'S RESPONSE: DELIGHTED APPROVAL (5:28-31)

28 And Jehovah heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and Jehovah said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! 30 Go say to them, Return ye to your tents. 31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:28-31

124. Mark verse 28: God hears us when we speak to one another.
125. Note the wonderful concern and compassion of our wonderful heavenly Father as indicated in verse 29. In what sense does fear prompt obedience?
126. Read Exodus chapters 21-23 for the commandments, statutes and ordinances God spoke to Moses.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 5:28-31

28 And the Lord heard your words, when you spoke to me; and the Lord said to me, I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you; they have well said all that they have spoken.

29 O that they had such a [mind and] heart in them always, (reverently) to fear Me, and keep all My commandments, that it might go well with them, and with their children for ever!

30 Go and say to them, Return to your tents.

31 But you [Moses], stand here by Me, and I will tell you all the commandments and the statutes and the precepts which you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess.

### COMMENT 5:28-31

OH THAT THERE WERE SUCH A HEART IN THEM, THAT THEY WOULD FEAR ME, AND KEEP ALL MY COMMANDMENTS ALWAYS, THAT IT MIGHT BE WELL WITH THEM, AND THEIR CHILDREN FOREVER (v. 29)—Have you ever heard a more beautiful outburst from the heart of God? Every command God gives is for OUR OWN GOOD—"for our good always" (6:24). And even if he proves and tries us, it is "to do thee good in thy latter end" (8:16). See Ps. 34:12-16, Jas. 3:10-13.

#### d. PURPOSES OF OBSERVING THE LAW: (5:32—6:3)

Notice these purposes as you read the verses below:

- (1) to live
- (2) to live well
- (3) to live long
- (4) to multiply

32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jehovah your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 Ye shall walk in all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it; 2 that thou mightest fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised unto thee, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:32—6:3

127. The command of verse 32 presupposes several things: (1) A personal knowledge of the law, (2) A personal desire to obey the



- law, (3) Those who would teach the law. Were these factors always present? If not who was to blame?
128. Physical life and material prosperity are here associated with obedience to the law. Is this true today? Discuss.
129. Someone said, "Democracy is the by-product of Christianity." Discuss the prosperity and danger of America as compared with Israel.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 5:32—6:3

32 Therefore you people shall be watchful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

33. You shall walk in all the way which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land which you shall possess.

### CHAPTER 6

Now this is the instruction, the laws, and the precepts, which the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land to which you go to possess it;

2. That you may (reverently) fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, and keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged.

3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be watchful to do them; that it may be well with you, and that you may increase exceedingly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

### COMMENT 5:32—6-3

THAT YE MAY LIVE, etc. (v. 33)—Note the similarity to v. 16 and Eph. 6:3. One cannot but be impressed time and again in this book that God promises happiness and joy to his children *if they will be obedient*. Afflictions and difficulties they might have on this earth (as Job did) but the promise contained here would still be theirs if they would not turn away from their God.

*Material* prosperity formed a large part of Israel's promised blessing. "The Israel of God" today, his church (Gal. 6:16) is also a "land flowing with milk and honey"—the great *spiritual* and *eternal* blessings of Christ! Every true member of the church inherits *far more* than the

blessings enumerated here. The *least* one in Christ's kingdom has more for which to be grateful than the *greatest* of those living under the Mosaic covenant (Matt. 11:11).

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE

*God's covenant with the people in Horeb, 1-4. Moses the mediator of it, 5. A repetition of the ten commandments, 6-21; which God wrote on two tables of stone, 22. The people are filled with dread at the terrible majesty of God, 23-26; and beseech Moses to be their mediator, 27. The Lord admits of their request, 28; and deploras their ungodliness, 29. They are exhorted to obedience, that they may be preserved in the possession of the promised land, 30-33.*

### QUESTIONS, LESSON FIVE (4:44—6:3)

1. Discuss "Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers (5:3). What conclusions can you draw?"
2. How did God "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (v. 9)? Were children guilty because parents sinned?
3. What, exactly, is the prohibition of the 3rd commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain"?
4. Show from scripture that the sabbath was a *national* law, given only to Israel.
5. Show how no present-day religious group keeps the sabbath *as it was given to Israel*.
6. Where and how many times is the *sabbath* mentioned in the book of Genesis? Record the instances where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob observed the sabbath.
7. If Jesus kept the sabbath, why shouldn't we?
8. How many of the ten commandments are now binding? Explain.
9. If the old covenant is done away in Christ, why study it?
10. What blessings are promised for Israel's obedience?

## LESSON SIX 6:4-25

### 2. LOVE TO BE THE MOTIVE FOR OBSERVANCE— THE "SHEMA" (6:4-9)

4 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: 5 and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; 7 and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:4-9

130. These verses are so very important to the orthodox Jew. Why? How important are they to us?
131. Our love for God is inseparately associated with the word of God. Discuss and demonstrate the connection.
132. What distinction is there between the words, "heart", "soul" and "might"?
133. The manner of teaching our children is so very important. Use two or three synonyms for the word "diligently."
134. Why is the subject of the will and word of God so seldom on the lips of most of us?
135. Here are four occasions for discussing the scriptures: (1) In your house instead of TV, (2) Riding in the car instead of the radio, (3) In bed instead of the magazine, (4) At breakfast instead of the newspaper.
136. What was in "the sign upon thy hand" and in "frontlets between thine eyes"?
137. How shall we use these "visual-aids" for our observance of God's law? What about the use of scripture mottos and plaques? Or is this the meaning?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 6:4-9

4 Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord—the only Lord.

5 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your (mind and) heart, and with your entire being, and with all your might.

6 And these words, which I am commanding you this day, shall be [first] in your *own* mind *and* heart; [then]

7 You shall whet *and* sharpen them, so as to make them penetrate, *and* teach *and* impress them diligently upon the minds (and hearts) of your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.

8. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets (forehead bands) between your eyes.

9. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

### COMMENT 6:4-9

Surely this passage will show that God's word was to *dominate* and *pervade* their lives. *If we truly love him*, this will be the case *today* as well as then. It also shows how, even in the Old Testament, God desired that his laws be kept out of a heart of love for him. Surely he cannot expect less in the New Covenant! These verses, recited by the Jews as a confession or reiteration of their faith, are called the *Shema*—the Hebrew word for the first word, *hear*, as it occurs here in the imperative. This is the first passage of scripture taught to Jewish children, and is recited by the orthodox every morning and evening.

It is to be a deep, moving, all-consuming, whole-souled love for God that prompts Israel to keep his commandments and communicate them to their children.

HEAR, O ISRAEL: JEHOVAH OUR GOD IS ONE JEHOVAH (v. 4)—This is also the exact rendering of Young's Literal Translation, and the only case we are aware of where the American Standard Version gives *three* alternative translations as follows: "Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one" or "Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one" or "Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone". We could multiply translations beyond this, but most are similar to *one* of those above! Whichever one is correct, the idea of ONE GOD (monotheism) is obviously in this phrase. There is, was, always will be only *one true God*. See 4:35,39; Eph. 4:6, I Tim. 2:5, I Cor. 8:4.

If there is just one God over heaven and earth, WHAT THEN? If he is the creator of the world, the maker and sustainer of all, what then? If "there is none else besides", and the whole universe sings out his glory, what should we do? WE SHOULD LOVE HIM WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT (v. 5)—See also 30:5,6; 4:29, 10:12. If this was part and parcel of the Mosaic law, how much

*more* should love prompt our service under *Christ*? And in Lev. 19:18 Israel was told ". . . thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself". Both of these passages were referred to by Christ himself in Matt. 22:34-40. Note the preeminence he gives them. Verse 5 (above) he calls "the great and first commandment," (Mark: "There is none other commandment greater than these") and the Leviticus passage is "a second like *unto* it". "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets"—i.e., loving God supremely and your neighbor as yourself was the proper basis for the keeping of all Old Testament commands. They were given from a God of love—they were to be observed from the *same motive*! If these two laws were observed as they *should* have been, Jesus could say, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28). But if these two BASIC laws were neglected, the observance of others would become a hollow form! Friend, if that was true under the law (and it was!), it is *overwhelmingly* true under the covenant of Christ. Jesus and his apostles taught that our love for him and others must be the basis of all our acts as Christians: Jn. 14:15,23; I Cor. 13 (all), 10:24, 16:14; Col. 3:14, I Pet. 1:22, I Jn. 2:10,11; 4:8,16; 5:2, etc.

### 3. TEACHING THE LAW (6:7-9; 20-25)

20 When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah our God' hath commanded you? 21 then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt: and Jehovah brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; 22 and Jehovah showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house, before our eyes; 23 and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. 24 And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. 25 And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before Jehovah our God, as he hath commanded us.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:20-25

138. Read Psalms 119:97; 148 and examine your love for His law.
139. Why emphasize the deliverance from Egyptian bondage?
140. What relation did the signs and wonders have to the truthfulness of God's word?
141. Please notice the purpose of the law of God as stated in verse 24.
142. How does Satan use the law of God to slay us? Cf. Romans 7:7-9.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 6:20-25

20 When your son asks you in time to come, What is the meaning of the testimonies and statutes and precepts, which the Lord our God has commanded you?

21 Then you shall say to your son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand;

22 And the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and evil, against Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes;

23 And He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore to give our fathers.

24 And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to (reverently) fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as at this day.

25 And it will be accounted as righteousness [conformity to God's will in word, thought, and action] for us, if we are watchful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.

## COMMENT 6:20-25

ALL THESE WORDS, WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY, SHALL BE UPON THY HEART (v. 6) See also 11:18—i.e. shall be the express object of meditation and thought (See Josh. 1:8). David, perhaps more than any other Old Testament character, caught the essence of this command. He could say,

Oh how I love thy law!

It is my meditation all the day.

(Ps. 119:97)

Mine eyes anticipated the night watches,

That I might meditate on thy word.

(Ps. 119:148)

And their children were to grow up tutored and continually exhorted from the pages of God's Book:

AND THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY UNTO THY CHILDREN, AND SHALT TALK OF THEM WHEN THOU SITTEST IN THY HOUSE, AND WHEN THOU WALLEST BY THE WAY, AND WHEN THOU LIEST DOWN, AND WHEN THOU RISEST UP (v. 7)—That is, be teaching and applying the word of God to your children continually. Let them not for a moment forget their responsibility toward the Lord, his word, and his work. Today,

it is certainly needful that we have "family altars"—a time when the family gathers together specifically for prayer, praise, and study. But these words would take us far beyond *that* phase of teaching. They take us to the *daily life* of the family! How many hundreds of times throughout a child's life does a parent have opportunity to show him how God's word applies to this case or that, why it teaches this, how it condemns that, how God's work is seen in nature, etc., etc.

I feel compelled, here, to insert the pointed and worthy remarks of Adam Clarke on this important subject:

"If a man know the worth of his own soul, he will feel the importance of the salvation of the souls of his family. Those who neglect *family religion* neglect *personal religion*; if more attention were paid to the former, even among those called religious people, we should soon have a better state of civil society. On *family religion* God lays much stress; and no head of a family can neglect it without endangering the final salvation of his own soul." (pp. 747, 748)

"A most injurious and destructive maxim has lately [and still is!] advanced by a few individuals . . . though the authors affect to be thought *Christians* and *rational* ones, too; the sum of the maxim is this: 'Children ought not to be taught religion for fear of having their minds biased to some particular creed, but they should be left to themselves till they are capable of making a *choice*, and *choose* to make one.' This maxim is in flat opposition to the command of God, and those who teach it show how little they are affected by the religion they profess. If they felt it to be good for any thing, they would certainly wish their children to possess it; but they do not teach religion to their children because they feel it to be of no use to themselves . . . But what can be said to those parents who, possessing a better faith, equally neglect the instruction of their children in the things of God! They are highly criminal; and if their children perish through neglect, which is very probable, what a dreadful account must they give in the great day! PARENTS! Hear what the Lord saith unto *you*: Ye must diligently teach your children that there is one Lord, *Jehovah, Elohim*; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and that they must love him with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might. And as children are heedless, apt to forget, liable to be carried away by sensible things, repeat and re-peat the instruction, and add line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, carefully studying *time, place, and circumstances*, that your labour be not in vain: show it in its amiableness, excite *attention* by exciting interest; show how good,

how useful, how blessed, how ennobling, how glorious it is. *Whet* these things on their hearts till the keenest edge is raised on the strongest desire, till they can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee!" [Ps. 73:25]"—p. 757.

AND THOU SHALT BIND THEM FOR A SIGN UPON THY HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE FOR FRONTLETS BETWEEN THY EYES. AND THOU SHALT WRITE THEM UPON THE DOOR-POSTS OF THY HOUSE, AND UPON THY GATES (vv. 9,10)—That is, every available means must be employed that the law of God might be firmly and indelibly impressed upon the mind. (And note here that *adults*, and not just children are now being addressed). The word of God was to be *continually before them*—both in the *mind's* eye and the *literal* eye. Lange, noting that the expressions of this verse are "precisely in accordance with oriental usage," states: "*to bind them upon thy hand* is to keep them *for a sign* for thy conduct, as over to be regarded, and which must determine the manner of action. The brow, *between the eyes*, represents the chamber of thought, is as the door to the intellectual nature of man . . . The commandments, as frontlets or browbands, become therefore a badge or confession by which one may be known, and embrace the private life . . ."

SIGN UPON THY HAND (v. 8)—The Hebrew word (OTH) is defined by Gesenius as "*a sign . . . [and specifically here] a sign of something past, which serves to keep it in memory, Ex. 13:9,16; Deut. 6:8 . . .*" Baumgartner has "sign: . . . reminding token."

FRONTLETS BETWEEN THINE EYES (v. 8)—The Hebrew word TOTAPHOTH signifies "bands, fillets" (Gesenius); "appendage, phylacteries, mark" (Baumgartner).

It is the belief of this writer that the two above phrases were not necessarily intended to be literal—i.e. God did not mean that the scripture should be printed on the hands or inscribed between the eyes. The idea of the command was that they were to be continually *reminded* of God's law. (Of course, in *carrying out* the command, it might be necessary to write the law in *many places*). In Exodus 13.9, with reference to the Passover feast, God said, "and it shall be for a sign [Heb. *oth*] unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial [Heb. *zikkaron*, memorial, reminder, remembrance] between thine eyes, that the law of Jehovah may be in the mouth: for with a strong hand hath Jehovah brought thee out of Egypt." I do not understand this to mean "PASSOVER" or any other such words were to be printed on the hand or between the eyes, anymote than



a parchment containing the law was to be in the mouth. Rather, the feast itself was to *be* a memorial firmly planted in the memory. Continuing in Exodus, with reference to the consecration of the first-born, we are told in 13:16 "And it shall be for a sign [Heb., *otb*] upon thy hand, and for frontlets Heb. [*totapheth*] between thine eyes: for by strength of hand Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt." Note how the latter passage is strikingly similar to that above, with the same Hebrew words for *sign* and *frontlets*. Thus the *fact itself* of the *word of God* being constantly and continually in the mind, heart, and memory, (and, of course, proceeding also from the mouth) causes it to be as it were, a token in the hand and a symbol on the forehead to all who know us.

In process of time, however, the spirit and purpose of the above law was lost in the letter, and even though the word was not in their mouth, nor the law in their *heart*, they had their phylacteries on their *heads* and on their *hands*. And the Pharisees, who in the days of Christ put on a great show of sanctimonious piety, made their phylacteries very broad "to be seen of men" (Matt. 23:5). The *intent* and *purpose* of this law had been totally bypassed for the letter. *Reminders* (of the kind mentioned here) or otherwise, were in order. But, like the command to have fringes on their garments (Num. 15:37-41, Deut. 22:12, Cf. Matt. 23:5) as reminders, the Jews degenerated into enlarging them "to be seen of men." Such phylacteries as shown below were thus worn—far more elaborate than either the spirit or the letter of this law would endorse.

I.S.B.E. states, "It is evident that the words in Exodus are beyond all question, used *figuratively*; a careful reading of the verses in Deuteronomy in close connection with their contexts [we have the same phrase in 11:18], in which are other figures of speech not to be taken literally, is sufficient proof of their purely figurative intention also. Only the formalism of later ages could distort these figures into the gross and materialistic practice of the phylactery. Just when this practice began cannot accurately be determined. While the Talmud attempts to trace it back to the primitive, even Mosaic times, it probably did not long antedate the birth of Christ. In conservative Jewish circles it has been maintained through the centuries, and at present is faithfully followed by orthodox Judaism."

#### 4. GOD NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN (6:10-15)

10 And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee, great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, 11 and

houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and cisterns hewn out, which thou hewedst not, vineyards and olive-trees, which thou plantedst not, and thou shalt eat and be full; 12 then beware lest thou forget Jehovah, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 13 Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; and him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by his name. 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples that are round about you; 15 for Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is a jealous God; lest the anger of Jehovah thy God be kindled against thee, and he destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:10-15

143. Please notice the progress: Egypt—Deliverance—Miracles—Canaan, east—Conquest—Canaan, west. Always in every state the present tense is used; by faith it has already happened! What lesson is there in this for us? Not "if", but "when"!
144. We are in a land (U. S. A.) of great and good cities which we (our generation) builded not, houses full of good things which we did not fill, etc. The temptation and sin of Israel is ours; what is it?
145. What is meant in verse 13 "thou shalt swear by His name."
146. If God does not seem near to us or "in the midst of us," what has happened?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 6:10-15

10 And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you, with great and goodly cities, which you did not build,

11 And houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant and when you eat and are full,

12 Then beware lest you forget the Lord, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

13 You shall (reverently) fear the Lord your God, and serve Him, and swear by His name [and presence]

14 You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples who are round about you;

15 For the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and He destroy you from off the face of the earth.

## COMMENT 6:10-15

See also 8:11-18. Prosperity and abundance would tempt Israel away from their God. What more could they ask for than *great* and *good* cities which they did not build, *houses full of good things*, which they had not filled. Cisterns, laboriously hewn out of rock ["cisterns cut in stone"—Gesenius]—that they simply took over. Beautiful vineyards and olive groves—already flourishing—were soon literally given to them by God. But they were no more than in the land, than they began to forget and forsake the very God whose hand had given it all!

How often in life have we, figuratively speaking, also inherited cities which we did not build, cisterns we did not hew out, houses full of all good things which we did not build or fill, vineyards and olive groves which we neither planted or cultivated—just harvested! In short, we, as God's children, have inherited a great host of spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ—blessings we did not earn and do not merit in any way! "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Eph. 2:8,9). But because of this very fact, "BEWARE LEST THOU FORGET JEHOVAH," for he has brought us also "out of the house of bondage" (v. 12)—the bondage of sin (Rom. 6:14-18, 22,23). May we not forget our redemption or Redeemer!

SHALT SWEAR BY HIS NAME (v. 13)—See under 5:11)

## 5. GOD NOT TO BE TEMPTED (6:16-19)

16 Ye shall not tempt Jehovah your God, as ye tempted him in Massah. 17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of Jehovah your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. 18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of Jehovah; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, 19 to thrust out all thine enemies from before thee, as Jehovah hath spoken.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:16-19

147. Didn't Gideon tempt God with God's approval? Cf. Judges 6:36-40. Explain.
148. Read Exodus 17:1-7 to understand the word "Massah."
149. There seems to be some distinction between "commandments" and the "testimonies and statutes" is there? Discuss.

150. Is "right and good" always exciting and interesting? Can it be? How? Why not?
151. How did certain men become the enemies of both Jehovah and Israel? Irrevocably so?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 6:16-19

16 You shall not tempt *and* try the Lord your God, as you tempted *and* tried Him in Massah. [Exod. 17:7.]

17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His exhortations, and His statutes, which He commanded you.

18 And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers,

19 To cast out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has promised.

### COMMENT 6:16-19

YE SHALL NOT TEMPT JEHOVAH (v. 16)—The Hebrew word *Nasab* means "to try, to prove or tempt God when they doubt as to his power and aid, Ex. 17:2, 7; Deut. 6:16; Ps. 78:18, 41, 56; Isa. 17:12, 'I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah'"—Gesenius. So in I Cor. 10:9 we have, "Neither let us make trial (*ekpeirazomen*) of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents." See how Christ used the above phrase in Matt. 4:5-7.

AS YE TEMPTED HIM IN MASSAH (v. 16)—As recorded in Exodus 17:1-7. "Massah" is Hebrew for *temptation, trials* (*Gesenius*) or, *tempting, proving* (Margin, Ex. 17:7). It was so called "because they tempted Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us, or not?"

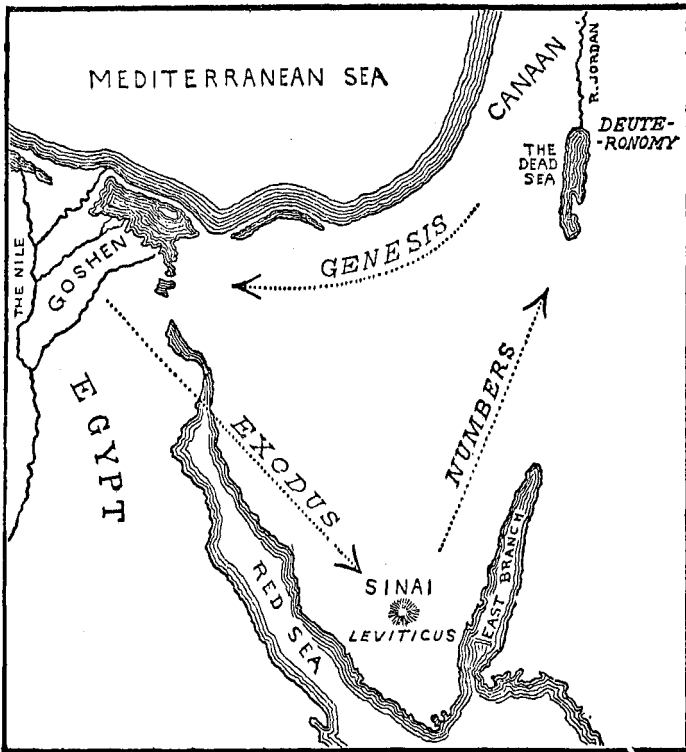
### SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIX

*The great design of God in giving his laws is, that the people may fear and obey him, that they may continue in peace and prosperity, and be mightily increased, 1-3. The great commandment of the law, 4, 5, which shall be laid up in their hearts, 6; taught to their children, 7; and affixed as a sign to their hands, heads, doors, and gates, 8, 9. How they are to act when they shall come into the promised land, 10-19. How they shall instruct their children, and relate the history to them of God's wonderful acts, 20-25.*

QUESTIONS ON LESSON SIX

QUESTIONS, LESSON SIX (6:4-25)

1. Show what part *love* was to have in keeping the Mosaic law, with reference both to God and our fellow man.
2. What did *Christ* teach on this?
3. Describe how the faithful Hebrew was to make the law pertinent and meaningful to himself and his family.
4. The law was to be "for a sign upon thy hand" and "for frontlets between thine eyes" (v. 8). Explain.
5. What blessings would the Israelites get "free and clear" that they did not now possess?
6. What temptation would accompany this blessings?
7. What happened at Massah?



## LESSON SEVEN 7:1-26

### 6. DEFENDING THE FAITH: NECESSITY OF THE HOLY WAR (7:1-26)

#### a. THE REASONS FOR THE HOLY WAR (7:1-15)

When Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and shall cast out many nations before thee, the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 and when Jehovah thy God shall deliver them up before thee, and thou shalt smite them; then thou shalt utterly destroy them: thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them; 3 neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For he will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and he will destroy thee quickly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them: ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.

6 For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. 7 Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples: 8 but because Jehovah loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he sware unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that Jehovah thy God, he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations, 10 and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command thee this day, to do them.

12 And it shall come to pass, because ye harken to these ordinances, and keep and do them, that Jehovah thy God will keep with thee the covenant and the lovingkindness which he sware unto thy fathers: 13 and he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee; he will also bless the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy ground, thy grain and thy new wine and thine oil, the increase of thy cattle and the young of thy flock,

in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. 14 Thou shalt be blessed above all peoples: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. 15 And Jehovah will take away from thee all sickness; and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, will he put upon thee, but will lay them upon all them that hate thee. 16 And thou shalt consume all the peoples that Jehovah thy God shall deliver unto thee; thine eye shall not pity them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:1-16

152. Please refer to the map for a location of these various nations, memorize their locations.
153. In what sense were these seven nations "greater" than Israel? In what sense "mightier"?
154. Are we to understand the expression ". . . God shall deliver them up before thee," that God directed the military strategy of the enemy in such a manner as to insure their defeat?
155. List three things the Israelites were *not* to do with the enemy and three things they were *to do* with the enemy.
156. What is the meaning of "holy" as used in verse six? Surely this word is not to be equaled with our usual meaning of the term.
157. Please notice the areas of life into which the worship of Jehovah enters: marriage, vows, name two other areas.
158. Why not educate these people out of idolatry? Why all this cruelty and bloodshed?
160. Why did Jehovah love Israel? Read verses 7 and 8.
161. What is meant by the expression "keepeth covenant"?
162. Discuss the meaning of the phrase "to their face" and "to his face" in verse 10.
163. List the promises God made to Israel. (1) Keep with thee the covenant; (2) love thee. Name two or three more. Read verses 12 through 16.
164. Does God control man's health and the growth of grain? Read verse 13.
165. There is a startling statement and promise in verse 15—read it! How much sickness would be eliminated if we loved God with all our hearts? Give a percentage.
166. If God is a just and merciful heavenly Father, and we know He is, what are we to conclude from the command in verse 16 not to show pity?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 7:1-16

When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you are entering to possess, and has plucked away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than yourselves.

2 And when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you smite them; then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, or show mercy to them.

3 You shall not make marriages with them; your daughter you shall not give to his son, nor shall you take his daughter for your son.

4 For they will turn away your sons from following Me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and He will destroy you quickly.

5 But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire.

6 For you are a holy *and* set apart people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people to Himself, out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.

7 The Lord did not set His love upon you and choose you, because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the fewest of all people;

8 But because the Lord love you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a might hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 Know, recognize *and* understand therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, Who keeps covenant and steadfast love *and* mercy with those who love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations;

10 And repays those who hate Him to their face, by destroying them; He will not be slack to him who hates Him, but will requite him to his face.

11 You shall therefore keep and do the instruction, laws, and precepts which I command you this day.

12 And if you hearken to those precepts and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love which He swore to your fathers;



13 And He will love you, bless you, and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your body and the fruit of your land, your grain, your new wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your fathers to give you.

14 You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle,

15 And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which you knew, will He put upon you, but will lay them upon all who hate you.

16 And you shall consume all the peoples whom the Lord your God will give over to you; your eye shall not pity them; neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

### COMMENT 7:1-16

Note that in these verses we have:

- (1) The danger of corruption for Israel (7:1-5, 12-16)
- (2) The wickedness of the Canaanites (7:5)
- (3) Israel must be a separate and holy people (7:6-11)

SEVEN NATIONS GREATER AND MIGHTIER THAN THOU (v. 1)—“greater in number and stronger than thou” (Rotherham). And they also had greater fortifications and equipment—1:28, etc. The word nation (*goi*) indicates a *people*, a confluence of men. The root idea of this word is given as *body, corpus*. Baumgartner has swarm, people . . . nation . . . the whole population of a territory.” Thus the more *formal* sense we now attach to “nation” does not necessarily hold, though it often does. It is sometimes in this book rendered “peoples” and sometimes “nations.” In 4:6-8, for example, we have this Hebrew word occurring four times—twice translated “peoples” and twice “nation.”

SEVEN NATIONS (v. 1)—See Acts 13:16-20.

THOU SHALT UTTERLY DESTROY THEM (v. 2)—Israel was to be the sole occupant of the land. They were not only to utterly destroy the seven “ite” tribes, but also to make no covenants or intermarriages. The temptation, of course, would be for Israel to become lax, soft, and careless about carrying out this command. So the statement, “nor show mercy unto them.” Israel started to fulfill this command in good fashion, but, for the most part, treated it with indifference once the twelve tribes were settled in their respective territories. The seven nations were *destroyed* but not “utterly.”

Note that we have both a negative and positive command in these verses. They were to make no covenant, show no mercy, and make no marriages. But they were to *do* something, too!

1. Smite them, utterly destroy them (v. 2)
2. Break down their altars (v. 5)
3. Dash in pieces their obelisks or pillars (v. 5)
4. Hew down their Asherim (v. 5)
5. Burn their graven images (v. 5)

—all of which meant they were to rip out *idolatry* from the land. They were to be first-class iconoclasts! See Ex. 23:24, 34:12-17.

In verses 3 and 4 intermarriage is forbidden on the basis that the Israelite would be the loser, and turned away to "serve other gods." It was probably argued then (as it so often is now) by the young people: "But we will make Israelites out of these girls! We will never serve *their* gods!" But God knew better. His warning still stands to every young person in "the Israel of God," the church. His exhortation remains: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers . . ." See II Cor. 6: 14—7:1.

ALTARS . . . PILLARS . . . ASHERIM . . . GRAVEN IMAGES (v. 5)—all were to be destroyed. The pillars or obelisks were idolatrous monuments in Canaanitish and other heathen countries. See 16:22, Lev. 26:1. These were of different shapes—some being little more than a slab of rock turned upright, others being carefully squared stone pillars with a larger base and tapering toward a pointed top. It is apparently this latter form (obelisk) that is especially meant here. They were usually shrines to Baal.

The Asherim were probably the wooden symbols or shrines of the goddess Asherah—the goddess of fertility. (Not the same as Ashtoreth, the female counterpart of Baal). See 12:3, 16:21. Her worship was widely spread throughout Canaan and Syria. In Babylon her worship and that of Ashtoreth (Istar) seemed to have merged. "In the West, however, Asherah and Astoreth came to be distinguished from one another, Asherah being exclusively the goddess of fertility, whereas Ashtoreth passeth into a moon-goddess . . . The existence of numerous symbols in each of which the goddess was believed to be immanent led to the creation of numerous forms of the goddess herself, which, after the analogy of the Ashtarothe, were described collectively as the Asherim." (I.S.B.E.) See further under 16:21.

FOR YE WERE THE FEWEST OF ALL PEOPLES (v. 7)—In Gen. 46:27 we are told, "all the souls of the house of Jacob, that came into Egypt,

were threescore and ten." And yet, through this handful of people, God began to show his great power. Had a *large* nation accomplished that Israel did, *human* power might be credited. But God's *love* for Israel plus his eternal design in bringing the Messiah into the world, enabled Israel to accomplish great things. Great numbers are often not necessary for God to accomplish his purposes!

THOU SHALT BE BLESSED ABOVE ALL PEOPLES (v. 14)—Contrast v. 7 "ye were the fewest of all peoples." This promise was contingent upon their *obedience*. Note the sweeping, all-inclusive promises that follow, vv. 14-16.

"Such a pre-eminence has its ground not in anything external, as in the numerical importance and greatness of a people, in which case to be *above all* would imply that they were more numerous, if not than all taken together, still than any one of the all. That Israel was as the stars (i. 10; x. 22) was merely the fulfillment of the promise of God to the fathers, a promise according to grace, not implying any merit or pre-eminence on the part of the people."—Lange

NEITHER SHALT THOU SERVE THEIR GODS; FOR THAT WILL BE A SNARE UNTO THEE (v. 16)—The Hebrew word for "snare" (*moqesh*) Baumgartner's Lexicon defines as "*bait, lure (of fowler), bird-trap.*" "The snares were set in a favorable location and grain scattered to attract the attention of feathered creatures. They accepted the bribe of good feeding and walked into the snare, not suspecting danger. For this reason the snare became particularly applicable in describing a tempting bribe offered by men to lead their fellows into trouble . . ." (I.S.B.E.)

#### b. DIFFICULTIES OF THE HOLY WAR (7:17-26)

17 If thou shalt say in thy heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them? 18 thou shalt not be afraid of them: thou shalt well remember what Jehovah thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; 19 the great trials which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, whereby Jehovah thy God brought thee out: so shall Jehovah thy God do unto all the peoples of whom thou art afraid. 20 Moreover Jehovah thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves, perish from before thee. 21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them; for Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a great God and a terrible. 22 And Jehovah thy God will cast out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beast of the field

increase upon thee. 23 But Jehovah thy God will deliver them up before thee, and will discomfit them with a great discomfiture, until they be destroyed. And he will deliver their kinds into thy hand, and thou shalt make their name to perish from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. 25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire; thou shalt not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein; for it is an abomination to Jehovah thy God. 26 And thou shalt not bring an abomination into thy house, and become a devoted thing like unto it: thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a devoted thing.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 7:17-26

167. The conquest of Canaan has no lesson for us if we have no "conquest" of self or sin or need to which we can make application. Please make application!
168. Memory has a great power when used right, how?
169. Are we to understand that God used literal "hornets" in aiding Israel? Discuss.
170. In what sense was God to be considered "terrible"?
171. Explain in your own words verse 22.
172. There can be no neutral ground. There can be no moderation with sin. "detest, utterly abhor," why is this true? What is "a snare"?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 7:17-26

17 If you say in your [mind and] heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them?

18 You shall not be afraid of them, but remember (earnestly) what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh, and to all Egypt,

19 The great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out; so shall the Lord your God do to all the people of whom you are afraid.

20 Moreover the Lord your God will send the hornet among them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed.

21 You shall not dread them; for the Lord your God is among you, a mighty and terrible God.

22 And the Lord your God will clear out those nations before you little by little; you may not consume them quickly, lest the beasts of the field increase among you.

23 But the Lord your God will give them over to you, and will confuse them with a mighty panic until they are destroyed.

24 And He will give their kings into your hand, and you shall make their name perish from under the heavens; there shall no man be able to stand before you, until you have destroyed them.

25 The graven images of their gods you shall burn with fire; you shall not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourself, lest you be ensnared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God

26 Neither shall you bring an abomination (an idol) into your house, lest you become an accursed thing like it; but you shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.

### COMMENT 7:17-26

Note that we have here:

- (1) The apparent superiority of the foe (vv. 17-21)
- (2) The gradual nature of the conquest (v. 22)
- (3) The rewards and demands of faithfulness (vv. 20,21, 23-26)

The foe was *far* superior in both numbers and physical equipment. But Jehovah, "the Lord of hosts" was with Israel! And he demanded one great basic quality of his people—confidence in his ability—unbounded faith!

IF THOU SHALT SAY IN THY HEART, THESE NATIONS ARE MORE THAN I (v. 17)—The very attitude that had kept them *out* of the promised land before (1:26-33, Num. 13:32—14:4)

HOW CAN I DISPOSSESS THEM? (v. 17)—One cannot read these lines without thinking of the many "impossible" and *apparently* insurmountable difficulties that sometimes face the people of God today. And doubtfully the question is asked, "How can I do it? How can I overcome it? The answer is, YOU can't! "But God is able." This does not mean idly sitting back and supposing that "all will work out." But it *does* mean simply doing *what we can* in the Lord's work, with a child-like faith in our Master, *knowing* that we labor for "him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

THOU SHALT WELL REMEMBER WHAT JEHOVAH THY GOD DID UNTO PHAROA, AND UNTO ALL EGYPT (v. 18)—Nothing is more helpful for the child of God, when anticipating the *future* with its difficulties and “impossibilities,” than to reflect upon what God has done for his children in the *past*. *As he has done, so will he do!* See 4:32-39.

JEHOVAH . . . WILL SEND THE HORNET AMONG THEM (v. 20)—The Hebrew word for hornet or wasp (*tsirab*) is used only two other times in the Old Testament. Young’s literal translation has “locust.” “And I will send the hornet before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee” (Ex. 23:28). And God could say through Joshua, about twenty-five years later, “And I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites [Sihon and Og? (Deut. 3:7, 4:47), or two of the Amorite kings mentioned in Josh 10?]; not with thy sword, nor with thy bow” (Josh. 24:12).

I take these verses all literally, believing that God actually *did* employ wasps or hornets to assist Israel in battle. Why couldn’t he? I reject, then, such figurative renderings for hornet (*tsirab*) as “leprosy” (Smith-Goodspeed), “a plague” (The Torah), “raiders” (Lamsa), “depression, discouragement” (Baumgartner). Gesenius, while admitting that “hornet” is the rendering which accords with the ancient versions and the Hebrew, states that it “seems hardly capable of being literally understood” and says here it is to be understood metaphorically as “designating *ills and calamities of various kinds*.” The common versions (A.V., A.S.V., R.S.V.) as well as Berkely, Rotherham, Moffatt, and The Amplified Old Testament, consistently translate “hornet” however, and the other renderings seems to be more *interpretation* than *translation*. (The non-literal idea is perhaps best explained in the note adapted from Lange in the Amplified O.T. “. . . the hornet’ with the article, meaning collective as a species or kind, is thus evidently to be understood, as 2:25, of the terrors of God which should go before Israel, with which also Josh. 24:12 and Ps. 44:2 fully agree.”)

JEHOVAH . . . WILL CAST OUT THOSE NATIONS BEFORE THEE BY LITTLE AND LITTLE—In fact, they were forbidden to cast them all out at once, LEST THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD INCREASE UPON THEE (v. 22)—That is, they were not to be driven out “in one year, lest the land before desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee” (See Ex. 23:29,30). A *number* of years would be needed before the Israelites them-

selves were sufficiently numerous to fill the whole land occupied by the seven nations mentioned in v. 1 and especially the even broader borders outlined in the "promised land"—1:7, 1:24.

THOU SHALT NOT COVET THE SILVER OR THE GOLD THAT IS ON THEM [idols or images]) NOR TAKE IT UNTO THEE, LEST THOU BE SNARED THEREIN (v. 25)—"Some of the ancient idols were plated over with gold, and God saw that the value of the metal and the excellence of the workmanship might be an inducement for the Israelites to *preserve them*; and this might lead, remotely at least, to idolatry. As the idols were accursed, all those who had them, or any thing appertaining to them, were accursed also, ver. 26." (Clarke)

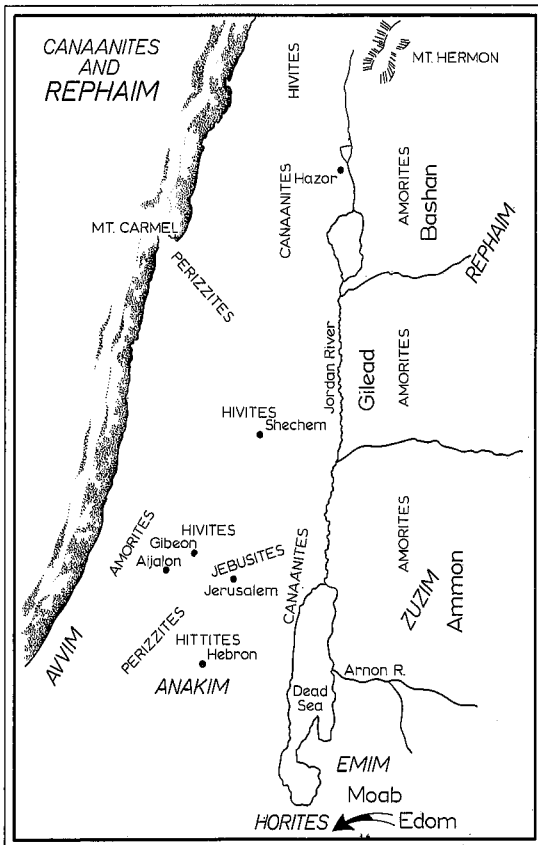
There are moral and spiritual implications here that are "for our learning." The very gold and silver on the idols was to be burned with fire. No *part* of the idol was to be *coveted*, let alone *taken*! There was always the temptation that they would "be snared therein" (Cf. also v. 16). Similarly the Lord would have every Christian destroy and obliterate every vestige of sin in his life. Jesus taught us to pray, "And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil *one*" (Matt. 6:13). Paul taught, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfill* the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14).

### QUESTIONS, LESSON SEVEN (7:1-26)

1. To what extent were the Israelites to show mercy to the surrounding nations?
2. How were these nations "greater and mightier" than Israel?
3. What did the Holy Spirit predict would happen if Israel intermarried with foreigners?
4. What were the "pillars" of the heathen?
5. What were the Asherim?
6. Where did Israel rank with other nations in the population census?
7. Specifically, what religious items of the heathen nations were to be destroyed?
8. List two great difficulties of the Holy War.
9. What was Israel to *remember* as an encouragement in this war?
10. What peculiar means did God use to rout the enemy (according to the standard versions)?
11. Why not cast out the enemies all at once?
12. What part of the heathen images could be kept by an Israelite? Why?

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SEVEN

*With the seven nations that God shall cast out, 1, they shall make no covenant, 2, nor form any matrimonial alliances, 3; lest they should be enticed into idolatry, 4. All monuments of idolatry to be destroyed, 5. The Israelites are to consider themselves a holy people, 6; and that the Lord had made them such, not for their merits, but for his own mercies, 7, 8. They shall therefore love him, and keep his commandments, 9-11. The great privileges of the obedient, 12-24. All idolatry to be avoided, 25, 26.*





## LESSON EIGHT 8:1—11:32

### 7. THE THREAT FROM WITHIN (8:1—11:21)

#### a. THE DANGER OF PROSPERITY (8:1-20)

All the commandment which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers. 2 And thou shalt remember all the way which Jehovah thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or not. 3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man does not live by bread only, but by every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live. 4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. 5 And thou shalt consider in thy heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so Jehovah thy God chasteneth thee. 6 And thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. 7 For Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills; 8 a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey; 9 a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig copper. 10 And thou shalt eat and be full, and thou shalt bless Jehovah thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. 11 Beware lest thou forget Jehovah thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his ordinances, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12 lest, when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13 and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; 14 then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget Jehovah thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; 15 who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions, and thirsty ground where was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; 16 who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not; that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end: 17 and lest thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of my

hand hath gotten me this wealth. 18 But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as at this day. 19 And it shall be, if thou shalt forget Jehovah thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. 20 As the nations that Jehovah maketh to perish before you, so shall ye perish; because ye would not harken unto the voice of Jehovah your God.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 8:1-20

173. Wasn't the purpose of the wilderness wanderings to punish Israel for faithlessness? Read verse 2 and explain.
174. What is involved in the phrase concerning the manna in verse 3: "which thou knewest not"?
175. Our Lord cited this verse (8:3) to Satan. Israel *did* live by bread (and almost "bread alone" when we consider the conditions when the manna or bread was given) what then is meant by saying, "but by every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live."?
176. Are we to understand that there was some supernatural preservation of the garments of Israel? Discuss.
177. Over and over again we are told to "fear the Lord" but this is not the fear we know in normal life. Discuss the difference.
178. If Jehovah had not chastened Israel they would not be ready to enter Canaan. Why?
179. Why mention iron and copper?
180. Why is it so easy to forget our God in prosperity?
181. What is involved in the phrase referring to the "lifting up" of the heart? Cf. verse 14.
182. Are God's ultimate purposes always for our good? Discuss. Cf. verse 16.
183. From man's viewpoint: why is it better to be humble-minded?
184. For what accomplishments in life should man take credit?
185. Does God grant to some men special powers of getting wealth? Discuss.
186. Read Psalms 39:4 and apply to this text and our present life.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 8:1-20

All the commandments which I command you this day you shall be watchful to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers.

2 And you shall (earnestly) remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your (mind and) heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

3 And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that he might make you recognize and personally know that man does not live by bread only, but man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

4 Your clothing did not become old upon you, nor did your foot swell, these forty years.

5 Know also in your (mind and) heart that, as a man disciplines and instructs his son, so the Lord your God disciplines and instructs you.

6 So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and (reverently) fear Him. [Prov. 8:13.]

7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills;

8 A land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey,

9 A land in which you shall eat food without shortage, and lack nothing in it, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper.

10 When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for all the good land which He has given you.

11 Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God, by not keeping His commandments, His precepts, and His statutes, which I command you today,

12 Lest when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses, and live in them,

13 And when your herds and flocks multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all you have is multiplied;

14 Then your (mind and) heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,

15 Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, but Who brought you forth water out of the flinty rock;

16 Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end.

17 And beware lest you say in your (mind and) heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.

18 But you shall (earnestly) remember the Lord your God; for it is He Who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as at this day.

19 And if you forget the Lord your God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.

20 Like the nations which the Lord makes perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

### COMMENT 8:1-20

This chapter points up two grave dangers Israel would face as a result of their *prosperity*. These dangers, we might add, are faced by every child of God when prosperity and blessings come their way. They are:

- (1) Forgetfulness of past discipline (vv. 1-16)
- (2) Self-deification (vv. 17-20)

OBSERVE TO DO, THAT YE MAY LIVE, AND MULTIPLY (v. 1)—  
See also 4:1, 40, 5:33 and remarks.

THESE FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, THAT HE MIGHT HUMBLE THEE, TO PROVE THEE, TO KNOW WHAT WAS IN THY HEART, WHETHER THOU Wouldest KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, OR NOT (v. 2)—See also v. 16, where the additional purpose is given: "to do thee good at thy latter end". See also Ex. 15:25, 26; 20:18-20. God's purpose was "to put thee to the proof (etc)" (Rotherham). ". . . so that he might discover your true disposition and learn whether you will observe His orders or not" (Berkeley).

AND FED THEE WITH MANNA, WHICH THOU KNEWEST NOT, NEITHER DID THY FATHERS KNOW (v. 3)—See also v. 16. In what sense is this to be understood? Ex. 16:13-15 provides the inspired answer. They at first neither understood what the manna was or who had provided it. Hence Moses' reply "This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded" (Ex. 16:16). But the real purpose of the hunger

and the manna was to teach Israel a great lesson of *dependence upon God* for everything, as these verses go on to say. This lesson neither they nor their fathers understood—did not begin to grasp.

THAT HE MIGHT MAKE THEE KNOW THAT MAN DOTHT NOT LIVE BY BREAD ONLY, BUT BY EVERY THING THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF JEHOVAH DOTHT MAN LIVE (v. 3)—For forty years Israel had wandered in one of the bleakest, driest, most foreboding deserts known to man (Geographers often think of the Sinai Peninsula and the Arabian desert as an *extension* of the Sahara Desert). They were being "schooled"—shown the absolute necessity of heeding and obeying THE WORD OF GOD! (v. 2).

What kept Israel *alive* during this period? How did this great horde of people *survive* all the rigors of desert life? What kept their bodies from being just so many bleached bones drying in the desert sun?

Verse three gives the divine answer. *Every move Israel made* needed the definite direction and commandment of *God!* With the movement of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, Israel moved. "At the commandment of Jehovah they encamped, and at the commandment of Jehovah they journeyed: they kept the charge of Jehovah, at the commandment of Jehovah by Moses" (Num. 9:23). And so it was that in *every way* they were dependent on God's direction and help: When to *attack an enemy*, or when to go around him (as in the case of Edom we have just studied). Practically all their food was miraculously supplied *from God*—and at times their water. Because God decreed it, their raiment or shoes did not wear out nor did their feet swell (v. 4, Cf. 29:5). Again and again God *helped* them—again and again he chastised them. And what was the *purpose* of all this? That they might *know*, and know of a certainty, that a man's life is absolutely and *totally* dependent upon the will of God and the *word* of God! Oh how God hoped that his children would come to have a sense of utter and complete *dependence* upon him—and trust him for everything! He hoped they would realize, and think, "If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that" (Jas. 4:15).

It was, of course, a temptation for them to be primarily concerned with their *stomachs* (Num. 11:4-6; 18-20). But they should have learned *more* than this! They should have learned that *all* of God's words, instructions, and dealings with them were designed to be heeded. He gives no unnecessary commands—his dealings are all for a purpose.

In his temptation in the wilderness Jesus refers to this passage and enlarges upon its meaning (Matt. 4:1-4). As Israel had been forty *years* in a desert place, so Christ had been forty *days* in the wilderness. He, too, would be tempted to think of the *physical*—especially after a forty-day fast! Yet his refutation of Satan is, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Reader, do you realize the far-reaching significance and importance of that statement? In God's eyes (and he *knows* you—he is your creator!) you are not *really* "living" unless you are living under the authority and by the dictates of his holy word!

Israel's food and water were *miraculously* supplied by God. Their stomachs were not really what sustained them. They were *supernaturally* sustained—always! For they "did all eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink of the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:3, 4). God, the Spirit, and the Son were involved in the sustenance of the people of God—have always been—ever will be. Surely they could say, much *more* than the Athenians of Paul's day, "he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:27, 28).

To go through life under the delusion that the material, the tangible, the touchable, and the tasteable are all that we should live for, is to soon starve from hunger—*soul* hunger! We were created in the image of God, and with an inborn *capacity* to praise, adore, and serve him—if we will! Can we say with Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them . . ." (Jer. 15:16)? Or with Job, "I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured up the words of his mouth MORE THAN MY NECESSARY FOOD" (Job 23:12)? Bread, of course, is material. It is a term used throughout the Bible, for *food*. So our verse becomes the equivalent of saying, "Material things are entirely insufficient as a life-sustainer." Such as the teaching of Jesus over and over again: Matt. 5:6, 6:31-33, Jn. 6:35, 53, 58, 68. Truly, "It is the Spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: THE WORDS THAT I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO YOU ARE SPIRIT AND ARE LIFE" (Jn. 6:63).

Surely this passage teaches the absolute inadequacy and insufficiency of the *material* in life. "Man shall NOT live by bread alone." Doctors and Nurses have testified that babies have died because they lacked Tender Loving Care (T.L.C.)—though they had plenty of

physical nourishment. And so is the soul who is not *attached to the love of God!* He is dead while he lives (I Tim. 5:6, Rev. 3:1). On the other hand, "godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8). Our minds, then, should not be set upon the uncertain things of this fading world, "but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy (I Tim. 6:17).

The Great Physician, who alone can heal the sin-sick soul, has diagnosed our malady and given us his prescription. He demands that we literally *live* by his words—"hang" on them as it were. He who knows us and created us gave these directions. ". . . the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). What is the conclusion?

Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart  
 And lean not upon thine own understanding:  
 In all thy ways acknowledge him,  
 And he will direct thy paths

(Prov. 3:5, 6)

THY RAIMENT WAXED NOT OLD UPON THEE, NEITHER DID THY FOOT SWELL, THESE FORTY YEARS (v. 4)—29:5 adds "thy shoe is not waxed old upon thy foot." Clarke, as well as others, doubts that an actual *miracle* is involved here. But the inferences he attaches to such a miracle (such as the clothes growing with the children) seem entirely out of order. Lange, along with one of his editors, Dr. A. Gosman, states,

"It was a miraculous blessing, Moses says, without once stopping to reason why it should occur. It does not exclude the use of natural supplies to which Kurtz refers, the rich herds supplying abundantly wool and leather, the numerous garments and sandals which every Israelite must have possessed (Ex. xii. 34, 35) the garments of the Egyptians which were washed ashore (Ex. xiv. 30) and the booty they would have secured from the Amalekites [Ex. 17:13] sq. We need not hold with some Jewish Rabbis, or some Christian expositors, that the clothes and shoes upon the children grew with their growth, or with a reference to Ezek. xvi. 10 sq., that the Angel was present as a tailor in the wilderness . . . [It is idle, of course, to speculate as to the process by which this result was secured, as it would be to ask how Christ multiplied the loaves and the fishes. But while we need not overlook the natural supplies, nor exclude human agency in part, as

that agency was used in collecting and preparing the manna; it is clear that these natural supplies were supplemented by some special and miraculous exercise of the divine power—A.G.]”

AS A MAN CHASTENETH HIS SON, SO JEHOVAH THY GOD CHASTENETH THEE (v. 5)—Cf. Prov. 3:11, 12; Job 5:17, Heb. 12:4-13.

A GOOD LAND, etc. (vv. 7-10)—See also 11:8-15. The description is not exaggerated—and it was only the sins of Israel that caused the land to be other than this.

A LAND WHOSE STONES ARE IRON, AND OUT OF WHOSE HILLS THOU MAYEST DIG COPPER (v. 9)—Iron and copper had long been in use (Gen. 4:22) along with other metals (Num. 31:22, Deut. 3:11, 4:20 and notes, 33:25, etc.), though the “Iron Age” in history was only emerging. The oldest pieces of iron known to exist at this writing are Egyptian sickle blades and a crosscut saw, all of a much earlier date than the book of Deuteronomy. Copper has been one of man’s most useful metals for over 5,000 years. Both of these are still found in the Negev (Negeb) area of present-day Israel, though not in large amounts.

BEWARE LEST THOU FORGET JEHOVAH THY GOD (v. 11)—Prosperity, the enjoying of the good things of life, and particularly material and temporal blessings—so often lead one away from the very God who *gave* them! This danger is expressed again and again in Deuteronomy. See also 6:10-12 and notes, 11:13-15, etc.

THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE WILDERNESS (v. 15)—See 1:19, notes. *wherein were* FIERY SERPENTS AND SCORPIONS AND THIRSTY GROUND WHERE THERE WAS NO WATER (v. 15)—One naturally thinks of Num. 21:4 ff. here, but apparently this is better understood as a more inclusive statement, simply descriptive of the barren and hazardous nature of nearly *all* the land through which they had just traveled.

There were several kinds of poisonous serpents in this area (Cf. Isa. 30:6). The scorpions of this land, usually two or three inches long, have stings, “which, though often exceedingly painful for several hours, are seldom fatal.” (I.S.B.E.)

WHO BROUGHT THEE FORTH WATER OUT OF THE ROCK OF FLINT (v. 15)—At least twice, Ex. 17:6, Num. 20:11.

MANNA WHICH THY FATHERS KNEW NOT (v. 16)—See our discussion of this phrase under v. 3.



THAT HE MIGHT HUMBLE THEE, AND THAT HE MIGHT PROVE THEE, TO DO THEE GOOD AT THY LATTER END (v. 16)—See also vv. 2, 3, 5 and notes. Not God's *purpose* in all this: "to do thee GOOD in thy latter end"! Such is always God's *design* in the disciplining of his children. But their *response* to such discipline may be *backbiting* and *backsliding*. His designs and purposes are always for our *good* (Rom. 8:28) but whether this design is effective or not is contingent upon a proper attitude and response from his children. His chastizements, as well as his commands, are "for our good always" (6:24).

AND LEST THOU SAY IN THY HEART, MY POWER AND THE MIGHT OF MY HAND HATH GOTTEN ME THIS WEALTH (v. 17)—Such has always been the temptation of men—when it is *God* who has blessed them! Man seems to think that if God should bless him, then it must *surely* be because of his own *greatness* and *goodness*! It *must* be something *he* did, and therefore something *he* for which should be commended. But the next verse serves as a rebuke for all who think in such terms.

BUT THOU SHALT REMEMBER JEHOVAH THY GOD, FOR IT IS HE THAT GIVETH THEE POWER TO GET WEALTH (v. 18)—True, no matter what *means* or talents one may be able to employ toward the acquiring of wealth. Where is the room for boasting or pride here? By the principle stated, no sensible *reason* exists for pride—for *all* we are able to do is only possible if the Lord allows (I Cor. 15:10). "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that" (Jas. 4:15). "The blessing of Jehovah, it maketh rich" (Prov. 10:22). The Rich Fool had great plans *himself*, but they were short-lived when God said to him, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:20, 21). Who empowers and enables us to have the good things of life we enjoy—spiritual, material, or whatever? The Bible principle is, "Except JEHOVAH build the house, they labor in vain that build it: Except JEHOVAH keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1).

Who gives the power and strength to earn wealth? The power of mind to *think* and *reason* and thus increase earning power? The natural ability of voice, hand, eye, etc. which, when developed, often increase earnings? The health and energy with which to work? The air to breathe, the power to breathe it, the 103,680 heartbeats *a day* to keep

us alive? Paul said of God, "in him we LIVE and MOVE and HAVE OUR BEING" (Acts 17:28), but do we appreciate it?

Some one says, "But I am strong, industrious, healthy, intelligent, and have good business judgment." If so, who *gave* you these basic traits, and who enables you to cultivate them? Who spares your life day by day? Who supplies every breath of air you breathe? Who sustains the body, grants every heartbeat as a gift of his love? O how we need to pray with David,

Jehovah make me to know mine end,  
And the measure of my days, what it is;  
Let me know how frail I am.

(Ps. 39:4)

## b. HOW TO PREVENT THE THREAT (9:1—11:21)

### (1) BY A REALISTIC SELF-EVALUATION (9:1—10:11)

(Moses rehearses the story of the two tables of stone and the Israelite's sin at Sinai. This is done so Israel might see their previous course: rebelliousness, stubbornness, and disobedience.)

Hear, O Israel: thou art to pass over the Jordan this day to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2 a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the sons of Anak? 3 Know therefore this day, that Jehovah thy God is he who goeth over before thee as a devouring fire; he will destroy them, and he will bring them down before thee: so shalt thou drive them out, and make them to perish quickly, as Jehovah hath spoken unto thee. 4 Speak not thou in thy heart, after that Jehovah thy God hath thrust them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness Jehovah hath brought me in to possess this land; whereas for the wickedness of these nations Jehovah doth drive them out from before thee. 5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the unrighteousness of thy heart, dost thou go in to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations Jehovah thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may establish the word which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

6 Know therefore, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people. 7 Remember, forget thou not, how thou provokedst Jehovah thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou wentest forth out

of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah. 8 Also in Horeb ye provoked Jehovah to wrath, and Jehovah was angry with you to destroy you. 9 When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which Jehovah made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water. 10 And Jehovah delivered unto me the two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them *was written* according to all the words, which Jehovah spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that Jehovah gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant. 12 And Jehovah said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people that thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image. 13 Furthermore Jehovah spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 14 let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they. 15 So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount was burning with fire: and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands. 16 And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against Jehovah your God; ye had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which Jehovah had commanded you. 17 And I took hold of the two tables, and cast them out of my hands, and brake them before your eyes. 18 And I fell down before Jehovah, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water; because of all your sin which ye sinned, in doing that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith Jehovah was wroth against you to destroy you. But Jehovah hearkened unto me that time also. 20 And Jehovah was very angry with Aaron to destroy him: and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. 21 And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked Jehovah to wrath. 23 And when Jehovah sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah your God,

and ye believed him not, nor harkened to his voice. 24 Ye have been rebellious against Jehovah from the day that I knew you.

25 So I fell down before Jehovah the forty days and forty nights that I fell down, because Jehovah had said he would destroy you. 26 And I prayed unto Jehovah, and said, O Lord Jehovah, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, that thou hast redeemed through the greatness, that thou has brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember thy servants, Abraham, Issac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin, 28 lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because Jehovah was not able to bring them into the land which he promised unto them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. 29 Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy great power and by thine outstretched arm.

At that time, Jehovah said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. 2 And I will write on the tables the words that were on the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark. 3 So I made an ark of acacia wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in my hand. 4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which Jehovah spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and Jehovah gave them unto me. 5 And I turned and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they are as Jehovah commanded me. 6 (And the children of Israel journeyed from Beeroth Bene-jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead. 7 From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of brooks of water. 8 At that time Jehovah set apart the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, to stand before Jehovah to minister unto him, and to bless his name, unto this day. 9 Wherefore Levi hath no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; Jehovah is his inheritance, according as Jehovah thy God spake unto him.) 10 And I stayed in the mount, as at the first time, forty days and forty nights: and Jehovah hearkened unto me that time also; Jehovah would not destroy thee. 11 And Jehovah said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people; and

they shall go in and possess the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give unto them.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 9:1—10:11

187. What is the grand purpose of chapter nine?
188. What time is involved in the use of the term "day" in verse 1?
189. "Our God is a consuming fire"—this can be understood in at least two ways; how is it used here?
190. Were not the Israelites more righteous than the Canaanites? If so why not say it is because we are more righteous that God is driving out the inhabitants of the land? Cf. verses 4, 5.
191. Show how the punishment of the original inhabitants of the land was actually very merciful.
192. Why call for a remembrance of their sin at Horeb, and in the wilderness?
193. How was Moses able to remain alive without water for forty days?
194. Just what corruption or sin was involved at the worship of the golden calf? Is there a lesson in this for today?
195. Consider God's proposal to Moses in verse 14, did God mean what He said? Discuss.
196. There are two or three periods of forty days, designate them. Why were they necessary? Are there two or three?
197. Was it wrong for Moses to break the two tables of the covenant? What was Moses attitude
198. Jehovah was as angry with Aaron as He was with the people, why?
199. What very commendable quality is found in Moses at this time?
200. What ultimately happened to the golden calf? Why?
201. What sins were committed at the following places? (1) Taberah, (2) Massah, (3) Kibroth-hattaavah, (4) Kadesh-barnea.
202. Name the two arguments used in his prayer for the preservation of Israel.
203. In what sense was Israel Jehovah's "heritage"?
204. Why was it necessary to make an ark? Wasn't the ark made later along with the furniture of the tabernacle?
205. Who wrote the ten commandments on the tables of stone?
206. Why introduce the subject matter of verses 6 through 9?
207. Where did the Levites live? How were they supported? Read I Corinthians 9:13 for present application.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 9:1—10:11

Hear, O Israel; you are to cross the Jordan today, to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you are, cities great and fortified up to the heavens,

2 A people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you have heard it said, Who can stand before the sons of Anak?

3 Know therefore this day, that the Lord your God is He Who goes over before you as a devouring fire; He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall dispossess them and make them perish quickly, as the Lord has promised you.

4 Do not say in your (mind and) heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land, whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is dispossessing them before you.

5 Not for your righteousness, or for the uprightness of your [mind and] heart, do you go to possess their land; but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out before you, and that He may fulfill the promise which the Lord swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

6 Know therefore, that the Lord your God does not give you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a hard and stubborn people.

7 (Earnestly) remember, and forget not, how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day you left the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord.

8 Even in Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, and the Lord was so angry with you that He would have destroyed you.

9 When I went up the mountain to receive the tables of stone, the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I neither ate food nor drank water.

10 And the Lord delivered to me the two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them were all the words which the Lord spoke with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

11 And at the end of forty days and forty nights the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, the tables of the covenant.

HOW TO PREVENT THE THREAT 9:1—10:11

12 And the Lord said to me, Arise, go down from here quickly; for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they have quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molten image.

13 Furthermore the Lord said to me, I have seen this people, and behold, it is stubborn and hard;

14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under the heavens; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.

15 So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain was burning with fire; and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands.

16 And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the Lord your God; you had made you a molten calf; you had turned aside quickly from the way which the Lord had commanded you.

17 I took the two tables, cast them out of my two hands, and broke them before your eyes.

18 Then I fell down before the Lord, as before, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate food, nor drank water, because of all the sin you had committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.

19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure which the Lord held against you, enough to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also.

20 And the Lord was very angry with Aaron, enough to have destroyed him; and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

21 And I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I cast the dust of it into the brook that came down out of the mountain.

22 At Taberah also, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, you provoked the Lord to wrath.

23 Likewise when the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God, and you did not believe Him or trust and rely on Him or obey His voice.

24 You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.

25 So I fell down and lay prostrate before the Lord forty days and nights, for the Lord had said He would destroy you.

26 And I prayed to the Lord, O Lord God, do not destroy Your people and Your heritage, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

27 Remember [earnestly] your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not at the stubbornness of this people, or at their wickedness, or at their sin,

28 Lest the land from which You brought us out say, Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

29 Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.

At that time the Lord said to me, Hew two tables of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain, and make an ark of wood.

2 And I will write on the tables the words that were on the first tables which you broke, and you shall put them in the ark.

3 So I [Moses] made an ark of acacia wood, and hewed two tables of stone like the first, and went up the mountain\* with the two tables of stone in my [one] hand.

4 And the Lord wrote on the tables, as at the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; and the Lord gave them to me.

5 And I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as the Lord commanded me.

6 (The Israelites journeyed from the wells of the sons of Jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died, and there he was buried, and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead.

7 From there they journeyed to Gudgodah; then to Jotbathah, a land of brooks [dividing the valley].

\*One of the many misconceptions of articles and events mentioned in the Bible, which have been innocently perpetuated by artists without adequate knowledge, is that of the size of the two tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written. They were not great combstone-size slabs, but probably small rectangular plates, two of which could easily be carried in one hand. Dr. George L. Robinson brought from the Sinai area a pair of "tablets of stone" believed comparable to those mentioned here, which he put in his coat pocket. Moses says here "I went up the mountain with the two tables of stones in my [one] hand;" and he confirms it in Exod. 34:4.



HOW TO PREVENT THE THREAT 9:1—10:11

8 At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to Him, and to bless in His name, unto this day.

9 Therefore Levi has no part or inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance, as the Lord your God promised him.)

10 And I [Moses] stayed on the mountain, as the first time, forty days and nights; and the Lord listened to me at that time also; the Lord would not destroy you.

11 And the Lord said to me, Arise, journey on before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give to them.

COMMENT 9:1—10:11

THOU ART TO PASS OVER THE JORDAN THIS DAY (v. 1)—Commenting on the term "this day," Clarke states: "*baiyom, this time*; they had come thirtyeight years before this nearly to the verge of the promised land, but were not permitted at *that day or time* to pass over, because of their rebellion; but *this time* they shall certainly pass over. This was spoken about the *eleventh* month of the fortieth year of their journeying, and it was on the first month of the following year they passed over; and during the interim Moses died." Robert Jamieson states, "*this day—means this time*. The Israelites had reached the confines of the promised land [thirty-eight years before], but were obliged, to their great mortification, to return. But now were they certainly to enter it. No obstacle could prevent their possession . . ."

NATIONS GREATER AND MIGHTIER THAN THYSELF, CITIES GREAT AND FORTIFIED UP TO HEAVEN . . . A PEOPLE GREAT AND TALL, THE SONS OF THE ANAKIM (vv. 1, 2)—See 1:28, 7:1 and notes.

GOD IS HE WHO GOETH BEFORE THEE AS A DEVOURING FIRE (v. 3)—They had been warned against idolatry with the reminder, "For Jehovah thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God" (4:24). But how good it is to have the power of God going *before* one, overpowering the enemy, as a devastating forest or prairie fire consumes all that is in its path! So was God's *continued* promise to an *obedient* Israel.

SO SHALT THOU DRIVE THEM OUT, AND MAKE THEM TO PERISH QUICKLY (v. 3)—How do we reconcile what is stated here, with the previous promise that God would "cast out those nations before thee by little and little," and not "at once" (7:22)? Looking at the *whole*

*process*, and in view of the time it would take by any "natural" means for a nation the size of Israel to dispossess the native inhabitants, it was to be "quickly." But looking on it from the standpoint of the Israelites, the process would be "little by little." Furthermore, the emphasis here is on the fact that these inhabitants should not be allowed to *live*: ". . . you will be able to dispossess them and kill them off quickly" (Berkeley).

SPEAK NOT THOU IN THY HEART . . . FOR MY RIGHTEOUSNESS JEHOVAH HATH BROUGHT ME IN . . . WHEREAS FOR THE WICKEDNESS OF THESE NATIONS JEHOVAH DOTH DRIVE THEM OUT (v. 4)—There were two great purposes in God's bringing Israel into this land.

1. To punish the Canaanite tribes for their gross wickedness.

2. To bring about his eternal purpose of salvation through Christ, promised to the patriarchs (4:37, 10:15). Note v. 5.

The wickedness of these nations has already been described, and archaeologists have shown that these nations were engrossed in the basest, most degrading kind of idolatry. Their "worship" often included human sacrifice and sensual rites. See 12:31, 18:9-14; Num. 31:15, 16; Lev. 18:24-30, etc. The iniquity of the Amorite was full (Gen. 15:16), and it was time now for God to drive *them* out and bring his chosen seed *in*. Where, then, was room provided for Israel to boast? Clarke's comment is timely: "Thus the *Canaanites were cut off*, and the *Israelites were grafted in*; and the *Israelites*, because of their wickedness were afterwards *cut off*, and the *Gentiles grafted in*. Let the latter not be high-minded but fear; if God spared not the *natural* branches, take heed lest he spare not thee." [Cf. Rom. 11:17-24]

THOU ART A STIFFNECKED PEOPLE (v. 6)—One of a number of references to Israel's perennial disobedience. In just this chapter we have

- (a) Stiffnecked, v. 6, 13
- (b) rebellious, v. 7, 23, 24
- (c) corrupted themselves, v. 12
- (d) provoked Jehovah to wrath v. 7, 8, 22
- (e) believed not God, v. 23
- (f) "sinned" and "were evil," v. 18
- (g) quickly turned aside, v. 12

These were not exactly complimentary terms—but every one of them true. Moses could rightfully say, "Ye have been rebellious against Jehovah FROM THE DAY THAT I KNEW YOU" (v. 24). Where was

HOW TO PREVENT THE THREAT 9:1—10:11

Israel's room for pride in this? An honest appraisal of their past would have induced humility and contriteness of heart.

I ABODE IN THE MOUNT FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS; I DID NEITHER EAT BREAD NOR DRINK WATER (v. 9)—How could Moses have more exactly stated that his was a *total fast* in Sinai? See also v. 18, where the second stay in the mount is similarly described, and Ex 34:28. Jesus' fast in the wilderness was for the same length of time, and it is also specified that "he did eat nothing in those days," Luke 4:1, 2. They were both, of course, miraculously sustained and strengthened, though this does not mean they were without hunger afterward (Matt. 4:2).

WRITTEN WITH THE FINGER OF GOD (v. 10)—See 5:22 and notes.

LET ME ALONE, THAT I MAY DESTROY THEM, AND BLOT OUT THEIR NAME FROM UNDER HEAVEN; AND I WILL MAKE OF THEE A NATION MIGHTIER AND GREATER THAN THEY (v. 14)—See Ex. 32:7-14. Moses' prayer found favor with God, and changed the course of history! See also vv. 18, 25-29; 10:10, 11. As it was, Moses had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer (Ex. 18:3, 4), but no tribe or nation sprang from them.

SO I TURNED AND CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNT (v. 15)—The student should review these events in Exodus, chapter 31 ff. if he is not already familiar with them.

AND I FELL DOWN BEFORE JEHOVAH, AS AT THE FIRST, FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS (v. 18)—See also v. 25, 10:10; Ex. 34:28. "Moses interceded for the people before he came down from the mountain the first time (Ex. xxxii. 11-13). This intercession is only briefly alluded to in this verse. Afterwards he spent another forty days on the mountain in fasting and prayer to obtain a complete restitution of the Covenant (Ex. xxxiv. 28). It is this second forty days, and the intercession of Moses made therein (Cp. Ex. xxxiv. 9), that is more particularly brought forward here and in vv. 25-29." (Cook, in *Barne's Notes*)

AND JEHOVAH WAS VERY ANGRY WITH AARON, TO DESTROY HIM (v. 20)—See Ex. 32:21 ff. Aaron had died several months before Moses' present speech. Cf. Num. 33:38 with Deut. 1:3.

AND I TOOK . . . THE CALF . . . GRINDING IT VERY SMALL (v. 21)—Ex. 32:20 states additionally, "And he took the calf which they

had made, and burnt it with fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." That's what is called, "a taste of your own medicine." But the consequences of that sin were much more serious, and three thousand men were immediately slain by the Levites (Ex. 32:25-29).

AND AT TABERAH ["*Burning.*" See Num. 11:1-3] . . . MASSAH ["*tempting*" or "*proving.*" See Ex. 17:1-7, Deut. 6:16 and notes] AND AT KIBROTH-HATTAVAH ] "The graves of lust." See Num. 11:4-35 [YE PROVOKED JEHOVAH TO WRATH (v. 22). AND WHEN JEHOVAH SENT YOU FROM KADESH-BARNEA (v. 23) ["*The holy place of Barnea*" See Numbers, Chaps. 13, 14]. Murmuring, complaining, and rebellion were evident at all four of these places; and with all truthfulness Moses could say, YE HAVE BEEN REBELLIOUS AGAINST JEHOVAH FROM THE DAY I KNEW YOU (v. 24)—Cf. v. 7—"from the day that thou wentest forth out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place". What an indictment! And yet, what Israelite could deny it?

SO I FELL DOWN BEFORE JEHOVAH THE FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS (v. 25)—Continuing now from v. 18. See also 10:10. Moses' effectual prayer when Israel, led by Aaron, had "corrupted themselves" is recorded in Ex. 32:7-14; also v. 30-35. But Moses' references *here*, are especially to his pleas with God during his *second* stay in the mount, which was "as the first, forty days and forty nights" (v. 18). This account is in Ex. 34:4 ff.

Moses' acts were similar during both stays, and (as we saw in discussing the engraving on the stones) it is not always easy to know those acts that were true in one stay and not in another. We know 10:1 ff. concerns his second stay.

"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working," and Moses found favor with God. Note that his prayer for Israel's preservation is based on God's *eternal purpose* for his people. And surely *this* was God's reason for preserving them—their own "righteousness" merited only destruction (v. 4, 5).

God's true leaders are even in prayer for his people; and their motives, like Moses', are altogether disinterested and altruistic. Samuel could say, even to a people bent on doing wrong, "Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you: but I will instruct you in the good and right way" (I Sam. 12:23).

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER NINE

*The people are informed that they shall shortly pass over Jordan, and that God shall go over before them, to expel the ancient inhabitants, 1-3. They are cautioned not to suppose that it is on account of their righteousness that God is to give them that land, 4-6. They are exhorted to remember their various provocations of the Divine Majesty, especially at Horeb, 7-14; and how Moses interceded for them, and destroyed the Golden calf, 15-21. How they murmured at Taberah, 22; and rebelled at Kadesh-barnea, 23; and had been perverse from the beginning, 24. An account of the intercession of Moses in their behalf, 25-29.*

AT THAT TIME (10:1)—Moses' second stay in the mount. The Exodus account (Ch. 34) can here be compared.

JEHOVAH SAID . . . I WILL WRITE (v. 2)—See also our previous discussion under 5:22. The plain statements of this chapter about God writing the ten commandments during Moses' second stay in the mount, cannot help but influence our interpretation of Ex. 34:1, 27, 28. In the first instance, "the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven on the tables" (Ex. 32:16). Moses hewed out the second set of tables himself, and if the words here about God writing on the second set are to be understood literally (and we have no difficulty so understanding them), the statement "And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments" (Ex. 34:28) would refer to God, not Moses.

AND I . . . PUT THE TABLES IN THE ARK (v. 5)—". . . the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant" (Heb. 9:3, 4).

AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL JOURNEYED . . . etc. (vv. 6-9)—A parenthetical statement concerning Aaron and the tribe of Levi. Aaron's death and his succession by Eleazar his son is further detailed in Num. 20:22-29 and (especially as it connects with this passage) Num. 33:31-39. Obviously, the statements of our present verses are not intended to be understood as happening at the same time as the giving of the law, for Aaron had only recently died, in the fifth month of their fortieth year out of Egypt. Why, then, are these statements made? They are apparently suggested by the mentioning of the covenant and the Ark (v. 5), which was borne by the tribe of Levi. And

so prominent was the fact that the tables of stone were within the ark, it was known as "the ark of the covenant," or "the ark of the covenant of Jehovah." The book of Deuteronomy was later carried on the side of the ark (31:2b).

WHEREFORE LEVI HATH NO PORTION NOR INHERITANCE (v. 9)—  
See also 12:12, 14:27-29, 18:1-8, Num. 18:19-24. The fact that they did *not* have an inheritance placed them at the mercy of the Israelites for *support*. Don't miss the application Paul makes of this, I Cor. 9:13, 14. Members of this tribe were not property owners. Num. 35:1-8, however, provides that forty-eight cities should be given to the Levites, each surrounded by a pasturage ("suburb"). These included the six cities of refuge. They were not "inheritances" as such (the area occupied by the whole forty-eight jointly is estimated to have covered less than sixteen square miles), but provided places for members of this tribe to *live*. This passage is not inconsistent with 18:8, which specifies that the Levite may have "that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony." See notes under that verse, and remarks under 12:12.

The threat from within was to be further prevented . . .

(2) BY AN ABIDING LOVE (10:12—11:1)

12 And now, Israel, what doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, 13 to keep the commandments of Jehovah, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? 14 Behold, unto Jehovah thy God belongeth heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth, with all that is therein. 15 Only Jehovah had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all peoples, as at this day. 16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. 17 For Jehovah your God, he is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty, and the terrible, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. 18 He doth execute justice for the fatherless and widow, and loveth the sojourner, in giving him food and raiment. 19 Love ye therefore the sojourner; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt. 20 Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; him shalt thou serve; and to him shalt thou cleave, and by his name shalt thou swear. 21 He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen. 22 Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten

## HOW TO PREVENT THE THREAT 10:12—11:1

persons; and now Jehovah thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Therefore thou shalt love Jehovah thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his ordinances, and his commandments always.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 10:12—11:1

208. Please read carefully this whole section as an expression of the heart of our Lord respecting His children. Does this sound like a tyrant type law giver?
209. Fill in the blanks: "What does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear \_\_\_\_\_ your God, to walk in all \_\_\_\_\_, to love \_\_\_\_\_, to serve \_\_\_\_\_ your God with all your \_\_\_\_\_."
210. In what sense are God's commandments for our good?
211. Why mention the thought that God owns all?
212. Isn't verse 16 a strange word? What does it mean?
213. Why mention the fatherless and widow?
214. Please list the verbs that refer to the proper relationship of the Israelite to Jehovah, such as "fear, walk, love," . . . etc. What does the Lord require of thee and me?
215. What is the suggestion in the expression: "He is your praise"?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 10:12—11:1

12 And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but (reverently) to fear the Lord your God: [that is,] to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your (mind and) heart and with your entire being.

13 To keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command you today for your good?

14 Behold, the heavens and the Heaven of heavens belong to the Lord your God, the earth also, with all that is in it and on it;

15 Yet the Lord had a delight in loving your fathers, and He chose their descendants after them, you above all people, as this day.

16 So circumcise the foreskin of your [mind and] heart; be no longer stubborn and hardened.

17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, the terrible God, Who is not partial and takes no bribe.

18 He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger or temporary resident and gives him food and clothing.

19 Therefore love the stranger and sojourner, for you were strangers and sojourners in the land of Egypt.

20 You shall (reverently) fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and by His name and presence you shall swear.

21 He is your praise; He is your God, Who has done for you these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen.

22 Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons; and now the Lord your God has made you as the stars of the heavens for multitude.

Therefore you shall love the Lord your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His precepts, and His commandments always.

### COMMENT 10:12—11:1

WHAT DOTTH JEHOVAH . . . REQUIRE OF THEE, etc. (vv. 12, 13)—Surely one of the most moving passages in this book! We are immediately reminded of 6:4, 5, and also that famous scripture in Micah 6:8. One cannot help but see in these passages that God demanded the *heart* of his servants in the *Old Testament!* He was dissatisfied and displeased when service was rendered to him only out of habit, form, and dry conformity. Reader, if that was true then, under the partial light of that distant age, what shall we say of the expectations of God now?

FOR THY GOOD (v. 13)—See also 6:24, 8:16.

UNTO JEHOVAH THY GOD BELONGETH HEAVEN AND THE HEAVEN OF HEAVENS, THE EARTH, WITH ALL THAT IS THEREIN (v. 14)—A graphic way of saying that *all* belongs to *God*. "The earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness thereof" (Ps. 24:1) on one hand, "The heavens are the heavens of Jehovah" (Ps. 115:16) on the other. Concerning the phrase, "heaven and the heaven of heavens," Gesenius remarks, "i.e. all the spaces of heaven, however vast and infinite," citing this passage and I K. 8:27.

CIRCUMCISE . . . THE FORESKIN OF YOUR HEART, AND BE NO MORE STIFFNECKED (v. 16)—See also 30:6. Circumcision was, of course, an identifying mark of all Israelites. But, as Paul later states, "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28, 29).



Before *God* would be pleased, their *hearts* must be circumcised. "Circumcise yourselves to Jehovah," the prophet said, "and take away the foreskin of your heart" (Jer. 4:4). A mere outward alteration simply would not (and *will* not) do with God! The *inner* man, "the hidden man of the heart" must be changed. See Joel 2:12, 13.

[GOD] LOVETH THE SOJOURNER . . . LOVE YE THEREFORE THE SOJOURNER (vv. 18, 19)—If Israel was to be *godlike*, his love, like God's, would extend to *all*. The reference here is, of course to those who joined themselves to Israel and embraced Jehovah and his worship, such as Ruth the Moabitess and Uriah the Hittite. Cf. Lev. 19:33, 34.

BY HIS NAME THOU SHALT SWEAR (v. 20)—See 5:11 and remarks. Also 6-13.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TEN

*Moses is commanded to make a second set of tables, 1, 2. He makes an ark, prepares the two tables, God writes on them the ten commandments, and Moses lays them up in the ark, 3-5. The Israelites journey from Beeroth to Mosera, where Aaron dies, 6; and from thence to Gudgodah and Jotbath, 7. At that time God separated the tribe of Levi for the service of the sanctuary, 8, 9. How long Moses stayed the second time in the mount, 10, 11. What God requires of the Israelites, 12-15. Their heart must be circumcised, 16. God's character and conduct, 17, 18. They are commanded to love the stranger, 19; to fear, love, and serve God, 20, because he had done such great things for them and their fathers, 21, 22.*

### (3) BY A CONSTANT REFRESHING OF MEMORY (11:2-25)

2 And know ye this day: for I *speak* not with your children that have not known, and that have not seen the chastisement of Jehovah your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his outstretched arm, 3 and his signs, and his works, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; 4 and what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how Jehovah hath destroyed them unto this day; 5 and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came unto this place; 6 and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben; how the earth opened its mouth, and

swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel: 7 but your eyes have seen all the great work of Jehovah which he did.

8 Therefore shall ye keep all the commandment which I command thee this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go over to possess it; 9 and that ye may prolong your days in the land, which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10 For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; 11 but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinketh water of the rain of heaven. 12 a land which Jehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Jehovah thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love Jehovah your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy grain, and thy new wine, and thine oil. 15 And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and thou shalt eat and be full. 16 Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; 17 and the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there shall be no rain, and the land shall not yield its fruit; and ye perish quickly from off the good land which Jehovah giveth you.

18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul; and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. 19 And ye shall teach them your children, talking of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 20 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates; 21 that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of the heavens above the earth. 22 or if ye shall diligently keep all this commandment which I command you, to do it, to love Jehovah your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; 23 then will Jehovah drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall dispossess nations greater and mightier

than yourselves. 24 Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder sea shall be your border. 25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: Jehovah your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath spoken unto you.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 11:2-25

216. Why was Israel to consider the discipline or chastisement of the Lord?
217. Define in your own words the following qualities of Jehovah: (1) greatness, (2) mighty hand, (3) outstretched arm, (4) signs, (5) deeds, (6) destroyed, (7) great work.
218. What was one of the basic differences and advantages of Canaan as compared to Egypt?
219. Did God promise material prosperity as a result of obedience to His laws? Is this true today? Discuss.
220. Read the comments again on 6:6-9.
221. Please consider verse 21 and answer the question as to whether Palestine still belongs to the Jews?
222. Were the conditions and promises of Jehovah ever met for the conquering of the promised land? When? By whom?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 11:2-25

2 And know this day (for I am not speaking to your children who have not [personally] known and seen it), the instruction and discipline of the Lord your God, His greatness, His mighty hand, and His outstretched arm,

3 His signs and His deeds which He did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land;

4 And what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and chariots; how He made the water of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord has destroyed them to this day;

5 And what He did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place;

6 And what He did to Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, son of Reuben; how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up them, their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel; [Num. 26:9, 10.]

7 For your eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord which He did.

8 Therefore you shall keep all the commandments which I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you go across [Jordan] to possess;

9 And that you may live long in the land, which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 For the land which you go in to possess is not like the land of Egypt, from which you came out, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your foot laboriously, as a garden of vegetables;

11 But the land, which you enter to possess, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinks water of the rain of the heavens;

12 A land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

13 And if you will diligently heed My commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your [mind and] heart and with your entire being,

14 I will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil.

15 And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle, that you may eat and be full.

16 Take heed to yourselves, lest your [mind and] heart be deceived and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them,

17 And the Lord's anger be kindled against you, and He shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land yield not its fruit, and you perish quickly off the good land which the Lord gives you.

18 Therefore you shall lay up these My words in your [mind and] heart and in your [entire] being, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, and as forehead bands between your eyes.

19 And you shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you rise up.

20 And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house, and on your gates,

21 That your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.

22 For if you diligently keep all this commandment which I command you to do, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave to Him,

23 Then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you shall dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves.

24 Every place upon which the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours; from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western [Mediterranean] sea your territory shall be.

25 There shall no man be able to stand before you; the Lord your God shall lay the fear and the dread of you upon all the land that you shall tread, as He has said to you.

### COMMENT 11:2-25

In vv. 2-7, note that the mighty works of Jehovah, which the adults had all seen, argued for their obedience. In vv. 8-17, the rich, fertile, and productive nature of the promised land is depicted, while in vv. 18-25 Israel is reminded that God's law, when carefully kept, assured them of victory and conquest of the entire area pledged. All this Israel doubtless knew, mentally. But this is a "sermon," and Moses would indelibly impress, yea, *engrave* certain thoughts upon their minds.

FOR I SPEAK NOT WITH YOUR CHILDREN (v. 2)—The youngsters could not be *reminded* of what the older ones could—the adults *should* have learned life-long lessons from their wilderness experiences (6:2, 3).

DATHAN AND ABIRAM (v. 6)—See Num. 16. One would think such an event as this would put a stop to all thoughts of rebellion, murmuring, or disobedience for a long while. "But on the morrow all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of Jehovah" (Num. 16:41). This was Israel's history. The most severe chastisement often failed to teach the desired lesson! A plague resulted from this murmuring, killing 14,700. "Now, Israel," Moses is saying, "*think* about this! Do you want such chastisements to be *again* upon your head, or will you receive the *blessings* God has promised with *obedience*? Your eyes have *seen* all these things (v. 7)—have you absorbed the *lesson* God has for you in all this? And have we (I Cor. 10:11, 12)?"

FOR THE LAND . . . IS NOT AS THE LAND OF EGYPT . . . WHERE THOU SOWEDST THY SEED, AND WATEREDST IT WITH THY FOOT . . . etc. (vv. 10-12)—Although various methods of irrigation are today absolutely necessary for agriculture in vast portions of Israel, such was

not true in ancient times for the greater part of the land promised in vv. 24, 25. Furthermore, the former and latter rains (v. 14. Cf. Job 29:23, Jer. 5:24, Joel 2:23, Jas. 5:7) were *assured* only if Israel was *obedient* (v. 17). In contrast, Egypt is absolutely dependent on an extensive irrigation system for her very survival as an agricultural state. (Witness the recent building of the Aswan High Dam in southern Egypt). Rain seldom falls in Egypt. Most of the country has only about one inch a year. Were it not for the Nile, most of the country would simply be a part of the Sahara desert.

On the above phrase, the I.S.B.E. states, "To one familiar with the methods of irrigation today practiced in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, the passage, 'where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs' (Deut. 11:10), is easily explained. The water is brought in channels to the gardens, where it is distributed along the rows of growing vegetables planted on the sides of the trenches. In stony soil the canal leading to a particular plot is opened and closed with a hoe. Any obstruction in the trench is similarly removed, while in the soft, loamy soil of the coastal plain or in the Nile valley these operations can be done with the foot, a practice still commonly seen."

TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES (vv. 16, 17)—The thought of these verses being very similar to that of 8:11 ff., i.e. that the very blessings they *received* from God would cause them to become soft and lax with regard to his worship and the observance of his laws. The *same warning* needs to be sounded loud and frequently *today!*

THEREFORE SHALL YE LAY UP THESE MY WORDS IN YOUR HEART AND IN YOUR SOUL; AND YE SHALL BIND THEM FOR A SIGN . . . etc (vv. 18-21)—See 6:6-9 and remarks.

THAT YOUR DAYS MAY BE MULTIPLIED . . . AS THE DAYS OF THE HEAVENS ABOVE THE EARTH (v. 21)—"as long as the heavens are above the earth" (Amplified O.T.), "as long as there is a heaven over the earth" (The Torah). As the phrase stands in the A.S.V., the phrase would indicate no specific *length of time*, but simply an innumerable number of days. The other renderings would extend this promise to the end of the world (II Pet. 3:9).

AND YE SHALL DISPOSSESS NATIONS GREATER AND MIGHTIER THAN YOURSELVES (v. 23) . . . THERE SHALL NO MAN BE ABLE TO STAND BEFORE YOU (v. 25)—Christian, why cannot *we* learn the lesson here that Israel did *not*? A complete trust, obedience and love of Jehovah

(note v. 22) had this great promise along with it. In essence, the promise was: You will be able to do things that now appear totally *impossible*—accomplish things that try even the imagination—vanquish peoples that are “unconquerable,” overcome difficulties that seem insurmountable, conquer insuperable barriers. When Israel took these exhortations to heart, God literally fulfilled his part of this promise (as shown especially in Joshua, and also under the rulership of David and Solomon).

Unless a foe or difficulty is larger than *God*, it is not insurmountable. the theme of the Bible is “God is able.” Yes, it is “him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph. 3:20). “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Who can stand up against him who is aligned with and in fellowship with Almighty God? Let us *stand with him*, and we will soon *share of his power!* Let us stop asserting *ourselves*, and assert our confidence in the Omnipotent One.

#### 8. THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE (11:26-32)

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, if ye shall hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God, which I command you this day; 28 and the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. 29 And it shall come to pass, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt set the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. 30 Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? 31 For ye are to pass over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which Jehovah your God giveth you, and yet shall possess it, and dwell therein. 32 And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and the ordinances which I set before you this day.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 11:26-32

223. Just what blessing had Jehovah promised to Israel? What curse?
224. It would seem the whole of God’s desire for us can be summarized in one word, “obedience.” Do you agree?
225. What is meant by “set the blessings on Mount Gerizim”?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 11:26-32

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

27 The blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day;

28 And the curse, if you will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which you have not known.

29 And when the Lord your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, you shall set the blessings on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. [Josh. 8:33.]

30 Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road where the sun goes down, in the land of the Canaanites, living in the Arabah opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks or terebiths of Moreh?

31 For you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you shall possess it, and live in it.

32 And you shall be watchful to do all the statutes and ordinances which I set before you this day.

## COMMENT 11:26-32

We will have more to say of God's instructions upon Israel's arrival at Ebal and Gerizim in chapters 27 and 28. These mountains were directly opposite one another in the area allotted to the tribe of Ephraim. Ebal, 3,075 feet high, was on the north, and Gerizim, elevation 2,850, on the south; with the town of Shechem lying in the valley between.

THIS DAY (vv. 26, 32)—It appears that this section chronologically belongs to the same time as chap. 27 ff. because the same event is described. In fact, all the intervening scriptures *may* be a record of Moses' words *on the same day*. However, it is not mandatory that we compress "this day" into so literal a meaning. See 9:1, notes.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ELEVEN

*The people are exhorted to obedience from a consideration of God's goodness to their fathers in Egypt, 1-4, and what he did in the wilderness, 5, and the judgment on Dathan and Abiram, 6, and from the mercies of God in general, 7-9. A comparative description of Egypt and Canaan, 10-12. Promises to obedience, 13-15. Dissuasives from*



idolatry, 16, 17. The words of God to be laid up in their hearts, to be for a sign on their hands, foreheads, gates, &c., 18, taught to their children, made the subject of frequent conversation, to the end that their days may be multiplied, 19-21. If obedient, God shall give them possession of the whole land, and not one of their enemies shall be able to withstand them, 22-25. Life and death, a blessing and a curse, are set before them, 26-28. The blessings to be put on Mount Gerizim and the curses on Mount Ebal, 29, 30. The promise that they should pass over Jordan, and observe these statutes in the promised land, 31, 32.

## QUESTIONS, LESSON EIGHT (8:1—11:32)

### CHAPTER 8

1. What was God's *purpose* in both providing Israel's food and allowing him to suffer hunger?
2. In what sense did neither this generation nor their fathers "know" the manna? (finish before proceeding.)
3. Complete: "\_\_\_\_\_ doth not \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ alone, but by \_\_\_\_\_ that proceedeth out of the mouth of \_\_\_\_\_ doth man \_\_\_\_\_."
4. Explain what particular significance the above verse would have to *Israel* in the wilderness.
5. In what context did Jesus use this verse?
6. What applications do you see for this passage in life *today*?
7. Finish: "And thou shalt consider in thy heart, that, as a man \_\_\_\_\_ his son, so Jehovah thy God \_\_\_\_\_ thee" (v. 5).
8. Name two metals Israel would be able to obtain in their new land.
9. What is said of Israel's wearing apparel during the wilderness trek?
10. What particular temptations would come Israel's way along with their wealth and plenty?

### CHAPTER 9

11. How do you reconcile the statement of v. 3 ("make them [the native tribes] to perish quickly,") with the command to cast out those nations "by little and little" (7:22)?
12. Israel was not to say "For \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness Jehovah hath brought me in to possess this land" because "for the \_\_\_\_\_ of these nations Jehovah does drive them out . . ." (v. 4).

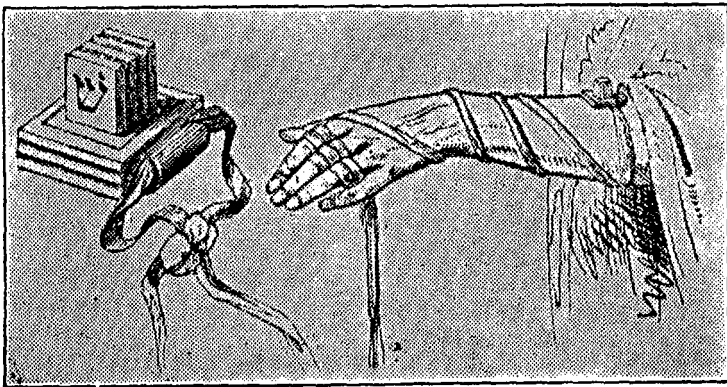
13. What two basic reasons, then, did God have for exterminating the Canaanite tribes?
14. Moses could personally testify that Israel had been rebellious for quite some time. How long?
15. Of whom did God threaten to make a nation when Israel sinned below the mount?
16. How much *total* time did Moses spend in fasting and prayer on the mount?

## CHAPTER 10

17. What was kept in the ark?
18. Levi had no inheritance but ... \_\_\_\_\_.
19. What "exceptions" do the scriptures make to the above rule?
20. Was heart-felt service absolutely necessary to the faithful Israelite? Explain.

## CHAPTER 11

21. What advantage did the adult Israelite have that the children did not?
22. What was the chief difference mentioned here between Egypt and Palestine?
23. Who could stand before Israel when they were obedient?
24. What was to be the mountain of blessing? Of the curse?



**Phylacteries for Head and Arm.**

## LESSON NINE 12:1-28

### B. THE LAW ("the Statutes and Ordinances") (12:1—26:19)

#### 1. ONE SANCTUARY (12:1-28)

These are the statutes and the ordinances which ye shall observe to do in the land which Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath given thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth. 2 Ye shall surely destroy all the places wherein the nations that ye shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: 3 and ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods; and ye shall destroy their name out of that place. 4 Ye shall not do so unto Jehovah your God. 5 But unto the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come; 6 and thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill-offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock: 7 and there ye shall eat before Jehovah your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee. 8 Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes; 9 for ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 10 But when ye go over the Jordan, and dwell in the land which Jehovah your God causeth you to inherit, and he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; 11 then it shall come to pass that to the place which Jehovah your God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you: your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and all your choice vows ye vow unto Jehovah. 12 And ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates, forasmuch as he hath no portion nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou seest; 14 but in the place which Jehovah shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

15 Notwithstanding, thou mayest kill and eat flesh within all thy gates, after all the desire of thy soul, according to the blessings of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee; the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the gazelle, and as of the hart. 16 Only ye shall not eat the blood; thou shalt pour it out upon the earth as water. 17 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy grain, or of thy new wine, or of thine oil, or the firstlings of thy herd or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill-offerings, nor the heave-offering of thy hand; 18 But thou shalt eat them before Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God in all that thou puttest thy hand unto. 19 Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest in thy land.

20 When Jehovah thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul desireth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, after all the desire of thy soul. 21 If the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to put his name there, be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which Jehovah hath given thee, as I have commanded thee; and thou mayest eat within thy gates, after all the desire of thy soul. 22 Even as the gazelle and as the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat thereof: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof alike. 23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou shalt not eat the life with the flesh. 24 Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it out upon the earth as water. 25 Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah. 26 Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which Jehovah shall choose: 27 and thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of Jehovah thy God; and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of Jehovah thy God; and thou shalt eat the flesh. 28 Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee forever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the eyes of Jehovah thy God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:1-28

226. Wouldn't it have been enough to simply worship the Lord in sincerity and truth and not to fight other religions? Why all the negative action?
227. What advantage was there in one place of worship?
228. Notice the laxity suggested in verse 8, or is this the thought of the verse?
229. What could be slaughtered at home?
230. What attitude was to prevail when offerings were made?
231. What was never to be eaten?
232. How could a Levite be forsaken?
233. Did God permit meat eating? (cf. verse 20) What of some present-day prohibitions of flesh eating?
234. What new rule for slaughtering animals is given verse 21?
235. How we need to believe God's will is both *good* and *right*. Cf. verse 28. What will help us understand this?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 12:1-28

These are the statutes and ordinances which you shall be watchful to do in the land, which the Lord, God of your fathers, gives you to possess all the day you live on the earth.

2 You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations you dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains and the hills and under every green tree;

3 You shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their name out of that place.

4 You shall not behave so toward the Lord your God.

5 But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name and make His dwelling-place, and there shall you come;

6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the offering of your hands and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock;

7 And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you.

8 You \*shall not do according to all we do here [in the camp] this day, every man doing whatever looks right in his own eyes.

9 For you have not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God gives you.

10 But when you go over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God causes you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety,

11 Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name [and His presence] to dwell there; to it you shall bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, and what the hand presents [as a first gift from the fruits of the ground], and all your choicest offerings which you vow to the Lord.

12 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, and your menservants and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your towns; since he has no part or inheritance with you.

13 Be watchful not to offer your burnt offerings in every place you see;

14 But in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all I command you.

15 However, you may kill and eat flesh in any of your towns, whenever you desire, according to the provision for the support of life with which the Lord your God has blessed you; those [ceremonially] unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and the hart.

16 Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it upon the ground as water.

17 You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your new wine or of your oil or the firstlings of your herd or flock, or anything you have vowed, or your freewill offerings, or the offerings from your hand [of garden products].

18 But you shall eat them before the Lord your God in the place which the Lord your God shall choose, you and your son and your

\* "It has been too much overlooked that the Law of Moses had a prophetic side. It was given to him and to Israel when they were not in a position to keep it [fully]. It was *the law of the land* which God would give them. In many ways its observance depended on the completion of the conquest of the land, and upon the quietness of the times in which they lived. This prophetic aspect was certainly not unrecognized by the Jews, or they would not (for example) have neglected to dwell in booths at the Feast of Tabernacles from the time of Joshua to Nehemiah. See Neh. 8:17." (*Ellicott's Commentary*.)

daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite that is within your towns; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God in all that you undertake.

19 Take heed not to forsake or neglect the Levite [God's minister] as long as you live in your land.

20 When the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as He promised you, and you say, I will eat flesh, because you crave flesh, you may eat flesh, whenever you desire.

21 If the place where the Lord your God has chosen to put His name [and presence] is too far from you, then you shall kill from your herd or flock which the Lord has given you, as I [Moses] have commanded you; eat in your towns as much as you desire.

22 Just as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so you may eat of it [but not offer it]; the unclean and the clean alike may eat of it.

23 Only be sure that you do not eat the blood; for the blood is the life; and you may not eat the life with the flesh.

24 You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the earth like water.

25 You shall not eat it; that all may go well with you and with your children after you, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

26 Only your holy things which you have [to offer], and what you have vowed, you shall take, and go to the place [before the sanctuary] which the Lord shall choose,

27 And offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the Lord your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the Lord your God, and you may eat the flesh.

28 Be watchful and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you for ever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.

### COMMENT 12:1-28

Note here, that in anticipation of their stay in Canaan, God demands that Israel have one central sanctuary—his offerings are to be made in one place, and other offering places are to be destroyed (vv. 1-14). Then, in vv. 15-18 note that flesh, but *not the blood* nor consecrated things, could be eaten at home.

THE NATIONS . . . SERVED THEIR GODS, UPON THE HIGH MOUNTAINS, AND UPON THE HILLS, AND UNDER EVERY GREEN TREE (v. 2)—

Cf. Isa. 57:5, 7; Jer. 2:20, 3:6, 17:1, 2; Hos. 4:13; II K. 16:4, 17:10. "The heathen had their places of worship on lofty elevations, probably because they imagined they were thus nearer to the object of their worship; and they sought also the shade of woods, or thick-foliaged trees (Ezek. vi. 13), under which to perform their rites, as tending to inspire awe, and as in keeping with the mysterious character of their rites." (Pulpit Commentary)

AND YE SHALL BREAK DOWN THEIR ALTARS . . . etc. (v. 3)—Cf. 7:5 and notes. The destructive process was to be complete and total: AND YE SHALL DESTROY THEIR NAME OUT OF THAT PLACE. No vestige or reminder of idolatry and the carnal rites that accompanied such worship were to remain in the land. As we have already seen in the names Baal-peor and Beth-peor (3:29, 4:3, 46), the *names* traceable to the idolatry of the land were everywhere in Canaan. A check with a concordance will show many names with the prefix Baal—existing in the land when Israel conquered it. Clarke mentions that these names "were no doubt at first graven on the stones, and carved on the trees, and then applied to the surrounding districts. In various instances the names of whole mountains, valleys, and districts were borrowed from the gods worshipped there."

YE SHALL NOT DO SO UNTO JEHOVAH (v. 4)—i.e., he is not to be worshipped (formally) in *any place* you might deem convenient (v. 2) and certainly not in the *manner* the heathen do (v. 3).

BUT UNTO THE PLACE WHICH JEHOVAH YOUR GOD SHALL CHOOSE . . . (v. 5 ff)—"A particular place for the general rendezvous of all the tribes would be chosen by God himself; and the choice of one common place for the solemn rites of religion was an act of divine wisdom, for the security of true religion; it was admirably calculated to prevent the corruption which would otherwise have crept in from their frequenting groves and high hills—to preserve uniformity of worship, and keep alive their faith in Him to whom all their sacrifices pointed. The place was successively Mizpeh [or *Mizpah*, A.S.V., in Judah, near Gilgal; Judges 20:1, 5; I Sam. 7:5-9. Not to be confused with the Mizpah in Genesis, which was east of the Jordan], Shiloh [Josh. 18:1; Judges 18:31, 21:19; I Sam. 1:3], and especially Jerusalem [conquered by David, II Sam. 5:4-10, I Chron. 11:4-9]; but in all the references made to it by Moses, the name is never mentioned . . ." We can only conjecture at the reason for this silence. The above quote is taken from Robert Jamieson, who continues, "and this studied



silence was maintained partly lest the Canaanites within whose territories it lay might have concentrated their forces to frustrate all hopes of obtaining it; partly lest the desire of possessing a place of such importance might have become a cause of strife or rivalry amongst the Hebrew tribes, as about the appointment to the priesthood (Numbers 16)."

TO PUT HIS NAME THERE (v. 5)—i.e., the place God would designate as his special place of worship—eventually Jerusalem. See I K. 8:27-29; also II Chron. 7:11, 12, 15, 16. Back in Ex. 20:24 it was specified that an altar was to be built and sacrifices to be made "in every place where I record my name . . ."—i.e. any place where he specially manifests himself as present. The temple at Jerusalem was in later times known as the place of the name of Jehovah (Is. 18:7), the dwelling place of his glory (Ps. 26:8) The reference here, therefore, is quite *general*, and applies to *any* place where, by the Divine appointment, the tabernacle might be set up and the worship of Jehovah instituted.

THERE YE SHALL EAT (v. 7)—This statement, and the similar ones later in the chapter, are not incompatible with Num. 18:18, which specifies that the flesh of the sacrifices was to be given to the priest. An explanation is found in the Pulpit Commentary thus: "The animal belonged originally to the offerer; when he brought it before the Lord part of it was consumed on the altar, part of it was assigned to the priest, and the rest, as a matter of course, remained with himself. The law in Numbers, addressed to the priest, intimates what *he* might claim as his portion; the law in Deuteronomy, where the people are addressed, directs them how to use the portion that remained with *them*. It may be added that, even supposing that all the flesh was given to the priest, yet, as it had to be consumed on the day in which the sacrifice was offered, and as every clean person in the house might partake of it, it is almost certain that the offerer would, as a matter of course, share in the meal, as was usual in the case of sacrificed meals." McGarvey adds concerning both verses 6 and 7, "Here they are told to eat, but they are not told which they shall eat of the various offerings mentioned. We know, however, from other legislation, that they were not to eat of the burnt offerings, which were totally consumed on the altar. They were not to eat of the heave-offering, which was to be consumed by the priest and his family; and, if the law in Numbers had been already given, they were not to eat of the firstlings. But other legisla-

tion gave them the right to eat of the tithes, of the free-will offerings, and of the offerings in fulfillment of vows. When, then, they were told to bring all these offerings to the place that God would choose, and to eat there, they were necessarily restricted in their eating to these three classes of offerings, the others having been forbidden."

THE LEVITE . . . FORASMUCH AS HE HATH NO PORTION NOR INHERITANCE WITH YOU (v. 12)—See also vv. 18, 19, 26:11-13, 14,27, 10:9 and notes, and elsewhere in this chapter. Remarking on the statement about the Levites in v. 19, Clarke says, "These had no inheritance, and were to live by the sanctuary: if therefore the offerings were withheld by which the Levites were supported, they of course must perish. Those who have devoted themselves to the service of God in ministering to the salvation of the souls of men, should certainly be furnished at least with all the *necessaries* of life. Those who withhold this from them sin against their own mercies, and that ordinance of God by which a ministry is established for the salvation of souls.

OFFER NOT THY BURNT OFFERINGS IN EVERY PLACE THAT THOU SEEST (v. 13)—which was, of course, exactly what the heathens did in their idolatrous worship (v. 2). The period of Judges provides a grim commentary on the breaking of this command, for there, again and again Israel *did* "every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes" (v. 8, Cf. Judges 17:6, 21:25)—always to their degradation and shame. And even though they had no king in those days, the law of God had been given, and if it had been taught as it should have been (6:6-9) it would not have taken the brute force and legislation of a *king* to enforce it.

Mackintosh here gives us another of his many excellent remarks. Concerning the centralized worship so clearly demanded in this chapter, he says, "Here was *the* one grand and all-important point. It was the dwelling-place of Jehovah which was dear to the heart of every true Israelite. Restless self-will might desire to run hither and thither, the poor vagrant heart might long for some change, but, for the heart that loved God, any change from the place of His presence, the place where He had recorded His blessed name, could only be a change for the worse. The truly devout worshipper could find satisfaction and delight, blessing and rest, only in the place of the divine presence; and this, on the double ground,—the authority of His precious word and the powerful attractions of His presence. Such an one could never think of going anywhere else. Whither could he go? There was but one altar,

one habitation, one God—that was the place for every right-minded, every true-hearted Israelite. To think of any other place of worship would, in his judgment, be not only a departure from the word of Jehovah, but from His holy habitation.”

THOU MAYEST KILL AND EAT FLESH WITHIN ALL THY GATES (v. 15)— (also vv. 6, 17, 18). They were to beware of offering sacrifice in any place that might seem to them best; their offerings were to be presented only in that place which God should choose. But this did not imply that they were not to kill and eat in their own abodes whatever they desired for food. But . . .

YE SHALL NOT EAT THE BLOOD (v. 16, 23, 24). See also Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:26, 17:10-14; Acts 15:19, 20, 28, 29. Note the reason given: it contains the life. It is the life stream of the human body. No part of the body can live without this red fluid. It carries oxygen and food to every part of the body, fights disease, and helps the body get rid of wastes. Modern medicine would only “Amen” the statement of this verse, but witness the practice of bloodletting (the process of drawing blood from the body in treatment of disease) which surgeon-barbers practiced for so many years—a practice which usually only weakened the body. (Polycythemia, a disease in which the blood cells grow too rapidly, is one of the few maladies that is today treated by bloodletting).

The fact that the life is in the blood cannot, of course be separated from the grand plan of the redemption of the world through the Saviour. Shedding his *blood* in the sacrifice of himself, he gave his *perfect life* for our sinful ones.

THOU MAYEST NOT EAT WITHIN THY GATES THE TITHE OF THY GRAIN, etc. (v. 17)—This was not to say they could not also partake of such items when they brought them in as offerings (Note vv. 6, 7, 18, 26) but they were not to do so “within thy gates.”

“These are the offerings which they would be most tempted to partake of at their homes; and this accounts for the repetition. It seems from this that, while not commanded to eat of the firstlings, they were permitted to do so [See 15:19-23]. The case, then, is like that of the tithes, which though given to the Levites, the giver was permitted to have one feast from them with the Levites, at the time of delivering them to the latter. This provision is not contradictory to the one that gave the firstlings to the priests, but an addition to it by

which the offered was permitted to have one feast with the priests who received them" . . .

"It provided only for a single meal out of the tithe before it was left for the Lord's ministry—the priests and Levites . . . [And here McGarvey refers to a custom of his day that, with the details altered, still exists among many churches]. "There is a custom in modern times, though not known in the established churches of the Old World, which illustrates the sacred feasts of Deuteronomy. The members of a congregation often gather at the house of the minister, bringing with them various articles of food to supply his storeroom for months to come; yet the whole company remains to have a feast with the family out of what has been brought. The feast adds a charm to the occasion, and increases the good will of both the givers and the receiver. Such was the evident intention of the feast given on the occasion of delivering the tithe to the Levites" (McGarvey *Authorship*, pp. 102, 103, 64, 67).

FORSAKE NOT THE LEVITE (v. 19)—See also v. 12, notes; 14:27. As we have already seen, the Levites had no property *as a tribe*, though they did have towns allotted to them among the different tribes. (Num. 35)—forty-eight cities with their "suburbs" (pasture-lands), including the six cities of refuge. Thus they were dispersed throughout the land and are described as "within the gates" of the rest of the people.

Dependent as they were upon Israel for support, what could they do if it was *withheld*? "All depended on the conscientiousness of the individual tithe-payer. It is easy to see that an income of this sort was in the highest degree precarious, and that in times of religious declension, the body of the Levites would be reduced to great straits. These facts sufficiently account for the reiterated injunctions not to forsake the Levite, but to include him in every festive gathering. Three reasons for his liberal support: 1. His calling deprived him of the usual means of livelihood. 2. His office was one of service for the people. 3. His relation to the altar made neglect shown to him a dishonour done to God." (J. Orr, in *Pulpit Com.*).

Paul's application to the Christian ministry (I Cor. 9:6-14) is obvious. The principle is, that if a man *gives his* life to a particular pursuit, is it asking too much if he derives a decent *living* from that work, and from the people *served* in that work? Some ministers (as Paul) may be able to resort to some kind of secular labor with relative ease and little hindrance to their ministry, especially when a wife and children are not being supported by their income. But how often *today*

it is true that a minister has so devoted himself to study, prayer, and the ministry of the word (cf. Acts 6:4) that he is virtually unable to support himself and his family except *by this means*. And what if the volunteer and generous support of the church fails? Frequently, it means embarrassment, humiliation, and a lowering of his office in the eyes of the community. It is honorable for anyone to "labor, working with his hands the thing that is good," but how much *more* honorable when those who *deserve* the support of "the Israel of God," his church, receive those material things necessary to live respectfully in a community. "Are you ignorant of the fact that those who minister sacred things take part of the sacred food of the Temple for their own use, and those who attend the altar have their share of what is placed on the altar? On the same principle the Lord has ordered that those who proclaim the Gospel should receive their livelihood from those who accept the Gospel" (I Cor. 9:13, 14, J.B. Phillips). "Forsake not the Levite,"—nor his present-day counterpart!

IF THE PLACE WHICH JEHOVAH THY GOD SHALL CHOOSE . . . BE TOO FAR FROM THEE, etc. (v. 21, see also 14:22-27)—In Lev. 17:3 ff. it is specified that every animal designed for food, whether ox, goat, or lamb, was during the abode in the wilderness ordered to be slain as a peace offering *at the door of the tabernacle*. Its blood was to be sprinkled, and its fat burnt upon the altar by the priest. The encampment, being then round about the altar, made this practice (probably commanded to prevent idolatry) easy and practical. But on their arrival in Canaan the obligation to slay *at the tabernacle* was to be dispensed with, and the people left at liberty to prepare their meat in their own homes, if necessary.

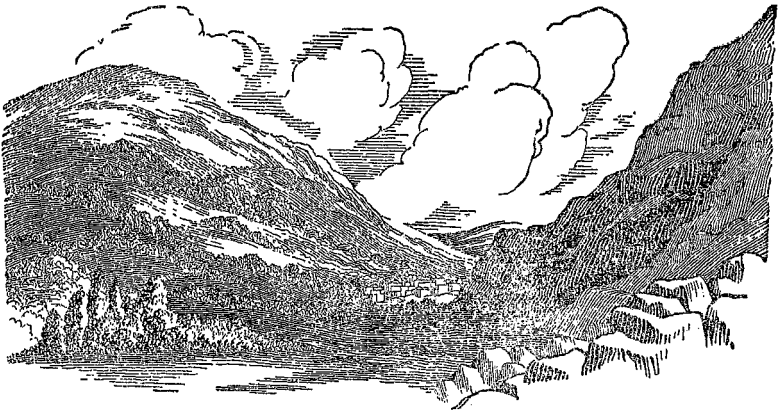
## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWELVE

*All monuments of idolatry in the promised land to be destroyed, 1-3; and God's service to be duly performed, 4-7. The difference between the performance of that service in the wilderness and in the promised land, 8-11. The people are to be happy in all their religious observances, 12. The offerings must be brought to the place which God appoints, and no blood is to be eaten, 13-16. The tithe of corn, wine, oil, &c., to be eaten in the place that God shall choose, 17, 18. The Levite must not be forsaken, 19. All clean beasts may be eaten, but the blood must be poured out before the Lord, and be eaten on no pretence whatever, 20-25. Of vows, burnt-offerings, &c., 26, 27. These*

*precepts are to be carefully obeyed, 28. Cautions against the abominations of the heathen, 29-31. Nothing to be added to or diminished from the word of God. 32.*

### QUESTIONS, LESSON NINE (12:1-28)

1. Where were the various places the heathen might worship?
2. The destruction of idolatry and heathen practices was to be so complete, Moses said "Ye shall destroy their \_\_\_\_\_ out of that place."
3. Why have a centralized worship?
4. Their place of sacrifice was to be "the place which Jehovah your God shall choose . . ." What place is mentioned in Deuteronomy? It was, successively, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. How do you reconcile the statements of scripture that specify in one place the tithes and offerings are to be the *priests'*, and elsewhere that "thou shalt eat the flesh"?
6. Suppose a man felt, in his own considered judgment, that it was not expedient or convenient to worship in the place which Jehovah chose? What then?
7. Suppose a man lived a long way from the designated place of sacrifice. What provision was made for him? Did he have to go to the designated place at all?
8. What part (s) of the sacrificial victim could *not* be eaten?
9. What reason is given for this?
10. What harm would result if the Levite was forsaken? How does Paul apply this principle?



*Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim*

*Deut. 11, 29*

## LESSON TEN 12:29—13:18; 17:2-13

### 2. ONE GOD: DEATH PENALTIES FOR APOSTASY (12:29—13:18; 17:2-13)

29 When Jehovah thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest in to dispossess them, and thou dispossesest them, and dwellest in their land; 30 take heed to thyself that thou be not ensnared to follow them, after that they are destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How do these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31 Thou shalt not do so unto Jehovah thy God: for every abomination to Jehovah, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods.

32 What thing soever I command you, that shall ye observe to do: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

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If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give thee a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams: for Jehovah your God proveth you, to know whether ye love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 Ye shall walk after Jehovah your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him and cleave unto him. 5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken rebellion against Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of bondage, to draw thee aside out of the way which Jehovah thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, that is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; 7 of the gods of the peoples that are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; 8 thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: 9 but thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to

put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. 10 And thou shalt stone him to death with stones, because he hath sought to draw thee away from Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 11 And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is in the midst of thee.

12 If thou shalt hear tell concerning one of thy cities, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to dwell there, saying, 13 Certain base fellows are gone out from the midst of thee, and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; 14 then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in the midst of thee, 15 thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. 16 And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, unto Jehovah thy God: and it shall be a heap for ever; it shall not be built again. 17 And there shall cleave nought of the devoted thing to thy hand; that Jehovah may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and show thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; 18 when thou shalt hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah thy God.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 12:29—13:18

236. After destroying idol worship why would anyone be ensnared in it?
237. Are we to infer that these idolators had had opportunity to know the one true God and had steadfastly refused to worship Him? or that they were being slain in their ignorance?
238. Are we to understand from verse 2 that certain false prophets can perform a sign of wonder?
239. Explain in your own words just how God "tested" some persons. Cf. verses 3 and 4.
240. Why not preach to some of these idolators?
241. Specify what was so attractive in the worship of these "other gods" that some would be willing to risk their very lives for the worship of them.



242. What lesson for love, hatred, right, wrong, are in the example of killing your own loved ones because of idolatry?
243. If such stringent measures were taken by Israel, how often would they be repeated? As to the use of a preventive measure how could the fewest lives be lost and still preserve the worship of Jehovah?
244. Please do enough research to discover the total procedure involved before passing the death penalty upon an individual or a city. Cf. 17:2-7; 19:15-19; Leviticus 24:10-14; Josua 8:4-7.
245. Are there lessons here for present-day church discipline? Cf. Matthew 18:15-20; Luke 17:3, 4; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19, 20.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 12:29—13:18

29 When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go to dispossess, and you dispossess them and live in their land,

30 Be watchful that you are not ensnared into following them after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? I will do likewise.

31 You shall not do so to the Lord your God; for every abominable thing which the Lord hates they have done for their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire of their gods.

32 Whatever I command you, be watchful to do it; you shall not add to it or diminish it.

If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder,

2 And the sign or the wonder he foretells to you comes to pass, and if he says, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them,

3 You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart and with your entire being.

4 You shall walk after the Lord your God and (reverently) fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and cling to Him.

5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has talked rebellion and turning away from the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you

out of the house of bondage; that man has tried to draw you aside from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So shall you put the evil away from your midst.

6 If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend, who is as your own life, entice you secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which you have not known, you nor your fathers;

7 Of the gods of the peoples who are round about you, near you or far away from you, from one end of the earth to the other,

8 You shall not consent to him, or listen to him; nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him;

9 But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

10 And you shall stone him to death with stones, because he has tried to draw you away from the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

11 And all Israel shall hear, (and reverently) fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this among you.

12 If you hear it said in one of your cities, which the Lord your God has given you in which to dwell,

13 That certain base fellows have gone out from your midst, and have enticed away the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;

14 Then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be true and certain that such an abominable thing has been done among you,

15 You shall surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all who are in it, and its beasts, with the edge of the sword.

16 And you shall collect all its spoil into the midst of its open square, and shall burn the city with fire, with every bit of its spoil [as a whole burnt offering] to the Lord your God; it shall be a heap [of ruins] for ever; it shall not be built again.

17 And nothing of the accursed thing shall cling to your hand; that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of His anger, and show you mercy, and have compassion on you, and multiply you, as He swore to your fathers,

18 If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you this day, to do what is right in the eyes of the Lord your God.

## COMMENT 12:29—13:18

Note that in these verses we have

- (1) Warnings against being seduced and ensnared into idolatrous practices (12:29-32)
- (2) Idolatrous prophets and dreamers to be slain (13:1-5)
- (3) Idolatrous relatives and friends to be slain (13:6-11)
- (4) Idolatrous cities to be destroyed and their inhabitants slain (13:12-18)

Thus this *entire section* is concerned with cautions and warnings about being led away into *idolatry*.

INQUIRE NOT AFTER THEIR GODS, SAYING, HOW DO THESE NATIONS SERVE THEIR GODS? EVEN SO WILL I DO LIKEWISE (v. 30)—There is always a danger in the process of *informing oneself* of something that is evil. The motives (at first) may be ever so pure—perhaps to gain information for the purpose of helping someone *in* a false religious system. But, all too often, there is a foggy and ethereal line between such a person's *information* and his own *beliefs*. What he *knows* he tends to *believe*—whether right or wrong. We would not stifle an investigating spirit and an inquisitive mind. Only let that mind be first firmly established in Christ, and the *motives* for investigation be an ever more useful service to *Christ*. These inspired—but with a sensual heart! Doubtless they wanted the "lowdown" on all the immoral and godless rites the heathen practiced—so they could try *their hand* at it!

FOR EVEN THEIR SONS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS DO THEY BURN IN THE FIRE TO THEIR GODS (v. 31)—See also 18:9-12, Ps. 106:34-37, Ezek. 16:20, 21. This was practiced in the worship of several gods in the areas surrounding Israel, especially Molech (Moloch, Milcom), Lev. 18:21, 20:1-5; II K. 23:10—the national god of the Ammonites, and Chemosh, the national god of the Moabites, I K. 11:7, Cf. II K. 3:27; and apparently Baal, II K. 17:16, 17.

AND THE SIGN OR THE WONDER COME TO PASS (v. 2)—Note that whether the prediction of this "Seer" comes to pass or not is not the *only* criterion to be used to establish his identity as a true or false prophet. He is to be judged by the law of God *per se*—claims, "proofs," and "confirmations" notwithstanding. A false prophet's predictions are not *always* wrong—if they were, *nobody* would believe them! See 18:9-22, notes. Paul certainly recognized the great influence of "*he*,

whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders . . ." (II Thes. 2:9). Other examples could be given, such as Jannes and Jambres (II Tim. 3:8, Cf. Ex. 7:8-13, 20-22; 8:6, 7). The question is not "Did they perform a miracle?" but "Are they furthering and promoting the teachings and will of *Christ*?" See II Cor. 11:10-15, Matt. 7:15-23, I Jn. 4:1. Someone might ask "Why would God allow the false prophet's prophecy to be fulfilled?" The next verse in our text provides the answer:

FOR JEHOVAH YOUR GOD PROVETH YOU (v. 3)—i.e., is testing or trying you (Heb. *nasab*, as in 8:2). How many could learn from this truth in our present age if they would take it to heart! Why quibble and forever argue with these who saw some present day Simon giving out that he is "some great one," and causing multitudes to cry out, "This man is that power of God which is called Great" (Acts 8:9, 10)? If we are to "prove the spirits, whether they are of God" because "many false prophets are gone out into the world" what *means* shall we use? "To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Isa. 8:20).

THAT PROPHET, OR THAT DREAMER OF DREAMS, SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH, BECAUSE HE HATH SPOKEN REBELLION (v. 5)—See also v. 9, 17:2-7, 18:20-22. The Heb. word *sarah* ("rebellion") is variously rendered. The A.V. has "to turn you away . . .," a rendering that Gesenius seemingly confirms by his definition, "prop. a *departing, withdrawing*; hence (1) the *violation* of a law, an offence, Deut. 19:16 [where it is rendered "wrong doing"]. (2) *departure from Jehovah*, Deut. 13:6". Baumgartner has "*rebellion . . . obstinancy*," and specifically "incite rebellion against". As a deceiver, he was to be put to death.

IF THY BROTHER . . . SON . . . DAUGHTER . . . WIFE . . . FRIEND . . . ENTICE THEE SECRETLY . . . THOU SHALT SURELY KILL HIM (vv. 6-11)—See also 17:2-7. At least two witnesses were required, and death was to be by stoning. This command is obviously stated as it is because of the great temptation to be lenient and lax about carrying out God's law with regard to transgressors close and dear to them. Read v. 8 again! Their enticement would be "secretly," (Heb. *sether*) and doubtless subtle and plausible!

THY HAND SHALL BE FIRST UPON HIM (v. 9)—In executing the laws of Israel wherein someone was worthy of death, the accuser-witness was to be the first to lay his hands on the guilty party, and to cast

the first stone. See 17:7, 19:15-19, Lev. 24:10-14, and compare the wording of Jn. 8:4-7.

This would tend to prevent off-hand, haphazard or flippant accusations. The accuser had to have the courage and strength of conviction to "follow through" with his charges. If not, he was *not to make any charges*. The principle involved could be well-received by many today.

We do not of course have any such death-penalty law in "the Israel of God," the church of the Lord. However, the principle of the accuser-witness *instigating the corrective action*, is definitely taught by Christ: (Matt. 18:15-20; Lk. 17:3, 4; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19, 20) not only if he realizes his *brother* has sinned, but if he realizes *he* has sinned *against his brother* (Matt. 5:23-26). The principle is, that if something is seen or realized as in need of correction or forgiveness, immediate action should be initiated toward that end.

THOU SHALT SURELY SMITE THE INHABITANTS OF THAT CITY (v. 15)—But not before a careful investigation was made (v. 14). Note how it all began. "Certain base fellows" influenced the city like leaven, and "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Margin, Heb. *sons of worthlessness*, and expression meaning those *totally worthless or devoted to worthless ends*. Cf. "sons of disobedience," Eph. 2:2).

— 17:2-13 —

2 If there be found in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that doeth that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3 and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; 4 and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, then shalt thou inquire diligently; and, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, 5 then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, who hath done this evil thing, unto thy gates, even the man or the woman; and thou shalt stone them to death with stones. 6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is to die be put to death; at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7 The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke,

being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; 9 and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days: and thou shalt inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. 10 And thou shalt do according to the tenor of the sentence which they shall show thee from that place which Jehovah shall choose; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they shall teach thee, 11 according to the tenor of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not turn aside from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. 12 And the man that doeth presumptuously, in not hearkening unto the priest that standeth to minister there before Jehovah thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 17:2-13

246. Who is to prefer charges against the idolator?
247. Why not punish a man with only one witness? Supposing the idolator was sincere in his worship; was he yet to be put to death?
248. What is meant by the expression "blood and blood, plea and plea, stroke and stroke"?
249. What is involved in the terrible sin of presumption? Is not this a present-day problem? Discuss.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 17:2-13

2 If there is found among you, within any of your towns which the Lord your God gives you, a man or woman who does what is wicked in the sight of the Lord your God, by transgressing His covenant,

3 Who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or moon or any of the host of the heavens, which I have forbidden,

4 And it is told that you hear of it; then inquire diligently, and if it is certainly true that such an abomination has been committed in Israel,

5 Then you shall bring forth to your town's gates that man or woman who has done that wicked thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death.

6 On the evidence of two or three witnesses, he who is worthy of death shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

7 The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment, between one kind of bloodshed and another, between one legality and another, between one kind of assault and another, matters of controversy within your towns, then arise and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses,

9 And you shall come to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall consult them, and they shall make clear to you the decision.

10 And you shall do according to the decision which they declare to you from that place which the Lord chooses, and you shall be watchful to do according to all that they tell you;

11 According to the decision of the law which they shall teach you, and the judgment which they shall announce to you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the verdict they give you, either to the right hand or the left.

12 The man who does presumptuously, and will not listen to the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or to the judge, that man shall die; so you shall purge the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear, and (reverently) fear, and not act presumptuously again.

### COMMENT 17:2-13

We have included this passage with the section above because of its obvious similarity and because it treats the same subject. God had said to have "no other gods before (besides) me" nor to make any graven image (5:7-10). He had also strictly forbidden the worship of any creature, star, planet, etc. (4:15-19 and notes). Here it will be seen that the same method of procedure was to follow the punishment of transgressors as we have just noted in chapter 13. One witness was not enough for the death sentence, (Cf. Num. 35:30) and the witnesses had to have reputations for reliability (19:15-21). (Naboth, for example, had two "base fellows" witness against him, I K. 21:10, 13). In matters of discipline in the New Testament church, two or more witnesses are also required (Matt. 18:15-18).

IF THERE ARISE A MATTER TOO HARD FOR THEE IN JUDGMENT (v. 8)—See also 1:9-18, 19:16-19, 25:1-3, and also Ex. 18:13-26. The passages in Ex. 18 and Deut. 1 (which speak of the same instance) do not specify that the *judges themselves* had to be priests or Levites. In fact, the Exodus passage seems definitely to specify that Moses' choices for these officers were not limited to one tribe: "And Moses chose able men out of all Israel . . . and they judged the people . . ." Furthermore, Deut. 17:9 and 19:17 seem to carefully distinguish between the *priests* (who of course were always Levites) and the Judges, who might have been from *any* tribe of Israel.

AND THOU SHALT COME UNTO THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES, AND UNTO THE JUDGE (v. 9)—"In all such cases [Cf. v. 8] recourse was to be had to the court at the sanctuary—to the priests the Levites, i.e. the priests who were of the tribe of Levi, and the judge presiding there—the lay judge associated with the high priest as president . . ." (Pulpit Com.)

AND THOU SHALT DO ACCORDING TO THE TENOR OF THE SENTENCE (v. 10)—Cf. v. 12, which enacts the death penalty for THE MAN THAT DOETH PRESUMPTUOUSLY in not obeying the judge and the priest. The Hebrew word *zid* is defined by Baumgartner's *Lexicon* as "insolent, presumptuous, . . . boundless insolence" and by Gesenius, "*swelling, pride; as joined with insolence and arrogance [here], haughtiness*". It ought to be seen from all this that this judicial method was not intended as any "kangaroo court" by God! The decisions made by these appointed men were to be *listened to and obeyed*.

Much, of course, is left *unsaid* in these verses which could perhaps be profitably discussed. For example, to what *extent* did God personally and miraculously *guide* these judges and priests? Did the priests employ the Urim and Thummim in making such judgments?

In the theocracy Israel was under, there was little distinction between "ecclesiastical" and "civil" cases. The priests no doubt specialized as expounders and judges of cases involving *the law*, but the lay judges were not "added" to the court, to be judges of the facts in distinction from the law in the case.

It is debatable whether the judges to whom Israel came for judgment during that era of history known as the Period of Judges (Judges 2:16-19, 3:10, 4:4, 5, 10:2, etc.) represent "the judge that shall be in those days" (v. 9). If so, they took on far different responsibilities than anything mentioned here, for *they* were chiefly military men raised



up to deliver Israel from his enemies—a task never assigned to *these* judges.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*Of false prophets and their lying signs, 1-6. Of those who endeavour to entice and seduce people to idolatry, 7, 8. The punishment of such, 9-11. Of cities perverted from the pure worship of God, 12-14. How that city is to be treated, 15. All the spoil of it to be destroyed, 16. Promises to them who obey these directions, 17, 18.*

### QUESTIONS, LESSON TEN (12:29—13:18; 17:2-13)

1. We should all have inquiring minds. What danger is to be avoided in cultivating such in religious matters?
2. What godless practice of the idolators is mentioned in the closing verses of chapter 12?
3. What is the one and only true criterion by which a prophet must be judged?
4. What is the context and reason for the phrase, "for Jehovah your God proveth you," as it occurs in chapter 13?
5. What was the penalty against the prophet that spoke against Jehovah?
6. What class or group of people would especially try to lead other Israelites into idolatry? How were such to be treated?
7. Let us suppose you are an Israelite and found another man practicing idolatry. Describe the legal procedure necessary to effect the death penalty.
8. Who was to throw the first rock?
9. How might a *whole city* be found practicing idolatry? What influenced it?
10. How was such a city to be punished?
11. How many years could elapse before the city could be rebuilt?
12. What penalty was in order for those who worshipped heavenly bodies?
13. In an appointed place, matters of difficult decision were to be brought before whom? How was their decision to be received?
14. Was "civil" and "ecclesiastical" law carefully distinguished in Israel?

## LESSON ELEVEN 14:1-21

### 3. ONE HOLY PEOPLE, DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHERS (14:1—25:19)

#### a. DISFIGUREMENT FOR THE DEAD FORBIDDEN (14:1, 2)

Ye are the children of Jehovah your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. 2 For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God, and Jehovah hath chosen thee to be a people for his own possession, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:1, 2

250. Why the strange prohibition in verse 1? Cf. Leviticus 21:5; Ezekial 44:20.  
251. Read I Peter 2:9-12 and compare our status with Israel.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 14:1, 2

You are the sons of the Lord your God; you shall not cut yourselves, or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead.

2 For you are a holy people (set apart) to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a peculiar people to Himself, above all the nations on the earth.

#### COMMENT 14:1, 2

See also Lev. 21:5, Ezek 44:20. The message seems to be especially directed to the priests.

The heathen apparently had the practice of both shaving their heads and cutting themselves in mourning for their dead. "You shall not gash yourselves or shave the front of your heads because of the dead" (The Torah). They were not only to abstain from idolatry, but also to avoid all heathen practices connected with those who *were* idolators.

V. 2 gives the *reason* for the different type of life they are to lead. Note it carefully! The surrounding nations might become progressively worse, but *God's* people are different! They are governed and regulated (inwardly it was hoped, as well as outwardly) by different standards! They are the ones chosen of God for his own possession! Let them live, then, as the *children of God* and not the sons of Belial. Cf. 7:6, Ex. 19:5, 6.

New Testament writers speak of the church as "The Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), and his people, as his own possession, are still to show forth the glories of their owner, master, and savior. See I Pet. 2:9-12.

#### b. THEIR DIET A CONSTANT REMINDER (14:3-21)

Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. 4 These are the beasts which ye may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, 5 the hart, and the gazelle, and the roebuck, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the antelope, and the chamois. 6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and hath the hoof cloven in two, *and* cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat. 7 Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that have the hoof cloven: the camel, and the hare, and the coney; because they chew the cud but part not the hoof, they are unclean unto you. 8 And the swine, because he parteth the hoof but cheweth not the cud, he is unclean unto you: of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch.

9 These ye may eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales may ye eat; 10 and whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye shall not eat; it is unclean unto you.

11 Of all clean birds ye may eat. 12 But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the gier-eagle, and the osprey, 13 and the glede, and the falcon, and the kite after its kind, 14 and every raven after its kind, 15 and the ostrich, and the night-hawk after its kind, 16 the little owl, and the great owl, and the horned owl, 17 and the pelican, and the vulture, and the cormorant, 18 and the stork, and the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat. 19 And all winged creeping things are unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten. 20 Of all clean birds ye may eat.

21 Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou mayest give it unto the sojourner that is within thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto a foreigner: for thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God. Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:3-21

252. Why was God interested in the diet of His people?
253. What two qualifications were involved with the "clean" animal?
254. Name the two qualifications for the clean fish.
255. What one great lesson is taught in all these prohibitions?

256. Identify: pygarg; chamois; coney; glede; hoopoe.

257. Why not "boil a kid in its mother's milk"?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 14:3-21

3 You shall not eat anything that is abominable [to the Lord and so forbidden by Him].

4 These are the beasts which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,

5 The hart, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep.

6 And every beast that parts the hoof and has it divided into two, and brings up and chews the cud, among the beasts, you may eat.

7 Yet these you shall not eat of those that chew the cud or have the hoof split in two: the camel, the hare, and the coney, because they chew the cud but divide not the hoof; they are unclean to you.

8 And the swine, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you; you shall not eat of their flesh, or touch their dead bodies.

9 These you may eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales you may eat;

10 And whatsoever has not fins and scales you may not eat; it is unclean to you.

11 Of all clean birds you may eat.

12 But these are they of which you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the ospray,

13 The buzzard, the kite in its several species,

14 The raven in all its species,

15 The ostrich, the night-hawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any variety,

16 the little owl, the great owl, the horned owl,

17 The Pelican, the carion vulture, the cormorant,

18 The stork, the heron of any variety, the hoopoe, and the bat.

19 And all flying insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

20 But of all clean winged things you may eat.

21 You shall not eat of anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the stranger or the foreigner who is within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to an alien; [they are not under God's law in this matter] but you are a people holy to the Lord your God. You shall not [even] boil a kid in its mother's milk.

## COMMENT 14:3-21

See also the entire 11th chapter of Leviticus. Of animals, it was necessary that they *both* chew the cud and part the hoof before they could be eaten. Meeting half the qualifications would not do.

Among fish or marine life, it was necessary that it have both fins and scales. Again, *both* qualifications had to be met to be acceptable.

This passage has often been studied with the idea that God forbade the eating of certain animal-life and allowed the eating of others because of their intrinsic health (or nutritional) value, or lack of it. (And, of course, *many* "unclean" animals *are* rather repulsive to *most* of us! Have you ever tried broiled night-hawk? Or how about a nice plump bat? Or what about a few other "winged creeping things" we might find flying or crawling around?).

But I firmly believe the real reason for the prohibitions and allowances of these verses is not found in the *apparent* nutritional or health-giving benefits of "clean" animals over the "unclean." Rattlesnake steaks or slices of eel meat may be repulsive to many, but the meat is perfectly edible if properly prepared. As a student in Bible College, this writer several times resorted to eating inexpensive horse and colt steaks, which really weren't injurious.

The prohibitions and distinctions given here were rather for the purpose of teaching *obedience*, and to show that Israel was a *separate people*, different from all other nations (v. 2).

THOU SHALT NOT EAT ANY ABOMINABLE THING (v. 3)—i.e. any thing God had pronounced unclean, or forbidden. Originally, (or at least after the flood) there had been no such restriction. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; as the green herb [Cf. Gen. 1:29, 30] have I given you all" (Gen. 9:3). Our present scripture, as part of the Mosaic law, was a temporary and provisional one. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (I Tim. 4:4, 5). See also Mk. 7:17-19; Acts 10:9-16; Rom. 14:2, 3, 14, 20; I Cor. 6:12-14, 8:8, 10:25, 26, 30, 31; Col. 2:16, 17; I Tim. 4:1-5. As far as the true religion of *God* is concerned, there are no prohibitions upon eating flesh, providing it is not a cause of stumbling. The New Testament of course, does not discuss individual cases, doctor's recommendations, etc. *Any* thing that is harmful to the body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, is forbidden by the principle set forth in I Cor. 6:19, 20.

**PYGARG** (v. 5)—a kind of antelope, perhaps the addax, an antelope of Arabia and North Africa, with long loosely spiraled horns. Others believe it to be the *ibex*.

**CHAMOIS** (v. 5)—pronounced *shámi*. This is a small, goatlike antelope that lives now in the high mountains of Europe and south-western Asia, known for its agility in climbing steep cliffs. The chamois skin (or "shammy leather") which is still used widely for cleaning, polishing, or erasing blackboards, came originally from this animal. But most of those presently in use are from the skin of sheep or goats.

**THE CONEY** (v. 7)—The Hebrew word *shaphan* "is now universally considered to refer to the Syrian hyrox" (I:S:B:E:); found not only in Syria, but Palestine and Arabia. A number of other species including several that are arboreal (living among and in trees), are found in Africa. They are not found elsewhere. Their appearance more resembles a squirrel than a rabbit, though they are often associated with the latter animal. They frequently make their homes among rocks (Prov. 30:26; Ps. 104:18) which is why they are sometimes called rock-badgers (Lev. 11:5, Margin).

**GIER-EAGLE** (v. 12)—Most modern versions have "vulture."

**GLEDE** (v. 13)—a member of the hawk species. The English word is akin to *glide* (and is synonymous with kite), emphasizing its gliding motion in flight. The Heb. word is *ra-ab*, a word frequently rendered *see*, *perceive*, etc. Baumgartner says "Red Kite . . . on account of its sharp sight."

**KITE** (v. 13)—Heb. *ayyah*, another bird noted for its keen sight, supposedly having exceptionally piercing eyes. "It takes moles, mice, young game birds, snakes, and frogs, as well as carrion for food. Its head and facial expression are unusually eagle-like" (I.S.B.E.). Gesenius: "some unclean *clamorous bird*, to which very great acuteness of sight is attributed, Job 28:7 ["falcon"] . . ."

**SEAMBW** (v. 15)—the A.V. has *cuckow*. The Hebrew word *shachaph* probably signifies a *seagull*.

**HOOPOE** (v. 18)—The A.V. has *lapwing* (a plover) now universally admitted to be incorrect. The hoopoe (Heb. *dukhiphath*) is one of the peculiar and famous birds of Palestine, having a long curved

bill and beautiful plumage. About the size of a thrush, it has a crest of feathers of gold. Its body is of mixed cinnamon-gold color, with black and white stripes across the back, tail, and wings. It nests in holes and hollow trees. "All ornithologists agree that it is a 'nasty filthy bird' in its feeding and breeding habits. The nest, being paid no attention by the elders, soon becomes soiled and evil smelling" (I.S.B.E.). It was one of the sacred birds of Egypt, where magical powers were attributed to it. In Southern Europe it is killed in migration, eaten and considered delicious. The word "hoopoe" sounds like its call.

YE SHALL NOT EAT OF ANY THING THAT DIETH OF ITSELF (v. 21)—In Lev. 17:14, 15 this law is in a context forbidding the eating of blood, and the connection is easily seen. The prohibition here would help prevent any possibility of transgressing the former one. The blood of an animal that so died (Heb. carcass) would soon coagulate, preventing draining. See also Lev. 22:8, 7:24, 11:39, 40. Health reasons may also be involved in this law.

THOU SHALT NOT BOIL A KID IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK (v. 21)—Also in Ex. 23:19, 34:26. This prohibition seems to be connected with magical superstitions. It appears that it was the custom of certain heathens, after they had gathered in their fruits, to take the milk of the dam after it had been used to boil its kid, and then, in a magical way to sprinkle it over their trees, fields, gardens, and orchards. Supposedly this would make them more fruitful the following year.

But it is equally probable "that the act was condemned as an outrage on the connection naturally subsisting between parent and offspring. It is thus related to the commands forbidding the killing of a cow and calf on the same day (Lev. xxii. 28), or the taking of a bird with its young (ch. xxii. 6), and to the precepts enjoining a scrupulous regard for natural distinctions—not sowing a field with mingled seed, etc. (Lev. xix. 19). . . . The lesson is that everything is to be avoided which would tend to blunt our moral sensibilities" (Pulpit). Clarke's thought is similar: ". . . the simple object of the precept seems to be this: 'Thou shalt do nothing that may have any tendency to blunt thy moral feelings, or teach thee hardness of heart.' Even *human* nature shudders at the thought of causing the mother to lend her milk to seethe [boil] the flesh of her young one! We need go no farther for the delicate, tender, humane, and impressive meaning of this precept."

## QUESTIONS, LESSON ELEVEN (14:1-21)

1. What *reason* does God give for not cutting themselves, etc., for the dead?
2. What qualifications made an animal clean?
3. What if half the qualification was met?
4. What made a fish (or other marine life) clean?
5. Again, what if half the qualification was met?
6. Why all this *forbidding* (and in other cases *allowing*) on the part of God? Was there any "moral" to it?
7. Briefly, discuss what the New Testament teaches on this subject (questions 2-6).
8. Give a possible reason for God forbidding the eating of an animal not slaughtered (a carcass).
9. Give a possible reason for not boiling a kid in its mother's milk.



*The Owl and Hawk*

*Deut. 14, 15-16*



## LESSON TWELVE 14:22—15:23

### c. DIFFERENCES IN ECONOMIC PRACTICES (14:22—15:23)

22 Thou shalt surely tithe all the increase of thy seed, that which cometh forth from the field year by year. 23 And thou shalt eat before Jehovah thy God, in the place which he shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there, the tithe of thy grain, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herd and of thy flock; that thou mayest learn to fear Jehovah thy God always. 24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, because the place is too far from thee, which Jehovah thy God shalt choose, to set his name there, when Jehovah thy God shall bless thee; 25 then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thy hand, and shalt go unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose: 26 and thou shalt bestow the money for whatsoever thy soul desireth, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul asketh of thee; and thou shalt eat there before Jehovah thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household. 27 And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee.

28 At the end of every three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase in the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: 29 and the Levite, because he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 14:22-29

258. What would happen to ten-percent of the see? To whom was it given? What use was made of it?
259. How could the tithe be given to the Lord if it was eaten by the worshipper?
260. Why would the exception of verses 24, 25 help some of the twelve tribes?
261. Does verse 26 give permission for the drinking of strong drink? Discuss.
262. Explain the special provision made in verses 28 and 29.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 14:22-29

22 You shall surely tithe all the yield of your seed, produced by your field each year.

23 And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place in which He will cause His name [and presence] to dwell, the tithe (tenth) of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstlings of your herd and your flock, that you may learn (reverently) to fear the Lord your God always.

24 And if the distance is too long for you to carry your tithe, or the place where the Lord your God chooses to set His name [and presence] is too far away for you, when the Lord your God has blessed you,

25 Then you shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and shall go to the place [of worship] which the Lord your God has chosen;

26 And you may spend that money for whatever your appetite craves, for oxen, or sheep, or new wine or stronger drink, or whatever you desire; and you shall eat there before the Lord your God, you and your household.

27 And you shall not forsake or neglect the Levite [God's minister] in your towns, for he has been given no share or inheritance with you.

28 At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your increase the same year, and lay it up within your towns;

29 And the Levite [because he has no part or inheritance with you], and the stranger or temporary resident, and the fatherless, and the widow, who are in your towns, shall come and eat and be satisfied; that the Lord Your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

### COMMENT 14:22-29

TITHE . . . FROM THE FIELD YEAR BY YEAR (v. 22)—The produce of the soil is to be tithed each year. This was to be brought to the central sanctuary—"the place which he [God] shall choose" (v. 23). There, the giver would share in a sacrificial feast with the Levites (See chapter 12). Obviously, the giver was not to eat *all* the tithe, as some have erroneously implied. If a man's little farm yielded barely enough to feed his family, this interpretation of the law would require him to eat up at one feast what would keep his family for *five weeks!* The law allowed for this single meal *from* the tithe, before it was given into the care of the priests and Levites. ". . . simply providing that, when the farmer came up annually with his tithe and his firstlings, he should unite with the beneficiaries of it in a feast on part of it ere he left the remainder for its appointed purpose. It was a very wise provision;

because it had the tendency to make the giver part from his gifts more cheerfully." (McGarvey). He continues, "There is still another reason, a very imperative one, for thus understanding the law. If the whole tithe were to be eaten at one feast, the Levite would certainly be well stuffed at the time, but what provision would this be for the rest of the year? He would have nothing to eat except when he could find some farmer coming up with his tithe, and there would be intervals of feasting and longer ones of fasting throughout the year—a mode of living not conducive to good health or long life."

We now must ask the question, how many tithes did the faithful Israelite give to the Lord? Albert Barnes, commenting on Matt. 23:23, states, "The law requires the Jews to devote a tenth part of all their property to the support of the Levites, Num. xviii. 20-24. Another tenth part they paid for the service of the sanctuary, commonly in cattle and grain, but where they lived far from the place of worship they changed it to money, De. xiv. 22-24. Besides these, there was to be every third year a tenth part given to the poor, to be eaten in their own dwellings (De. xiv. 28, 29); so that nearly one-third of the property of the Jews was devoted to religious services by law. This was besides the voluntary offerings which they made."

This quote represents a fairly common and popular concept. But as we have already seen, the latter part of it is obviously erroneous. The three-year tithe of vv. 28, 29 was not solely for the poor, but simply *provided* for them.

Now the question as to whether our present scripture is a "second tithe"—additional to that given in Numbers and Leviticus: We see no need of so understanding it. It appears, rather, that the differences that are here are rather to be considered as further stages of *legislation*, particularly in view of the fact that (excepting the three-year tithe) no mention is made of more tithes than one. This, of course, does not include the many special and free-will offerings (Mal. 3:8), sacrifices, etc. See below.

THE FIRSTLINGS OF THY HERD AND OF THY FLOCK (v. 23)—These were God's (Num. 18:15-17, Ex. 34:19). See 12:6, 15:19-23 and notes.

STRONG DRINK (v. 26)—Heb. *shecar* (akin to our word *cider*) defined by Gesenius, "strong drink, intoxicating liquor," mentioning that it might be made from barley, honey, grapes or dates, but usually distinguished from wine, as, of course, it is here. The word appears in

a similar connection in Num. 28:7. In Lange's commentary, A. Gosman remarks, "The distinction here is not between two kinds of wine, one intoxicating and the other not, but between wine and a drink made from some other substance than the grape; from honey or barley."

AT THE END OF THREE YEARS THOU SHALT BRING FORTH ALL THE TITHE (v. 29)—See also 26:12-15. "In this instance, as in the other [See above], it would be impossible to eat all the tithe in one feast; and if it were thus eaten, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow would alternate between enormous feasts and excruciating fasts. The meaning evidently is that out of the supply laid up and kept on hand the Levites were to be provided for, and the poor to be kept from suffering. But here, again, the law in Numbers [Num. 18:21-32, Cf. Lev. 27:30-33] is presupposed. It had already provided for the support of the Levites out of the tithe, and this law simply adds the provision that the poor of the cities in which the tithe was stored should also be fed from it . . . It is like the provisions of a man's will in which by an early clause he bequeaths certain property to one of his children, and in a later clause directs that this child shall give an annual feast to his brothers and sisters, and keep from suffering any of them who might become very poor." (McGarvey)

Surely Israel was to be a *giving* nation. Vows, free-will offerings, burnt-offerings, drink-offerings, meal-offerings seem to come in an over-whelming deluge as one reads through the last four books of the Pentateuch. Then there were the festivals (Chap. 16) where the command was, "they shall not appear before Jehovah empty." Add to this such laws as the releasing from debt in the seventh year (15:1 ff.), helping and lending to the needy, and allowing for the poor in harvest time (24:19-22), and what characteristic would you have in a faithful Israelite? *Generosity*, both toward God and man!

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*The Israelies are not to adopt superstitious customs in mourning, 1, 2. The different kinds of clean and unclean animals, 3-20. Nothing to be eaten that dieth of itself, 21. Concerning offerings which, from distance cannot be carried to the altar of God, and which may be turned into money, 22-26. The Levite is not to be forsaken, 27. The third year's tithe for the Levite, stranger, widow, &c., 28, 29.*

## (2) THE YEAR OF RELEASE (15:1-6)

At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. 2 And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother; because Jehovah's release hath been proclaimed. 3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it: but whatsoever of thine is with thy brother thy hand shall release. 4 Howbeit there shall be no poor with thee; (for Jehovah will surely bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it;) 5 if only thou diligently hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all this commandment which I command thee this day. 6 For Jehovah thy God will bless thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over thee.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:1-6

263. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of releasing all creditors every seven years.
264. Is there a distinction in legal and moral obligations? Discuss.
265. Are we promised freedom from poverty if we are obedient to Jehovah?
266. How account for the treatment of "foreigners" and "other nations" as in verses 3 and 6?
267. Are there present-day laws like those of Deuteronomy 15:1-6?  
At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:1-6

2 And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he has lent to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor, his brother; for the Lord's release is proclaimed.

3 Of a foreigner you may exact it; but whatever of yours is with your brother [Israelite] your hand shall release.

4 But there will be no poor among you, for the Lord will surely bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance to possess,

5 If only you carefully listen to the voice of the Lord your God, to do watchfully all these commandments which I command you this day.

6 When the Lord your God blesses you as He promised you, then you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; and you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you.

## COMMENT 15:1-6

It is interesting that a number of our states have very similar laws as this one. A man cannot be held indefinitely for a debt, and in most states if the overdue money is not collected by the creditor within a specified number of years, the borrower is no longer *legally* held responsible for the debt.

The year of release apparently corresponds with the "sabbatical year" in which the land was to rest and lie fallow (Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:1-7, 18-22.) In that year there was to be a general remission of debts. It was a wholesale "year of recovery" in every quarter. As every seventh day was to be a sabbath day, every seventh year was to be a sabbath year.

Did this *permanently* release the debtor of his responsibility? On this, the critics are divided. "This does not imply that the debt was to be remitted, but only that the debtor was not then to be pressed for payment . . . A law that every seventh year debts should be remitted, would have frustrated itself, for on such conditions no one would lend, and so there would be no debtors" (Pulpit). Similarly, A. Gosman states, "The clear reference to the land-rest or release, which was for the year, and the force of the Hebrew word [*nagas*] rendered *exact*, more correctly *urge* or *press*, and the whole spirit of the Mosaic law, which was not to destroy obligations of this kind, but guard the poor and unfortunate against undue severity or oppression, are all in favor of the interpretation which regards the release as for the year."

Whether the release was permanent or temporary, the godly Israelite should not have been hesitant to loan no matter what year it was. It might have been a temptation to withhold a loan from the needy in the 5th or 6th year when there was little hope of having it repaid, but was it therefore *right* for one to refuse help to his brother? Jesus' teaching goes far beyond this, instructing us to give to those in need out of love—repaid or not, Matt. 5:42, Lk. 6:34, 35. Of course, this does not cancel any Christian's *moral* and *spiritual* obligation to repay anything he borrows. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; But the righteous dealeth graciously, and giveth" (Ps. 37:21). Surely a Christian's sense of *responsibility* in this area goes beyond mere civil code.

On the question as to whether this release is permanent or not, see further remarks with vv. 7-11, below.

**THERE SHALL BE NO POOR WITH THEE** (v. 4)—That is comparatively. If they were obedient, and followed God's directions and commandments. And if the very directions given *here* and elsewhere concerning *helping* the poor were followed, no one would go cold or hungry.

**FOR JEHOVAH THY GOD WILL BLESS THEE** (v. 6)—The blessings of this verse, as elsewhere in Deuteronomy, were promised and assured an *obedient* Israel.

### (3) THE POOR (15:7-11)

7 If there be with thee a poor man, one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates in thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother. 8 but thou shalt surely open thy hand unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need *in that* which he wanteth. 9 Beware that there be not a base thought in thy heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou give him nought; and he cry unto Jehovah against thee, and it be sin unto thee. 10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thy work, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto. 11 For the poor will never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor, in thy land.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:7-11

268. How can we reconcile the thought of verse 4 with that of verse 7? Cf. verse 11.
269. Are we not to inquire as to the worthiness of the "poor brother"? Suppose he can not pay back the debt?
270. With what attitude should we give to the poor? Why is the attitude so important?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:7-11

7 If there is among you a poor man, one of your kinsmen in any of the towns of your land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not harden your [mind and] heart, or close your hand to your poor brother;

8 But you shall open your hand wide to him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, which he lacks.

9 Beware lest there be a base thought in your [mind and] heart, and you say, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and your eye be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the Lord against you, and it be sin in you.

10 You shall give to him freely without begrudging it; because for this the Lord will bless you in all your work and in all you undertake.

11 For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor in your land.

### COMMENT 15:7-11

These verses (in spite of the comments above) cannot help but cause us to favor the interpretation of vv. 1-3 as indicating a total relinquishing of all debts at the end of the seventh year—at least such debts as contracted by a poor man, especially if the year of release was only a year or two off. But it appears these verses were designed to guard against just such a "base thought" (v. 9). A magnanimous spirit and feelings of compassion, mercy, and generosity would take precedence over selfish or personal motives.

Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,  
 When it is in the power of thy hand to do it.  
 Say not unto thy neighbor  
 Go, and come again, And tomorrow I will give;  
 When thou hast it by thee.

—Prov. 3:27, 28

See also Prov. 11:24-26.

FOR THIS THING JEHOVAH THY GOD WILL BLESS THEE (v. 10)—God loves a cheerful giver, and will invariably grant blessings to him. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and the man that waters shall be watered himself. See Lk. 6:38, Acts 20:35.

THE POOR WILL NEVER CEASE OUT OF THE LAND (v. 11)—A principle Jesus cited (Mk. 14:7, Matt. 26:11, Jn. 12:8) as shown that *he* must be honored, worshipped, and glorified *while time allows*, for the poor are ever-present. Jesus did *not* teach that the poor were to be neglected. See Matt. 19:21, 25:31-46. But he would not have us *side-tracked from his worship* for humanitarian reasons. Christ will not take second place—even to the poor!



## (4) SLAVERY (15:12-18)

12 If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. 13 And when thou lettest him go free from thee, thou shalt not let him go empty: 14 thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy wine-press; as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee; therefore I command thee this thing today. 16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go out from thee; because he loveth thee and thy house, because he is well with thee; 17 then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise. 18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou lettest him go free from thee; for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee six years; and Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all that thou doest.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:12-18

271. Does this text sanction some form of slavery? Cf. Exodus 21:2-6; Leviticus 25:39-46.
272. Why be careful to provide the livelihood of the former slave? Cf. verse 18.
273. Wasn't it unreasonable to expect anyone to become a lifetime slave? Discuss.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:12-18

12 And if your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold to you and serve you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you.

13 And when you send him out free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed;

14 You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, your threshing floor, and your winepress; of what the Lord your God has blessed you, you shall give to him.

15 And you shall [earnestly] remember that you were a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I give you this command today.

16 But if the servant says to you, I will not go away from you, because he loves you and your household, since he does well with you.

17 Then take an awl and pierce his ear through to the door, and he shall be your servant always. And also to your bondwoman you shall do likewise.

18 It shall not seem hard to you when you let him go free from you; for at half the cost of a hired servant he has served you six years, and the Lord your God will bless you in all you do.

### COMMENT 15:12-18

Is this the same seventh year as referred to above—the "sabbath year"? Probably not. It seems to refer to *any* six years during which the individual has been in bondage. As vv. 13, 14 specify, this servant was not to be "left to the elements," but the spirit of love was to prompt a generous furnishing of his needs, so he could set up house for himself. If, however, he desired to stay, he could, and would be "branded" as specified in vv. 16, 17. Compare Ex. 21:2-6; also Lev. 25:39-46.

IT SHALL NOT SEEM HARD FOR THEE (v. 18)—An appreciative and grateful spirit, as well as a generous one, should have kept the master from disobeying this law (Cf. v. 9).

FOR TO THE DOUBLE OF THE HIRE OF A HIRELING HATH HE SERVED THEE (v. 18)—"At half the cost of a hired servant" (R.S.V., Amplified). ". . . for at half the cost of a hired workman he has served you six years" (Berkeley, and similarly rendered by several others). The master had used this man's services at a "bargain price"—now let him show his appreciation and gratitude toward him.

#### (5) THE OFFERING OF THE FIRSTLINGS (15:19-23)

19 All the firstling males that are born of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto Jehovah thy God: thou shalt do not work with the firstling of thy herd, nor shear the firstling of thy flock. 20 Thou shalt eat it before Jehovah thy God year by year in the place which Jehovah shall choose, thou and thy household. 21 And if it have any blemish, *as if it be* lame or blind, any ill blemish whatsoever, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto Jehovah thy God. 22 Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean *shall eat it* alike, as the gazelle, and as the hart. 23 Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it out upon the ground as water.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 15:19-23

274. What significance was there in setting aside the first-born as belonging to Jehovah?
275. Some first-born were not to be sacrificed unto the Lord—why? What was to be done with them?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:19-23

19 All the firstling males that are born of your herd and flock you shall set apart for the Lord your God; you shall do no work with the firstling of your herd, nor shear the firstling of your flock.

20 You shall eat it before the Lord your God annually in the place [for worship] which the Lord shall choose, you and your household.

21 But if it has any blemish, if it is lame, blind, or has any bad blemish whatever, you shall not sacrifice it to the Lord your God.

22 You shall eat it within your towns; the [ceremonially] unclean and the clean alike may eat it, as if it were a gazelle or a hart.

23 Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.

## COMMENT 15:19-23

Note also 12:6, 14:23. The firstlings were God's (Ex. 13:2) and were to be brought to the central sanctuary just as the tithes and offerings. These were to be without blemish, v. 21 (Compare Lev. 22:17-25). The giver could share in partaking of the sacrificial feast (v. 20), just as we learned in chapters 12 and 14.

"It is enjoined that, as all the firstborn were to be sanctified to the Lord (Exod. xiii. 2-13), they were not to work with the firstborn of their cattle, either by yoking the bullock to the plough or wagon or by shearing the sheep; these belonged to God, and were not to be put to any vulgar uses of men; year by year they were to be brought to the sanctuary, offered as sacrifices and eaten before the Lord" (Pulpit).

These animals were "sanctified" (v. 19). The word *qadesh* means to be *pure, clean, holy, sacred*, from a more literal meaning of to *separate, set apart*. The firstling males were to be so separated for God (Ex. 13:12), though an ass could be redeemed with a lamb (Ex. 13:13, 34:19, 20). An unclean beast could also be redeemed, Lev. 27:26, 27.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIFTEEN

*The Sabbatical year of release, 1. The manner in which this release shall take place, 2-5. Of lending to the poor, and the disposition in which it should be done, 6-11. Of the Hebrew servant who has served six years, and who shall be dismissed well furnished, 12-15. The ceremony of boring the ear, when the servant wishes to continue with his master, 16-18. Of the firstlings of the flock and herd, 19, 20. Nothing shall be offered that has any blemish, 21. The sacrifice to be eaten both by the clean and unclean, except the blood, which is never to be eaten, but poured out upon the ground, 22, 23.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON TWELVE (14:22—15:23)

1. How many *tithe*s did the faithful Israelite give to the Lord?
2. How did the three-year tithe differ from the "tithe of all the increase of thy seed . . . " ?
3. What if the central sanctuary was a long way from home? What provision was made?
4. What *principles* should a faithful Israelite have learned from these various laws about giving?
5. How often was the year of release from debt?
6. In relation to loaning, what "base thought" might the prosperous man have, and when would he be most likely to have it?
7. Who or what "will never cease out of the land"? How did Jesus apply this principle?
8. What does the expression, "for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee" (v. 18) mean?
9. For what could an Israelite use the firstlings of the flock?



Conies

Deut. 14, 7



Eagle

Deut. 14, 12

## LESSON THIRTEEN 16:1-17; 21, 22; 17:1

### d. HOLY FESTIVALS (16:1-17; 21, 22; 17:1)

(These three yearly feasts are also discussed in Ex. 23:14-17, 34:23; Lev. 23; Num. 28:16—29:40.)

#### (1) THE PASSOVER (16:1-8)\*

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto Jehovah thy God; for in the month of Abib Jehovah thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. 2 And thou shalt sacrifice the passover unto Jehovah thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which Jehovah shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there. 3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. 4 And there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy borders seven days; neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrificest the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. 5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee; 6 but at the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. 7 And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. 8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to Jehovah thy God; thou shalt do no work *therein*.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:1-8

276. According to our calendar when was the month Abib?
277. In the order of observance, when were the days of unleavened bread?
278. Are we to understand from verse 5 that the Passover could not be observed in the home? Discuss.
279. Mention at least two comparisons of the sacrifice of our Passover lamb.

\*An excellent study of typology relating to the passover is found in the book *Shadow and Substance*, by Victor E. Hoven. (N. W. Christian College Press, Eugene, Ore.) He also treats the other festivals mentioned here. This book is for sale from *College Press*—Joplin, Missouri.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:1-8

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover to the Lord your God; for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night.

2 You shall offer the passover sacrifice to the Lord your God from the flock or the herd, in the place where the Lord will choose to make His name [and His presence] dwell.

3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you fled from the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may [earnestly] remember the day when you came out of Egypt.

4 No leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory for seven days; nor shall any of the flesh which you sacrificed the first day at evening be left all night until the morning.

5 You may not offer the passover sacrifices within any of your towns which the Lord your God gives you;

6 But at the place which the Lord your God will choose in which to make His name [and His presence] dwell, there you shall offer the passover sacrifice in the evening at sunset, at the season that you came out of Egypt.

7 And you shall roast or boil and eat it in the place which the Lord your God will choose; and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents.

8 Six days you shall eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord your God; you shall do no work on it.

## COMMENT 16:1-8

Basic to a study of this feast is a knowledge of the original Passover, Ex. 12 and 13.

OBSERVE THE MONTH ABIB (v. 1)—The first Jewish month, Ex. 12:2. Lev. 23:5 specifies that the passover was to begin on the 14th day of this month, at even. The Jewish month Abib overlaps between our March and April. Smith, in his Bible Dictionary, states, "From the time of the institution of the Mosaic law downward the month was a lunar one. The cycle of the religious feasts commencing with the passover depended not simply on the month, but the moon; the 14th of Abib was coincident with the full moon . . . the commencement of the month was generally decided by observation of the new moon."

The months were often simply referred to by number, and some had more than one name. Abib, for example, is also called Nisan (Neh. 2:1).

AND THOU SHALT SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER (v. 2)—The feast's name and its implications are obvious from Ex. 12:21-28. Our Paschal Lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed and we, too, have been redeemed from bondage and slavery. ". . . wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7, 8). Even as God *passed over* the houses of those Israelites who had appropriated to themselves the blood of the lamb, so God will *pass over* us, not inflicting the penalty of death, if we have appropriated unto ourselves "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29).

OF THE FLOCK AND OF THE HERD (v. 2)—Note the offerings demanded on this day in Num. 28:18 ff.

THOU SHALT EAT NO UNLEAVENED BREAD (v. 3)—Ex. 12:39 gives the reason for this. They were not only to have unleavened bread, but no leaven was to be found in their houses (see v. 4 and Ex. 12:19). Leaven is usually also a type of sin, I Cor. 5:6, 7; Gal. 5:7-9.

BREAD OF AFFLICTION (v. 3)—So called because of the affliction from which they were delivered in Egypt.

AT EVEN, AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN (v. 6)—Referring to Exodus 12, Victor E. Hoven says of the passover lamb: "It was killed at even on the fourteenth, about three o'clock (vs. 6) the time Israel came out of Egypt (Deut. 16:6), At the same time, when the daily evening sacrifice of a lamb took place in Jerusalem, the Lamb of God expired on the cross (Matt. 27:45-50)."—Shadow and Substance, p. 95.

## (2) PENTECOST (16:9-12)

9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: from the time thou beginnest to put the sickle to the standing grain shalt thou begin to number seven weeks. 10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a freewill-offering of thy hand, which thou shalt give, according as Jehovah thy God blesseth thee: 11 and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son,

and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of thee, in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there. 12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:9-12

280. Please read Exodus 23:16, 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31 and Deuteronomy 26:1-11 to be able to understand this feast, and more especially the counting of time.
281. Why call this the feast of Pentecost?
282. Why was the purpose of this feast?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:9-12

9 You shall count seven weeks: beginning to number the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain.

10 Then you shall keep the feast of weeks to the Lord your God with a tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give to the Lord your God, as the Lord your God blesses you.

11 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your son and daughter, your manservant and maidservant, and the Levite who is within your towns, the stranger or temporary resident, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place in which the Lord your God chooses to make His name [and His presence] dwell.

12 And you shall (earnestly) remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be watchful and obey these statutes.

### COMMENT 16:9-12

(More on this feast in Ex. 23:16, 34:22; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31, and Deut. 26:1-11.)

This feast has several names: also called Harvest and First-fruits. It marked the *beginning* of the harvest period, and is called Pentecost (fiftieth) because they were to number fifty days after the Passover for its observance (Lev. 23:15, 16; Acts 2:1) which was on the first day of the week. Because seven weeks of seven days were numbered before it was observed during their month Sisan or Sivan, which answers to our May-June.

The giving of the first fruits, of course, honored God. In the old economy God was to be thought of *first*—how much more in the new!



## (3) TABERNACLES (16:13-15)

13 Thou shalt keep the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in from thy threshing-floor and from thy winepress: 14 and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. 15 Seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto Jehovah thy God in the place which Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be altogether joyful.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:13-15

283. What was the purpose of the feast of Tabernacles?  
 284. Read: Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:33-36; Numbers 29:12-16 to help in your understanding of this feast.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:13-15

13 You shall observe the feast of tabernacles or booths seven days, after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and wine vat.

14 You shall rejoice in your feast, you, your son and daughter, your manservant and maidservant, the Levite, the transient and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, that are within your towns.

15 Seven days you shall keep a solemn feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses; because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce, and in all the works of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

## COMMENT 16:13-15

Also called the feasts of booths, and ingathering. See Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:33-36, 39-44; Num. 29:12-16. It was on the 15th day of the 7th month, the month Tisri (our Sept.-Oct.). At this time they "gathered in the fruits of the land" (Lev. 23:39). The word "Tabernacles" (from the Heb. *sukkah* or succoth)\* is translated "booths" in most of the recent versions as this word more aptly describes the "homes" of the Israelites during the week this festival was being celebrated. It was "camp meetin' time," and a memorial service to

\*Gesenius says of this word: "a booth, a cot, made of leaves and branches interwoven . . ." He would render the phrase, "the feast of tabernacles (v. 13) "the feast of booths and branches."

their camping days as they came out of Egypt, as well as a "Thanksgiving Day" for the recent harvest.

AND THOU SHALT BE ALTOGETHER JOYFUL (v. 15)—This probably was Israel's most festive and joyous feast.

#### 4. GENERAL RULES FOR OBSERVANCE

(16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1)

16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before Jehovah empty: 17 every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Jehovah thy God which he hath given thee.

21 Thou shalt not plant thee an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of Jehovah thy God, which thou shalt make thee. 22 Neither shalt thou set thee up a pillar; which Jehovah thy God hateth.

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God an ox, or a sheep, wherein is a blemish, or any thing evil; for that is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

285. To what "place" does verse 16 allude?  
 286. What was to be given by every man? In what attitude?  
 287. What a strange prohibition! Who would consider such a strange admixture of Jehovah and Asherah? Cf. verse 21.  
 288. If a man did not have a healthy animal to offer to the Lord what should he do?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

16 Three times a year shall all your males appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, in the feast of unleavened bread, in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles or booths. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed;

17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you.

21 You shall not plant you any kind of tree as an Asherah beside the altar of the Lord your God which you shall make.

22 Neither shall you set up an idolatrous stone or image, which the Lord your God hates.

You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or sheep with a blemish or any defect whatever; for that is an abomination to the Lord your God.

### COMMENT 16:16, 17, 21, 22; 17:1

EVERY MAN SHALL GIVE AS HE IS ABLE (v. 17)—This was true of the giving required at these feasts (whether the offerings specified were for the particular feast, or free-will offerings) and all through the ages. Paul asked each Corinthian Christian to "lay by him in store, as he may prosper" (I Cor. 16:2). "For if the readiness is there, *it is* acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as *he* hath not" (See II Cor. 8:3, 12).

THOU SHALT NOT PLANT THERE AN ASHERAH OF ANY KIND OF TREE BESIDE THE ALTAR (v. 21)—See 7:2, 5, notes; 12:1-4. An "Asherah of any kind of tree" (or, as otherwise rendered, "an asherah [or pole] of any wood") has reference to the idols of wood that were made to this female diety. The commentators are not altogether agreed as to whether the name Asherah "is the name of a distinct goddess, as well as the 'poles,' 'stumps,' or 'stems' which represented her; or whether the notorious 'Ashtoreth' (Astarte) was herself worshipped under these obscene images."\* In any case the rites associated with the "Asherahs" were immoral—involving the glorification—even deification—of sexual passion.

Note here that God did not want *his* worship associated *in any way* with idolatry and such sensual and evil "rites" as accompanied it. Yet there was apparently the possibility that there would be an attempt to *blend* the true religion of God with the Asherah. So the later statements that Israel "feared Jehovah and served other gods."

THOU SHALT NOT SACRIFICE . . . OX . . . SHEEP, WHEREIN IS A BLEMISH (17:1)—See also 15:21, Lev. 22:19-25. It seems probable that this exhortation was given in connection with the sacrifices to be offered at the three major festivals just mentioned.

Such animals could be eaten, but not sacrificed to *God*. There is surely a parallel here between what God demanded in an Old Testament

\*Rotherham, in a Special Note on the *Destruction of the Canaanite Nations*. It is difficult to find cultured words to express the grossness of the immorality associated with these idols.

sacrifice, and the life he expects us, *through Christ*, to give to him as a Christian. We are to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (See Rom. 12:1, 2). And how thankful we can be that the perfect sacrifice of Christ compensates for our imperfection!

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIXTEEN

*The month of Abib to be observed, 1. The feast of the passover and of unleavened bread, 2-8. The feast of weeks, 9-12. The feast of tabernacles, 13-15. All the males to appear before the Lord thrice in the year, none to come empty, each to give according to his ability, 16, 17. Judges and officers to be made in all their cities, 18. Strict justice shall be executed, 19, 20. No grove to be planted near the altar of God, nor any image to be set up, 21, 22.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON THIRTEEN

(16:1-17, 21, 22; 17:1)

1. Name the three yearly Jewish feasts, giving at least two names for each, and the time of year each was observed.
2. What did the Passover commemorate? (Discuss the name and its significance.)
3. Why use unleavened bread? Why was it called "bread of affliction"?
4. Explain what Paul meant when he referred to Christ as our passover.
5. How did "Pentecost" get its name?
6. What was celebrated at this feast?
7. What great New Testament event occurred on the first day of this feast?
8. Why is the *feast of tabernacles* so called?
9. What *two* things did this festival commemorate?
10. Were both men and women to attend these annual festivals?
11. Who or what were the Asherah?
12. In this lesson, what kind of sacrifice is an abomination unto Jehovah?

## LESSON FOURTEEN 16:18-20; 17:2—18:22

### e. THE LEADERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE (16:18-20; 17:2—18:22) (Laws concerning Judges, kings, priests, and prophets)

#### (1) JUDGES (16:18-20; 17:2-13)

18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, according to thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. 20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

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2 If there be found in the midst of thee, within any of thy gates which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that doeth that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3 and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; 4 and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, then shalt thou inquire diligently; and, behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, 5 then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, who hath done this evil thing, unto thy gates, even the man or the woman; and thou shalt stone them to death with stones. 6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shalt he that is to die be put to death; at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7 The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; 9 and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days: and thou shalt inquire; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. 10 And thou shalt do according to the tenor of the sentence which they shall show thee from that place which Jehovah shall choose; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they shall teach thee: 11 according to the tenor of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall

tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not turn aside from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. 12 And the man that doeth presumptuously, in not hearkening unto the priest that standeth to minister there before Jehovah thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 16:18-20; 17:2-13

289. Think carefully about the full meaning of the term "judge" as used here; to what office or work does this term compare in our day? A lawyer?
290. How could justice be "wrested"?
291. Approximate a circumstance in which a bribe could be attractive.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 16:18-20; 17:2-13

18 You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment.

19 You shall not misinterpret or misapply judgment; you shall not be partial, or take a bribe; for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise, and perverts the words of the righteous.

20 Follow what is altogether just [that is, uncompromisingly righteous], that you may live and inherit the land which your God gives you.

2 If there is found among you, within any of your towns which the Lord your God gives you, a man or woman who does what is wicked in the sight of the Lord your God, by transgressing His covenant,

3 Who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or moon or any of the host of the heavens, which I have forbidden,

4 And it is told and you hear of it; then inquire diligently, and if it is certainly true that such an abomination has been committed in Israel,

5 Then you shall bring forth to your town's gates that man or woman who has done that wicked thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death.

6 On the evidence of two or three witnesses, he who is worthy of death shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

7 The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment, between one kind of bloodshed and another, between one legality and another, between one kind of assault and another, matters of controversy within your towns, then arise and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses,

9 And you shall come to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall consult them, and they shall make clear to you the decision.

10 And you shall do according to the decision which they declare to you from that place which the Lord chooses, and you shall be watchful to do according to all that they tell you;

11 According to the decision of the law which they shall teach you, and the judgment which they shall announce to you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the verdict they give you, either to the right hand or the left.

12 The man who does presumptuously, and will not listen to the priest who stands to minister there before the Lord your God, or to the judge, that man shall die; so you shall purge the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear, and (reverently) fear, and not act presumptuously again.

### COMMENT 16:18-20; 17:2-13

We have treated the last of these two sections in lesson ten because the basic subject matter is the same. But because the scripture also concerns the judges, we include it again here.

JUDGES AND OFFICERS SHALT THOU MAKE IN ALL THY GATES (v. 18)—Obviously anticipating the settled life in Canaan. In ancient times, the gates of the city composed the "city hall," and the chief area of civil business. In Ch. 1:13-18 we saw how judges were appointed for Israel's good for the length of their wilderness wanderings. Now, a similar system was in order for each city. "JUDGES . . . *shophetim*, among the Hebrews, were probably the same as our *magistrates* or *justices of the peace*. OFFICERS . . . *shoterim*, seems to have been the same as our inquest sergeants, beadles [formerly, messengers of the court] & c., whose office it was to go into the houses, shops, & c., and examine *weights, measures*, and the civil conduct of the people. When they found anything amiss, they brought the person offending

before the *magistrate*, and he was punished by the *officer* on the spot. They seem also to have acted as heralds in the army, chap. xx. 5." (Clarke, who is, of course, comparing Britain).

The Hebrew word for judge (*shaphat*) is the same as occurs in the book of Judges, but, as we saw in Lesson Ten (17:9), the same word is used for men who usually performed very different functions than those outlined here.\*

THOU SHALT NOT WREST JUSTICE (v. 19)—See 1:16, 17, notes.

IF THERE BE FOUND IN THE MIDST OF THEE (v. 2)—On vv. 2-13, see our remarks in lesson ten. Note that the judge is involved in judgment of the difficult cases (v. 9) working in conjunction with the priests. Cf. 19:15-21.

## (2) KINGS (17:14-20)

14 When thou art come unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round about me; 15 thou shalt surely set him king over thee, whom Jehovah thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, who is not thy brother. 16 Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he may multiply horses; forasmuch as Jehovah hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites: 19 and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them; 20 that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel.

\*Some judges during that era *did* appear to perform in an office similar to Moses' in the wilderness, judging the "hard matters"—Judges 3:10, 4:5, I Sam. 4:18, 7:6, 15. But when it is said of a man, "he judged Israel twenty years" (Samson. Judges 16:31), much more is meant.



## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 17:14-20

292. These verses contain a prophesy covering how many years?  
 293. Was this prediction an encouragement to disobedience? Discuss.  
 294. Discuss the importance of the three prohibitions. Cf. verses 16, 17.  
 295. What law book was to be copied by the King? For what purpose?  
 296. What are some of the indications of "his heart" being "lifted up above his brethren"?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 17:14-20

14 When you come to the land which the Lord your God gives you, and you possess it and live there, and then say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are about me;

15 You shall surely set as king over you him whom the Lord your God will choose; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner, who is not your brother, over you.

16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to multiply horses, since the Lord said to you, You shall never return that way.

17 And he shall not multiply wives to himself, that his [mind and] heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

18 And when he sits on his royal throne, he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of what is before the Levitical priests;

19 And he shall keep it with him, and he shall read it in all the days of his life, that he may learn (reverently) to fear the Lord his God, by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them;

20 That his [mind and] heart may not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he may not turn aside from the commandments, to the right hand or to the left; so that he may continue long, he and his sons, in his kingdom in Israel.

## COMMENT 17:14-20

As we have already seen, and *shall* see in this book, God divinely anticipates the evil into which Israel would degenerate and makes provision for it. See another example of this in I Sam. 8:4-22, 12:12. He does not condone or endorse all he allows—or all he foreknows. Their desire for a king would represent a degeneration and corruption of Israel's Theocracy. But God was still their father, and Israel was still

his nation, and he was not about to forsake them on this account. So the regulatory laws we have here. As we will see, even *these* were soon broken!

Because God knew ahead of time what Israel would do after they arrived in the promised land, did not mean he *caused* or *compelled* them to do it—much less authorized it. A scientist-astronomer may now know that an eclipse will take place exactly at such-and-such a time in 1980. Does his foreknowledge *cause* the eclipse? No, but it may cause *him* to do many things in *anticipation* of it. It seems we have a fair parallel here. God anticipated the evil into which Israel would degenerate in clamoring for a king, and the present scriptures provide *for that state of things*. McGarvey asks, "What was to prevent Moses from anticipating this? He was starting his people on their national career without a king, when all the nations round about them had kings, and had been ruled by them in the past. He would have been grossly ignorant of human nature had he not anticipated and feared that in the course of time they would grow weary of such singularity, and want to live like other nations. Such has been the fearful anticipation of every body of patriots who ever organized a democratic or republican form of government."\*

AND SHALT SAY, I WILL SET A KING OVER ME (v. 14)—I Sam. 8:5, 19, 20.

KING . . . WHOM JEHOVAH THY GOD SHALL CHOOSE (v. 15)—An Israelite that had God's divine approval. Note, for example, David's anointing, I Sam. 16:4-13. Of course, this principle was often broken after the kingdom divided.

HE SHALL NOT MULTIPLY HORSES (v. 16) . . . WIVES (v. 17) . . . SILVER AND GOLD (v. 17)—King solomon probably represents the most flagrant transgressor of these prohibitions. He at first obeyed the Lord, and riches (which he had not asked for )were added to his request for wisdom (I K. 3:9-14). But he was soon sidetracked from whole-hearted service to Jehovah. Exactly as these verses specify he was *not* to do, he multiplied

- (1) Horses—I K. 4:26 (Cf. II Chron. 9:25) 10:26, 28, 29. Note also that his horses "were brought out of Egypt"—again breaking the command of God as we have it here (v. 16).

A king would not "multiply" horses normally, unless prepar-

\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, p. 116

ing for *war* or building up military might. See Ps. 20:7, 33:16-19, 147:10, 11; Prov. 21:31; Isa. 2:5-8. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah!" (Isa. 31:1).

- (2) Riches—I K. 10:27, II Chron. 1:15. At first given by God, money apparently became an obsession with him. This meant heavy, excessive taxes, plus a system of forced labor, I K. 5:13-17. Compare Israel's complaint to Rehoboam, I K. 12:4.
- (3) Wives—I K. 11:1-10. These turned Solomon's heart away from God.

HE SHALL WRITE HIM A COPY OF THIS LAW OUT OF THAT WHICH IS BEFORE THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES (v. 18)—"It is likely this means, that the copy which the king was to write out was to be taken from the autograph kept in the tabernacle before the Lord, from which, as a standard, every copy was taken, and with which doubtless every copy was compared; and it is probable that the priests and Levites had the revising of every copy that was taken off, in order to prevent errors from creeping into the sacred text." (Clarke) The priests were the custodians of the law (31:26).

The book was to be constantly studied and meditated upon by the king (vv. 19, 20)—and be his directory and guide in daily life. Joshua was not a king, but was God's leader of Israel, note Josh. 1:7, 8. David, of course, is the king who truly held God's law in its proper esteem (Ps. 119, etc.).

It is probable, however, that the "book" here referred to was neither the book of Deuteronomy or the Pentateuch. "As this law was to be copied 'out of that which was before the priests,' it did not, of course, contain all that was in that book; and as it was to govern the king rather than the priests or the people, it included only such portions as related to the king's personal and official duties. It was not, therefore, a very long document." (McGarvey)

This may have been "the testimony" given Jehoash (Joash), II K. 11:12.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

*All sacrifices to be without blemish, 1. Of persons convicted of idolatry and their punishment, 2-7. Difficult matters in judgment to be laid before the priests and judges, and to be determined by them;*

*and all to submit to their decision, 8-13. The king that may be chosen to be one of their brethren; no stranger to be appointed to that office, 14, 15. He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return unto Egypt, 16. Nor multiply wives, money, &c., 17. He shall write a copy of the law for his own use, and read and study it all his days, that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, 18-20.*

## (3) PRIESTS (18:1-8)

The priests the Levites, *even* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of Jehovah made by fire, and his inheritance. 2 And they shall have no inheritance among their brethren: Jehovah is their inheritance, as he hath spoken unto them. 3 And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep, that they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. 4 The first-fruits of thy grain, of thy new wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him. 5 For Jehovah thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of Jehovah, him and his sons for ever.

6 And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourneth, and come with all the desire of his soul unto the place which Jehovah shall choose; 7 then he shall minister in the name of Jehovah his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, who stand there before Jehovah. 8 They shall have like portions to eat, besides that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 18:1-8

297. What distinction was there between a priest and a Levite?
298. What three portions of the sacrificial animal belonged to the Levite?
299. The attitude of the worshipper toward God is reflected in what he gave to the man of God; how so?
300. There is a special type of Levite described in verses 6 through 8; who is he?
301. What is "patrimony"?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 18:1-8

The Levitical priests and all the tribe of Levi shall have no part or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings made by fire to the Lord, and His rightful dues.

2 They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their inheritance, as He promised them.

3 And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach.

4 The first fruits of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the first or best of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give the priest.

5 For the Lord your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand to minister in the name [and presence] of the Lord, him and his sons for ever.

6 And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel, where he is a temporary resident, he may come whenever he desires to [the sanctuary] the place the Lord will choose,

7 Then he may minister in the name [and presence] of the Lord his God, like all his brethren the Levites, who stand to minister there before the Lord.

8 They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what may come of the sale of his patrimony. [Jer. 32:6-15.]

### COMMENT 18:1-8

We have already studied considerably concerning the priests and their divine allotment from the tithes and offerings of Israel (10:8, 9, 12:12, 17-19, 14:27-29). Having no inheritance, they were dependent upon the goodness and faithfulness of Israel for their support and livelihood.

THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES, EVEN ALL THE TRIBE OF LEVI (v. 1)—  
On the term "Levites," Smith's Bible Dictionary states, "Sometimes the name extends to the whole tribe, the priests included, Ex. 6:25; Lev. 25:32; Num. 35:2; Dt. 18:1; Josh. 21:3, 41, etc; sometimes only to those members of the tribe who were not priests, and as distinguished from them. Sometimes again it is added as an epithet of the smaller portion of the tribe, and we read of "the priests the Levites" Josh. 3:3; Ezek. 44:15."

One family of Levites, Aaron and his sons, was set apart to be priests as such. The rest of the Levites were assistants to the priests, caring for the transportation and upkeep of the tabernacle, and later, the service of the temple. But they were all a part of the *priestly tribe*.

AND HIS INHERITANCE (v. 1) i.e., God's. ". . . and His rightful dues" [Amplified].

AND THIS SHALL BE THE PRIESTS' DUE (v. 3)—Of that part of the sacrifice that he was to keep for himself.

THE MAW (v. 3)—better, *the stomach*. The "rough stomach of ruminants, in which the digestion was completed" (Pulpit).

As much as it might seem otherwise to us, these were regarded as the choice parts of the animal. They were given in addition to the wave breast and heave leg of the peace offerings (Lev. 7:32 ff., Num. 18:11, which belonged with the "offerings made by fire" (v. 1). God's ministers of Israel were to eat well!

THE FIRST-FRUITS . . . SHALT THOU GIVE HIM (v. 4)—See Num. 18:12, 13. Moses here adds that the first fleece of the sheep shall be the priests'.

We can see from these verses, (and by comparing our discussion in ch. 12) that the Israelite had not only to think about the *amount* he gave, but also the *quality*. God's servants should not have the worst part of the animal, but the *best*; and of the tithe from the field and flock, they were to get their share *first*. And why? Because God had chosen them to minister in his name (v. 5)! Is anything more important than that?

How often this simple principle could well be learned today, among God's people. Those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel (I Cor. 9:14)—*live*, not *exist*. If we have attached the proper *importance* and *dignity* to the work of Christ, his *servants* will have our generous and hearty assistance. Aaron and Hur, *God's servants*, needed some one else to hold up their hands to be effective with God.

AND IF A LEVITE COME FROM ANY OF THY GATES (note vv. 6-8) —Only a portion of the Levites were engaged in the service of the sanctuary; the rest lived in their towns throughout the country, Num. 35:7. It might happen, however, that a Levite, moved by holy feeling, would come to the place of the sanctuary to worship there; and it is prescribed that such a one should fare as his brethren the Levites engaged in the service of the sanctuary fared; he should minister along with them, and share with them in the gifts of the worshippers; and this in addition to any means he might have from the sale of his patrimony.

THE SALE OF HIS PATRIMONY (v. 7)—The latter word literally signifies "the fathers" and which Young renders "upon (concerning) the fathers (clans)." The I.S.B.E. states, "e.g. 'house of the fathers.'" It may indicate some private source of income possessed by the Levite [who has come up from a country district] distinct from what he receives as a priest officiating at the central sanctuary." Beyond this one occurrence of "patrimony," we have the same idea conveyed elsewhere: "Father, give me the portion of thy [Greek, *the*] substance that falleth unto me. And he divided unto them his living" (Lk. 15:12). "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me" (Lk. 12:13).

The Levite, as we have already learned (12:12, 19, 14:27) had no inheritance as such. He was therefore to be provided for out of the tithes and offerings of Israel. But when this sojourner came to the house of God and the place of sacrifice, he too, was to have his portion, along with the other priests. And this was to be so, even though he sold the house he had inherited (that is, that had been passed down to him) from his fathers. See Lev. 25:32-34. He might also have had such supplies, furniture, etc. as was voluntarily contributed to him by grateful Israelites. These might be passed down from generation to generation, and the "sale" here might include such. When a man leaves the home he has known from childhood to devote his life to the Lord's ministry, he is not to be deprived the income he might receive in the process of "selling out."

#### (4) PROPHETS (18:9-22)

9 When thou art come into the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. 10 There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that useth divination, one that practiseth augury, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, 11 or a charmer, of a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. 12 For whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah: and because of these abominations Jehovah thy God doth drive them out from before thee. 13 Thou shalt be perfect with Jehovah thy God. 14 For these nations, that thou shalt dispossess, hearken unto them that practise augury, and unto diviners; but as for thee, Jehovah thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.

15 Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; 16 according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb

in the day of the assembly, saying Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. 17 And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. 18 I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

20 But the prophet, that shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. 21 And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah hath not spoken? 22 when a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 18:9-22

302. What is meant by the expression "to pass through the fire"? Cf. 12:31.
303. Please define separately the following terms: (1) divination, (2) augury, (3) enchanter (4) sorcerer, (5) charmer, (6) consulter with familiar spirits, (7) wizard, (8) necromancer.
304. "Abomination" is a strong word. How is it used here.
305. Besides the immoral and idolatrous practices accompanying the use of these various "fortune tellers" there was a basic sin more fundamental than these external practices. What was it?
306. Verse 13 is a key verse. Read it carefully.
307. Give three qualities of "the prophet" God was to raise up.
308. Read Acts 3:19-23; 7:37 and re-read these verses to understand just how this prophecy is fulfilled.
309. A prophet could speak "presumptuously." If so, what would be involved?
310. Some prophets were to be put to death. What test was to be exercised?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 18:9-22

9 When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of these nations.



10 There shall not be found among you any one who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer,

11 Or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord; and it is because of these abominable practices that the Lord your God is driving them out from before you.

13 You shall be blameless (and absolutely true) to the Lord your God.

14 For these nations, whom you shall dispossess, listen to soothsayers and diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so.

15 The Lord your God will raise up for you \*a prophet from the midst of your brethren, like me [Moses]; to him you shall listen.

16 This is what you desired (and asked) of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, or see this great fire any more, lest I die.

17 And the Lord said to me, They have well said all that they have spoken.

18 I will raise up for them a prophet from among their brethren, like you, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

19 And whoever will not hearken to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.

21 And if you say in your [mind and] heart, How shall we know which words the Lord has not spoken?

\*The insertion of this promise in connection with the preceding prohibition, might warrant the application which some make of it, to that order of true prophets whom God commissioned in unbroken succession to instruct, to direct, and warn His people; and in this view the gist of it is, "there is no need to consult with diviners and soothsayers, for I shall afford you the benefit of divinely appointed prophets, for judging of whose identity a sure clue is given" (vs. 20,22). But the prophet here promised was pre-eminently the Messiah, for He alone was 'like unto Moses in His mediatorial character; in the peculiar excellence of His ministry; in the number, variety and magnitude of His miracles; in His close and familiar communion with God; and in His being the author of a new dispensation of religion.' This prediction was fulfilled 1500 years afterwards, and was expressly applied to Christ by Peter (Acts 3:22,23), and by Stephen (Acts 7:37)—*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary.*

22 When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or prove true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

### COMMENT 18:9-22

We have included these three paragraphs together because the spokesman of *God*, his true mouthpiece, is contrasted to the diviner, wizard, and *false* prophet best by taking this entire section together.

Included here, of course, is one of the most wonderful prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament.

In vv. 9-13 sorcery and divination are forbidden.

PASS THROUGH THE FIRE (v. 10)—See 12:31 and notes.

DIVINATION . . . AUGURY . . . ENCHANTER, etc. (v. 10-14)—These terms would cover all types of the magical or secret arts. How could one claim total trust and faith in the leading *Jehovah*, and also claim guidance by *these means*? They were *destructive* of such trust. God would have us "come ye out from among them, and be ye separate." *God's* people do not need to consult the stars, "fortune tellers," gypsies, or other of the "black arts" for their guidance.

These people were not to be imitated by Israelites (Lev. 19:26), nor be consulted by them (Lev. 19:31), but both they and those who turned to them were to be put to death, (Lev. 20:6, 27, Ex. 22:18).

King Saul, who at first responded wonderfully to this commandment, later degenerated to a point of consulting a witch himself! See I Sam. 28:3 ff., I Chron. 10:13, 14. King Manasseh fell into a similar sin, II K. 21:6, II Chron. 33:6, but king Josiah put all who dealt with them out of the land, II K. 23:24.

FAMILIAR SPIRIT (v. 11)—Probably so called because it was regarded as the "friend" and "servant" of the person possessing it, and might be summoned to do services at his command.

NECROMANCER (v. 11)—One who inquires for, or consults with, the spirits of the dead.

Obviously, some of these names overlap. Keil and Delitsch will remark,

"Moses groups together all the words which the language contained for the different modes of exploring the future and discovering the will of God, for the purpose of forbidding every description of

soothsaying, and places the prohibition of Moloch-worship at the head [v. 10], to show the inward connection between soothsaying and idolatry, possibly because februation, or passing children through the fire in the worship of Moloch, was more intimately connected with soothsaying and magic than any other description of idolatry" (*Commentary on the Pentateuch*, III, 393).

**A PROPHET FROM THE MIDST OF THEE** (v. 15)—Here we have a blessed prophecy of Christ, the great prophet (*Nabi*, spokesman, mouthpiece, preacher) of God. He would not be a foreigner, but would arise "from the midst of thee," His office and work, Moses tells us, will be "like unto me," and unto him shall all hearken. Even as Moses was God's divinely appointed delivered and saviour of Israel, so it would be with this Prophet. ". . . and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

That this is a divine prophecy of our Lord is made clear by inspiration (Acts 3:19-23, 7:37). Thus John denies that *he* is "the prophet" (Jn. 1:19-25). See also Matt. 21:10, 11; Jn. 1:45, 6:14, 7:40. Compare Jn. 5:45-47.

As in 13:1-5, we *may* have here also the requirements for *God's true prophets*—i.e. the prophet of *God* as contrasted to the false, lying and deceitful prophets of Baal and other dieties. "No doubt the language of Moses had a *general* fulfillment in the raising up of a prophetic succession, culminating in the appearance and work of Jesus Christ, to Whom therefore it eminently refers" (Joseph Angus, *The Bible Handbook*). Because of his position as successor to Moses as God's chosen leader and spokesman, many have thought the *immediate* fulfillment of this prophecy was found in Joshua (Heb. savior). But so far as the Bible statements are concerned, Christ represents the fulfillment of this prophecy.

**AND I WILL PUT MY WORDS IN HIS MOUTH** (v. 18)—Jesus said, "For I spoke not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak" (Jn. 12:49, 50). See also Jn. 7:16-17.

**AND WHOSOEVER WILL NOT HEARKEN** (v. 19)—See Jn. 12:48, Acts 3:23, Heb. 12:24, 25. The words of our divine Prophet must be heeded. God said "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;

HEAR YE HIM" (Matt. 17:5). Note the application the Holy Spirit makes in Heb. 10:28-31. O that we might stand in awe of Christ's words!

BUT THE PROPHET THAT SHALL SPEAK A WORD PRESUMPTUOUSLY IN MY NAME (v. 20)—See "presumptuously" defined under 1:43. Note that it is done in the name of God! Ff. Matt. 7:21-23. See 13:1-5 and notes. Also Matt. 24:24, Mk. 13:22. False prophets always speak *some* truth—else *no one* would believe them!

Whether he spoke in the name of *God*, or in the name of *gods*, if it was not that which God had commanded to be spoken, he was to die! Surely we can learn here how imperative it is that God's spokesmen teach *his words* (Jas. 3:1).

HOW SHALL WE KNOW . . . ? (v. 21)—By comparing Ch. 13:1-5 we arrive at three tests of this prophet. 1. Was his teaching in accord with the teachings of God? 2. Did he prophesy in the name of other gods? 3. Did his prophecies come to pass? It might take a while to check him out on the third qualification, but not the first and second. On any of these counts he was to be put to death.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

*The priests and Levites to have no inheritance, 1, 2. What is the priest's due, 3-5. Of the Levites that come from any of the other cities, 6-8. The Israelites must not copy the abominations of the former inhabitants, 9. None to cause his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or use any kind of divination or enchantment, as the former inhabitants did, 10-14. The great prophet which God promised to raise up, 15-19. Of false prophets, 20; and how to discern them, 21, 22.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON FOURTEEN

(16:18-20; 17:2—18:22)

1. Name at least two temptations faced by the judges.
2. Was a king for Israel within the will of God? Explain.
3. What two qualifications does God here lay down for the king-to-be?
4. Once he became king, a ruler was forbidden to multiply \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Why not multiply horses?

6. What great king was the most flagrant transgressor on all three counts?
7. What was the king to do with at least this portion of the word of God?
8. Do you remember the part of the animal the priest received? What is significant about this?
9. If a new priest began to serve in the sanctuary, would he have "eating privileges"?
10. What was the priest's "patrimony" (v. 8)? Does not this "contradict" previous statements that the priest had no inheritance?
11. What would happen to the Levites if the people were not generous and obedient to the commands to support them? . . . What would happen to the *quality* of the various services surrounding the sanctuary?
12. Couldn't a person use divination, sorcery, and consult wizards *as well as* worship God? Explain.
13. Who is the "prophet" of vv. 15-19. (*Prove* your answer with scripture!)
14. Without looking, can you remember three identifying characteristics of this prophet?
15. In what three ways could a "prophet" show that he was *not* God's prophet?



9 as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

## LESSON FIFTEEN 19:1-21; 21:1-9

### f. THE SANCTITY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY (19:1-21; 21:1-9)

#### (1) CONCERNING MURDER (19:1-13; 21:1-9)

##### (a) The Cities of Refuge (19:1-13)

When Jehovah thy God shall cut off the nations, whose land Jehovah thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses; 2 thou shalt set apart three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it. 3 Thou shalt prepare thee the way, and divide the borders of thy land, which Jehovah thy God causeth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every manslayer may flee thither.

4 And this is the case of the manslayer, that shall flee thither and live: whoso killeth his neighbor unawares, and hated him not in time past; 5 as when a man goeth into the forest with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbor, so that he dieth; he shall flee unto one of these cities and live: 6 lest the avenger of blood pursue the manslayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and smite him mortally; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past. 7 Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt set apart three cities for thee. 8 And if Jehovah thy God enlarge thy border, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; 9 if thou shalt keep all this commandment to do it, which I command thee this day, to love Jehovah thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, besides these three: 10 that innocent blood be not shed in the midst of thy land, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee.

11 But if any man hate his neighbor, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally so that he dieth, and he flee into one of these cities; 12 then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. 13 Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:1-13

311. Note the strong element of specific faith in verses 1 and 2. What example is in this for us?

312. Suppose the avenger of blood was not of the temperament to take vengeance?
313. In the example given, why would there be a problem if the nearest of kin knew it was only an accident?
314. What three cities were involved in the description here? What three were added later?
315. First degree murder was always punished. Why?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 19:1-13

When the Lord your God has cut off the nations whose land the Lord your God gives you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses;

2 You shall set apart three cities for you in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess.

3 You shall prepare the road, and divide the territory of your land, which the Lord your God gives you to possess, into three parts, so that any manslayer can flee to them.

4 And this is the case of the slayer who shall flee there that he may live. Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally, for whom he had no enmity in time past;

5 As when a man goes into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand strikes with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slips off the handle and lights on his neighbor, and kills him; he may flee to one of those cities and live;

6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his [mind and] heart are hot with anger, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; although the slayer was not worthy of death, since he had not been at enmity with him previously.

7 Therefore I command you, You shall set apart three [refuge] cities.

8 And if the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as He has sworn to your fathers to do, and gives you all the land which He promised to your fathers to give,

9 If you keep all these commandments to do them, which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to walk always in His ways; then you shall add three other cities to these three,

10 Lest innocent blood be shed in your land, which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, and so blood guilt be upon you.

11 But if any man hates his neighbor, and lies in wait for him, and attacks him and wounds him mortally so that he dies, and the assailant flees into one of these cities,

12 Then the elders of his own city shall send and fetch him there, and give him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die.

13 Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall clear Israel of the guilt of innocent blood, that it may be well with you.

### COMMENT 19:1-13

See also Ch. 4:41-43 and notes. There we had the east-side cities set apart. Now provision is made, not only for the first three, but a second three, and also "three cities more" (v. 9) on the west side. The controversy as to whether the former passage is chronologically out of place, is not worth the energy of debate. We will leave it where it is, as a part of the divine record, and leave this where it is for the same reason. As will be seen below, there is no good reason for changing the order of the two passages.

WHEN JEHOVAH . . . SHALL CUT OFF THE NATIONS (v. 1)—This beginning phrase makes it seem obvious that the refuge cities Moses now refers to are the *west* side cities, not the east, for the conquering of the east side, as well as the setting aside of the refuge cities on that side of the Jordan, was *history*, and Israel was now camping near the banks of the Jordan, yea, not far from the water's edge! See 1:1, 3:27, etc. In view of the fact that the tribes of Ephraim, Gad and Manasseh (except those able to go forth to war, who were to assist Israel) were to stay on the *east* side, it would only be natural for Moses to go ahead and set apart the cities on that side (4:41-43).

THOU SHALT SET APART THREE CITIES (v. 2)—McGarvey remarks on the sequence of setting these cities aside thus:

"As the Pentateuch now stands, the first command on the subject is in the thirty-fifth chapter of Numbers. There the order to appoint cities of refuge is given, the number then is stated, and the law by which their use is to be regulated is elaborated. No one of the cities is named. Next, in Deut. iv. 41-43, it is said that Moses, after the conquest of the country east of the Jordan, selected three of them, and their names are given. Next, in Deut. xix. 1-13, Moses directs that after they shall have possessed the country west of the Jordan, they shall select three cities of refuge on that side; he repeats the law less elaborately, and orders that if Jehovah shall enlarge their borders, and



give them all the land promised to their fathers, they shall add three other cities on that side [v. 9], so that all the manslayers may have the benefit of a place of refuge. Their borders were never thus extended until the reign of David, and they remained so only till the close of Solomon's reign, and consequently these three additional cities were never appointed."

In Josh. 20:1-9 these three west-side cities are set apart: Kedesh in Naphtali, Shechem in Ephraim, and Hebron in Judah. The east-side cities are again listed.

Ex. 21:12, 13, it has been mistakenly thought, provides that the *altar* was appointed by God as a refuge for a manslayer. But that law, instead of making the altar of God an asylum for the manslayer, positively forbids its use as such. It was to furnish no protection, not even temporary protection, from death. A murderer might *think*, "Surely no one would have the gall to kill a man on God's altar!" Or, "Surely I will not be killed here, lest human blood defile the altar!" But God would say of a "presumptuous" murderer, "take him off the altar—do not spare him." So Adonijah and Joab both fled to the altar with the *hope* of being spared—but were slain, I K. 1:50-53; 2:24, 25; 28-34.

The cities of refuge, on the other hand, were not appointed to provide permanent asylum for murderers, but that every man who killed his neighbor might find protection there until the time of his trial, and might remain there after his trial, if he was not found worthy of death, until the death of the high priest. He could then return to his home if he wished.

THOU SHALT PREPARE THEE THE WAY (v. 3)—The Amplified O. T. renders v. 3, "You shall prepare the road, and divide the territory of your land, which the Lord your God gives you to possess, into three parts, so that any manslayer can flee to them." With a careful division of the land into thirds, and roads to the cities, access to them would be easier.

THREE CITIES (v. 7) . . . ADD THREE CITIES MORE FOR THEE, BESIDES THESE THREE (v. 9)—See note above. We have assumed that these last three are not again mentioned in the Bible, and probably were never appointed. The appointment of the six cities was "when . . ." but the appointment of the last three was "IF thou shalt keep all this commandment," etc. (v. 9). These periods were such brief flashes in Israel's history the job apparently never got done.

BUT IF ANY MAN HATE HIS NEIGHBOR (v. 11)—Whether this were true or not would be determined during his trial. Cf. Num. 35:9-34.

THOU SHALT PUT AWAY THE INNOCENT BLOOD (v. 13)—See 21:9 and notes, below.

(b) Expiation for an Unknown Murderer's Crime (21:1-9)

If one be found slain in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath smitten him; 2 then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain: 3 and it shall be, that the city which is nearest unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke; 4 and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. 5 And the priests the son of Levi shall come near; for them Jehovah thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah; and according to their word shall every controversy and every stroke be. 6 And all the elders of that city, who are nearest unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley; 7 and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. 8 Forgive, O Jehovah, thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and suffer not innocent blood to remain in the midst of thy people Israel. And the blood shall be forgiven them. 9 So shalt thou put away the innocent blood from the midst of thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:1-9

316. Responsibility was such a vital part of the life of all Israel, all human life was of supreme importance. How are these two thoughts dramatized in this text?
317. Who was to pay for the heifer?
319. Why specify the particular type of heifer?
319. Why: the running water?; a field that has never been plowed nor sown?
320. The washing of hands to clear guilt is found elsewhere, name two.
321. How is the expression "innocent blood" used in verse 8 and 9?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:1-9

If one be found slain in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess, lying in the field, and it is not known who has killed him.

2 Then your elders and judges shall come forth and measure the distance to the cities around him who is slain;

3 And the city which is nearest to the slain man, the elders of that city shall take a heifer, which has never been worked, never pulled in the yoke;

4 And the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley.

5 And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name [and presence] of the Lord, and by their word shall every controversy and every assault be settled.

6 And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley;

7 And they shall testify, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.

8 Forgive, O Lord, Your people Israel whom You have redeemed, and do not allow the shedding of innocent blood to be charged to Your people Israel. And the guilt of blood shall be forgiven them.

9 So shall you purge the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when you do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

## COMMENT 21:1-9

Note that in v. 3, the city's leaders nearest the slain man were responsible for making expiation. The ritual outlined here was applicable to cases where murder was not (and perhaps *could* not be) expiated by the apprehension, conviction, and execution of the murderer. Until the mystery was unravelled, this formula would exonerate the city's inhabitants.

THE ELDERS . . . SHALL TAKE A HEIFER (v. 3)—It is to be one in full vigor and health, which has not seen domestic work, and consequently expressed in the fullest form the life-producing power to which the violent death stood as a contrast.

THE ELDERS . . . SHALL WASH THEIR HANDS (v. 6)—An assertion of their innocence and repudiation of their guilt. Cf. Ph. 26:6, 73:13; Matt. 27:24.

SO SHALT THOU PUT AWAY INNOCENT BLOOD (v. 9)—Or, (as in 19:13) the guilt of shedding innocent blood. By the formula prescribed, they would not be held guilty for the blood *already shed*, nor of *taking another man's blood* before he was proved guilty. When the process of justice was properly carried out, no innocent person's blood would be shed.

#### (2) CONCERNING LANDMARKS (19:14)

14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit, in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:14

322. Why would anyone want to move a landmark? There might be more than one reason. Consider.
323. Read 27:17; Job 24:2; Proverbs 22:28; 23:10. The right of private ownership was an important factor in the prosperity and security of Israel. Remember this is a divine principle.
324. Is the same analogous comparison for some of the ancient Biblical land marks and their removal?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 19:14

14 You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess, which the men of old [the first dividers of the land] set.

#### COMMENT 19:14

As the proper inheritance of one's property was determined by the landmarks, they were not to be altered by another. The old, or original one was to remain. See 27:17, Job 24:2, Prov. 22:28, 23:10. The story of Ahab and Jezebel seizing Naboth's vineyard (I K. 21) surely represents a flagrant disregard for this law.

#### (3) CONCERNING WITNESSES AND JUDGMENT (19:15-21)

15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established.

16 If an unrighteous witness rise up against any man to testify against him of wrong-doing, 17 then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before Jehovah, before the priests and the judges that shall be in those days; 18 and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and have testified falsely against his brother; 19 then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to do unto his brother; so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee. 20 And those that remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in the midst of thee. 21 And thine eye shall not pity; life *shall go* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:15-21

325. Here is a safeguard against libel.
326. Read: Matthew 18:15-17; II Corinthians 13:1; I Timothy 5:19 for the New Testament application of this principle.
327. Once again: *responsibility* is the key word here. Specify the areas of responsibility.
328. A witness against a man put himself on trial and opened the possibility of his own punishment. He knew what possible punishment was in store; how?
329. The law as here stated was for prevention of crime. There was no revenge, spite, or hate involved, i.e. from the viewpoint of the innocent. Show how this was true.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 19:15-21

15 One witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or any wrong in connection with any sin he commits; only on the testimony of two or three witnesses shall a charge be established.

16 If a false witness rise up against any man to accuse him of wrongdoing.

17 Then both parties to the controversy shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days;

18 The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely,

19 Then you shall do to him as he had intended to do to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you.

20 And those who remain shall hear, and (reverently) fear, and shall henceforth commit no such evil among you.

21 Your eye shall not pity; it shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

### COMMENT 19:15-21

17:2-13 should also be carefully reviewed and compared here, as well as 13:6-11. See lesson ten. But the present scripture covers "any iniquity . . . any sin" (v. 15).

TWO WITNESSES . . . OR THREE (v. 15)—As also specified in 17:6 in the case of an idolater, in Num. 35:30 in the case of murder, and in Matt. 18:15-17, II Cor. 13:1, I Tim. 5:19, in the church. This is a divine safeguard against the individual throwing around idle or speculative accusations. And as we have already seen in the cases of the murderer and idolater, unless the prosecutor is willing to abide by the divine formula for justice, he should not be bringing accusations. If he is unable to back up his claim with evidence and witnesses, and pursue the matter to the casting of the first stone, let him "forever hold his peace."

IF AN UNRIGHTEOUS WITNESS RISE UP (v. 16)—A witness had to have a reputation for fairness and honesty. "Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" (Ex. 23:1). David could say,

Unrighteous witness rise up  
They ask me of things that I know not.  
—Ps. 35:11

And again,

Deliver me not over unto the will  
of mine adversaries:  
For false witnesses are risen up  
against me,  
And such as breathe out cruelty.  
—Ps. 27:12

Naboth could have testified in a similar vein (I K. 21:8-10).

In such a case, the punishment of the false witness was to be the same as that intended for his fellow-Israelite (v. 19). *Another* safeguard against petty, trivial or indefinite accusations! "And those that remain shall hear and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil . . ." (v. 20).

AND THINE EYE SHALL NOT PITY; LIFE SHALL GO FOR LIFE, EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH, HAND FOR HAND, FOOT FOR FOOT (v. 21)—See also Ex. 21:22-25, Lev. 24:17-21. In the *present* case, the meaning seems to be that whatever punishment the false accuser had intended for his brother, it should be given to him. This would stop gossip, careless accusations, and especially *lying*. If he had intended to put his brother's eye out (by pinning certain charges against him) *his* eye was to be put out, probably by the accused. This would be determined by the judges and priests. Israel was not to get sentimental or "soft-hearted" in the matter—"thine eye shall not pity . . ." (What *should*, for example, have been done to Jezebel and Ahab, in the case cited above?)

As a *general* rule, this law stands as a law of *prevention* all the way through. Note the other passages. It was *not* a law intended to "get even," or justify retaliation. It was a civil code, and was to govern the decision of the *judges* in "court." But the Jews perverted this original purpose, and extended this law to their own private conduct—warping and twisting its meaning, for purposes of revenge (Matt. 5:38-42). ("You hit me, you *touch* me, and I'll gouge your eyes out!") Jesus not only rebukes this concept, but goes beyond the old law entirely, teaching a basic doctrine of physical nonresistance.

As the law was originally given, it did not allow for a spirit of spite, revenge, or hate. It was simply an edict to be carried out, once justice had been determined.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER NINETEEN

*Three cities of refuge to be appointed in the midst of the promised land; the land being divided into three parts, a city is to be placed in each, a proper way to which is to be prepared, 1-3. In what cases of manslaughter the benefit of those cities may be claimed, 4-6. Three cities more to be added should the Lord enlarge their coasts, and the reasons why 7-10. The intentional murderer shall have no benefit from these cities, 11-13. The landmark is not to be shifted, 14. One witness shall not be deemed sufficient to convict a man, 15. How a false witness shall be dealt with—he shall bear the punishment which he designed should have been inflicted on his neighbor, 16-20. Another command to establish the lex talionis, 21.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON FIFTEEN (19:1-21; 21:1-9)

(19:1-13)

1. What purpose did the cities of refuge serve?
2. How many cities did *God provide* for? (Careful!)
3. What protection was afforded the malicious murderer in Israel?
4. Did God also appoint the *altar* as a refuge? Explain.
5. Comment on this: "Thou shalt prepare thee the way, and divide the borders . . . into three parts" (v. 3).

(21:1-9)

6. How was it determined *which city* should make expiation for the unknown murderer's crime?
7. Why did the elders of the city wash their hands? Were they *dirty*?
8. Note v. 9. What is meant by putting away "innocent blood"?

(19:14)

9. What was not to be "removed" in this lesson?

(19:15-21, 17:2-13)

10. What safeguard(s) would be involved by having two or three witnesses?
11. What punishment was due a false witness?
12. Explain 19:21, its purpose *here*, how the Pharisees abused it, and what Jesus taught in contrast.



## LESSON SIXTEEN 20:1-20; 21:10-14; 23:9-14

### g. RULES FOR CONDUCTING THE HOLY WAR

(20:1-20; 21:10-14; 23:9-14)

#### (1) ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE PRIEST (20:1-4)

When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, *and* a people more than thou, thou shalt not be afraid of them; for Jehovah thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 2 And it shall be, when ye draw nigh unto battle, that the priests shall approach and speak unto the people, 3 and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye draw nigh this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint; fear not, nor tremble, neither be ye affrighted at them; 4 for Jehovah your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:1-4

330. It is one thing to say "be not afraid," it is another matter to fulfill this attitude. What element makes it possible?
331. What was the particular job for the priest of these verses?
332. This was truly a "holy war." What so characterized it?
333. There must be a lesson in this for other nations. What is it?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:1-4

When you go forth to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army greater than your own, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, is with you.

2 And when you come near to the battle, the priest shall approach and speak to the men,

3 And shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, you draw near this day to battle against your enemies; let not your [minds and] hearts faint; fear not, and do not tremble, or be terrified (and in dread) because of them.

4 For the Lord your God is He Who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. [I Sam. 17:45.]

#### COMMENT 20:1-4

"The instructions of this chapter are peculiar to Deuteronomy. As the people of God, Israel was not a warlike nation; they were rather to abstain from warfare, and as a general rule to cultivate the arts of

peace. But they had before them the prospect of a serious and protracted conflict before they could occupy the land which God assigned to them; and they might in future years have to go to war to maintain their independence and repel aggression. In view of this, instructions are here given regarding military services" (Pulpit).

THOU SHALT NOT BE AFRAID (v. 1)—See 3:22, 7:17-24, etc. See also our remarks under 1:30.

THE PRIEST (v. 2)—The Hebrew word *Kohen* is consistently so translated, and normally refers to that body of Levites that ministered to the Lord (18:1, notes). If that is so *here*, the priest designated to accompany Israel to war would call on Jehovah for help, and also act as exhorter and inspiration to the soldiers—a "chaplain." This was the *Lord's* war, fought by his people and against his enemies!\* See Num. 31:6, I Sam. 4:3 & 4, Num. 10:8, 9, II Chron. 13:10-12.

It was also the custom for a sacrifice to be offered (I Sam. 13) as a further appeal for God's blessing in battle. And sometimes Jehovah was consulted by the high priest before war, Judges 20:27, 28. It should be seen from all this that Israel's war—especially those having to do with conquering their promised land—were "Holy Wars." Because of this, God's chosen ministers were closely involved in its progress and success.

## (2) EXEMPTIONS FROM MILITARY SERVICE (20:5-9)

5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. 6 And what man is there that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not used the fruit thereof? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit thereof. 7 And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. 8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return to his house, lest his brethren's heart melt as his heart. 9 And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of

\*We see no need to give "priest" an abnormal meaning here. Gesenius remarks that "there is a very old opinion of Hebrew writers, that *Kohen* also signifies *prince*." But the places in scripture where that definition might apply are, at best, *few*, and even those few are questioned. His function here was basically a religious one." . . . the field preacher, not the high priest" (Lange).

speaking unto the people, that they shall appoint captains of hosts at the head of the people.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:5-9

334. The possibilities for deferment from military services were indeed varied. List them.
335. Wouldn't everyone claim exemption? Obviously man would not claim exemption. Why?
336. Cowardize was a recognized fault. We are in the greatest of all armies and engaged in a desperate conflict. Apply.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:5-9

5 And the officers shall speak to the people, saying, What man is there who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.

6 And what man has planted a vineyard and has not used the fruit of it? Let him also return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man use the fruit of it.

7 And what man has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her? Let him return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her.

8 And the officers shall speak further to the people, and say, What man is fearful and fainthearted? Let him return to his house, lest [because of him] his bretheren's [mind and] heart faint as does his own.

9 And when the officers finish speaking to the people, they shall appoint commanders at the head of the people.

## COMMENT 20:5-9

A house built but not dedicated; a vineyard planted but not harvested; a man betrothed but not married; a man faint-hearted but on the front lines of battle (i.e., a *coward*)—all these are allowed to return home until or unless their circumstances changed and they were thus qualified to wage war. In the case of the first three, if they died in battle it would be left to others to consummate what they had begun.

NEW HOUSE . . . NOT DEDICATED (v. 5)—“Probably formal possession was taken of the house by some solemn ceremony, followed by a festive entertainment” (Pulpit).

THAT HATH BETROTHED A WIFE (v. 7)—The Hebrew word *aras* signifies “to espouse a woman; properly, to make a spouse (Gesenius),

"become *engaged to (a girl), betroth (a wife)*" (Baumgartner). Cf. 28:30. Whether the wedding *ceremony* was over or not, he had not yet begun to make a home with his fiancée. Compare 24:5. In the economy of Israel, one betrothed was considered legally bound. See note, 22:23-27.

FEARFUL AND FAINT-HEARTED (v. 8)—"Is there anyone afraid and disheartened" (The Torah); "afraid and weak-hearted" (Berkely). And note the reason for sending him home—LEST HIS BRETHREN'S HEART MELT AS HIS HEART (v. 8)—His influence might spread like leaven, disheartening and discouraging the entire army (especially if there were several of them around!) Cf. 1:28.

It is not too hard to see that the same principle applies to those of us joined together in the warfare for Christ! Speak, act, and think discouragingly and, because we are *all* creatures of *influence*, others are caused to have feeble knees and weak hands. That is why Jesus taught "If ANY man would come after me [if any man would join his hosts and do battle against 'the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places'], let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

### (3) TREATMENT OF CITIES IN FAR-OFF NATIONS (20:10-15)

10 When thou drawest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. 11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that are found therein shall become tributary unto thee, and shall serve thee. 12 And if it will make not peace with thee, then thou shalt besiege it: 13 and then Jehovah thy God delivereth it into thy hand, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: 14 but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take for a prey unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. 15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:10-15

337. For what particular cities were there instructions given? Why the difference in treatment of enemies?
338. Does this scripture sanction slavery?
339. Read Numbers 15:15, 16 for further information concerning this section.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:10-15

10 When you draw near to a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace to it.

11 And if that city makes an answer of peace to you and opens to you, then all the people found in it shall be tributary to you and they shall serve you.

12 But if it refuses to make peace with you and fights against you, then you shall besiege it;

13 And when the Lord your God has given it into your hands, you shall smite every male there with the edge of the sword.

14 But the women, the little ones, the beasts, and all that is in the city, all the spoil in it, you shall take for yourselves, and you shall use the spoil of your enemies which the Lord your God has given you.

15 So shall you treat all the cities which are very far off from you, that do not belong to the cities of these nations.

COMMENT 20:10-15

PROCLAIM PEACE UNTO IT (v. 10)—They were to attempt peace negotiations on the terms specified.

SHALL BECOME TRIBUTARY (v. 11)—The Hebrew word *mas* Baumgartner defines as "forced labourers . . . forced services, task word," and here specifically, "be forced to taskwork." Thus the added phrase "and shall serve thee."

THOU SHALT SMITE EVERY MALE (v. 13)—The rest of the people could be spared, and taken captive. Those children or women who settled in Israel, however, when then subject to Israel's law (Num. 15:15, 16).

The law towards those people living in the area of Israel's promised land, however, was far different. See below.

(4) TREATMENT OF CANAANITE CITIES (20:16-18)

16 But of the cities of these peoples, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; 17 but thou shalt utterly destroy them: the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; as Jehovah thy God hath commanded thee; 18 that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so would ye sin against Jehovah your God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:16-18

340. Isn't there some admission of weakness in the need to utterly destroy these nations so "that they teach you not to do after all their abominations" . . . ?
341. Why not teach the other nations rather than learning from their teaching?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:16-18

16 But of the cities of these people, which the Lord your God gives you for inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes.

17 But you shall utterly exterminate them, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord your God has commanded you;

18 So they may not teach you all the abominable practices they have carried on for their gods, and so cause you to sin against the Lord your God.

## COMMENT 20:16-18

With these cities there was to be no arbitration, no peace conferences, no long negotiations for "peaceful coexistence." They were to be totally and finally destroyed. And God well knew what would happen if they were *not* (v. 18). See also 7:1-5 and notes.

## (5) RESPECT FOR NATURAL RESOURCES (20:19, 20)

19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee? 20 Only the trees of which thou knowest that they are not trees for food, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it fall.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:19, 20

342. Why would trees be destroyed? Why not destroy them?
343. What two-fold use was made of trees?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 20:19, 20

19 When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by using an ax on them, for you can eat their fruit; you must not cut them down, for is the tree of the field a man, that it should be besieged by you?

20 Only the trees which you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, that you may build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it falls.

## COMMENT 20:19, 20

As we can now see, all is *not* fair in love and war! This law, strange as it may appear, was probably designed for Israel's own good. In the process of waging a long war (v. 19), when everything living in the path of combat would normally be destroyed, the *fruit* trees were to be spared.

FOR IS THE TREE OF THE FIELD MAN . . . ? (v. 19)—the Canaanites were being destroyed, not only to make way for Israel, but because of their *wickedness* as a nation Gen. 15:16, Lev. 18:24, 25. But the fruit-trees were to be spared. ". . . it was a merciful provision to spare all fruit-bearing trees, because they yielded the fruit which supported man's life; and it was sound policy also, for even the conquerors must perish if the means of life were cut off.

It is diabolic cruelty to add to the *miseries* of war the horrors of *famine*; and this is done where the trees of the field are cut down, the dykes broken to drown the land, the villages burnt, and the crops wilfully spoiled. *O execrable war!* Subversive of all the charities of life!" (Clarke).

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY

*Directions concerning campaigns, 1. The priest shall encourage the people with the assurance that God will accompany and fight for them, 2-4. The officers shall dismiss from the army all who had just built a new house, but had not dedicated it, 5. All who had planted a vineyard, but had not eaten of its fruits, 6. All who had betrothed a wife, but had not brought her home, 7. And all who were timid and faint-hearted, 8. The commanders to be chosen after the timid, &c., had retired, 9. No city to be attacked till they had proclaimed conditions of peace to it, provided it be a city beyond the bounds of the seven Canaanitish*

*nations; if it submitted, it was to become tributary; if not, it was to be besieged, sacked, and all the males put to the sword; the women, children, and cattle to be taken as booty, 10-15. No such offers to be made to the cities of the Canaanites; of them nothing shall be preserved, and the reason, 16-18. In besieging a city no trees to be cut down but those who do not bear fruit, 19, 20.*

[See 21:1-9 discussed in lesson fifteen (II, B, 3, f.)]

(6) MARRYING WOMEN CAPTIVES (21:10-14)

10 When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, and Jehovah thy God delivereth them into thy hands, and thou carriest them away captive, 11 and seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and thou hast a desire unto her, and wouldest take her to thee to wife; 12 then thou shalt bring her home to thy house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; 13 and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thy house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. 14 And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not deal with her as a slave, because thou hast humbled her.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:10-14

344. How sad to be defeated when God planned victory. The lack of conquest was not because God had not already assured triumph. Why then was Israel not victorious?
345. Why would a pagan woman from a distance city be any more qualified for a wife than one from Canaan?
346. Why the shaving of the hair, paring nails, putting off raiment of captivity?
347. Show the protection and honor accorded these women. Why so?
348. Careful provision was made for the proper attitude in marriage. Discuss this as of today.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:10-14

10 When you go forth to battle against your enemies, and the Lord your God has given them into your hands, and you carry them away captive,



11 And you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her, that you may have her as your wife,

12 Then you shall bring her home to your house; and she shall shave her head and pare her nails [in purification from heathenism],

13 And put off her prisoner's garb and shall remain in your house, and bewail her father and mother a full month. After that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.

14 And if you have no delight in her, then you shall let her go absolutely free; you shall not sell her at all for money, you shall not deal with her as a slave or a servant, because you have humbled her.

### COMMENT 21:10-14

As in the case of the coming appointment of kings (17:14-17), this law is made as a *provision*, because of the *foreknowledge* of God. It is made in condescension to (not endorsement of) the weakness of men—and, incidentally, for the protection and honor of women.

This passage does not concern Canaanite cities, where "thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth (20:16), but distant cities where the males were either killed or taken as slaves, and the women and little ones taken as prey (20:10-15). No alliances or marriages were to be made with Canaanite women.

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (v. 11)—The word "beautiful" is a translation of two Hebrew words *yephath*, beautiful, bright, fair, and *toar*, dilineation, form, body. Thus, literally, "beautiful of form." It is used of Rachel in Gen. 29:17, where Clarke says of the word, "beautiful in her *shape, person, mien, and gait.*" In this trait, as well as being "well favored" (*yephath mareh*) she stood in contrast to Leah.

We would, of course, seriously question a man's wisdom who would choose his life's partner on such a superficial basis, with little or no chance to consider whether she was beautiful in *character*. We would wonder whether this "love at first sight" was not ninety per cent infatuation! We are tempted to warn him (as Solomon warned the young man of the seductress), "Lust not after her beauty in thy heart; Neither let her take thee with her eyelids" (Prov. 6:25). We would appeal to him on the basis of the overwhelming marital difficulties of taking a non-Israelite to wife—one who probably knew little or nothing of serving Jehovah God. "Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; But a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised" (Prov. 31:30).

But regardless of all this, God provides what shall be done when such a one *is* taken. The question here is not what he *should* have done, but *what he should now do*.

SHE SHALL SHAVE HER HEAD, AND PARE HER NAILS (v. 12)—Both of these ceremonies, as well as the putting off of the garments worn when she was taken captive (v. 13), were signs of purification, separating her from her former heathenism, and preparing her for becoming a part of the people of God. Compare the law of the leper, Lev. 14:8, and the cleansing of the Levites, Num. 8:6, 7. Shaving the head was also a sign of *mourning*, Job 1:20, etc.

PUT THE RAIMENT OF HER CAPTIVITY FROM OFF HER (v. 13)—“the putting off her gorgeous dress in which ladies, on the eve of being captured arrayed themselves to be the more attractive to their captors.” (J.F.B.) She then dons the garments of mourning and bewails her father and mother (who were now to her the same as dead) for thirty days. This period would also give her a chance to “pull herself together,” adjust to her new condition, and otherwise prepare herself for her new life-role.

More and more now, her husband is to see her as she really is.

It is well to observe the protection afforded womanhood here. By general consent in ancient times, the women were considered part of the “spoils of war,” and even in modern times this has often been true. Any one acquainted with the fearful license practiced among many nations towards female captives taken in war, can surely appreciate the humanizing influence these verses were intended to exert. A woman captive was not to be a plaything of passion or lust, but was to be dealt with honorably and with dignity. The requirements of this passage stand in sharp contrast to the conduct common among soldiers who have devastated a foreign power, and whose women are at their mercy.

IF THOU HAVE NO DELIGHT IN HER (v. 14)—This is after the marriage (v. 13). In the Hebrew home, the husband was unconditionally and unreservedly the head of his wife and family in all domestic relations. Nowhere is this headship more obvious than in his right to divorce. He might, under certain circumstances, divorce his wife—but it was much more difficult for her to reverse the procedure. And in view of her position here as “captive,” she would have even less ability to claim her “rights” in marriage. See Num. 5:12-31, Duet. 22:13-21, and particularly in connection with this passage, 24:1-4.

If he *was* displeased with her, however, he could not retain her in some subordinate or inferior capacity.

THOU SHALT NOT DEAL WITH HER AS A SLAVE (v. 14)—The Hebrew word *amar*, rendered here by five English words, signifies "To show self a tyrant (Young), "deal violently, tyrannically with (Baumgartner). It occurs again in 24:7, where it is again rendered "as a slave." She had, in fact, become his *wife*, and she was not now to be dealt with as if she had *only* been a captive servant (20:14). She was to be free to go where her inclinations led.

## (7) UNCLEANNESS (23:9-14)

9 When thou goest forth in camp against thine enemies, then thou shalt keep thee from every evil thing. 10 If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of that which chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: 11 but it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall bathe himself in water; and when the sun is down, he shall come within the camp. 12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp whither thou shalt go forth abroad: 13 and thou shalt have a paddle among thy weapons; and it shall be, when thou sittest down abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee; 14 for Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he may not see an unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:9-14

349. There are some very delicate subjects here discussed in a most candid and yet modest manner. This should offer some example for our approach and discussion of such subjects.
350. It will be of interest to note in this passage what God classifies as "unclean"; why so? Unclean in what sense? Cf. Numbers 5:1-4.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:9-14

9 When you go forth against your enemies and are in camp, you shall keep yourself from every evil thing.

10 If there is among you any man who is not clean by reason of what happens to him at night, then he shall go outside the camp, he shall not come with the camp;

11 But when evening comes he shall bathe himself in water, and when the sun is down, he may return to the camp.

12 You shall have a place also outside the camp to which you shall go [as a comfort station];

13 And you shall have a paddle or shovel among your weapons, and when you sit down outside [to relieve yourself], you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up what has come from you.

14 or the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy, that He may see nothing indecent among you, and turn away from you.

### COMMENT 23:9-14

We have placed this section here because it obviously concerns warfare (v. 9).

FROM EVERY EVIL THING (v. 9)—Heb. *ra-a*, here, evil in the sense of blemish, uncleanness. Gesenius mentions that the word may imply “to be noxious, hurtful”—and there seems to be such overtones in this passage. The fact that they were *in camp* and in the midst of a *war*, did not relieve them of certain responsibilities. Discipline and safety are the rule in any army camp, and it is not difficult to see the wisdom of these words. All impurity and uncleanness was to be kept out. This *basic* rule of course, also applies to the camp as a whole, Num. 5:1-4.

### QUESTIONS, LESSON SIXTEEN

(20:1-20, 21:10-14, 23:9-14)

1. What function did the priest have who accompanied the army to the battlefield.
2. Was there a clear line of demarcation between civil and religious laws under the Old Covenant?
3. Can you recall the four classes of soldiers who could return home from the battlefield? (Finish before proceeding.)
4. What *reason* is given for allowing the “fearful and faint hearted” to return home?
5. Can you name two differences (related) between the way Israel’s army should treat *distant*, as contrasted with *Canaanite*, cities.
6. What kind of trees were not to be destroyed in battle?
7. In this lesson, what was the soldier’s reason for taking a foreign wife?
8. What was required of her before the marriage was official?
9. Discuss how 21:10-14 uphold such a woman’s dignity and honor.
10. Upon what basis could her husband let her go?
11. Why couldn’t he sell her as a slave?
12. What would *Jesus* have taught about such a marriage?

## LESSON SEVENTEEN 21:15—23:14

### h. FAMILY REGULATIONS (21:15-21)

#### (1) THE RIGHT OF THE FIRST-BORN (21:15-17)

15 If a man have two wives, the one beloved, and the other hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the first-born son be hers that was hated; 16 then it shall be, in the day that he causeth his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved the first-born before the son of the hated, who is the first-born; 17 but he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the hated, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath; for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:15-17

351. Why no word of censure for having two wives?  
352. How could a son be "made" the first-born, if he was not?  
353. Is it an inevitable conclusion that of two wives, one will be hated and one loved?  
354. Why give the first-born twice as much?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:15-17

15 If a man has two wives, one loved and the other disliked, and they both have borne him children, and if the first-born son is hers who is disliked,

16 Then on the day when he wills his possessions to his sons, he shall not put the first-born of his loved wife in place of the first-born of the disliked, who is older.

17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the disliked as the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he was the first issue of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

#### COMMENT 21:15-17

The wisdom of having two wives is not even discussed by the law-giver. As in so many other cases in this book, the evil is *anticipated* and the problem faced "as is," not "as hoped."

From an emotional and sentimental standpoint, the father would be tempted to give the son of the beloved wife the greater portion of his inheritance. But law and order crumbles before such sentimentality:

the firstborn was to receive his double portion regardless of the position his mother held in his father's esteem.

Remembering the favoritism Jacob showed to Joseph, though both of these were godly men, it is not difficult to see the need of this exhortation. Whatever the portion given the other sons, the portion allotted to the eldest son was to be twice as much. His right were to be honored.

#### (2) THE TREATMENT OF STUBBORN SONS (21:18-21)

18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, that will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and though they chasten him, will not hearken unto them; 19 then shall his father and mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; 20 and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:18-21

355. Here is parental discipline with a vengeance! Why was this necessary? Do you imagine it was practiced?
356. Notice the preventative measures taken before the corrective discipline was administered.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:18-21

18 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or his mother, and though they chasten him, will not listen to them;

19 Then his father and his mother shall take hold of him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives,

20 And they shall say to the elders of his city, This our son is rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. [Prov. 23:20-22.]

21 Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall cleanse out the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and (reverently) fear.

## COMMENT 21:18-21

See also 5:16, 27:16 (and notes on both these passages), Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:9, Prov. 30:17.

This case appears to deal especially with a son who had gained a reputation of gluttony and drunkenness (v. 20), and who would not be deterred from such a life in spite of his parent's exhortations. Their advice and chastisements were only met with stubbornness and rebellion. This son has not simply "slipped," or made a mistake—he has been defiant, unruly, and recalcitrant. The severe punishment given to him is illustrative of God's hatred for such sin.

AND ALL ISREAL SHALL HEAR, AND FEAR (v. 21)—One cannot imagine other young people witnessing such an event without being deeply sobered. When Ananias and Sapphira were struck down by God, "great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things" (Acts 5:11). Some "object lessons" are too vivid and real to forget. This was to be a lesson for all Israel as well as punishment for one individual.

i. THE SANCTITY OF THE LAND: MAN HANGED  
ON A TREE (21:22, 23)

22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; 23 his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God; that thou defile not thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 21:22, 23

357. Read Joshua 10:22-27 and Numbers 25:4 to help understand this section
358. Was the hanging the cause of the death? What purpose was there in hanging on a tree?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 21:22, 23

22 And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and [afterward] you hang him on a tree, [Josh. 10:26, 27.]

23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall surely bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God; thus you shall not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance. [Gal. 3:13.]

## COMMENT 21:22, 23

Note how Joshua carried out this command in Josh. 10:22-27. See also Num. 25:4. This seems to be not a mode of execution *per se*, but rather a law concerning *exposure after death*. Ancient Syrian sculptures show naked men impaled at the top of long poles, and by the time of Esther the *gallows* (Est. 5:14—apparently a similar device) was employed for the same purpose—public exposure of a criminal as an object of warning to the people.

Crucifixion was a terrible method of punishment adopted later by the Romans from the Orient, and used by them only on slaves and the vilest of criminals. The victim was left to die of exhaustion, whereas *here* the victim was slain first. But it, too, involved hanging on a tree, and "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Cf. Gal. 3:13). Thus the death of our Savior by this means was doubly humiliating, simply from a standpoint of the opinion society had of such a "criminal."

And Paul's application is that in becoming such a curse *for us*, we may claim the promise of life.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

*If a man be found slain in a field, and the cause of his death be unknown, the murder shall be expiated by the sacrifice of a heifer in an uncultivated valley, 1-4. The rites to be used on the occasion, 5-9. The ordinance concerning marriage with a captive, 10-14. The law relative to the children of the hated and beloved wives: if the son of the hated wife should be the first-born he shall not be disinherited by the son of the beloved wife, but shall have a double portion of all his father's goods, 15-18. The law concerning the stubborn and rebellious son, who, when convicted, is to be stoned to death, 19-21. Of the person who is to be hanged, 22. His body shall not be left on the tree all night; every one that is hanged on a tree is accursed of God, 23.*

## j. LIFE IN THE NEW LAND: VARIOUS LAWS (22:1-12)

## (1) LOST POSSESSIONS (22:1-4)

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely bring them again unto thy brother. 2 And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it home to thy house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to



him. 3 And so shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his garment; and so shalt thou do with every lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found: thou mayest not hide thyself. 4 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fallen down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:1-4

359. Responsibility is again demanded. What is involved in the expression, "hide thyself"?
360. There is a reciprocal action involved here. How so?
361. Thoughtfulness and helpfulness are such grant virtues. Why do we need laws for them? Cf. Luke 10:27-37; 13:10-17.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:1-4

You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep being driven away or stolen, and hide yourself from [your duty to help] them; you shall surely take them back to your brother. [Cp. Prov. 24:12.]

2 And if your brother [the owner] is not near you, or if you do not know who he is, you shall bring the animal to your house, and it shall be with you until your brother comes looking for it; then you shall restore it to him.

3 And so shall you do with his donkey, or his garment, or with anything which your brother has lost and you have found; you shall not hide yourself from [your duty concerning] them.

4 You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down by the way, and hide from [your duty concerning] them; you shall surely help him to lift them up again.

## COMMENT 22:1-4

See also Ex. 23:4, 5. The finder of the lost article was not to avoid his responsibility of making a sincere effort to find the owner. And again, if his fellow Israelite's animal was found in need of help, he was not to avoid responsibility where he could be of *assistance*, much less exploit his brother's loss to his own advantage and betterment. Getting an animal or item back to its proper owner might involve "putting himself out" some, but the next day he might need the *same* services from his brother. By avoiding this duty, and "hiding himself," he could claim the animal or item as his own. But this childish "finders keepers, losers weepers" philosophy was not endorsed.

Verse 4 expresses a *principle of helpfulness* toward those in need. In this case it is with the man's animal—but Jesus would have us to be even more helpful when dealing with our fellow *man*—Luke 10:27-37, 13:10-17.

## (2) APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR THE SEX (22:5)

5 A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:5

362. Why such a strong prohibition against wearing clothes of the opposite sex?
363. Is God saying here we should be able to visibly tell whether a person is male or female? i.e. Should we appear to be the sex we are by the way we dress? Any modern day application for this?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:5

5 The woman shall not wear that which pertains to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord your God.

## COMMENT 22:5

We are not told *why* God made this distinction in clothing—or even that the distinction *was* between the two types of clothing. But (especially when vv. 9-12 are compared) it appears quite obvious that God wanted Israel to recognize a *distinction*, a *difference*, and a *separation*. He wanted his people to know whether they were seeing a male or female.

But it is likely that the reason for prohibition goes beyond this. Transvestism (the practice of dressing in clothing of the opposite sex) has historically almost always been practiced by those who exemplified the *characteristics* of the opposite sex, and often these were homosexuals.\* To wear the clothing of the opposite sex would immediately "label" you in the community, and God would have the Israelites avoid

\*Transvestism, with its accompanying evils (such as sodomy) is still a relatively common practice among several aboriginal tribes. Several American Indian groups formerly gave these men places of *honor* among their tribes!

such a stigma. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches . . ." (Prov. 22:1). "A good name is better than precious oil . . ." (Ecc. 7:1).

By donning improper apparel, a woman might be known as an amazon or virago; a man might be thought effeminate. "The distinction between the sexes is natural and established by God in their creation, and any neglect or violation of that distinction, even in externals, not only leads to impurity, but involves the infractions of the laws of God." (Lange).

### (3) NESTING BIRDS (22:6, 7)

6 If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: 7 thou shalt surely let the dam go, but the young thou mayest take unto thyself; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:6, 7

364. What lesson, or lessons, is in this concern of our heavenly Father for the mother bird?
365. What possible connection does the length of life have to do with saving a bird from death?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:6, 7

6 If a bird's nest chance to be before you in the way in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the mother bird is sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother bird with the young.

7 You shall surely let the mother bird go, and take only the young, that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days.

### COMMENT 22:6, 7

The young birds, and apparently the eggs, could be taken. But not the mother (dam). In Lev. 22:28, similarly, a cow or ewe could not be killed on the same day as its young.

Jesus said of the sparrows, ". . . not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God." And if God takes such graceful note of the "insignificant" matters of life, "Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6, 7).

## (4) BATTLEMENTS FOR NEW BUILDINGS (22:8)

8 When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:8

366. God was even interested in the design of the house, or was it another interest?  
 367. Read Numbers 35:33 and Genesis 9:6 and indicate how they relate to our text.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:8

8 When you build a new house, then you shall put a railing around your [flat] roof, so that no one may fall from there, and bring guilt of blood upon your house.

## COMMENT 22:8

The Hebrew word for battlement (*maaqeb*), a restraining, holding back, is simply rendered "parapet" by most modern translators and lexicons. This barrier for a flat roof was more than likely a low wall in most cases, perhaps a railing (Amplified O. T.) in others.

Its purpose, of course, was protection, lest the owner be guilty, in a roundabout way, of injuring or taking the life of another. It was a mandatory "safety feature" for each home.

THAT THOU BRING NOT BLOOD UPON THY HOUSE (v. 8)—Apparently the law of Num. 35:33, Cf. Gen. 9:6, would apply here, i.e., if the owner failed to take this precaution he would be liable for the death of any who accidentally fell from it.

## (5) FORBIDDEN MIXTURE (22:9-11)

9 Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole fruit be forfeited, the seed which thou hast sown, and the increase of the vineyard. 10 Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. 11 Thou shalt not wear a mingled stuff, wool and linen together.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:9-11

368. Is it a horticultural fact that the mixture of seeds as here described would result in loss? Discuss.

369. The separation of the ox and the ass had some reason; what was it?

370. Why not wear wool and linen together?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:9-11

9 You shall not plant your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole crop be forfeited [under this ban], the seed which you have sown and the yield of the vineyard forfeited to the sanctuary.

10 You shall not plow with an ox [a clean animal] and a donkey [unclean] together. [2 Cor. 6:14-16.]

11 You shall not wear a garment of mingled stuff, wool and linen together. [Ezek. 4:18; Rev. 19:8.]

### COMMENT 22:9-11

Note the basic concept of *separation* which runs throughout these verses. The fact that two kinds of seed might grow quite well together, or that one could plow together quite well with an ox and an ass, or that linen (originating from flax) and wool might make a durable, warm, and nice-looking garment when combined, was *nothing to the point!* God had said they were not to be mixed! His word was to be respected and honored.

As a separated people, they were to live separated lives (Cf. I K. 8:53, etc.) Such laws as this would also distinguish and identify them as God's own people, different from all others.

Separation is as much a New Testament doctrine as Old—not the separation here spoken of, but the separation from the world and its ways that has *always* characterized God's true children. It is still very necessary that the child of God *distinguish* and *differentiate* in this world—an ability he develops more and more as he matures and grows into the likeness of his Master. Mature Christians should see the difference between light and darkness, sham and sincerity, truth and falsehood.

The "unequal yoke" of the ox and ass (v. 10) perhaps were in the very mind's eye of the apostle when he exhorted the Corinthian Christians, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity . . ." etc. (see II Cor. 6:14—7:1).

### (6) FRINGED GARMENTS (22:12)

12 Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four borders of thy vestures, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:12

371. Is Numbers 15:37-41 a commentary on this verse?  
 372. How was the purpose of this practice perverted? Cf. Matthew 23:5.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:12

12 You shall make yourselves tassels on the four corners of your cloak with which you cover yourself. [Num. 15:37-40.]

## COMMENT 22:12

The Hebrew word for "fringe" (*gadil*) occurs only in the plural in scripture. Gesenius has "*intertwined threads, twisted work.*" Baumgartner remarks that the basic meaning is "twist firmly," and defines it "tassel" here. This definition is followed by most modern translators, as well as the I.S.B.E.

In Num. 15:37-41 this law is also given,\* and note the purpose: as reminders of God's commandments.

As in the case of the exhortation to keep God's word ever before them (6:6-9), the purpose and spirit of *this* exhortation was lost in the effort "to be seen of men" (see Matt. 23:5). The borders of their garments, rather than being reminders of God's law, became reminders of their ostentation and pride. [Compare notes on 6:8.] Albert Barnes remarks, "This fringe was commanded in order to distinguish them from other nations, and that they might remember to keep the commandments of God . . . The Pharisees made them broader than other people [i.e., even other Hebrews] wore them, to show that they had peculiar respect for the law."

These tassels are apparently what the woman with the issue of blood touched when she touched the "border" of Christ's garment (Matt. 9:20), a gesture which also healed those who were sick in the area of Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34-36).

## k. SEX OFFENSES (22:13-30)

## (1) VIRGINITY OF A BRIDE (22:13-21)

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 and lay shameful things to her charge, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came nigh to her, I

\*A different Heb. word is used in Numbers, but it seems obvious that the same law is being discussed.

found not in her the tokens of virginity; 15 then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate; 16 and the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; 17 and, lo, he hath laid shameful things *to her charge*, saying, I found not in thy daughter the tokens of virginity; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him; 19 and they shall fine him a hundred *shekels* of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. 20 But if this thing be true, that the tokens of virginity were not found in the damsel; 21 then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:13-21

373. Is this section a protection for the wife or for the husband?
374. How would a garment produced by the parents of the wife answer the problem?
375. Either supernatural knowledge or basic honesty plays an important role here, discuss.
376. Adultery was a serious sin; a life and death matter. Is it today? Discuss.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:13-21

13 If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and then scorns her,  
 14 And charges her with shameful things and gives her an evil reputation, and says, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I did not find in her the tokens of a virgin,

15 Then the father of the young woman, and her mother, shall get and bring out the tokens of her virginity to the elders of the city in the gate;

16 And her father shall say to the elders, I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he hates and spurns her,

17 And, lo, he has made shameful charges against her, saying, I found not in your daughter the evidences of her virginity. And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city.

18 And the elders of that city shall take the man and rebuke and whip him;

19 And they shall fine him 100 shekels of silver, and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought an evil name upon a virgin of Israel; and she shall be his wife; he may not divorce her all his days.

20 But if it is true that the evidences of virginity were not found in the young woman,

21 Then they shall bring her to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death; because she has wrought [criminal] folly in Israel, by playing the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

### COMMENT 22:13-21

Questioning the virginity of a man's bride was a serious matter in Israel—and these words were doubtless intended both as an incentive for the bride to present herself undefiled to her husband, and as a deterrent to husbands who might be prone to unjustly accuse their wives of unchastity before marriage. Certainly nothing is more utterly humiliating to a woman with a good name than to be so accused. "No act can be conceived more cruel or dastardly than that of a man who groundlessly assails his wife's character, accusing her of ante-nuptial unchastity. As the matter was one proof of which was not directly possible, and the man's word was all that could be adduced on his side, the Law threw the onus of clearing herself upon the woman through her parents, and indicated the mode of doing so." (Pulpit)

THE TOKENS OF VIRGINITY (v. 14) i.e., proofs of chastity.—In v. 17 this phrase seems to be used synonymously with the woman's *garment* that was spread before the elders of the city. A woman's dress depicted much about her marital status in the east, and still does in many areas. In Genesis, ch. 38, for example, Tamar is identified by her *dress* at one time as a widow, and another as a harlot (Gen. 38:14, 15, 19).

The word rendered "garment," Heb. *simlah*, (A.V. *cloth*) refers to her "wrapper, mantle" (Baumgartner). It is especially used of that garment which was wrapped around oneself at night for comfort and



warmth, though it was worn at other times also. Apparently this "proof garment" was kept by her parents for such an occasion, as would need its display—probably put away at the time of her marriage.

Note the severe punishment that was to be given a husband who dared to bring a false accusation against his wife—and hence ruin her name and reputation. He was to be scourged and fined, and legally bound out from ever divorcing the wife he had so abused.

(2) ADULTERY (22:22)

22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they shall both of them die, the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away the evil from Israel.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:22

377. So much is left to the imagination in the circumstances here described. If a girl, even one who is "betrothed" finds a boy she likes better than her betrothed, why not marry him?
378. Did the "man" of verse 23 have a personal interest in the damsel?
379. Compare John 8:5 for a possible example. Who is missing?
380. Supposing the girl "in the field" consented to the action, how shall this be handled?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:22

22 If a man is found lying with another man's wife, they shall both die, the man who lay with the woman and the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.

COMMENT 22:22

See also 5:18, Lev. 20:10. *Both* were to die, as both were guilty. (Compare the case of the woman taken in adultery—note Jn. 8:5. Where was her partner?)

(3) DEFILEMENT OF A MAIDEN BETROTHED (22:23-27)

23 If there be a damsel that is a virgin betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; 24 then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them to death with stones; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and he man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife: so thou shalt put away the evil from the midst of thee.

25 But if the man find the damsel that is betrothed in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her; then the man only that lay with her shall die: 26 but unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbor, and slayeth him, even so is this matter; 27 for he found her in the field, the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:23-27

23 If a maiden who is a virgin is engaged to be married, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

24 Then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and shall stone them to death, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he has violated his neighbor's [promised] wife. So shall you put away evil from among you.

25 But if a man finds the betrothed maiden in the open country, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die.

26 But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no sin punishable by death, for this is as when a man attacks and slays his neighbor;

27 For he came upon her in the open country, and the betrothed girl cried out, but there was not one to save her.

### COMMENT 22:23-27

In the case of the maiden in the city, it is assumed assistance and help is available to the girl if she *wants* it. Therefore both are held responsible for the crime. But with the maiden in the country no such assistance is likely to be available. It is assumed that "the damsel cried, and there was none to save her." In this case only the man shall die. She is compared to the victim of a murderer (v. 26).

Note the sanctity and sacredness of the "engagement" period. The betrothed man and maid are referred to already as "husband" and "wife." To be sure, it was a much more firm and binding contract than today. "Indeed, it was esteemed a part of the transaction of marriage, and that the most binding part . . . Its central feature was the dowry (*mohar*), which was paid to the parents, not to the bride. It may take the form of service (Gen. 29; I Sam. 18:25) . . . Among the Jews

the betrothal was so far regarded as binding that, if marriage should not take place, owing to the absconding of the bridegroom or the breach of contract on his part, the young woman could not be married to another man until she was liberated by a due process and a paper of divorce . . . A prolonged interval between betrothal and marriage was deemed undesirable on many accounts, though often an interval was needed that the groom might render the stipulated service or pay the price—say a year or two, or as in the case of Jacob, it might be seven years. The betrothed parties were legally in the position of a married couple, and unfaithfulness was 'adultery,' (Dt. 22:23; Mt. 1:19)." (I.S.B.E.)

#### (4) DEFILEMENT OF A MAIDEN NOT BETROTHED (22:28, 29)

28 If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, that is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; 29 then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his days.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:28, 29

381. Read Exodus 22:16, 17 to complete the record.
382. Who is considered responsible in this circumstance?
383. Is the girl to be considered innocent? What of love in this marriage.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:28, 29

28 If a man find a girl who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found,

29 Then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her; he may not divorce her all his days.

#### COMMENT 22:28, 29

By comparing Ex. 22:16, 17, it appears that the father might not accept the new "son-in-law"—but he was still to accept the money. Her husband was not allowed to divorce her throughout their days.

In the case mentioned above it is not *stated* that the maiden was at fault in any way—only what was to be done when the crime had been committed. She may (knowingly or unknowingly) have unduly tempted

him. Or she may have been ignorant of his evil intentions. The book *Scientific Illustrations* states the latter case well:

"Flamingoes are very shy and timid birds, and shun all attempts of man to approach them; the vicinity of animals, however, they disregard. Any one who is acquainted with this fact can take advantage of it by dressing himself up in the skin of a horse or an ox. Thus disguised, the sportsman may get close to them and shoot them down at his ease. They are taken in by appearances. Shy, beautiful, and harmless, the unfortunate bird meets destruction simply for want of wariness. Many a lovely human being with the like qualities has met her doom for want of the same trait."

#### (5) IMPURITY TOWARD A FATHER'S WIFE (22:30)

30 A man shall not take his father's wife, and shall not uncover his father's skirt.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 22:30

384. Consider Leviticus 18:8; 20:11 and Deuteronomy 27:20 for a complete perspective.  
 385. Is this a sin of incest?  
 386. How is the word "skirt" used here?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 22:30

30 A man shall not take his father's former wife, nor shall he uncover her who belongs to his father.

#### COMMENT 22:30

See also 27:20, Lev. 18:8; 20:11. The sin here is not necessarily with one's mother, for frequently a husband had two or more wives. Note the distinction between Lev. 18:7 and 18:8. Inasmuch as a wife was considered the husband's possession and property, it was "his father's skirt." Reuben's sin was similar, Gen. 35:22, as was also Absalom's, II Sam. 16:20-22.

#### SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

*Ordinances relative to strayed cattle and lost goods, 1-3. Humanity to oppressed cattle, 4. Men and women shall not wear other's apparel,*

5. No bird shall be taken with her nest of eggs or young ones, 6, 7. Battlements must be made on the roofs of houses, 8. Improper mixtures to be avoided, 9-11. Fringes on the garments, 12. Case of the hated wife, and the tokens of virginity, and the proceedings thereon, 13-21. The adulterer and adulteress to be put to death, 22. Case of the betrothed damsel corrupted in the city, 23, 24. Cases of rape and the punishment, 25-27; of fornication, 28, 29. No man shall take his father's wife, 30.

I. EXCLUSION FROM THE CONGREGATION (23:1-14)

(1) PERMANENT EXCLUSION FOR THE SEXUALLY MUTILATED,  
CHILDREN BORN OF ILLEGITIMATE UNION AND  
CERTAIN ENEMY PEOPLE (23:1-6)

He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

2 A bastard shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah; even to the tenth generation shall none of his enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

3 An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah; even to the tenth generation shall none belonging to them enter into the assembly of Jehovah for ever; 4 because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. 5 Nevertheless Jehovah thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but Jehovah thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because Jehovah thy God loved thee. 6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:1-6

387. Was the exclusion of the sexually mutilated a fair regulation? Discuss.
388. We can see reason for the exclusion of the bastard, but why the rest of the generations?
389. Evidently there is a time and circumstance when even God gives up. Is this a fair conclusion about what is said of the Ammonite and the Moabite?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:1-6

He who is wounded in the testicles, or has been made a eunuch, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.

2 A person begotten out of wedlock shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall his descendants not enter into the congregation of the Lord.

3 An Ammonite or \*Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation their descendants shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord for ever;

4 Because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired Balaam son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, against you to curse you.

5 Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam; but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing to you, because the Lord your God loved you.

6 You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days for ever.

## COMMENT 23:1-6

In all these verses the purity and separateness of God's people is being maintained—and they should be studied with this in mind.

AN AMMONITE OR A MOABITE SHALL NOT ENTER (v. 3)—These two peoples were related to Israel through Lot, Abraham's nephew (Gen. 19:36-38). Two reasons are given here for excluding them from the assembly:

1. Their lack of hospitality when Israel came out of Egypt (v. 4).
2. They hired Balaam to curse Israel (v. 4). See II Pet. 2:12-16, Jude 11.

Moab's actions toward Israel are recorded in Numbers 22-25. Their influence upon the Hebrews was in every way degrading. Ammon's treatment was apparently similar—their border was strong (Num. 21:24), Israel was to avoid conflict with them when entering Canaan (Dt. 2:19) and they evidently joined Moab in the hiring of Balaam. Both of these tribes were later thorns in Israel's flesh, Jud. 3:12, 13; 11:4, etc.

\*It must be remembered that the children, according to the Jewish law, followed the father, not the mother. [That is, the family of Boaz for example, although his wife Ruth was a Moabitess, was considered Israelite, including his wife.] The case of Ruth would not, therefore, be touched by this precept (*Ellicott's Commentary*).

(2) TEMPORARY EXCLUSION FOR EGYPTIANS, MOABITES  
AND PHYSICALLY UNCLEAN (23:7-14)

7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a sojourner in his land.  
8 The children of the third generation that are born unto them shall enter into the assembly of Jehovah.

9 When thou goest forth in camp against thine enemies, then thou shalt keep thee from every evil thing. 10 If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of that which chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: 11 but it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall bathe himself in water; and when the sun is down, he shall come within the camp. 12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad; 13 and thou shalt have a paddle among thy weapons; and it shall be when thou sittest down abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee: 14 for Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he may not see an unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:7-14

390. Why the lenient attitude toward the Egyptians? Were they not idolators? Discuss.
391. Read verse 14 first, then read verses 9 through 13. If Jehovah was so near then what of today?
392. There must be some connection between physical uncleanness and moral defilement. Discuss.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:7-14

7 You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother [Esau's descendant]. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a stranger and temporary resident in his land.

8 Their children may enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation.

9 When you go forth against your enemies and are in camp, you shall keep yourself from every evil thing.

10 If there is among you any man who is not clean by reason of what happens to him at night, then he shall go outside the camp, he shall not come within the camp;

11 But when evening comes he shall bathe himself in water, and when the sun is down, he may return to the camp.

12 You shall have a place also outside the camp to which you shall go [as a comfort station];

13 And you shall have a paddle or shovel among your weapons, and when you sit down outside [to relieve yourself], you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up what has come from you.

14 For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy, that He may see nothing indecent among you, and turn away from you.

### COMMENT 23:7-14

The Edomites, as descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother, and the Egyptians, because Israel sojourned in their land, were to be allowed into the assembly of the congregation after three generations within Israel's borders. Egypt, of course, has been the "spawning ground" of Israel—beginning with seventy souls (Gen. 46:27), and leaving some four hundred years later with a great host which must have totaled well over two million (See the Introduction, II).

Those men deemed unclean while Israel was encamped against the enemy (vv. 9-14) were also to be excluded until they had complied with the cleansing formula here described. See the *Rules for conducting the Holy War*, (II, B, g, 7) following 21:14.

### QUESTIONS, LESSON SEVENTEEN (21:15—23:14)

1. How much of the inheritance was the first-born son to receive?
2. If such a son was born of a wife that was hated, could this law be changed?
3. What was the proper treatment of stubborn sons under the Mosaic law?
4. Was Moses describing a single infraction on the part of this son?
5. What purpose did this have besides punishing the offender?
6. What purpose would be served by hanging a dead man on a tree?
7. Why not let him hang all night?
8. How did this Jewish law differ from the *crucifixion* of the Romans?
9. What was an Israelite to do when he found a lost article or animal?
10. Why not wear the clothing of the opposite sex?
11. What could *not* be taken from the bird's nest?



QUESTIONS ON LESSON SEVENTEEN

12. What safety feature was required on their new homes?
13. Give a possible reason for not mixing kinds of seed, cloth, etc.
14. Why have fringed (tasseled) garments?
15. How did the Pharisees exploit and pervert this purpose?
16. Who was to prove the virginity of his married daughter when it was challenged? How? Before whom?
17. How was adultery punished?
18. What distinction was made between the defilement of a betrothed maiden who lived in the *country* and one who lived in the *city*?
19. Why were the Ammonites and Moabites excluded from the assembly?
20. The Edomites and Egyptians were both excluded for only three generations, but for different reasons. What reasons?

## LESSON EIGHTEEN 23:15—24:22

### m. LAWS OF SOCIETY AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS

(23:15—26:19)

#### (1) TREATMENT OF ESCAPED SLAVES (23:15, 16)

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a servant that is escaped from his master unto thee: 16 he shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where it pleaseth him best: thou shalt not oppress him.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:15, 16

393. No such provision was made for a runaway Hebrew servant. Cf. 15:12-18. Why such a provision for outsiders?  
394. The motive for running away is at least suggested. What is it?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:15, 16

15 You shall not give up to his master a servant who has escaped from his master to you;

16 He shall dwell with you in your midst, where he chooses in one of your towns, where it pleases him best. You shall not defraud or oppress him.

#### COMMENT 23:15, 16

"The reference is to a foreign slave who had fled from the harsh treatment of his master to seek refuge in Israel, as is evident from the expression . . . 'in one of thy gates,' i.e. in any part of the land." (Pulpit) No such provision is made for runaway Hebrew servants, about which see 15:12-18 and notes; compare 22:1-3.

#### (2) MORALITY, ILLEGITIMATE PRACTICES AND WAGES (23:17, 18)

There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel. 18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:17, 18

395. Is a sodomite the masculine form of a prostitute?  
396. There seems to be a strong emphasis upon sex in both the heathen nations and in the life of Israel. Why?

397. Was the practice of such persons so common that some of them claimed a place in the worship of Jehovah? Discuss.
398. It is a sad day when a dog can be used to exploit the erotic desires of man. Cf. 22:19; Lev. 18:23; 20:15, 16. Or is this the meaning of the text?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:17, 18

17 There shall be no cult prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a cult prostitute (a sodomite) of the sons of Israel.

18 You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the price of a dog [a sodomite] into the house of the Lord your God, in payment for a vow; for both of these—the gift and the giver—are an abomination to the Lord your God.

COMMENT 23:17, 18

PROSTITUTE . . . SODOMITE (v. 16)—These words represent the feminine and masculine of the same Hebrew root. The word is *Kedesbab* in the first instance, *Kabesh* in the second—a woman who devoted herself to immoral practices as a part of her heathen and idolatrous “worship,” and a man who did the same. The root *kedesh* literally signifies *sanctuary*, a reference to the idolatrous houses where these practices were carried on. These persons were “sanctified” or “set aside for an (un)holy purpose” by the religions in and around Canaan.

Of the female member of the class, the I.S.B.E. states, “She was a *kedeshbab*, one of a consecrated class, and as such was a concrete expression and agent of the most insidious and powerful influence and system menacing the purity and permanence of the religion of Jehovah. This system defied the reproductive organs and forces of nature and its devotees worshipped their idol symbols in grossly licentious rites and orgies. The temple prostitute was invested with sanctity as a member of the religious caste . . . The Canaanite sanctuaries were gigantic brothels, legalized under the sanctions of religion.”

The “wares” of these women, however, were not always sold in the sanctuaries. See Gen. 38:15-23, where Tamar poses as a “prostitute” (*kedeshbab*) as well as a “harlot” (*zanab*), a more general word (see below). Note Hosea 4:11-19, where both of these words again occur, aptly depicting both the *moral and spiritual* degredation of Israel.

The male prostitute (sodomite) was normally attached to one of these sanctuaries also, though, like his female counterpart, his practices were apparently not restricted to that area. (Gen. 19:5, etc.) Josiah had to break down their houses "that were in the house of Jehovah, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah" (II K. 23:7)—a passage which testifies of its great influence as a practice. In both ancient and modern societies, sodomites have frequently been transvestites—a fact to remember in the exhortation of 22:5. See also Lev. 18:22, 20:13.

HIRE OF A HARLOT (v. 18)—i.e. the wages or income she obtained by her practices. The Heb. word here rendered "harlot" (*Zanab*) is more general than "prostitute" (*kedeshab*) above, *including* her but also any others given over to illicit sexual relations (cf. its use in 22:21). This woman might not be "religious" even by heathen standards.

THE WAGES OF A DOG (v. 18)—i.e. the wages some owner of a dog might charge for his relations with an Israelite. See Ex. 22:19, Lev. 18:23, 20:15, 16. Others believe "dog" is here used figuratively as a derisive term for the sodomite.

In either case, illicitly and illegally gained money was not to be contributed to *Jehovah God*. Money so gained was shrouded with sin and impurity. Using it for the sanctuary of God would be tantamount to robbing a bank so the money could be contributed to the church building fund!

### (3) INTEREST ON LOANS (23:19, 20)

19 Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother; interest of money, interest of victuals, interest of any thing that is lent upon interest: 20 unto a foreigner thou mayest lend upon interest; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon interest, that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all that thou puttest thy hand unto, in the land whither thou goest in to possess it.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:19, 20

399. Why not lend with interest to our brother? Does this relate to our day? Discuss.
400. How shall we connect the blessing of the Lord with lending without interest?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:19, 20

19 You shall not lend on interest to your brother, interest on money, on victuals, on anything that is lent for interest.

20 You may lend on interest to a foreigner; but to your brother you shall not lend on interest, that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land to which you go to possess it.

## COMMENT 23:19, 20

The amount of interest which could be charged to foreigners is not stated, but no interest was to be charged a fellow-Israelite. See also Ex. 22:25-27, Lev. 25:35-37, Neh. 5:6-10, Ezek, 18:5-9. If they were obedient, they would indeed lend as a *nation*, ch. 28:12.

## (4) MAKING AND KEEPING VOWS (23:21-23)

21 When thou shalt vows a vow unto Jehovah thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it: for Jehovah thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. 22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. 23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and do; according as thou hast vowed unto Jehovah thy God, a freewill-offering, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:21-23

401. Jephthah was not the only man who "opened his mouth unto Jehovah" and could not go back. A promise to God is no light matter.
402. In what sense is a vow a "free-will offering"?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:21-23

21 When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not be slack in paying it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and slackness would be sin in you.

22 But if you refrain from vowing, it will not be sin in you.

23 The vow which has passed your lips you shall be watchful to perform, a voluntary offering which you have made to the Lord your God, which you have promised with your mouth.

## COMMENT 23:21-23

See also Num. 30:1, 2, Ecc. 5:4, 5. This passage apparently applies to those freewill offerings and vows an Israelite could make to God. An Israelite was to be a "man of his word"—what he *said* he was to *do!*

A terrible example of a man who rashly vowed is found in the case of Jephthah, Judges 11:29-30.

## (5) PARTAKING OF A NEIGHBOR'S CROP (23:24, 25)

24 When thou comest into thy neighbor's vineyard, then thou mayest eat of grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. 25 When thou comest into thy neighbor's standing grain, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing grain.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 23:24, 25

403. Why was this provision made? Consider two viewpoints.

404. Jesus' disciples made use of this law. Cf. Matt. 12:1ff.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 23:24, 25

24 When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes as many as you please; but you shall not put any in your vessel.

25 When you come into the standing grain of your neighbor, you may pluck the ears with your hand; but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain.

## COMMENT 23:24, 25

In both the vineyard and the grain-field, the rule is based on the principle of providing for the *immediate needs* of the individual who passed through the field. They were not allowed to lay up a reserve of either crop.

Jesus' disciples used this law to their advantage, Matt. 12:1 ff. The Pharisees' rebuke in that instance was doubtless based on such passages as Ex. 31:12-17, Num. 15:32-36. But they forgot at least two considerations: 1. Preservation of *human life* is a principle over-shadowing sabbath-keeping, 2. Christ himself is Lord and Master of the sabbath.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

*Neither eunuchs, bastards, Ammonites, nor Moabites, shall be incorporated with the genuine Israelites, 1-3. The reason why the Ammonites and Moabites were excluded, 4-6. Edomites and Egyptians to be respected, 7. Their descendants in the third generation may be incorporated with the Israelites, 8. Cautions against wickedness when they go forth against their enemies, 9. To keep the camp free from every defilement, and the reason why, 10-14. The slave who had taken refuge among them is not to be delivered up to his former master, 15, 16. There shall be no prostitutes nor sodomites in the land, 17. The hire of a prostitute or the price of a dog is not to be brought into the house of God, 18. The Israelites shall not lend on usury to each other, 19; but they may take usury from strangers, 20. Vows must be diligently paid, 21-23. In passing through a vineyard or field a man may eat of the grapes or corn, but must carry away none with him, 24, 25.*

## (6) DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE (24:1-4)

When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. 3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife; 4 her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before Jehovah: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:1-4

405. Since this text has been variously used and abused, it should merit our most careful reading and thought.
406. Read through the fourth verse for the complete thought. What is it?
407. In this passage, as in many others, certain wrong practices of the people are assumed. Moses (and God) deal with life "as is." What is assumed in this passage?

408. Read Matt. 19:3-9. Does our Lord approve of the prevalence and purposes for divorce as given in Deuteronomy? Cf. Matt. 5:31, 32.
409. How would the violations of the regulations specified here "cause the land to sin"? Cf. vs. 4.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:1-4

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house,

2 And when she departs out of his house, she goes and marries another man,

3 And if the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house; or if the last husband dies, who took her as his wife,

4 Then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she is defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord; and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.

### COMMENT 24:1-4

See also 22:13-21, 21:10-14, Matt. 5:31, 32, 19:3-9. The law of Jealousy (Num. ch. 5) should also be kept in mind.

A great deal of discussion she been occasioned by the phrase "some unseemly thing in her" (v. 1). Some critics insist that the phrase has a moral connotation: "Some indecency in her" (R.S.V., Amplified O.T., Smith.) ". . . he has found her immodest in some way" (Moffatt). But although the phrase is literally rendered "a thing or matter of nakedness," the reference is more general. "i.e. some shameful thing, something disgraceful" (Pulpit). Indeed, we have already seen that adultery was punishable by death under the Mosaic law (22:22, Lev. 20:10). The Pharisees substituted the phrase "for every cause" (Matt. 19:3) in their questioning of Jesus. And it does appear that this law, given by Moses because of the hardness of their hearts, enabled a man to divorce his wife on sometimes very flimsy grounds. But, as the Pulpit Commentary remarks, "This is not a law sanctioning or regulating divorce; that is simply assumed as what might occur and what is here regulated is the treatment by the first husband of a woman who has been divorced a second time."



Edwin C. Bissell, in *Bible-Work*, states, "This regulation is remarkable alike for its concessive and its restrictive character. It assumes the prevalence of divorce—a fact also recognized in a number of other laws of this and the Levitical code (Lev. 21:7 [13, 14] De. 22:19, 29). It assumes that it was carried on with some degree of formality. And such a custom, with the form it took of giving a 'bill of divorcement,' this law does not forbid; neither does it command it. Herein our Lord corrected the Pharisees' false quotation of the Pentateuch, chaging their 'Why did Moses command?' into 'Moses suffered.' In its restrictions, on the other hand, the law assumes the sacredness of the marital tie and provides against an obvious tendency to break and renew it at will. Its sole prohibition, however, is of the remarriage of divorced persons after a second marriage had been entered upon by the former wife."

Behrends continues in the same book, "The Mosaic legislation permitted a certain liberty of divorce; but our Lord only brought into clear relief, and made emphatic for all time, its determining ethical principle, when he declared that the Mosaic permission was an unwilling concession to the 'hardness' of the people's heart; that from the beginning' marriage was not so contemplated and constituted, that man may not 'put asunder what God hath joined together;' that divorce is permissible only 'for the cause of fornication;' that [permanent or prolonged] separation for any other cause is an incentive to adultery, and that whoever contracts marriage with the guilty party commits adultery."

#### (7) BRIDEGROOM EXEMPT FROM WARFARE (24:5)

5 When a man taketh a new wife, he shall not go out in the host, neither shall he be charged with any business: he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he hath taken.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:5

410. Was there any advantage for the government in the above regulation?  
 411. How shall we compare this rule with the provision for divorce?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:5

5 When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer his wife who he has taken.

## COMMENT 24:5

See also 20:7, notes. As Matthew Henry remarks, this law would promote *love* and tend to *establish the bond* between this couple, and stands somewhat in contrast to the former law allowing divorce. He was neither to go to war, or be charged with "business" (Heb. *dabar*), literally word, thing; here, business, affair, or restricting labor of any kind. All this enabled him to "cheer his wife"—"Enjoy the wife he has married," (Benton), "to give happiness to the woman he has married" (Torah). As we are repeatedly seeing in this book, the feminine half of the marriage had privileges and blessings which represent only a foretaste of what was to come under Christ.

## (8) MILLSTONES NOT TO BE TAKEN IN PLEDGE (24:6)

6 No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone to pledge; for he taketh *a man's* life to pledge.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:6

412. What would be a synonym for the word "pledge"?
413. Why would anyone be willing to give a millstone as a pledge? Approximate a circumstance (imaginary) where this would be true.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:6

6 No man shall take a mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for he would be taking a life in pledge.

## COMMENT 24:6

The A.V. has "the nether or the upper millstone". J.F.B. remarks, "The 'upper' stone being concave, covers the 'nether' like a lid; and it has a small aperture, through which the corn [grain] is poured, as well as a handle by which it is turned. The propriety of the law was founded on the custom of grinding corn [grain] every morning for daily consumption. If either of the stones, therefore, which composed the hand-mill was wanting, a person would be deprived of his necessary provision."

## (9) KIDNAPPING A FELLOW-ISRAELITE (24:7)

7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and he deal with him as a slave, or sell him; then that thief shall die: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:7

414. What is the "Lindberg law" on kidnapping? How does it relate here?
415. Cf. Exodus 21:16 and notice how all encompassing was this law.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:7

7 If a man be found kidnapping any of his brethren of the Israelites, and treats him as a slave or a servant, or sells him, then that thief shall die. So you shall put evil from among you.

## COMMENT 24:7

Compare Ex. 21:16 The thief was to die regardless as to what he had done with his "loot"—whether he had made him a slave, sold him, or whatever.

## (10) LAWS OF LEPROSY TO BE OBSERVED (24:8, 9)

8 Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. 9 Remember what Jehovah thy God did unto Miriam, by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:8, 9

416. Read Leviticus chapters 13 and 14 to understand what the priests and Levites would teach concerning leprosy.
417. What possible two-fold reason could there be in mentioning Miriam in these verses?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:8, 9

8 Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that you watch diligently, and do according to all that the Levitical priests shall teach you, As I commanded them, so you shall be watchful and do. [Lev. 13:14, 15.]

9 Remember [earnestly] what the Lord your God did to Miriam by the way, after you had come out of Egypt. [Num. 12:10.]

## COMMENT 24:8, 9

Laws concerning leprosy are found in Lev. 13 and 14. Note there that the priests are again and again involved in testing for leprosy and the cleansing process. Cf. Matt. 8:4. Moses *here* simply exhorts them to *heed* the priests instructions—instructions which *God* had given them.

The case of Miriam is probably cited not only because Miriam became leprous (Num. ch. 12), but because she became such as a result of her disobedience and disrespect for Moses' authority. As disobedience had *caused* her leprosy, disobedience could *prevent the healing* of leprosy. And as God, being merciful, healed Miriam, so could he heal them if they would "do according to all that the Levites shall teach you".

## (11) PLEDGE FOR A LOAN (24:10-13)

10 When thou dost lend thy neighbor any manner of loan, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. 11 Thou shalt stand without, and the man to whom thou does lend shall bring forth the pledge without unto thee. 12 And if he be a poor man, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge; 13 thou shalt surely restore to him the pledge when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his garment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before Jehovah thy God.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:10-13

418. Please read the following references for a complete understanding of this circumstance: 15:7-11; 23:19, 20; Ex. 22:25-27.  
 419. List the qualities of character necessary to fulfill this injunction; such as: (1) compassion, (2) patience, (3) kindness.  
 420. What type of "righteousness" is involved in vs. 13?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:10-13

10 When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge.

11 You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you.

12 And if the man is poor, you shall not keep his pledge over night.

13 You shall surely restore to him the pledge at sunset that he may sleep in his garment and bless you; and it shall be credited to you as righteousness (rightness and justice) before the Lord your God.

## COMMENT 24:10-13

See also 15:7-11, 23:19, 20, and especially Ex. 22:25-27. The creditor was to be considerate of the comfort and warmth of the borrower, and he was not to invade the personal property rights of this

poor man. It is proverbial that "The rich ruleth over the poor; And the borrower is servant to the lender" (Prov. 22:7) but such despotism was not to characterize Israelites' financial dealings with one another.

A poor man might only have one or two items of clothing—he very often slept in the same clothes he wore. The normal garments for the poor were "long, loose garments . . . still used among the Arabs, and called *bykes*, which is a kind of blanket, something resembling a highland plaid, in which they often carry their provision, wrap themselves by day and sleep at night." (Clarke, writing about 1830). Thus the holder of this pledge was to return it by nightfall.

#### (12) PAYING THE POOR HIRED SERVANT (24:14, 15)

14 Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy sojourners that are in thy land within thy gates: 15 in his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto Jehovah, and it be sin unto thee.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:14, 15

421. If Jehovah loved all His children with an equal love, why are some poor and others rich?
422. What is suggested in the word "oppress" as here used?
423. Nothing is said of the "pay scale." Why not? Are all servants to be paid every day? Discuss.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:14, 15

14 You shall not oppress or extort from a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is of your brethren, or of your strangers and sojourners who are in your land inside your towns.

15 You shall give him his hire on the day he earns it, before the sun goes down; for he is poor, and sets his heart upon it; lest he cry against you to the Lord, and it be sin to you.

#### COMMENT 24:14, 15

See also Lev. 19:13. As in the previous case the pledged garment was to be *returned* on the same day before the sun set, so here he was to be *paid* the same day and for the same reason—he *needed* it! And when a man is truly "down and out" he naturally "setteth his heart upon it".

In Jas. 5:1-6 the wicked and oppressive rich are described as holding back the needed wages of the poor. Their wages were "kept back by fraud" and therefore "crieth out" against the hoarding masters. Jesus taught "the laborer is worthy of his hire," Luke 10:7. See also Matt. 10:10, I Tim. 5:18.

"The righteous taketh knowledge of the cause of the poor" (Prov. 29:7a).

### (13) TRANSGRESSORS TO BEAR OWN GUILT (24:16)

16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:16

414. Is the case of Achan a violation of this law?
425. What about Korah and his company or the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanite tribes?
426. Read II Kings 14:1-6; Jer. 31:27-30 for a fulfillment of this law.
427. How does Deuteronomy 5:8-10 relate?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:16

16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; only for his own sin shall anyone be put to death.

### COMMENT 24:16

God's law laid the punishment of death only upon the person or persons who had committed crimes worthy of death. The fathers, judges, or congregation had no right to punish any member of the family but the guilty party.

The case of Achan and his family (see especially Josh. 7:20-25)\* is sometimes cited as a "violation" of this law by God himself—as is also the punishment of Korah, his company, and their families (Num. 16:31-35) and the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanite tribes (Deut. 7:1-5, 20:16).

\*But were the other members of his family accomplices in the crimes? His "loot" was hidden in the family tent—it was not concealed from the eyes of wife and children!

But our present passage is not primarily a law regulating the dealings of *God*. Further, the cases cited above do not deal with God's *final* or *eternal* judgment (as administered by the Son, Jn. 5:22). Here, we have the judgments *Israel* was to make as a congregation—particularly through the priests and judges (13:6-11, 17:2-7, etc.) God *did* sometimes punish groups with death, whether directly or through human instrumentality. His reasons (as in the case of the Canaanites, above) are discussed elsewhere in this volume.

When *Israel* was a happy, prosperous, and obedient nation, this law was observed. Note II K. 14:1-6, Jer. 31:27-30. Vv. 31-34 of Jer. 31 have *special* reference to the situation under the New Covenant of Christ, Heb. 8:6-13.

But the principle of the passage before us also shall characterize God's final dealings with man, and the dealings of the righteous with their fellow-man. Note Ezek. 18 carefully. As in Jer. 31:29, 30, the proverb then in vogue about children suffering because of the parent's sin *is not upheld by the prophet of God*. Rather, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," and the righteous "shall surely live . . . the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." A careful study of Ezek. 18 and Jer. 31 will cause one to see the present passage in a larger context.

*Israel* knew the justice of this verse. That is why, under the yoke of Babylonian captivity, the cry is heard.

"Our fathers sinned, and we are not;  
And we have borne their iniquities"

—Lam. 5:7

Note also Deut. 5:8-10. The children would suffer punishment as a result of their parent's sin. But their personal guilt and destination is reckoned only from their own lives.

In the final day of reckoning, we have been assured of impartial and individual judgment, Matt. 16:27, Rom. 15:10-12, II Cor. 5:10, Eph. 5:7, 8, Col. 3:22—4:1, I Pet. 1:17.

#### (14) JUSTICE TO THE INDIGENT (24:17, 18)

17 Thou shalt not wrest the justice *due* to the sojourner, *or* to the fatherless, nor take the widow's raiment to pledge; 18 but thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:17, 18

428. Who was to enforce these various laws? Cf. 1:16, 17; 16:18-20.  
 429. Who would be classified as a "sojourner"? What justice was due him?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:17, 18

17 You shall not pervert justice due to the stranger or the sojourner or the fatherless, or take a widow's garments in pledge;

18 But you shall [earnestly] remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this:

## COMMENT 24:17, 18

The principles were to be observed by all, and enforced by the judges (1:16, 17; 16:18-20). As we saw above (vv. 10-13) a poor person often had only one or two garments—and the same garment often served as a nightgown and blanket. Thus the widow's was not to be taken as a pledge.

On v. 18, see also 10:17-19, Lev. 19:33, 34.

## (15) NEEDY TO BE CONSIDERED AT HARVEST TIME (24:19-22)

19 When thou reapest thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands. 20 When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the sojourners, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 21 When thou gatherest *the grapes* of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it after thee: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 22 And thou shalt remember that thou was a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 24:19-22

430. Are some people "naturally" more generous than others? Is generosity a quality controlled by law?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 24:19-22

19 When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the



stranger and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

20 When you beat your olive tree, do not go over the boughs again; the leavings shall be for the stranger and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

22 You shall [earnestly] remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

### COMMENT 24:19-22

Compare 23:24-25, Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22. The poor and the sojourner were to be considered whether grain, olives, or grapes were being harvested. It is not difficult to see how the basic quality of *generosity* would be developed in the faithful Israelite who kept these laws.

### SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

*The case of a divorced wife, 1-4. No man shall be obliged to undertake any public service for the first year of his marriage, 5. The mill-stones shall not be taken as a pledge, 6. The man-stealer shall be put to death, 7. Concerning cases of leprosy, 8, 9. Of receiving pledges, and returning those of the poor before bed-time, 10-13. Of servants and their hire, 14, 15. Parents and children shall not be put to death for each other, 16. Of humanity to the stranger, fatherless, widow, and bondman, 17, 18. Gleanings of the harvest, &c., to be left for the poor, stranger, widow, fatherless, &c., 19-22.*

### QUESTIONS, LESSON EIGHTEEN (23:15—24:22)

#### CHAPTER 23

1. Note 23:15, 16. We have said this escaped slave was *not* an Israelite. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. It is a fact that prostitution and sodomy were frequently connected with heathen religious rites in ancient times. Do you know of modern examples of religion upholding or encouraging immoral practices?

## DEUTERONOMY

3. Why *not* bring the wages of a harlot into the house of God? Isn't money all the same? Do you think the church of the Lord should be supported by solicitations from non-Christians?
4. When loaning, whom could an Israelite charge interest? Whom could he not?
5. What was the rule concerning making and breaking vows?
6. If you ate grapes or plucked grain as you passed through your neighbor's field, what one cardinal rule was to be observed?

### CHAPTER 24

7. Upon what grounds could a man obtain a divorce under the Old Covenant?
8. Why did Jesus say this law was given?
9. Do you think it was practiced by Israelites before Deuteronomy was written?
10. What prohibition is laid down here for divorced persons?
11. How long was a newly married man exempt from military service? What reason is given for this?
12. How did the millstones involved in grinding grain represent "a man's life"?
13. What happened to an Israelite who kidnapped an Israelite?
14. Specifically, whose instructions were to be heeded by the leper?
15. Why should the leper remember Miriam?
16. How long could a creditor keep a poor man's pledged garment? Why?
17. When was a poor laborer to be paid? Why?
18. Note 24:16. This statement deals with Israel's judgment toward transgressors. How do you "reconcile" it with the judgment of *God* in 5:8-10?
19. Do you think 25:16 would aptly describe God's judgment in the final day? Scripture(s) please!
20. How would the poor be provided for as a generous Israelite harvested his crops?

## LESSON NINETEEN 25:1-16

### (16) JUDGING AND PUNISHING MEN IN CONTROVERSY (25:1-3)

If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, and *the judges* judge them: then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked; 2 and it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his wickedness, by number. 3 Forty stripes he may give him, he shall not exceed; lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:1-3

431. Was forty stripes given for every type of crime?
432. What was used for the administration of such punishment? Cf. Ex. 21:20.
433. By New Testament times the instrument for beating had changed. Cf. Matt. 10:17; 23:34.
434. In what sense was such punishment corrective?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:1-3

If there is a controversy between men, and they come into court, and the judges decide between them, justifying the innocent and condemning the guilty,

2 Then if the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with a certain number of stripes, according to his offense.

3 Forty stripes may be given him, but not more; lest, if he should be beaten with many stripes your brother should [be treated like a beast and] seem low and worthless to you.

### COMMENT 25:1-3

See also 17:8-13, notes, 19:15-21. We have discussed the necessity of fair judgment on the part of the judges several times: 1:16, 17; 16:18-20; Cf. 24:17, 18.

The emphatic way in which the law stated that only forty stripes were to be given the offender, give rise to the custom of giving thirty-nine. A miscount might otherwise cause the offender to deem his persecutor as "vile," (Heb. *Kalab*) "to be counted despicable," (Gesenius). Yet by New Testament times the counting process had usually a simpler solution—less actual strokes by the one giving the lashes. See II Cor.

11:24, \*where Macknight remarks, "By the law, Deut. xxv. 3, punishment with stripes was restricted to forty at one beating. The whip with which these stripes were given [in Paul's day] consisting of three separate cords, and each stroke being counted as three stripes, beyond which they never went. Hence the expression, 'forty stripes save one.'" One more last would have meant forty-two stripes.

But the original law apparently referred to beating by a rod (Ex. 21:20). Scourging replaced it in later Jewish history (Matt. 10:17, 23:34) but the number of stripes was retained.

#### (17) OX TO WORK UNMUZZLED (25:4)

4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out *the grain*.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:4

435. Read I Cor. 9:9, 10 and I Tim. 5:17, 18 for a N. T. application of this principle. To whom does it refer in these two passages?  
 436. Why not muzzle the ox and feed him later?  
 437. How should we react to a comparison with an ox?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATIONS 25:4

4 You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the grain. [I Cor. 9:9, 10; I Tim. 5:17, 18.]

#### COMMENT 25:4

Paul uses the principle involved in this verse as applying to those who devote their lives to laboring in the work of Christ—I Cor. 9:9, 10! I Tim. 5:17, 18. If he is concerned about a brute beast enough to provide for his sustenance, is he not also desirous that those men who have devoted their lives to His "harvest" (i.e. his *service*) also be sustained? And as the oxen partook of the very grain in which he worked, so it is right that God's laborers be sustained by the very persons with whom they work. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast" (Prov. 12:10)—How much *more* should he regard the life of his fellow-man, made in the image of God, and devoted wholly to his service.\*

\*If I may be allowed to draw out this parallel a bit, it is well to note that no "eating privileges" are mentioned here for lazy or non-working oxen! "The laborer is worthy of his hire" and "If any will not work, neither let him eat" (II Thes. 3:10). It is right and proper that *working* elders, ministers, or others set aside for the service of Christ be supported; it is also right and proper that they give themselves fully to their tasks (I Tim. 4:15, 16). The Church of our Lord has no room for mercenaries, hirelings or leeches!

## (18) THE FAMILY NAME: LEVIRATE MARRIAGE (25:5-10)

5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her. 6 And it shall be, that the first-born that she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother that is dead, that his name not be blotted out of Israel. 7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother unto me. 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand, and say, I like not to take her; 9 then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face; and she shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto the man that doth not build up his brother's house. 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:5-10

438. What of the preferences of the husband's wife? Is she not to be considered at all in the second marriage? Discuss.
439. Why would the brother of the deceased refuse to marry his brother's widow? Give two or three possible reasons.
440. What possible symbolic relation does the loosing of the shoe have with this transaction?
441. Why spit in the face?
442. Read Gen. 38:6-11 for the practice of this custom long before it was recorded as law.
443. Read also Ruth 4:7-13 and Matt. 22:23-33 for further examples.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:5-10

5 If brothers live together, and one of them dies and has no son, his wife shall not marry outside the family to a stranger [an excluded man]; her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

6 And the first-born son shall succeed to the name of the dead brother, that his name be not blotted out of Israel.

7 And if the man does not want to take his brothers' wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, My

husband's brother refuses to continue his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.

8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak to him; and if he stands firm and says, I do not want to take her.

9 Then shall his brother's wife come to him in the presence of the elders, and pull his shoe off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer, So shall it be done to that man who does not build up his brother's house.

10 And his family shall be called in Israel, The house of him whose shoe was loosed.

### COMMENT 25:5-10

Here we have the first time this instruction is *recorded as a law* in Israel. But it apparently had been a command of God for several centuries: Gen. 38:6-11. And it was still being practiced during Christ's ministry Matt. 22:23-33.

The law accords with the strong family ties in the Jewish economy, and the great reproach felt by them if no children were born to the marriage. As is so vividly described in the book of Ruth, the later custom in Israel was for another kinsman to assume this responsibility if it was refused by the brother or "near kinsman." Thus Boaz purchased (redeemed) this marriage right from Ruth's near kinsman (Ruth 4:7-13).

**LOOSE HIS SHOE** (v. 9)—Possibly symbolizing a releasing of his authority or rights over his brother's wife.

**SPIT IN HIS FACE** (v. 9)—An expression of utmost contempt, Num. 12:14, Job 17:6, 30:10. Insult is added to injury by the title with which he would be known (v. 10). By both means he would be publicly disgraced.

The design of this institution was obviously to preserve a family from becoming extinct and to secure the property of the family from passing on to a stranger.

#### (19). PROTECTION FROM ANOTHER'S WIFE (25:11, 12)

11 When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets; 12 then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall have no pity.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:11, 12

444. How prudish to fail to translate a plain word meaning testicales! Why do this? What is wrong with facts?  
 445. Why such a stringent measure in this action?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:11, 12

11 When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draws near to rescue her husband out of the hand of him who is beating him, and puts out her hand, and seizes the other man by the private parts;

12 Then you shall cut off her hand; your eye shall not pity her.

COMMENT 25:11, 12

It was undoubtedly wrong for two Israelites to engage in fisticuffs as a means of settling a matter, but this did not justify either man's wife (apparently the one losing the fight) to use such a method of breaking it up. The man's very life and reproductive abilities were at stake.

(20) JUST WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (25:13-16)

13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great and a small. 14 Thou shalt not have in thy house diverse measures, a great and a small. 15 A perfect and just weight shalt thou have; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 16 For all that do such things, *even* all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:13-16

446. There seems to have been a bureau of weights and measures long ago. How was it determined if a weight was too great or small?  
 447. Proverbs has much to say about this. Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:10; 23.  
 448. How does the length of Israel's stay in the land relate to honest business transactions?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:13-16

13 You shall not have in your bag true and false weights, a large and a small.

14 You shall not have in your house true and false measures, a large and a small.

15 But you shall have a perfect and just weight, and a perfect and just measure; that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

16 For all who do such things, and all who do unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord your God.

### COMMENT 25:13-16

See also Lev. 19:35-37, Micah 6:11. A number of Proverbs (11:1, 16:10, 20:10, 23) refer to the justice of this law—and the wickedness of being deceptive or deceitful in this all-important matter in the business world.

"They must not only not use them [diverse weights], but they must not have them; not have them in the bag, not have them in the house; for if they had them they would be strongly tempted to use them. They must not have a great weight and measure to buy by and a small one to sell by, for that was to cheat both ways, when either was bad enough; as we read of those that made the *ephah* small, in which they measured the corn [grain] they sold, and the *shekel* great, by which they weighed the money they received for it (Amos 8:5)." (Butler's *Bible Work*).

### QUESTIONS, LESSON NINETEEN (25:1-16)

1. What was the two-fold job of the judges?
2. If one deserved a beating, how many stripes?
3. Paul said he received *thirty-nine* stripes three times. Explain.
4. Give the two instances in which Paul uses v. 4. What was he trying to show in both cases?
5. Explain how the Levirate Law worked.
6. What "ritual" was to be performed if the husband's brother did not assume his responsibility in carrying it out?
7. What *purpose* did this law serve?
8. Diverse \_\_\_\_\_ were not to be in their bag; diverse \_\_\_\_\_ were not to be in their house.



## LESSON TWENTY 25:17—26:19

### n. LAWS OF NATIONAL IMPORT (25:17—26:19)

#### (1) THE PUNISHMENT OF AMALEK (25:17-19)

17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way as ye came forth out of Egypt; 18 how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. 19 Therefore it shall be, when Jehovah thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 25:17-19

449. Read Exodus 17:8-16 and Numbers 14:42-45 for further information on the treatment of Amalek.
450. When was the sentence of Amalek executed?
451. How sad to consider what could have been. What was the one most minus quality in Israel's character?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 25:17-19

17 Remember what Amalek did to you on the way, when you had come forth from Egypt;

18 How he did not fear God, but when you were faint and weary he attacked you along the way and cut off all the stragglers in your rear. [Exod. 17:14.]

19 Therefore when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies round about, in the land which the Lord your God gives you to possess for an inheritance, you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens; you must not forget it.

### COMMENT 25:17-19

REMEMBER WHAT AMALEK DID (v. 17)—See Ex. 17:8-16. Without any provocation whatever, they attacked Israel's rear as they were journeying through the wilderness, but were defeated by Joshua at Rephidim. They seemed to have attacked merely through hopes of plunder. Note also the encounter at Hormah (Num. 14:42-45) which ended in Israel's defeat.

Their manner of attack as described here, not only qualified them for immediate defeat; they must be *exterminated* as a tribe. And the prophecy of Balaam was,

"Amalek was the first of the nations;  
But his latter end shall come to destruction"  
(Num. 24:20).

His end, however, was not soon coming. The Amalekites were again and again thorns in Israel's flesh. Saul smote many of them (I Sam. 14:48, 15:7) as did David (I Sam. 27:8, II Sam. 8:11, 12). Finally, after the time of Hezekiah (I Chron. 4:43) they are not a tribe of consequence.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

*Punishment by whipping not to exceed forty stripes, 1-3. The ox that treads out the corn is not to be muzzled, 4. The ordinance concerning marrying the wife of the brother who has died childless, 5-10. Of the woman who acts indecently in succouring her husband, 11, 12. Of false weights and measures, 13-16. Amalek is to be destroyed, 17-19.*

### (2) OFFERING THE FIRST-FRUITS (26:1-11)

And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein, 2 that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which thou shalt bring in from thy land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee; and thou shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there. 3 And thou shalt come unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come unto the land which Jehovah sware unto our fathers to give us. 4 And the priest shall take the basket out of thy hand, and set it down before the altar of Jehovah thy God. 5 And thou shalt answer and say before Jehovah thy God, a Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, we in number; and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. 6 And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: 7 and we cried unto Jehovah, the God of our fathers, and Jehovah heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression; 8 and Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and

with signs, and with wonders; 9 and he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10 And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground, which thou, O Jehovah, hast given me. And thou shalt set it down before Jehovah thy God, and worship before Jehovah thy God: 11 and thou shalt rejoice in all the good which Jehovah thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thy house, thou, and the Levite, and the sojourner that is in the midst of thee.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 26:1-11

452. For what purpose was the offering made?
453. Where and before whom was this offering made?
454. Is the offering here the same as what we also know as Pentecost? Cf. 16:9-12.
455. There appears to be an exchange between the priest and the worshipper. Approximate the part of each. This is a very impressive ceremony.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 26:1-11

When you have come into the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, and possess it, and live in it,

2 You shall take some of all the produce of the soil which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God gives you, and put it in a basket, and go to the place [the sanctuary] which the Lord your God has chosen as the abiding place of His name [and His presence].

3 And you shall go to the priest who is in office in those days, and say to him, I give thanks this day that I have come to the land which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us;

4 And the priest shall take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God.

5 And you shall say before the Lord your God, A wandering and lost Aramean ready to perish was my father [Jacob], and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number, and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and numerous.

6 And the Egyptians treated us very badly, and afflicted us, and laid on us hard bondage.

7 And when we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our (cruel) oppression;

8 And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great (awesome) power, and with signs, and with wonders;

9 And He brought us into this place, and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 And now, behold, I bring the first fruits of the ground, which You, O Lord, have given me. And you shall set it down before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God;

11 And you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given you and your household, you and the Levite, and the stranger and the sojourner among you.

### COMMENT 26:1-11

See also 16:9-12 and notes. We have connected this ceremony to the *feast* of the first-fruits (Pentecost) as the two events must have come at approximately the same time.

The Israelite was to take a portion of these first fruits, and placing it in a basket, take it to the sanctuary, where it was to be received by "the priest that shall be in those days" (Probably not the high priest, but a priest whose function it was to officiate on such occasions, see 17:12). There, in a formal way, he was to say words to the effect "I profess this day unto Jehovah thy God, that I am come (etc.);" The priest now setting the basket down before the altar, the offerer responds, "A Syrian ready to perish, etc." (vv. 5-9); concluding with the recognition and grateful acknowledgement that all the blessings he now enjoyed (after so humble an origin) were the result of God's mercy and goodness, (vv. 10, 11). Thus he was both rejoicing and giving thanks. The ceremony, when carried out as directed, must have been an impressive one.

A SYRIAN READY TO PERISH WAS MY FATHER (v. 5)—Jacob, their father, was in fact a Syrian—"a wandering Aramean" (Berkely)—for twenty years (Gen. 31:38, 41). "A wandering *and* lost Aramean ready to perish was my father Jacob" (Amplified O.T.). This was, specifically, the land of Paddan-aram or Mesopotamia. Thus, Laban, Jacob's father-in-law, was referred to as the "son of Bethuel the Syrian" (Aramean). And if these were humble origins for what was to become the great tribe of Israel, their sojourn into Egypt (vv. 5-8), while "few in number" (see Gen. 46:27) further demonstrated their lowly beginning.

## (3) TITHES OF THE THIRD YEAR (26:12-15)

12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithe of thine increase in the third year, which is the year of tithing, then thou shalt give it unto the Levite, to the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled. 13 And thou shalt say before Jehovah thy God, I have put away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: 14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I put away thereof, being unclean, nor given thereof for the dead: I have hearkened to the voice of Jehovah my God; I have done according to all that thou has commanded me. 15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the ground which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 26:12-15

456. Why call the third year "the year of tithing"?
457. Please notice those who were to benefit by the tithe. Who fits these categories now?
458. What is meant by the expression, "I have put away the hallowed things out of my house"?
459. Why would anyone be tempted to eat of the Lord's tithe during the time of mourning?
460. Explain: "given thereof for the dead."
461. God's blessing and approval is here directly related to the proper use of money. Is it yet true?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 15:12-15

12 When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce the third year, which is the year of tithing, and have given it to the Levite, the stranger and the sojourner, the fatherless, and to the widow, that they may eat within your towns and be filled,

13 Then you shall say before the Lord your God, I have brought the hallowed things [the tithe] out of my house, and moreover have given them to the Levite, to the stranger and the sojourner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all your commandments which you have commanded me; I have not transgressed any of your commandments, neither have I forgotten them.

14 I have not eaten of the tithe in my mourning [making the tithe unclean], nor have I handled any of it when I was unclean, or given any of it to the dead; I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me.

15 Look down from Your holy habitation, from Heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the land which You have given us, as You swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

### COMMENT 26:12-15

This passage is an expansion of the one formerly given in 14:28, 29. See notes there, and also on 14:22-27, all in lesson 12.

AND THOU SHALT SAY BEFORE JEHOVAH THY GOD (v. 13)—The head of the household makes a solemn declaration that he has discharged his tithing responsibilities faithfully and conscientiously. It may also have been made at the sanctuary before the priest (cf. v. 3, 5), though "before Jehovah" (v. 13) *may* also refer to what one does in his own house (Gen. 27:7).

I HAVE PUT AWAY THE HALLOWED THINGS OUT OF MY HOUSE (v. 13)—That is, the things which had been designated for God in the tithe had not been kept in his house. Jesus said "Rended . . . unto God the things that are God's"—a concept of both testaments.

Dr. Thomson\* gives us a helpful statement here. Remarking on v. 14 he says, ". . . this passage is made sufficiently plain by an acquaintance with modern [he wrote in the mid-nineteenth century] funeral customs. What you have just read is part of that protestation which the devout Jew was required to make at the close of the third year, 'which is the year of tithing.' He was to come before the Lord and say 'I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite and unto the stranger, to the fatherless and to the widow, according to all thy commandments. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead.' This was the strongest possible protestation that he had dealt faithfully in the matter of tithing and consecrated things, and in charities to the poor. He had not allowed himself to divert anything to other uses, not even by the most pressing and unforeseen emergencies. It is here assumed, or rather implied, that times of mourning 'for the dead' were expensive, and also that the stern law of custom obliged the bereaved

\**The Land and the Book*, pp. 104, 105.

to defray those expenses, however onerous. The same thing lies at the basis of that excuse for not following our Saviour—'Suffer me first to go and bury my father;' a duty which must take precedence of all others. Such it was among most ancient nations, and such is the public sentiment at this day. Moreover, funerals are now ruinously expensive. Crowds of relatives, friends, and acquaintances assemble on these occasions. The largest gatherings ever seen in Lebanon are on these occasions. For all these guests refreshments must be provided, and not a few from a distance tarry all night, and must be entertained . . . In short, many families are reduced to poverty by funerals; and it must have been substantially so in remote ages, for the customs were similar. The temptation, therefore, to devote a part of the tithes, hallowed things, and charities, to defray these enormous, unforeseen, providential expenses, would be very urgent; and he who stood faithful at such times might be safely trusted on all other occasions . . . The words 'nor given ought thereof for the dead,' are explained by a curious custom still observed with great care. On certain days after the funeral, large quantities of corn [grain] and other food are cooked in a particular manner, and sent to all the friends, however numerous, in the name of the dead."

(4) CONCLUDING EXHORTATION TO CARRY OUT COMMITMENTS  
TO GOD AND HIS LAW (26:16-19)

16 This day Jehovah thy God commandeth thee to do these statutes and ordinances; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. 17 Thou hast avouched Jehovah this day to be thy God, and that thou wouldest walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his ordinances, and hearken unto his voice: 18 and Jehovah hath avouched thee this day to be a people for his own possession, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments; 19 and to make thee high above all nations that he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto Jehovah thy God, as he hath spoken.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 26:16-19

462. What distinction (if any) is there between "heart" and "soul" as here used?
463. What is the meaning of the term "avouched"?
464. When we keep our promises Jehovah is ready to keep His promises. What are they?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 26:16-19

16 This day the Lord your God has commanded you to do these statutes and ordinances; therefore you shall keep and do them with all your [mind and] heart and with all your being.

17 You have (openly) declared the Lord this day to be your God, [pledging] to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His precepts, and to hearken to His voice.

18 And the Lord has declared this day that you are His peculiar people, as He promised you, and you are to keep His commandments;

19 And He will make you have above all nations which He has made, in praise and in fame and in honor, and that you shall be a holy people to the Lord your God, as He has spoken.

## COMMENT 26:16-19

In v. 17 we have what *Israel* avouched (Heb. *amar*, Literally, be bright, make visible or known; hence to *declare*, as when a covenant is being made), and in vv. 18, 19, what *God* avouched. In *these* verses, the Israelite does not enumerate, one by one, the laws he will keep—he simply affirms openly that whatever God's will is concerning the matters mentioned, he will keep them.

AND TO MAKE THEE HIGH ABOVE ALL NATIONS etc. (note v. 19a), which the Torah renders "and that He will set you, in fame and renown and glory, high above all the nations that He had made . . ." while the margin of the A.S.V. reads, "for a praise, and for a name, and for an honor . . ."

However read, the meaning is apparent—obedient Israel would be greatly blessed.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

*First-fruits must be offered to God, 1, 2. The form of confession to be used on the occasion, 3-11. The third year's tithe to be given to the Levites and the poor, 12, and the form of confession to be used on this occasion, 13-15. The Israelites are to take Jehovah for their God, and to keep his testimonies, 16, 17. And Jehovah is to take them for his people, and make them high above all the nations of the earth, 18, 19.*



## QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY (25:17—26:19)

1. What had the Amelekites done to deserve extermination?
2. At what *two* places had they attacked Israel? What was the outcome in the first? Second?
3. Was the commandment to "blot out their remembrance" carried out?
4. Give the gist of the declaration to be made at the presentation of the first-fruits.
5. How could an *Israelite* say, "A Syrian ready to perish," or "a wandering Aramean" was my father?
6. For whom were the tithes of the third year intended?
7. Note v. 14 and comment on the declaration this tither made. What does he mean by these statements?
8. Basically, what did God "avouch" in the last part of this lesson?

## LESSON TWENTY-ONE 27:1—28:68

### III. THE THIRD DISCOURSE

Future of Israel Foretold (27:1—30:20)

#### A. ALTAR TO BE BUILT UPON MOUNT EBAL FOR THE RECORDING OF GOD'S LAW

(27:1-8)

And Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandment which I command you this day. 2 And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over the Jordan unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: 3 and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over; that thou mayest go in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised thee. 4 And it shall be, when ye are passed over the Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. 5 And there shalt thou build an altar unto Jehovah thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt lift up no iron *tool* upon them. 6 Thou shalt build the altar of Jehovah thy God of unhewn stones; and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto Jehovah thy God: 7 and thou shalt sacrifice peace-offerings, and shalt eat there; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God. 8 And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:1-8

465. Read Joshua 8:30-35 for fulfillment of the promises made here.
466. What was to be written upon the stones? How much of the law? How large were the stones?
467. Was the altar the same as the stones upon which was written the laws of Jehovah? Cf. Joshua 8:31, 32.
468. What specific purpose or purposes were served in fulfilling these instructions?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:1-8

And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, Keep all the commandments with which I charge you today.

2 And on the day when you pass over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall set you up great stones, and cover them with plaster.

3 And you shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have passed over, that you may go into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you.

4 And when you have gone over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, on Mount Ebal, and coat them with plaster.

5 And there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not lift up any iron tool upon them.

6 You shall build the altar of the Lord your God of whole stones, and offer burnt offerings on it to Him;

7 And you shall offer peace offerings, and eat there, and rejoice before the Lord your God.

8 And you shall write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

### COMMENT 27:1-8

See also Josh. 8:30-35 where we have these instructions carried out.

SET THEM UP GREAT STONES (v. 2)—These were to be unhewn stones, v. 5, Ex. 20:25. Hewn and engraved stones were associated with idolatry. Thus graven images were forbidden, v. 15, 4:16ff. Recall Aaron in making the golden calf "fashioned it with a graving tool" (Ex. 32:4). The whole stones would contrast to the idolator's hewn and graven ones. Compare memorials set up in the Jordan (Josh. 4:8, 9), and Gilgal (Josh. 4:20). Perhaps for this (as well as other reasons), no iron tool was used on the temple premises (I K. 6:7).

PLASTER THEM WITH PLASTER (v. 2)—Some believe the Hebrew is better read, *cement them with cement*. Smith has "white washing them with lime". But regardless of the mixture used, its purpose is apparent: to serve as a binder and provide a relatively smooth surface for writing (we suppose before it hardened).

WRITE UPON THEM ALL THE WORDS OF THE LAW (v. 3)—Are *all the words of Moses* meant? The laws of the book meant? The laws of the book of Deuteronomy just given? Surely not the entire Penta-

teuch! Nor is there any valid reason for supposing only the decalogue to be meant. Clarke suggests that "the (. . . *Torah*) law or ordinance in question simply means the *blessings* and *curses* mentioned in this and the following chapter; and indeed these contained a very good epitome of the whole law in all its promises and threatenings, in reference to the whole of its grand moral design."

But it seems difficult to understand "all the words of this law" (v. 3, 8) as not referring to a legal code. And in view of the ability of the Hebrew language to say much in a few words, we would tend to believe that at least the *legislative* portion of Deuteronomy—"this law" is meant. It may have been condensed or abbreviated. Note especially Josh. 8:32, where it is called "a copy of the law of Moses," which is distinguished from "the book of the law of Moses," (v. 31). As we are not told the size of the monument, no problem exists concerning making it *large* enough for a lengthy inscription.

IN MOUNT EBAL (v. 4)—On the side of this mount the stones were to be set up. It was the mountain of curses, 3,075 feet, and stood to the north and directly opposite mount Gerizim, the mountain of blessings, 2,850 feet. Between them lay a vale, and the town of Shechem—a city of ancient origin (Gen. 12:6, 33:18), before which lay a relatively wide plain.

AND THERE SHALT THOU BUILD AN ALTAR (v. 5)—Not a different structure from the memorial, but the same one, Josh. 8:31, 32.

## B. CURSES TO BE REPEATED FROM MT. EBAL (27:9-26)

9 And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Keep silence, and hearken, O Israel: This day thou art become the people of Jehovah thy God. 10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of Jehovah thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:9, 10

469. In what sense was Israel becoming a people of Jehovah? Why were they not before this time?
470. Is there some distinction between commandments and statutes?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:9, 10

9 And Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, Keep silence, and hear, O Israel; this day you have become the people of the Lord your God.

10 So you shall obey the voice of the Lord your God, and do His commandments and statutes, which I command you today.

## COMMENT 27:9, 10

THIS DAY THOU ART BECOME THE PEOPLE OF JEHOVAH (v. 9)—The normal sense of "this day" in Deuteronomy is "at this time" (26:16-18). But in a very wondrous and real way, the *could* then say they were "the people of God"—a *nation*, a country, and they had finally arrived at their home! The impressive ceremony of Josh. 8:30-35 must certainly also have been a very emotion-filled one, as Israel officially "claimed" the land.

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, 12 These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are passed over the Jordan: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. 13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 14 And the Levites shall answer, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice,

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:11-14

471. Why the choice of the tribes to bless?

472. What impression was this whole ceremony to make upon Israel?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:11-14

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying,

12 These [tribes] shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have passed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph's [sons], and Benjamin.

13 And these [tribes] shall stand upon Mount Ebal to pronounce the curse [for disobedience]: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

14 And the Levites shall declare with a loud voice to all the men of Israel:

## COMMENT 27:11-14

On the sides of these two mountains the people were to be placed, half on one and half on the other, while in the vale between (with Shechem to one side) stood the ark, with the Levites. Those who stood on Gerizim responded to the blessings, those on Ebal to the cursings, as these were spoken "with a loud voice" by the Levites. (Apparently the acoustics were good—Jotham later spoke to all Shechem by standing "on the top of mount Gerizim," Jud. 9:7.\* See also 11:26-32.

Adam Clarke, following Dr. Parry, positions the tribes of Israel as follows:

NORTH EBAL	<i>Strangers</i> Naphthali Dan Zebulun Asher Gad Reuben <i>Levites</i> PRIESTS	EAST	<i>Strangers</i> Benjamin Joseph Issachar Judah Levi Simeon <i>Levites</i> PRIESTS	SOUTH GERIZIM
		<i>Blessings</i>	<i>Curses</i>	
		ALTAR		
		ARK		
		WEST		

According to the Talmud, six tribes went up towards the top of Gerizim and six towards the top of Ebal. The priests and Levites stood beneath the two with the ark. They then turned their faces towards Mount Gerizim and pronounced the blessings (see ch. 28). To this

\*"In consequence of the dispute which arose over the marriage of Manasseh, who belonged to the high-priestly family, with a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. 13:28), a temple was built on Gerizim as a rival to that in Jerusalem (c 432 B.C.)," (I.S.B.E.). This was the beginning of the schism between Jew and Samaritan which lasts to the present day. According to Josephus, however, Sanballat, with the sanction of Alexander the Great, built a temple for the Samaritans on Mt. Gerizim, of which Manasseh became high priest. At any rate, by the time of Jesus the Samaritan woman could very truthfully say, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain" (Jn. 4:20). Jacob, a common ancestor of both nations (Jn. 4:12), worshipped either on or near it, Gen. 33:20.

both sides responded with "Amen!" As the scripture reads, however, the "Amen" was to come after each curse.

15 Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, an abomination unto Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and setteth it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.

19 Cursed be he that wresteth the justice *due* to the sojourner, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife, because he hath uncovered his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen.

22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law. And all the people shall say, Amen.

24 Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbor in secret. And all the people shall say, Amen.

25 Cursed be he that taketh a bribe to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.

26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:15-26

473. Try to imagine the great attraction of idolatry. There must have been some rationalization, attempt to express it.
474. What is meant by the use of the word "light" as used in vs. 16?
475. Are we to believe a man could be put to death for changing a property line?
476. Why would anyone be so cruel as to mislead a blind man?
477. Kindness and generosity was a very prominent part of Israel's morality. Why?

478. Why mention "his father's skirt" in the case of adultery with the wife of the father?
479. Was morality so lax in Israel, or was there some other reason for these regulations?
480. What is involved in the word "confirmeth" in vs. 26?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:15-26

15 Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret. All the people shall answer, Amen.

16 Cursed be he who dishonors his father or his mother. All the people shall say, Amen.

17 Cursed be he who moves (back) his neighbor's landmark. All the people shall say, Amen.

18 Cursed be he who misleads a blind man from his way. All the people shall say, Amen.

19 Cursed be he who perverts the justice due to the sojourner or the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. All the people shall say, Amen.

20 Cursed be he who lies with his father's wife, because he uncovers what belongs to his father. All the people shall say, Amen.

21 Cursed be he who lies with any beast. All the people shall say, Amen.

22 Cursed be he who lies with his half-sister, whether his father's or his mother's daughter. All the people shall say, Amen.

23 Cursed be he who lies with his mother-in-law. All the people shall say, Amen.

24 Cursed be he who slays his neighbor secretly. All the people shall say, Amen.

25 Cursed be he who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person. All the people shall say, Amen.

26 Cursed be he who does not support and give assent to the words of this law to do them [as the rule of his life]. All the people shall say, Amen.

### COMMENT 27:15-26

It is quickly seen that most of these curses have been discussed in previous chapters.

GRAVEN OR MOLTEN IMAGE (v. 15)—See 4:15-19, notes, 5:8-10.



AND SETTETH IT UP IN SECRET (v. 15)—Lest his fellow-Israelite or leaders discover his sin. (Like Rachel, who hid the teraphim under the camel's saddle without even her *husband's* knowledge, Gen. 31:32-35). But "the eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). He "seeth under the whole heaven" (Job 28:24). Cf. II Chron. 16:9, Prov. 5:21.

HE THAT SETTETH LIGHT BY HIS FATHER OR HIS MOTHER (v. 16)—"he who is making light of his father and his mother" (Young's Literal); "he who dishonors his father or his mother" (R.S.V.); "he who insults his father or mother" (Torah). "Setteth light by" is a rendering of the Heb. verb *Kalab*, which Baumgartner's Lexicon defines as "treat with contempt." See Lev. 20:9, Ezek. 22:7, and our previous discussion under Deut. 21:18-21.

HE THAT REMOVETH HIS NEIGHBOR'S LANDMARK (v. 17)—See 19:14, notes.

THAT MAKETH THE BLIND TO WANDER (v. 18)—See also Lev. 19:14. It is difficult to conceive of one so inhumane as to mistreat or deceive the blind, but in our own generation we have witnessed such in the sadistic and cruel treatment of elderly men and women who are robbed, abused or beaten on the streets.

JUSTICE DUE THE SOJOURNER, FATHERLESS, AND WIDOW (v. 19)—Cf. 1:16-18, 10:17, 18; 16:19, 24:17, 18, notes: Ex. 22:21-24.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS FATHER'S WIFE (v. 20)—See 22:30, notes.

HE THAT LIETH WITH ANY MANNER OF BEAST (v. 21)—See 23:18, notes. Cf. Ex. 22:19, Lev. 18:23, 20:15.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS SISTER (v. 22)—This curse applies to half sisters as well as full sisters. See Lev. 18:6-18, esp. v. 9. Also Lev. 20:17.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW (v. 23)—See also Lev. 20:14. A careful reading of Leviticus, chapters 18 and 20, will show how God abhorred *any* kind of incest, adultery, or fornication, under the Mosaic code. And surely this fact is clear from the many condemnations of these sins we have found in *this* book.

HE THAT SMITETH HIS NEIGHBOR IN SECRET (v. 24)—See 4:41-43 and especially 19:1-13, notes. The reference *here* is obviously to premeditated murder.

HE THAT TAKETH A BRIBE TO SLAY AN INNOCENT PERSON (v. 25)—Compare 10:17-19, 16:18-20; 25:1; Ex. 23:1-3, 6-8.

CURSED BE HE THAT CONFIRMETH NOT THE WORDS OF THIS LAW TO DO THEM (v. 26)—Compare 26:16-19. Again and again the necessity of *doing* the words of the law is emphasized. This was a prerequisite of God's fullest blessing. But this very truth pointed up the need of a Redeemer. The fact that *no* one (save the Lord Jesus) kept the law completely and perfectly, meant that the law itself served as their condemning agent. Thus Paul affirms, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us . . ." See Gal. 3:9-14.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

*Moses commands the people to write the law upon stones, when they shall come to the promised land, 1-3. And to set up these stones on Mount Ebal, 4; and to build an altar of unbewn stones, and to offer on it burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, 5-7. The words to be written plainly, and the people to be exhorted to obedience, 8-10. The six tribes which should stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, 11, 12. Those who are to stand upon Mount Ebal to curse the transgressors, 13. The different transgressors against whom the curses are to be denounced, 14-26.*

### C. BLESSINGS TO BE REPEATED FROM MOUNT GERIZIM (28:1-14)

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth: 2 and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy beasts, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 5 Blessed shall be thy

basket and thy kneading-trough, 6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

7 Jehovah will cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee: they shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. 8 Jehovah will command the blessings upon thee in thy barns, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto; and he will bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 9 Jehovah will establish thee for a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee; if thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, and walk in his ways. 10 And all the peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of thee. 11 And Jehovah will make thee plenteous for good, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 12 Jehovah will open unto thee his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. 13 And Jehovah will make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if thou shalt hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*, 14 and shalt not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:1-14

481. What specifically is promised in the expression: "Set thee on high above all the nations of the earth"? "On high" in what respect?
482. What is a synonym for the word "Blessed"? As used in vs. 3, 4, 5.
483. What would cause the enemies of Israel to flee before them? The fierceness of Israel's appearance? The military ability of Israel or what?
484. Itemize the relationships of Jehovah to Israel if they were obedient.
485. List the specific promises, material and Spiritual, promised by God to Israel.
486. God assumes faith and demands what?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:1-14

If you will listen diligently to the voice of the Lord your God, being watchful to do all His commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth,

2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you heed the voice of the Lord your God.

3 Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field.

4 Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock.

5 Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading trough.

6 Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

7 The Lord shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways.

8 The Lord shall command the blessing upon you in your storehouse, and in all that you undertake; and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

9 The Lord will establish you as a people holy to Himself, as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and walk in His ways.

10 And all people of the earth shall see that you are called by the name [and in the presence of] the Lord; and they shall be afraid of you.

11 And the Lord shall make you have a surplus of prosperity, through the fruit of your body, of your livestock, and of your ground, in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you.

12 The Lord shall open to you His good treasury, the heavens to give the rain of your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

13 And the Lord shall make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and are watchful to do them.

14 And you shall not go aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

### COMMENT 28:1-14

The blessings here recounted are *not* those that God sends "on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). They are the blessings promised

to an *obedient Israel*, and withheld if they are disobedient as in 7:12-26, Lev. 26:3-13.

THY BASKET AND THY KNEADING-TROUGH (v. 5)—a rendering to be preferred over the A.V., "thy basket and thy store," as also in v. 17. Both when they *gathered* produce (grain) would they be blessed, and when they proceeded to *use* it by baking, would God be with them.

The basket (Heb. *tene*) was large and deep, and in it grain or other products of the field were carried home and kept. Cf. 26:2 ff. They were variously made of willow branches, palm leaves, or rushes.

COME OUT AGAINST THEE ONE WAY, AND SHALL FLEE SEVEN WAYS (v. 7)—Indicating the utter confusion and consternation of a routed enemy. Note v. 25 where *Israel* is described as fleeing in the same way. The simple promise of God was *victory* over the enemy with obedience, *defeat* with disobedience. And the defeat is described as being just as cataclysmic as the victory would be glorious.

AND ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH SHALL SEE (v. 10)—Note the two blessings promised here: 1. Foreign nations shall see Israel's greatness as coming from Jehovah God, and that his name is held high in the land. 2. They shall fear Israel. Cf. 2:25, 11:25.

JEHOVAH WILL OPEN UNTO THEE HIS GOOD TREASURE THE HEAVENS, TO GIVE THE RAIN OF THY LAND IN ITS SEASON (v. 12)—The early and latter rains (See 11:11-17, notes), were the very "life of the land" in Israel. Every kind of blessing was dependent upon their regular appearance. Without them, the land very literally became cursed. See v. 24 of this chapter. Because the manna also came from above (Ps. 78:23, 24), and because godly people of all ages have known that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above (Jas. 1:17)," many blessings are included when God speaks of opening up the windows of heaven (II K. 7:2, 19, Mal. 3:9-12), although this expression originally had specific reference to rain (Gen. 7:11). So here God's "treasure the heavens" is specifically rain, but because a million blessings followed a well-watered Palestine, the "treasure" included much more than *water!*

THOU SHALT LEND TO MANY NATIONS . . . NOT BORROW (v. 12)—See 23:19, 20, note.

Before you leave this section, reread vv. 1-14 and note the "ifs". All the promised blessings were Israel's to have and enjoy *IF* . . .

## D. FEARFUL CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE FORETOLD (28:15-68)

15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. 16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. 17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:15-19

487. What is the meaning of the word "cursed" as here used?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:15-19

15 But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God, being watchful to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you:

16 Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field.

17 Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading trough.

18 Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, of your land, of the increase of your cattle and the young of your sheep.

19 Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

### COMMENT 28:15-19

These verses stand in obvious contrast to those blessings just promised to the obedient nation. Contrast v. 17 with v. 5, v. 18 with v. 4, v. 19 with v. 6. See Lev. 26:15 ff.

20 Jehovah will send upon thee cursing, discomfiture, and rebuke, in all that thou puttest thy hand unto to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the evil of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. 21 Jehovah will make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest in to possess it. 22 Jehovah will smite thee with consumption, and with

## CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE 28:15-24

fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. 23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. 24 Jehovah will make the rain of thy land power and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:20-24

488. Jehovah was going to interfere and interrupt the daily life of the people of Israel. Does He have less interest in His people today?
489. List the influences of God as to: (1) work, (2) sickness, (3) weather, (4) politics.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:20-24

20 The Lord shall send you curses, confusion, and rebuke in every enterprise to which you set your hand, until you are destroyed, perishing quickly, because of the evil of your doings, by which you have forsaken me [Moses and God as one].

21 The Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from off the land, which you go to possess.

22 The Lord will smite you with consumption, with fever, and inflammation, fiery heat, sword and drought, blasting, and mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

23 The heavens over your head shall be brass, and the earth under you shall be iron.

24 The Lord shall make the rain of your land powered soil and dust; from the heavens it shall come down upon you until you are destroyed.

## COMMENT 28:20-24

Now, and increasingly as we proceed in this chapter, the curses take on the form of a concrete *prophecy*. And although in several cases we can see *many* instances of fulfillment, in others we can be more concrete and specific.

The Amplified O.T. renders v. 20 well: "The Lord shall send you curses, confusion, and rebuke in every enterprise to which you set your hand, until you are destroyed, perishing quickly, because of the evil of your doings, by which you have forsaken me [Moses and God as one]."

UNTIL THOU BE DESTROYED (v. 20. Cf. v. 48)—“destroy” is the English rendering of a number of different Hebrew words—in the Old Testament, in this book, and in this chapter! Normally, *utter* destruction is not meant unless that is the translation—(as the Heb. word *charam* is rendered in 2:34, 3:6 [twice], etc.) The Hebrew word used here (*shamad*) is, indeed, also sometimes rendered “utterly destroy,” but the idea is not the annihilation or total extinction of the Hebrew peoples from the face of the earth. This truth is well illustrated in 4:25-31, where “utterly destroy” is used synonymously with “scatter you among the peoples.” With reference to Israel, (as is seen below) the term simply has reference to a nation *cursed of God*—unproductive, unhappy, and ruled by a foreign power. So in v. 33 we are told they shall be “only oppressed and crushed away”—Not quite rooted out as the Canaanites and Amalakitcs were, and of which no traces now remain.

PESTILENCE (v. 21)—Heb. *deber*, “bobopest, plague” (Baumgartner).

FIERY HEAT (v. 22)—Is this a reference to the weather conditions of the land, or an individual's state of fever? Gesenius defines the Heb. word (*charchur*) “inflammation, burning, fever.” The LXX has *erethismos*, irritation.

THE SWORD (v. 22)—this is the normal rendering of the Heb. *chereb*. However, some manuscripts, because of a different pointing of the Hebrew consonants, have *choreb*, drought, waste. This reading is found in the Samaritan text, and is rendered similarly in the Vulgate, Arabic, and most of the modern versions.

HEAVEN . . . SHALL BE BRASS . . . EARTH THAT IS UNDER THEE SHALL BE IRON (v. 23)—i.e., the heavens would not bring forth rain (Contrast v. 12) and the earth would be sterile and unproductive. (Remember too that dry ground tends to *harden* and does not respond readily to cultivation.) See Lev. 26:19, 20.

JEHOVAH WILL MAKE . . . DUST (v. 24)—Contrast again with v. 12. As the *rain* was formerly given in response to their righteousness, so God also can be the source of powder and dust (or sand)—which of course may also move through the sky carried by the winds. “The allusion is probably to those clouds of dust and sand which often fill the air in Palestine, when the heat is intense and there has been no rain for a vehement sirocco, and the air is filled with sand and dust, and is like the glowing heat at the mouth of a furnace.”\*

\*The quote is from Pulpit Commentary. But see also the vivid description of this wind and dust in Thomson's *Land and the Book*, pp. 295, 536, 537.



25 Jehovah will cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and shalt flee seven ways before thee: and thou shalt be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 And thy dead body shall be food unto all birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten them away. 27 Jehovah will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. 28 Jehovah will smite thee with madness, and with blindness, and with astonishment of heart; 29 and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and robbed alway, and there shall be none to save thee. 30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not use the fruit thereof. 31 Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to save thee. 32 Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people; and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day: and there shall be nought in the power of thy hand. 33 The fruit of thy ground, and all thy labors, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway; 34 so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 35 Jehovah will smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, whereof thou canst not be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the crown of thy head.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:25-35

490. Consider the map as to the location of Israel. How would the geographical location of Israel relate to the promise, "tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms"?
491. List the personal bodily afflictions here promised. When were these promises fulfilled?
492. List the domestic tragedies.
493. Where and when and by whom were these words first fulfilled? With what result?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:25-35

25 The Lord shall cause you to be struck down before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and you shall be tossed to and fro and be a terror among all the kingdoms of the earth. [Fulfilled, 2 Chron. 29:8.]

26 And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away.

27 The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with the tumors, the scurvy and the itch, of which you cannot be healed.

28 The Lord will smite you with madness and blindness and dismay of [mind and] heart.

29 And you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways; and you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to save you.

30 You shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, and not live in it; you shall plant a vineyard and not gather its grapes.

31 Your ox shall be slain before your eyes, and you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away before your face, and not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to help you.

32 Your sons and daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day, and there shall be no power in your hands to prevent it. [Fulfilled, 2 Chron. 29:9.]

33 A nation which you have not known shall eat up the fruit of your land and of all your labors; and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. ]Fulfilled, Judg. 6:1-6; 13:1.[

34 So that you shall be driven mad by the sight which your eyes shall see.

35 The Lord will smite you on the knees and on the legs and a sore boil that cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

## COMMENT 28:25-35

AND THOU SHALT BE TOSSED TO AND FRO AMONG THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH\* (v. 25)—“a ball for all the kingdoms to play with” (Shultz). If any nation on earth has fulfilled these words, Israel has.

\*A number of modern translators have rendered this phrase “a horrible spectacle to all the kingdoms of the earth” or similarly.

She has been a literal "football" for centuries. Perhaps that period of history immediately after the conquest of Alexander the Great best illustrates these verses. Palestine then lay between the kingdom of the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucidae in Syria. These royal families and their kingdoms were constantly at one another's throats, and Israel became a literal battlefield for their wars—Sometimes held by one power, sometimes by the other. (How ridiculous, then, the later defense of the Jews—"We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to any man" (Jn. 8:33))!

BOIL OF EGYPT (v. 27)—The A.V. has *botch of Egypt*. Compare also v. 35, 60, Ex. 9:9, 10, though these may not all refer to the same affliction. Whatever kind of boil or inflammation it was, it is hard to imagine one that was pleasant!

EMEROLDS (v. 27)—Heb. *ophel*, probably hemorrhoids or piles.

MADNESS, BLINDNESS, etc. (v. 28)—Note how these diseases are either of the head or mental, while the previous ones were basically bodily afflictions.

MADNESS (v. 28)—Heb. *shiggaan*, a form of which also appears in v. 34. Baumgartner says it is derived from an Arabic word which was used of the continuous cooing of a male pigeon, (apparently one in *distress*). But the Hebrew word always refers to a distressed *individual*, a madman.

BETROTH A WIFE . . . ANOTHER SHALL LIE WITH HER (v. 30)—This, as well as other statements in vv. 29, 30, show the unstable and insecure social conditions that would exist in Israel—especially an Israel continually threatened, invaded, or dominated by heathen nations. Law, order, morality, respect for the rights of others, respect for private property—these are lacking when evil dominates, for "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:35).

36 Jehovah will bring thee, and thy king whom thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation that thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. 37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away. 38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. 39 Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them, but thou shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather *the grapes*; for the worm shall eat them. 40 Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy borders, but thou shalt

not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast *its fruit*. 41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be thine; for they shall go into captivity. 42 All thy trees and the fruit of thy ground shall the locust possess. 43 The sojourner that is in the midst of thee shall mount up above thee higher and higher; and thou shalt come down lower and lower. 44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. 45 And all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenest not unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: 46 and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:36-46

494. Consider the chronology involved in verse 36. How many years for the conquest? How many years in the period of Judges? How long before the nation of Israel was taken into captivity?
495. Which captivity is prophesied here?
496. We should learn the oft repeated lesson: what is so many times referred to as "good luck" is actually God's blessing; what is called "bad luck" is God's chastizement.
497. Read Jer. 16:13; 44:17-19 for one fulfillment.
498. There is a contrast in verses 15 and verses 43 and 44. What is it?
499. According to verse 46 what was to be a sign to the nation of Israel?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:36-46

36 The Lord shall bring you and your king whom you have set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall [be forced to] serve other gods, of wood and stone. [Fulfilled, 2 Kings 17:4, 6; 24:12, 14; 25:7, 11; Dan. 6:11, 12.]

37 And you shall become an amazement, a proverb, and a byword, among all peoples to which the Lord will lead you.

38 You shall carry much seed out into the field, and shall gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. [Fulfilled, Hag. 1:6.]

39 You shall plant vineyards and dress them, but shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall eat them.

40 You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olive trees shall drop their fruit.

41 You shall beget sons and daughters, but shall not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. [Fulfilled, Lam. 1:5.]

42 All your trees and the fruit of your ground shall the locust possess. [Fulfilled, Joel 1:4.]

43 The transient (stranger) among you shall mount up higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower.

44 He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

45 All these curses shall come upon you and shall pursue you and overtake you, till you are destroyed, because you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you;

46 They shall be upon you for a sign [of warning to other nations] and for a wonder, and upon your descendants for ever.

### COMMENT 28:36-46

A NATION THAT THOU HAST NOT KNOWN, THOU NOR THY FATHERS; AND THERE SHALT THOU SERVE OTHER GODS, WOOD AND STONE (v. 36)—What nation in history that has conquered and carried away Israel, best fits this prophecy? But before we proceed further, we must ask the question, Is God always referring to the *same nation* in this chapter, or are his words at times *general* in scope, with perhaps a *number* of specific fulfillments? We must *immediately* answer that the last statement is at least *true so far as history is concerned*: history will show a *number* of nations that meet the requirements of *most* of these scriptures, such as Persia, Babylonia, Assyria, Greece and Rome. And who is to say these nations were not instruments in the hand of God. (Dan. 4:31, 32, 35; Jer. 1:10, 18:5-9)? Some are overwhelmingly convinced that the Babylonian seige and captivity, and that *only*, was in the mind of God throughout these verses. We could not deny this in such verses as 36, but in vv. 49, 52, and 53 the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions so perfectly fits the description that it surely can be called *one* fulfillment of the prophecy. And this writer would be hard pressed to deny the claim of one who argued that the atrocities and wholesale murders of the Jews by the Germans before and during World War II was another fulfillment of several statements in Deut. 28. The atrocities were cruel, inhuman, and malicious on the part of the Germans, but *so are those described here!*

As a *general* rule we may say that vv. 36-46 better describe the Babylonian siege and captivity, and vv. 47-57 the Roman. Compare this first section with 4:25-31 and note the promise of returning to their *homeland* when they returned to *God*. This, of course, was especially true of the seventy-year Babylonian captivity.

Since 1948 Israel, as a result of the Zionist movement, has again been officially recognized as a nation. In the summer of 1967 they won an important victory over the Arabs, regaining the Arab sector of Jerusalem and other important territory to the south. But what of Israel's future? As long as she continues to reject the *Messiah* her prosperity can only be temporary.

A NATION THAT THOU HAST NOT KNOWN (v. 36)—with reference to the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah said, "therefore will I [God] cast you forth out of this land into the land that ye have not known, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night . . ." (Jer. 16:13). "The Hebrew exiles, with some honourable exceptions, were seduced or compelled into idolatry in the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities (Jeremiah 44:17-19). Thus, the sin to which they had too often betrayed a perverse fondness, a deep-rooted propensity, became their punishment and their misery" (J.F.B.).

The nation described in v. 49, on the other hand, was not only "from far," but had a language foreign to the Hebrews. Compare Dan. 3:6, 7. Babylon would fulfill the "not known" requirement, but their language was a kindred one to the Hebrews'. See v. 49.

Note here too that Israel's *king* was to be taken in this captivity—which was true of the *Chaldean* conquest, not the Roman.

THEY SHALL GO INTO CAPTIVITY (v. 41)—True of the Northern ten tribes to some degree (II K. 17:6, 18:11, 12) but more literally fulfilled when Jerusalem was sacked by Nebuchadnezzar, II K. 24:14, 25:11, II Chron. 36:20, Jer. 22:24-28. Henry Cooke (N.S.I.B.L.) adds, "Besides the captivities recorded in the Old Testament, the destruction of Jerusalem after [during] the Christian era was accompanied by the captivity of many thousands of all ages and sexes, and their exposure to sale and slavery."

THE SOJOURNER THAT IS IN THE MIDST OF THEE SHALL MOUNT UP HIGHER AND HIGHER (v. 43)—Especially well illustrated in the case of the Assyrian infiltration, then domination, of the ten northern tribes (II K. 15:19, 29, 17:1-6). Perhaps the Seleucid domination even better depicts this description. The conquests of Alexander the great

of Macedonia, at least as far as its immediate effect, was benign, in that it relieved the Jews of the galling yoke of the Persians. But upon Alexander's death Palestine became part of one of the five divisions of the empire. Ruled from Syria by the hated Seleucid dynasty even into Roman times, the Jews finally revolted under the leadership of the Macabees in 166 B.C.

HE SHALL LEND TO THEE (v. 44)—Contrast v. 12, 15:6. And remember that borrowing often inferred subjection, Prov. 22:7.

AND THEY SHALL BE, etc. (v. 46)—a better rendering is, "They shall serve as signs and proofs against you and your offspring for all time." (The Torah)

47 Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things; 48 therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies that Jehovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. 49 Jehovah will bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; 50 a nation of fierce countenance, that shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young, 51 and shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy ground, until thou be destroyed; that also shall not leave thee grain, new wine, or oil, the increase of thy cattle, or the young of thy flock, until they have caused thee to perish. 52 And they shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fortified walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; and they shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. 53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, whom Jehovah thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. 54 The man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children whom he hath remaining; 55 so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, because he hath nothing left him, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in all thy gates. 56 The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward

her daughter, 57 and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children whom she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:47-57

500. Joyfulness and gladness are an essential ingredient for acceptableness with Jehovah; Why?
501. Who put a yoke of iron upon the neck of Israel?
502. Note the three characteristics of the nation brought in by God to oppress Israel.
503. Notice the progressive nature of the siege; list the steps.
504. War makes animals of men. Why?
505. Is there no one who will remain true to his standards of ethics regardless of circumstances? Discuss.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:47-57

47 Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness of [mind and] heart [in gratitude] for the abundance of all [with which He had blessed you],

48 Therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord shall send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in want of all things; and He will put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until He has destroyed you.

49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you shall not understand;

50 A nation of unyielding countenance, who will not regard the person of the old, or show favor to the young.

51 And shall eat the fruit of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; who also shall not leave you grain, new wine, oil, the increase of your cattle or the young of your sheep until they have caused you to perish.

52 They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the Lord your God has given you.

53 And you shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the Lord your God has given you, in the siege



and in the (pressing) misery with which your enemies shall distress you, [Fulfilled, 2 Kings 6:24-29.]

54 The man who is most tender among you, and extremely particular and well-bred, his eye shall be cruel and grudging of food toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward those of his children still remaining;

55 So that he will not give to any of them any of the flesh of his children which he is eating, because he has nothing left him in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you in all your towns.

56 The most tender and daintily bred woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground because she is so dainty and kind, will grudge to the husband of her bosom, to her son, and to her daughter,

57 Her afterbirth that comes out from her body and the children whom she shall bear; for she will eat them secretly for want of all else in the siege and distress with which your enemies shall distress you in your towns.

### COMMENT 28:47-57

These verses, while in certain instances aptly describing the Babylonian and other invaders and their treatment of Israel, are especially descriptive of the Roman siege of Judea and Jerusalem. In 66 A.D. the Jews openly rebelled against the Roman rule and violence, and gained control of Jerusalem. Rome's first counter was to send, late in the summer of 66 A.D. 40,000 soldiers from Antioch under the Roman legate in Syria, Cestius Gallus. But he was thoroughly routed by the Jews in and around Jerusalem, and retreated minus 6,000 of his men. Word of Gallus' sorry failure was hurried to Rome, and Nero now chose his greatest general, Titus Flavius Vespasian, to put Palestine, and Jerusalem particularly, into its proper place. By the spring of 67 A.D. he had 50,000 troops massed at Ptolemais on the coast north of Mount Carmel. Bit by bit, he successfully crushed opposition in the areas of Samaria, Peraea, and Idumaea. But in June of 68 Nero died and Vespasian himself was placed upon the throne. The Jewish war was abandoned for almost two years. Finally, in the spring of 70, another sizeable Roman army was organized, this time at Caesarea, and its command entrusted to the emperor's own son, Titus. Many of the statements of this chapter describe his conquest of Jerusalem as perfectly as if it was written some 1500 years later.

BECAUSE THOU SERVEST NOT, etc. Read v. 47 slowly and carefully through again, and note v. 48 begins "THEREFORE . . ." Here is the verse upon which all the prophecies of doom in this entire chapter are pedicated! Israel did not serve Jehovah with a full, rich, glad heart EVEN THOUGH HE BLESSED THEM WITH "THE ABUNDANCE OF ALL THINGS!" Therefore they would get a "WANT OF ALL THINGS" (v. 48). Oh that this passage could be burned into the heart and emblazoned across the consciousness of every professing Christian! If such heartfelt and joyous service was part and parcel with a faithful keeping of the Mosaic law, how much *more* our devotion to *Christ* and our faithful service to *Him!* As we saw so plainly in 6:4 ff., the *law* demanded more than mechanical, perfunctory, stoical observance of precepts. If it was so then, how much more now, when under the gospel everything is dependent upon our right relationship with that One who promised "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"?

Never—never in the history of the world has God accepted service to Him that was not earnest, sincere, and spontaneous. He never will. And here the rebuke is levelled at a nation who failed to give God such service in spite of prosperity and plenty from his very hand. Frequently they "feared Jehovah, and served their own gods," and "did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah" (See II K. 17).

AND HE SHALL PUT A YOKE OF IRON UPON THY NECK, UNTIL HE HAVE DESTROYED THEE (v. 48)—See our previous discussion of "destroy," v. 20. The Babylonian domination and captivity was called an "iron yoke" (Jer. 28:13, 14). And that captivity may be symbolized here. But, as a good many expositors have pointed out, iron was symbolic of the rule of Rome, who employed that metal in their armies far more than any previous nation. Daniel used the metal to symbolize this empire, Dan. 2:40-43, 7:7.

A NATION AGAINST THEE FROM FAR, FROM THE END OF THE EARTH, AS THE EAGLE FLIETH; A NATION WHOSE TONGUE THOU SHALT NOT UNDERSTAND (v. 49)—This particular verse would appear to rule out the Babylonians, for their language, at least at the time of their conquest of Judah (586 B.C.) had marked similarities to the Hebrew. Probably because of the widespread migrations of the Aramaeans, by the year 1000 B.C. Aramaic was spoken extensively in the land of Babylon. This language became somewhat of a *lingua franca* (hybrid language) of the whole Tigris-Euphrates valley. Thus Senna-

cherib, king of Assyria, could communicate (through Rabshakeh) to the leaders of Israel "in the Syrian language (*literally, Aramean*), II K. 18:26, though at that time *most* Israelites could not understand it (Isa. 36:11). And Artaxerxes, king of Persia, received a communication from the enemies of Israel in the same language, Ezra 4:7. The Hebrews also used Aramaic increasingly after the exile, and in all probability learned it in Babylon. Daniel and his friends, for example, were taught "the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans" (Dan. 1:4), and the Syrian language was in vogue (2:4). "Aramaic is like Hebrew and Arayan, a North Semitic tongue, standing in a manner between them . . . before the reign of Tiglath-pileser Aramaic was the general speech for commerce and diplomacy all over S.W. Asia . . . generally understood from Asia Minor on the north to the Cataracts of the Nile on the south, and from the mountains of Media on the east to the Mediterranean on the west" (I.S.B.E.).

Thus we look for an invader outside the Near East for this prophecy's fulfillment. Rome, whose capital was some 1500 miles from Jerusalem as the crow flies certainly qualifies as one "from far, from the end of the earth". And her Latin languages, so totally different from the Hebrew, certainly was "a tongue thou shalt not understand." A Hebrew could no more understand Latin than an American can understand Chinese.

AS THE EAGLE FLIETH (v. 49)—"as swift as the eagle flies" (R.S.V.) or "swooping down upon you like an eagle".\* The Roman standard was an eagle, which has been called "the appropriate emblem of their soaring pride, their far-sighted cupidity, their swift descent, and their insatiable rapacity" (Cooke, N.S.I.B.L.).

A NATION OF FIERCE COUNTENANCE (v. 50)—The verses to follow illustrate this truth. The conquering nation then, is to be distinguished by three characteristics:

1. It was to come "from far, from the end of the earth".
2. Its language was to be one not understood by Israel.
3. It was to be unmerciful and ruthless to all classes of persons.

Such were the Romans, whose devastating conquests were to come a millenium and a half after these utterances;

\*Some render the Heb. word *Nesher*, ("a tearer with the beak") *vulture*. But the context of the most passages where the word occurs almost demand "eagle": II Sam. 1:23, Prov. 30:19, Isa. 40:31, Obad. 4. It should also be mentioned that the flight and ways of the eagle are also used to describe Babylon's conquest, Isa. 8:8.

AND THOU SHALT EAT THE FRUIT OF THINE OWN BODY (v. 53)—See also Lev. 26:27-29, II K. 6:29, also Jer. 19:9, where the Babylonian siege is referred to. Such atrocities describe conditions of great famine, or a people who are being starved out by the enemy. See II K. 6:24-29, describing conditions as Ben-hadad of Syria besieged Samaria (Israel). Also, in anticipation of the Babylonian siege, see Lam. 2:20, 4:10. Starving people are *desperate* people! Josephus, describing the Roman siege, tells how parents seized morsels of food from their children (though they were perishing) and how old men who held on to their food were beaten. “. . . and if women hid what they had within their hands, their hair was torn for so doing; nor was there any commiseration shown either to the aged or to the infants, but they lifted up children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and shook them down upon the floor.”\*

He later describes a starving woman who slew and roasted her own son, a babe still sucking at her breast. “. . . she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed.”\*\*

AND THE MAN THAT IS TENDER AMONG YOU, AND VERY DELICATE, HIS EYE SHALL BE EVIL (v. 54) . . . THE TENDER AND DELICATE WOMAN (v. 56)—War and starvation will turn them into ravenous animals—though they normally be refined and reserved. In the case cited above, for example, Josephus reports that the woman, upon being discovered by a group of fellow-Jews, said, “. . . Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself! Do not you pretend to be either more tender than a woman or more compassionate than a mother . . .”

58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, JEHOVAH THY GOD; 59 then Jehovah will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60 And he will bring upon thee again all the diseases of Egypt, which thou was afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. 61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will Jehovah bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. 62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 63 And it shall come to pass, that, as Jehovah rejoiced over you to do you

\*Wars of the Jews, Book V Ch. X, #3.

\*\*Ibid, Book VI, Ch. III, #4.

good, and to multiply you, so Jehovah will rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest in to possess it. 64 And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but Jehovah will give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul; 66 and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life. 67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would it were morning; for the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 68 And Jehovah will bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I said unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall sell yourselves unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:58-68

506. How is the word "fearful" in verse 58? How is the word "wonderful" used in verse 59?
507. Please remember there are two sides of God's character: wrath and love. Israel was promised in great detail both the benefits of His love and the punishment of His wrath. Who was responsible for what they received?
508. When was the promise of verse 64 fulfilled?
509. Israel's second bondage in Egypt was to be worse than their first bondage. How so?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:58-68

58 If you will not be watchful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may (reverently) fear this glorious and fearful name [and presence], THE LORD YOUR GOD;

59 Then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary strokes and blows, great plagues of long continuance, and grievous sickness of long duration.

60 Moreover He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you.

61 Also every sickness and every affliction which is not written in the book of this law, the Lord will bring upon you, until you are destroyed.

62 And you shall be \*left few in number, whereas you had been as the stars of the heavens for multitude; because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

63 And as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice to bring ruin upon you and to destroy you; and you shall be \*\*plucked from off the land which you go to possess.

64 And the Lord shall scatter you among all peoples from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall [be forced to] serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither your nor your fathers have known. [Fulfilled, Dan. 3:6.]

65 And among these nations you shall find no ease and there shall be no rest for the sole of your foot; but the Lord will give you there a trembling heart, failing of eyes [from disappointment of hope], fainting of mind and languishing of spirit.

66 Your life shall hang in doubt before you; day and night you shall be worried, and have no assurance of your life.

67 In the morning you shall say, Would it were evening! and at evening you shall say, Would it were morning! because of the anxiety and dread of your [mind and] heart, and the sights which you shall see with your [own] eyes.

68 And the Lord shall \*\*\* bring you into Egypt again with ships, by the way about which I said to you, You shall never see it again; and

\*The informed reader scarcely needs to be reminded of how literally fulfilled have been many of these predictions of evil made against the chosen people because of their idolatry and rebellion against God. Such verses as 25, 32, 33, 36, 38, 41, 42, and 53, foretell historical facts now recorded in Jewish history both sacred and secular. Here verse 62 foretells how the Jewish race "has been thinned, and kept down, again and again."

\*\*[The Roman Emperor] Hadrian issued a proclamation forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines (*Gray and Adams' Commentary*).

\*\*\*"Observe the contrast, you came out from bondage by God's high hand, monuments of His grace and power; you shall be carried back into bondage in men's slave-ships. This was literally fulfilled under [the Roman emperor] Titus, and also under Hadrian" (*Gray and Adams' Commentary*). The curses . . . were also fulfilled in a terrible manner during the middle ages, and are still in a course of fulfillment, though frequently less sensibly felt (*Lange's Commentary*). "Here, then, are prophecies delivered above 3,000 years ago, and yet being fulfilled in the world at this very time . . . I must acknowledge, they not only convince, but amaze and astonish me beyond expression; they are truly as Moses foretold (vs. 45, 46) they would be, 'a sign and a wonder for ever'" (Bishop Newton, quoted in *Jamieson, Faussett and Brown Commentary*).

there you shall be sold to your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you. [Hos. 8:13.]

## COMMENT 28:58-68

The prophecy now once again takes on a more general character, as in vv. 20-35.

ALL THE DISEASES OF EGYPT WHICH THOU WAST AFRAID OF (v. 60)—How many and what kind these were, we can only guess—But doubtless an oppressed and abused slave people had their share. Cf. v. 27, 7:14, 15; Ex. 15:25, 26.

ALSO EVERY SICKNESS, AND EVERY PLAGUE, WHICH IS NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK (v. 61)—In other words, diseases and afflictions of every description and of every kind will be the lot of a disobedient Israel.

v. 63—A better rendering perhaps is, ". . . as it was agreeable to the Lord to make you prosper and multiply, so it will be agreeable to the Lord to make you perish, and He will glory in your destruction . . ." God's glory, greatness, and dignity shall remain, regardless of the response men make to his divine will. But he takes no delight in the punishing of the wicked (Ezek. 18:21-32, I Tim. 2:3, 4, II Pet. 3:9).

YE SHALL BE PLUCKED FROM OFF THE LAND (v. 63)—See Jer. 12:14, where the Babylonian attack is again anticipated. Note II K. 24:10-14, 15:11, 12. The phrase also describes conditions following the Roman devastation: "Hadrain issued a proclamation forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines" (Gray and Adams).

SCATTER THEE AMONG ALL PEOPLES (v. 64)—What peoples in *all history* have been more completely dispersed throughout the world? And they certainly have not always kept their national religion, even in the modernized form gaining ascendancy with Jews in this country. But the immediate reference here appears to be further back in Israel's history.

JEHOVAH WILL BRING THEE INTO EGYPT AGAIN WITH SHIPS, BY THE WAY WHEREOF I SAID UNTO THEE, THOU SHALT SEE IT NO MORE AGAIN (v. 68—See also Jer. 4:11-14, 26-28, Hos. 8:13, 9:3, 11:5. Josephus speaks of Titus, after the Roman victory, reserving the stronger and abler ones of the city for the triumphal march, and killing

the aged and infirm. ". . . and as for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines."\*

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

*The blessings which God pronounces on the obedient, 1-6. Particular privileges which the faithful shall receive, 7-13. The curses pronounced against the ungodly and idolatrous, 14-19. A detailed account of the miseries which should be inflicted on them, should they neglect the commandments of the Lord, 20. They shall be smitten with the pestilence, 21; with consumption, fever, &c., 22; drought and barrenness, 23, 24; they shall be defeated by their enemies, 25, 26; they shall be afflicted with the borch of Egypt, 27; with madness and blindness, 28, 29; they shall be disappointed in all their projects, 30; deprived of all their possessions, and afflicted in all their members, 31-35; they and their king shall go into captivity, 36, and become a by-word among the nations, 37. Their land shall be unfruitful, and they shall be the lowest of all people, 38-44. All these curses shall come on them should they be disobedient, 45-48. Character of the people by whom they should be subdued, 49, 50. Particulars of their dreadful sufferings, 51-57. A recapitulation of their wretchedness, 58-63. The prediction that they shall be scattered among all the nations of the earth, 64-68.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY ONE (27:1—28:68)

### OVER CHAPTER 27

1. Describe the monument to be set up on mount Ebal, including as many details as possible.
2. Why no iron tools used in its construction?
3. What purpose(s) did it serve?
4. There is a "common denominator" in the origin of *most* of those tribes receiving the curse, and again among *most* of those receiving the blessing. What is it in each case?
5. Describe the setting of this event: Where are Ebal and Gerizim? What lay between them? How were the people arranged? Where were the Levites? What did they do?
6. How did the idolator cursed in the verses "set up shop"?
7. Who is one that "setteth light by" his father or mother?
8. The final curse of Cha. 27 is rather all-inclusive. Do you remember it.

\*Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Ch. IX, # 2.



OVER CHAPTER 28

9. What is the blessing of "thy basket" (v. 5)?
10. What are two effects Israel's righteousness and prosperity would have on the surrounding nations?
11. What is heavenly treasure, specifically and generally?
12. Israel is to "be destroyed . . . perish . . . crushed away . . ." In view of the fact that there are many Jewish people in the world today, did this prophecy fail?
13. What is signified by a brass sky? Iron earth? (v. 23)
14. Israel was to be "tossed to and from among all the kingdoms of the earth" (v. 25). Cite at least three obvious ancient examples and one modern one.
15. Can you recall three indications of the unstable and dangerous conditions which would exist in an Israel oppressed by a foreign power?
16. As a general rule, we may say vv. 36-46 best describe the \_\_\_\_\_ conquest, vv. 47-57 best describe the \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Why say "as a general rule"?
18. Which nation(s) best fits the phrase, "whose tongue thou shalt not understand," and why *not* Babylon?
19. Recall several phrases or statements of this chapter that describe a *desperate* and starving people.
20. What is "this glorious and fearful name"?
21. What country's diseases will afflict them?
22. How many other plagues and sicknesses?
23. How extensively would Israel be scattered?
24. Unto what country would they return which they had previously left, and by what means?

## LESSON TWENTY-TWO 29:1—30:20

### E. REMINDER OF GOD'S BLESSINGS 29:1-13

#### 1. THE PRESENT LAW TO BE ENFORCED (29:1)

These are the words of the covenant which Jehovah commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:1

510. Why another covenant with Israel? Or is this the thought here?  
511. Consider the circumstances of this text. What particular need was there for a renewal of God's covenant?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:1

These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

#### COMMENT 29:1

Note that the covenant made here on the plains of Moab is distinguished from the covenant previously made at Sinai.\*

The Pulpit commentary remarks, "This was not a new covenant in addition to that made at Sinai, but simply a renewal and reaffirmation of that covenant. At Sinai, the covenant was, properly speaking, *made*; sacrifices were then offered, and the people were sprinkled with the sacrificial blood, whereby the covenant was ratified (Exod. xxiv; Cf. Ps. L. 5); but on the occasion here referred to no sacrifices were offered, for this was merely the covenant formerly made as still subsisting." Thus in future writings, "the law of Moses" includes both those given at Sinai and on these plains of Moab. Compare 5:2, 3, notes.

#### 2. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD (29:2-9)

And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that Jehovah did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; 3 the great trials which thine eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders: 4 but Jehovah hath not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto

\*In the Hebrew text this verse is included with ch. 28. But of course Moses made no divisions of chapters and verses in his original autograph.

this day, 5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxed old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxed old upon thy foot. 6 Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink; that ye may know that I am Jehovah your God, 7 And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them: 8 and we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of the Manassites. 9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:2-9

512. If Jehovah did not give them a heart to know or eyes to see, how could Israel be held responsible?
513. Read the comments on 8:3, 4 to review what is meant by the preservation of clothes and shoes.
514. How would the lack of bread and wine establish their trust in Jehovah?
515. Why the review of God's acts of power and conquest?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:2-9

2 Moses called to all Israel, and said to them, You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to all his land;

3 The great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders;

4 Yet the Lord has not given you a [mind and] heart to understand, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day.

5 I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes have not worn out upon you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet.

6 You have not eaten [grain] bread, nor have you drunk wine or strong drink, that you might recognize and know [your dependence on Him Who is saying], I am the Lord your God.

7 And when you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out against us to battle, but we defeated them;

8 We took their land, and gave it for an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manassites.

9 Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may deal wisely and prosper in all that you do.

## COMMENT 29:2-9

BUT JEHOVAH HATH NOT GIVEN YOU A HEART TO KNOW . . . UNTO THIS DAY (v. 4)—This was partly their own fault, partly the working of God. Truthfully Moses could say they had been rebellious “from the day that thou wentest forth out of the land of Egypt” and “from the day that I knew you” (9:7, 24). Persons with such dispositions are not capable of perceiving and appreciating the will of God. Thus this passage is similar to those above, and should also have served as a rebuke: God has not seen fit to open up your eyes *even yet*—“unto this day”. The essence of the rebuke seems to be, “Will you now *wake up?*” Stubbornness and rebellion invariably clog the channels of one’s spiritual perception—and God withholds understanding (Isa. 6:9, 10, Matt. 11:25, 26, Rom. 11:7-10).

Yet, Israel had every opportunity *to* understand and appreciate God’s ways. These are enumerated in vv. 5-8, with the conclusion, “Keep therefore the words . . . that ye may prosper . . .” (v. 9).

YOUR CLOTHES ARE NOT WAXED OLD (v. 5)—See 8:4, note.

YE HAVE NOT EATEN BREAD, NEITHER HAVE YE DRUNK WINE OR STRONG DRINK; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT I AM JEHOVAH YOUR GOD (v. 6)—Basically the same thought is expressed in 8:3. They had been living all these years, not by harvesting wheat and baking bread, or by harvesting grapes and making wine. In short, they had not been sustained by their own labor, “but by every thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (8:3). It was *God* who directed their route for forty years, who kept their clothes from becoming old and ragged, who kept their shoes from wearing out, and who daily supplied their manna for food. The response *should* have been heartfelt obedience and praise to their Sustainer and Giver of life! Their recent victories in battle (vv. 7, 8) described earlier (chapters 2 & 3) were also the result of God’s direct blessing and goodness, and provided yet *another* reason for their cheerful obedience.

REUBENITES . . . GADITES . . . MANASSITES (v. 8)—Note their boundaries in 3:12-17.

## 3. THE PURPOSE OF GOD (29:10-13)

10 Ye stand this day all of you before Jehovah your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel, 11 your little ones, your wives, and thy sojourner that is in the

midst of thy camps, unto the drawer of thy water; 12 that thou mayest enter into the covenant of Jehovah thy God, and into his oath, which Jehovah thy God maketh with thee this day; 13 that he may establish thee this day unto himself for a people, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he spake unto thee, and as he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:10-13

516. Please notice how God expected everyone to enter into His covenant on a personal basis. Has His interest in individual participation changed?
517. What was God's purpose in establishing His covenant with Israel?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:10-13

10 All of you stand before the Lord your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel.

11 Your little ones, your wives, and the stranger and sojourner in your camp, from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water;

12 That you may enter into the covenant of the Lord your God, and into His oath, which He makes with you today;

13 That He may establish you this day as a people for Himself, and that He may be to you a God, as He said to you and as He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

### COMMENT 29:10-13

AS HE SWARE UNTO THY FATHERS (v. 13)—Israel, about to become a great nation, was the chief participant in the covenant God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:7), Isaac (Gen. 26:4), and Jacob (Gen. 28:14). Cf. 8:1, etc. The promises of God were not being kept because of Israel's goodness (7:6-8, 9:4, 5) but because of God's eternal purpose to bring the Messiah into the world through a nation he loved.

## F. SOLEMN WARNINGS AND REMINDERS

(29:14—30:20)

### 1. COVENANT ALL-INCLUSIVE (29:14-21)

14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath, 15 but with him that standeth here with us this day before Jehovah our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day; 16 (for ye

know how we dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which ye passed; 17 and ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them;) 18 lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from Jehovah our God, to go to serve the gods of those nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; 19 and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to destroy the moist with the dry. 20 Jehovah will not pardon him, but then the anger of Jehovah and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall lie upon him, and Jehovah will blot out his name from under heaven. 21 And Jehovah will set him apart unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that is written in this book of the law.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:14-21

518. Who could be identified under the phrase "with him that is not here with us this day"?
519. Jehovah's wrath is especially kindled against some people. Who are they?
520. Give three characteristics of the person of question 519.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:14-21

14 It is not with you only that I make this sworn covenant,

15 But with future Israelites who do not stand here with us today before the Lord our God, as well as with those who are here with us this day.

16 You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations you crossed;

17 And you have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them.

18 Beware lest there should be among you a man or woman or family or tribe, whose [mind and] heart turns away this day from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a [poisonous] root that bears gall and wormwood;

19 and lest, when he hears the words of this curse and oath, he flatter and congratulate himself in his [mind and] heart, saying, I shall

have peace and safety, \*though I walk in the stubbornness of my [mind and] heart [bringing down a hurricane of destruction] and sweep away the watered land with the dry.

20 The Lord will not pardon him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book shall settle on him; the Lord will blot out his very name from under the heavens;

21 And the Lord will single him out for ruin and destruction from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.

### COMMENT 29:14-21

NEITHER WITH YOU ONLY DO I MAKE THIS COVENANT (v. 14)—The covenant extended to all who were within the country of Israel as a nation—or who *would be* (v. 15, 22). Thus strangers and sojourners who made Israel their home were also included, Lev. 24:22, Num. 9:14, 15:14-16, 29.

Israel was to be a land within whose confines *God* was to be worshipped according to His word—regardless of the nationality of the resident. So it was with such well-known sojourners as Rahab and Ruth (Ruth 1:16).

LEST THERE SHOULD BE AMONG YOU MAN . . . TO GO TO SERVE THE GODS OF THOSE NATIONS (v. 18)—referring back to the neighboring nations of v. 16, a fact that lends weight to the argument of modern translators that the parentheses enclosing verses 16 and 17 should be omitted.

LEST THERE SHOULD BE AMONG YOU A ROOT THAT BEARETH GALL AND WORMWOOD (v. 18)—descriptive terms of one who was rebellious, stubborn, and disobedient towards God and his word, as the following verses show. And the factor of *others being defiled by this man's influence* may well be implied here, as in Heb. 12:14, 15.

\*It is on the strength of the Lord's oath to be Israel's God and also to protect them, that this Israelite flatters himself he is secure, no matter how he may behave. In the history of religion such a delusion has been lamentably frequent, and persons depending upon the unlimited protection of election have presumed on this and recklessly indulged in evil (*Cambridge Bible, condensed*). The Bible emphasizes the "security of the saints," but it is equally emphatic concerning the insecurity of those in conscious and continued indifference to God. [Ezek. 3:29; 18:24,26; Rev. 22:14; James 1:21; Gal. 6:8; 2 Pet. 1:10,11.]

GALL (Heb. *rosb*) is the name of a poisonous plant or herb. It grows quickly and luxuriantly (Hos. 10:14, "hemlock"), but is of bitter taste (Ps. 69:21, Lam 3:5) and on this account is, as here and in Lam. 3:19, connected with wormwood.

On the other hand, "What the Heb. *laamab* [wormwood] may have been is obscure; it is clear it was a bitter substance and it is usually associated with 'gall' . . . The genus *Artemisis* . . . has five species of shrubs or herbs found in Palestine, any one of which may furnish a bitter taste" (I.S.B.E.). Thus this man's influence would be poisonous, hurtful, and distasteful both to God and his people.

TO DESTROY THE MOIST WITH THE DRY (v. 19)—The margin reads "to add drunkenness to thirst."

Note that in the former part of the verse this man is blessing himself in his heart—i.e., congratulating or complimenting himself, saying "I shall have peace"—i.e. "all shall be well with me, everything is fine." And this, though he realizes he is stubborn of heart, and intends "To destroy the well-watered [land] with the dry" (Pulpit). His hardness of heart would influence him to destroy *one and all*. His very nature is destructive and ruinous. This interpretation suits the context, describing one whose influence is pernicious and devastating to God's people. Such a person imprecates the wrath of God (vv. 20, 21).

## 2. ISRAEL'S COMING WICKEDNESS: THE JUDGMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS AND FOREIGNERS (29:22-29)

22 And the generation to come, your children that shall rise up after you, and the foreigner that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sickness wherewith Jehovah hath made it sick; 23 *and that* the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, *and* a burning, *that* it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which Jehovah overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: 24 even all the nations shall say, Wherefore hath Jehovah done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? 25 Then men shall say, Because they forsook the covenant of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, 26 and went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods that they knew not, and that he had not given unto them: 27 therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against this



land, to bring upon it all the curse that is written in this book; 28 and Jehovah rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as this day. 29 The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 29:22-29

521. From reading this text there seems to be but little question that Israel will be tragically disobedient. Could they help it if God thus predicted it?
522. State three descriptive phrases used here to describe God's punishment of His disobedient children.
523. There seems to be a balance between the natural results of disobedience and the punishment of God. Are these two sides of the same coin?
524. Read verse 29 very carefully. Why does it appear in this context?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 29:22-29

22 So that the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who shall come from a distant land, shall say, when they see the plagues of this land, and the diseases with which the Lord has made it sick—

23 The whole land is brimstone and salt, and a burned waste, not sown or bearing anything, where not grass can take root, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah with Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and wrath—

24 Even all the nations shall say, Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?

25 Then men shall say, Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt,

26 For they went and served other gods, and worshiped them, gods they knew not, and that He had not given to them;

27 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses that are written in this book;

28 And the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger and in wrath and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as this day.

29 The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

### COMMENT 29:22-29

AND THE GENERATION TO COME, etc. (v. 22)—Better, "And later generations will ask—the children who succeed you . . ." (The Torah).

Both the generations future to those Moses was addressing and foreigners would speak of Israel's decline and degeneration in terms of reproach and disdain.

AND THAT WHOLE LAND THEREOF IS BRIMSTONE, AND SALT, AND A BURNING (v. 23)—Obviously figurative language to describe a sterile, desolate unproductive land. Perhaps also *punishment* and *destruction*, which *brought* such barrenness. See Job 18:15, Ps. 11:6, Isa. 30:33. But these minerals would, in truth, be physically present, and burning. See below.

BRIMSTONE (v. 23)—Heb. *gophriṯh* (as in Gen. 19:24), signifies "brimstone, sulfur" (Baumgartner). Gesenius agrees, believing the word originally meant *pitch*, "the name of which was afterwards transferred to other inflammable materials; especially *sulphur*." The I.S.B.E. is helpful here: "Sulphur existed in Palestine in early times and was known by most of the ancient nations as a combustible substance that the inhabitants of the land had experienced the terrors of burning sulphur is very probable. Once one of these deposits took fire it would melt and run in burning streams down the ravines spreading everywhere suffocating fumes such as come from the ordinary brimstone [sulphur] match. No more realistic figure could be chosen to depict terrible suffering and destruction. It is not at all unlikely that during some of the disastrous earthquakes which took place in this part of the world, the hot lava sent forth ignited not only the sulphur, but also the bitumen, and added to the horrors of the earthquake the destruction caused by burning pitch and brimstone."

SALT (v. 23)—also associated with destruction, ruin, and desolation, Job 39:6, Jud. 9:45, Jer. 17:6, Zeph. 2:9.

A BURNING (v. 23)—Again, a phenomenon especially associated with devastation and destruction, especially by a foreign power, Isa. 1:7, 64:11, II K. 25:9, Ps. 74:7, 8, etc.\*

Such land as described above is worthless for agriculture, so THAT IT IS NOT SOWN, NOR BEARETH, NOR ANY GRASS GROWETH THEREIN (v. 23). Rather, it is LIKE THE OVERTHROW OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH, ADMAH AND ZEBOIIM [Gen. 19:23-28, Admah and Zeboiim are associated with Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen. 10:19, 14:2, and thus are included in "the cities of the plain" destroyed with Sodom] WHICH JEHOVAH OVERTHREW IN HIS ANGER, AND HIS WRATH (v. 23)—and this is the *very point* of Moses' words. Their wickedness would result in their overthrow. Note vv. 25, 26.

ALL THE CURSE THAT IS WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK (v. 27)—The reference seems especially to refer to those just uttered, beginning in Ch. 27. But many others may well be included, not only in Deuteronomy (as in 4:25-27), but in other passages of the Pentateuch, such as Lev. 26:14 ff.

ROOTED THEM OUT . . . CAST THEM INTO ANOTHER LAND (v. 28)—See 28:36 ff, notes. This is not foreign domination or servitude to another power, but *captivity*.

THE SECRET THINGS BELONG UNTO JEHOVAH (v. 29)—The reference may be especially to *future* matters: "The hidden issues of the future . . ." (Moffatt), but "secret" (Heb. *sather*) of itself simply means hidden, secret, or concealed. ". . . things in God's purpose known only to himself: these things, it is affirmed, belong to him, are his affair, and may be left with him" (Pulpit). On the other hand,

THE THINGS THAT ARE REVEALED BELONG TO US AND OUR CHILDREN FOR EVER, THAT WE MAY DO ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW (v. 29)—What God *has* revealed he expects his children to study, meditate upon, and obey. Cf. 30:11-14. His people are responsible to him for responding to what he has made known. Thus, as it is wrong to subtract from what *is* written, so it is wrong to *add* to God's will where he, in his infinite wisdom, has seen fit to say nothing. His word is sacred—and so is his silence. (Cf. 4:2, 12:32). See also Ps. 119:160, Jn. 17:17, II Tim. 3:16, 17, Rev. 28:18, 19.

\*Fires also raged in Jerusalem's destruction. See Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Ch. IV, #8; Ch. V, #1; Ch. IV, #5.

This passage is not intended to discourage honest scientific investigation. It simply states that there *are*, indeed, many "secret" things in life—and ever *shall* be, no matter how much knowledge accumulates. There are secrets among the minute (a *few* more of which have recently been probed by the electron microscope and other scientific instruments). There are secrets in the vastness of space—What is beyond the farthest observable star? And who can tell *all* about a blade of grass or a stone—let alone the human body! In short, the religion of God demands that a man admit certain limitations within *himself* and the omniscience of God. He who contains all knowledge and wisdom has revealed *what we need* for life everlasting. And he has granted unto *us* "all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:3). The truths of the universe known or knowable only to himself will not form the criterion for our judgment in the final day.

This passage also forms, indirectly, an exhortation for studying. If we are responsible for revealed truth, effort must be exerted that we might *know* what is revealed. And it also comprises a *rebuke* to those who believe *spiritual* truth is found outside God and his word. Cf. Prov. 3:5, 6, Isa. 8:19, 20, I Cor. 1:18-25, I Tim. 6:3-5, II Tim. 1:13.

It was, in fact, the very essence of this scripture that was being repeated by Thomas Campbell's famous phrase, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

Opinions, conjectures, "educated guesses," theories on any of thousands of subjects *not* discussed in God's word—what do we do with them? As far as God is concerned, this word is open for exploration and investigation. But when we profess to know more than our maker and transgress *revealed* truth, we have, indeed, degenerated. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?" (I Cor. 2:16a).

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

*A recapitulation of God's gracious dealings with Israel, 1-8. An exhortation to obedience, and to enter into covenant with their God, that they and their posterity may be established in the good land, 9-15. They are to remember the abominations of Egypt, and to avoid them, 16, 17. He who hardens his heart, when he hears these curses, shall be utterly consumed, 18-21. Their posterity shall be astonished at the desolation that shall fall upon them, 22, 23; shall inquire the reason, and shall be informed that the Lord has done thus to them because of*

*their disobedience and idolatry, 24-28. A caution against prying too curiously into the secrets of the Divine providence, and to be contented with what God has revealed, 29.*

### 3. JEHOVAH'S BLESSINGS ASSURED WHENEVER ISRAEL REPENTS (30:1-10)

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither Jehovah thy God hath driven thee, 2 and shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; 3 that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples, whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If any of thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: 5 and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And Jehovah thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. 7 And Jehovah thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, that persecuted thee. 8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of Jehovah, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. 9 And Jehovah thy God will make thee plenteous in all the work of thy hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, for good: for Jehovah will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers; 10 If thou shalt obey the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law; if thou turn unto Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 30:1-10

525. Read Neh. 1:4-9; Psa. 85; 126 and 137 for a fulfillment of the promise made in 30:1-3.
526. Just how did God accomplish the task of circumcising the heart of Israel?
527. Specify at least three benefits promised to those who obey Jehovah?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 30:1-10

And when all these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, where the Lord your God has driven you,

2 And shall return to the Lord your God and obey His voice according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your [mind and] heart, and with all your being;

3 Then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes, and have compassion upon you, and will gather you again from all the nations, where He has scattered you.

4 Even if any of your dispersed are in the uttermost parts of the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there will He bring you.

5 And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will do you good, and multiply you above your fathers.

6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart, and with all your being, that you may live.

7 And the Lord your God will put all these curses upon your enemies, and on those who hate you, who persecute you.

8 And you shall return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all His commandments which I command you today.

9 And the Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in every work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, of your cattle, of your land, for good; for the Lord will again delight in prospering you, as He took delight in your fathers.

10 If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart, and with all your being.

## COMMENT 30:1-10

**JEHOVAH . . . WILL TURN THY CAPTIVITY, AND HAVE COMPASSION UPON THEE, AND WILL RETURN AND GATHER THEE FROM ALL THE PEOPLES** (v. 3)—a particularly graphic fulfillment is found in the Babylonian captivity, Neh. 1:4-9, Ps. 85, 126, and especially 137. And as v. 6 indicates a heart-circumcision, note the revival after the return in

Ezra and Nehemiah—foreign wives, for example were put away. Also, we have no record of idolatry after the captivity—a sin that continually plagued them before.

JEHOVAH THY GOD WILL CIRCUMCISE THY HEART (v. 6)—See 10:16. As physical circumcision changed the outward man, circumcision of the heart (the mind, the whole inner person, the "self") would change the whole disposition and way of life. Its result would be TO LOVE JEHOVAH . . . WITH ALL THY HEART AND ALL THY SOUL, THAT THOU MAYEST LIVE (v. 6)—They weren't "living" as far as God was concerned, unless their hearts were totally given to Him. Nor would Israel long *physically* remain alive without such devotion. Cf. 6:4, 5.

GOD WILL PUT ALL THESE CURSES UPON THINE ENEMIES (v. 7)—See also 7:15, Ex. 15:26.

#### 4. OBEDIENCE NOT IMPOSSIBLE (30:11-14)

11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? 14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 30:11-14

528. It is such an encouragement to know that God has never given a command man could not obey. Read Rom. 10:6-10 for a present day application of this text.
529. In what sense did Israel feel the word of God was far away from them?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 30:11-14

11 For this commandment which I command you this day, is not too difficult for you, nor is it far off.

12 It is not [a secret laid up] in Heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?

14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth, and in your mind and in your heart, so that you can do it.

### COMMENT 30:11-14

IT IS NOT TOO HARD FOR THEE, NEITHER IS IT FAR OFF, etc.—Literally, *is not too wonderful for you*, i.e., not too hard to be understood or perform. Nor was it far off—though heavenly in its source (v. 12), it did not *remain* there, but was *revealed*. Cf. 29:29. In short, God had made his plan simple enough and easy enough for the *sincere* and *devoted* to observe it. It was not mysterious, ethereal, or occult. Rather, “the word is very nigh unto thee . . . etc.” (v. 14). And if such words describe the Mosaic law, how much *more* our relationship to Christ, Matt.11:28-30, I Jn. 5:2, 3, Rom. 10:6-10.

The idea of keeping the Mosaic law perfectly, in every iota, and without ever failing, is not before Moses' eye here. On this side of the cross, we know that only our Savior did so, Rom. 3:9-12, 23-25, as one who was sinless, I Pet. 2:21, 22, II Cor. 5:21, Isa. 53:9.

### 5. FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO CHOOSE THE PATH OF BLESSING RATHER THAN THE CURSE (30:15-20)

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; 16 in that I command thee this day to love Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, that thou mayest live and multiply, and that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in the land whither thou goest in to possess it. 17 But if thy heart turn away, and thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; 18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish; ye shall not prolong your days in the land, whither thou passest over the Jordan to go in to possess it. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed; 20 to love Jehovah thy God, to obey his voice, and to cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.



## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 30:15-20

530. It hardly seems possible that anyone would knowingly choose death and evil. There must be another factor. What is it?
531. How much of life is suspended on the one word "obedience." And yet another factor must be present before we are willing to obey. What is it?
532. Could the Israelites have said, "for me to live is Jehovah"? Specifically how was this true?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 30:15-20

15 See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.

16 [If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which] I command you today, to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, then you shall live and multiply and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

17 But if your [mind and] heart turn away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them,

18 I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish, and you shall not live long in the land which you pass over the Jordan to enter and possess.

19 I call Heaven and earth to witness this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live;

20 To love the Lord your God, to obey His voice, and to cling to Him; for He is your life, and the length of your days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

## COMMENT 30:15-20

Do not these verses practically summarize the whole story of Deuteronomy? Again and again Moses has made these points: Blessings when you love, obey and observe—innumerable, excruciating hardships and curses if you do not. And as we have seen in exhortation after exhortation, this "life" meant their very *existence* as a nation. Prosperity, strength, health, hope—all gained or lost depending on their obedience or disobedience.

Very literally for them and for us "God . . . is thy life"—the source of *all* life, physical and spiritual. If, then *they* would have life, the Lifesource must be heeded, v. 19. And so it is with *our* Lifesource, Jn. 1:4, 11:25, 26; 14:6, I Jn. 5:20.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY

*Gracious promises are given to the penitent, 1-6. The Lord will circumcise their heart, and put all these curses on their enemies, if they hearken to his voice and keep his testimonies, 7-10. The word is near to them, and easy to be understood, 11-14. Life and death, a blessing and a curse, are set before them; and they are exhorted to love the Lord, obey his voice, and cleave unto him, that they may inherit the land promised to Abraham, 15-20.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY-TWO

(29:1—30:20)

### CHAPTER 29

1. This chapter begins, "These are the words of the covenant . . ." Should the covenant made *here* be considered separate from the one made at Sinai?
2. Why had Jehovah not given them knowing hearts and seeing eyes (v. 4)?
3. What convincing evidences had God given of his love and power?
4. What promise, made to the patriarchs, were they now fulfilling?
5. Mention two groups of people, not now present, that must also keep this covenant.
6. Who or what is meant by "a root that beareth gall and wormwood"?
7. What would a person be doing if he "destroyed the moist with the dry"?
8. What two groups would denounce Israel's wickedness in this chapter? (Hint: Same answer as No. 5).
9. Israel's desolation and barrenness is described by the terms \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and a \_\_\_\_\_. (finish)
10. To what cities is this destruction likened?
11. What is brimstone?
12. To what factor(s) would other nations attribute Israel's failure?
13. Thoroughly memorize 29:29.

## CHAPTER 30

14. How is Israel's condition pictured after *returning* from captivity?
15. What captivity especially fits the prophecy?
16. Of what does Moses remind them concerning their capability of keeping the law?
17. Now re-read vv. 11-14. Make a present day New Testament application of these words.
18. In what *very literal* way could Moses say, "I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" (v. 15), and "therefore choose life that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed" (v. 19)?

## LESSON TWENTY-THREE 31:1—32:47

### IV. MOSES' LAST DAYS

31:1—34:12

#### A. CHARGE TO JOSHUA (31:1-23)

##### 1. JOSHUA PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLE (31:1-8)

And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel. 2 And he said unto them, I am a hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: and Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. 3 Jehovah thy God, he will go over before thee; he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt dispossess them: *and* Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as Jehovah hath spoken. 4 And Jehovah will do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, the kings of the Amorites, and unto their land; whom he destroyed. 5 And Jehovah will deliver them up before you, and ye shall do unto them according unto all the commandment which I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be affrighted at them: for Jehovah thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of good courage: for thou shalt go with this people into the land which Jehovah hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. 8 And Jehovah, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 31:1-8

533. Moses cannot go over Jordan to possess the land, but someone can and will. Who was it? (We are not thinking of Joshua.)
534. For what reason should Israel and Joshua "be strong and of good courage"?
535. Beyond the bare word of Moses, how would Israel *know* Jehovah was with them?
536. What one quality has Moses exemplified for our emulation?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 31:1-8

And Moses went on speaking these words to all Israel.

2 And he said to them, I am 120 years old this day; I can no more go out and come in; and the Lord has said to me, You shall not go over this Jordan.

3 The Lord your God will Himself go over before you, and He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them; and Joshua shall go over before you, as the Lord has said.

4 And the Lord will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when He destroyed them.

5 And the Lord will give them over to you, and you shall do to them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you.

6 Be strong, courageous and firm, fear not, nor be in terror before them; for it is the Lord your God Who goes with you; He will not fail you or forsake you.

7 And Moses called to Joshua, and said to him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong, courageous and firm; for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them; and you shall cause them to possess it.

8 It is the Lord Who goes before you; He will [march] with you; He will not fail you or let you go, or forsake you; [let there be no cowardice or flinching, but] fear not, neither become broken [in spirit] (depressed, dismayed and unnerved with alarm).

### COMMENT 31:1-8

One cannot help but be struck with the solemnity of these words, and those to follow. They remind us of Paul's touching farewell to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:18 ff.) Both these esteemed and beloved servants realized the seriousness of their position and that of the persons they were addressing. Thus the urgent, sincere, solemn heart-to-heart appeal. The application Mackintosh makes is good: "All who really enter into the situation and destiny of the people of God in a world like this *must* be serious. The true sense of things, the apprehension of them in the divine presence, must, of necessity, impart a holy gravity to the character, and a special pungency and power to the testimony."

I AM A HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS OLD THIS DAY (v. 2)—Not that the very day of this announcement was necessarily his "birthday." "This day" usually means "now," "at this time" in Deuteronomy, as we just saw in 30:15, 18, 19.

THOU SHALT NOT GO OVER (v. 2)—See 1:37, 38, note, and 32:51, 52.

JOSHUA, HE SHALL GO BEFORE THEE (v. 3)—This man was no newcomer to the role of a leader in Israel. Forty years before, as military leader and captain of Israel's hosts, he had defeated Amelek

(Ex. 17:8-14). As Moses' minister and attendant he accompanied him unto Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:13; 32:17). He also accompanied Moses during those times in which God spoke to him "face to face," apparently acting as his special minister in "the tent of meeting" (Ex. 33:11) before the tabernacle was erected. He and Caleb were the only ones among the twelve spies sent into Canaan who brought back an encouraging report (Num. 14:6-10, Deut. 1:35-38), and as a result were the only Israelites *among those numbered* who were not recipients of God's curse (Num. 14:28-34, 26:65). Thus he was "a man in whom is the Spirit." He and Eleazer the priest were instructed to oversee the proper division of the land, Num. 34:17, and he had just finished leading Israel in victorious battles on the east-side, Deut. 3:21.

Concerning the present charge, see also Num. 27:15-23. His further history is found in the book bearing his name, and one cannot but stand in awe and admiration of this "war horse" for God, whose farewell to Israel was, ". . . choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah" (Josh. 24:15). And to the credit of this man's character, the sacred historian could write as his epitaph, "And Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua . . ." (Josh. 24:31).

Joshua is now about 78, as he died 32 years later at age 110 (Josh. 24:29).

AS HE DID TO SIHON AND OG (v. 4)—Recorded in 2:26—3:11.

BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE, etc. (v. 6)—A verse that provides encouragement and challenge to every soul in the Lord's "armed forces." Here (as in 1:29, 30, etc.) all Israel is being addressed. But such words of encouragement are elsewhere given to Joshua alone—v. 7, 23, 3:21, 22, Josh. 1:5-9. His was a very grave and sobering responsibility—especially that of exterminating the Canaanite tribes and settling Israel in their divinely given land. The sequel in the book of Joshua reveals that the leadership of Israel was in able hands.

HE IT IS THAT DOTTH GO WITH THEE; HE WILL NOT FAIL THEE, NOR FORSAKE THEE (v. 6, Josh. 1:5)—What man who is truly fighting the Lord's battles is not heartened and emboldened with these words? *Because* of God's nearness and presence, we need not fear his (our) enemies. And the Hebrew writers rightly used the same principle to teach us we ought to be "free from the love of money; content with

such things as ye have" (See Heb. 13:5). Who is not helped and spurred on in the Lord's service by the assurance that Christ himself is *near*, with his strength (Matt. 18:20, 28:20, Acts 18:9, 10).

## 2. LAW DELIVERED TO THE PRIESTS; COMMANDED TO BE READ BEFORE ALL ISREAL EVERY SEVEN YEARS (31:9-13)

And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and unto all the elders of Israel. 10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of *every* seven years, in the set time of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, 11 when all Israel is come to appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12 Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and thy sojourner that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; 13 and that their children, who have not known, may hear, and learn to fear Jehovah your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 31:9-13

537. This is the first reference to Moses as the one who "wrote" this book. Read Num. 33:2; Ex. 24:4 for comparative references.
538. The priests had a two-fold responsibility to the law of Jehovah; they were not only to protect it, but to \_\_\_\_\_.
539. How often was this command of Moses fulfilled?
540. There is strong prophetic reference in this passage. To what future place is reference made?
541. For what purpose is the law of Jehovah to be read?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 31:9-13

9 And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it to the Levitical priests, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel.

10 And Moses commanded them, At the end of every seven years, at the set time of the year of release [of debtors from their debts], at the feast of booths,

11 When all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses [for His sanctuary], you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

12 Assemble the people, men, women, and children, and the stranger and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn (reverently) to fear the Lord your God, and be watchful to do all the words of this law,

13 And that their children, who have not known it, may hear, and learn (reverently) to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land which you go over Jordan to possess.

### COMMENT 31:9-13

AND MOSES WROTE THIS LAW (v. 9)—The first time Moses' *writing* is mentioned in this book. See also vv. 22, 24. But Moses had written much before this time (Ex. 24:4, Num. 33:2, etc.) See the Introduction, III, (The Writer), and the special works by Rotherham and McGarvey included in this volume.

AND DELIVERED IT UNTO THE PRIESTS . . . AND UNTO ALL THE ELDERS (v. 9)—A formal presentation, committing the keeping of the law into their hands. It was put by the side of the ark (v. 25), *inside* of which the tables of stone were kept. See 10:1-5, Heb. 9:1-5.

AT THE END OF EVERY SEVEN YEARS (v. 10)—See 15:1, 2, 9. The law which had been written was to be read to the people at the end of every seven years, during the festival of the year of release, that is, at the Feast of Tabernacles, Lev. 23:34, Deut. 16:13-16.

Adam Clarke comments: "It is strange that this commandment, relative to a *public* reading of the law every seven years, should have been rarely attended to. It does not appear that from the time mentioned, Josh. viii. 30, at which time this public reading took place, till the reign of *Jehosphaphat*, 2 Chron. xvii. 7 [See also v. 9] there was any public seventh year reading—a period of 530 years. The next seventh year reading was not till the eighteenth year of the reign of *Josiah*, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30, a space of *two hundred and eighty-two* years. Nor do we find any other publicly mentioned from this time till the return from the Babylonish captivity, Neh. viii. 2. Nor is there any other record from that time to the destruction of Jerusalem."

The law was delivered to the priests and elders *not merely* for safe-keeping. It was to be *read* and enforced (vv. 12, 13). During the



centuries of the Dark Ages the Roman Church kept the Bible "safely"—safely locked to the walls and pulpits of monasteries and cathedrals! Throughout Europe the word of God was preserved in Greek, Hebrew and Latin. The latter language, understood only by the learned, was again used in the sacred services. Thus the ignorance of the common man was perpetuated; for Latin was not understood by the common man.

ASSEMBLE THE PEOPLE, etc. (vv. 12, 13)—Nehemiah, chapter 8, provides an illustration of this passage. The law was to be read so all Israel could "hear . . . learn . . . fear . . . observe." Thus when Ezra read, he did so "distinctly; and gave the sense, so that they understood the reading" (Neh. 8:8). God wants his message *communicated* to his people! Reading, with understanding, is good; a mere rattling of words, a matter of mechanics, is not enough! "Till I arrive, go ahead with the public reading, the preaching and the teaching" (I Tim. 4:13, Berkeley).

### 3. JOSHUA COMMISSIONED (31:14-23)

#### a. GOD CONFERS WITH MOSES AND JOSHUA (31:14, 15)

14 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourself in the tent of meeting, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tent of meeting. 15 And Jehovah appeared in the Tent in a pillar of cloud: and the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the Tent.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 31:14, 15

542. What tent is "the tent of meeting"? Cf. Ex. 40:7, Num. 11:16; 12:4.
543. Do we have a "tent of meeting" today? i.e., a place where Jehovah has promised to meet us?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 31:14, 15

14 And the Lord said to Moses, Behold, your days are nearing when you must die. Call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tent of meeting, that I may give him his charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tent of meeting.

15 And the Lord appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud; and the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the tent.

## COMMENT 31:14, 15

The "tent of meeting" is not to be confused with the tabernacle. Compare Ex. 33:7-11, and note that Joshua is involved in that conference also. The "tent of meeting" (Heb. *eth haahel*) is there referred to before the Tabernacle (Heb. *eth hammishcan*) was erected (Ex. 40:17). Nor should it be confused with Moses' own abode. Moses went to it without the camp, and returned again. Rather, it was a simple place of revelation and of the meeting of the people with Jehovah. See also Num. 11:16, 12:4.

Usually, the distinction between the two tents is quite apparent from the context. It should be noted, however, that both are referred to as "the tent of meeting" or "the Tent": with reference to the tabernacle in such passages as Ex. 39:32, 33; The "field office" of Moses in such scriptures as Ex. 33:7.

Many commentators hold, however, that the phrase "tent of meeting" consistently refers only to the tabernacle proper after that structure was erected—that is, it superseded or replaced it, and took on its predecessor's name. It could be so in the present case; but normally none but the priests were privileged to enter the sanctuary, and Moses and Joshua presented themselves "in" the tent (v. 14).

b. MOSES COMMANDED TO WRITE A SONG AS A  
WITNESS AGAINST ISRAEL (31:16-22)

16 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and play the harlot after the strange gods of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. 17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us? 18 And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evil which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. 19 Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach thou it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. 20 For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, flowing with milk and honey, and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxed fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and

despise me, and break my covenant. 21 And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are come upon them, that this song shall testify before them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed; for I know their imagination which they frame this day, before I have brought them into the land which I sware. 22 So Moses write this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 31:16-22

544. Please remember that the constant reference to death as a sleep has no reference to the spirit of man, but only to his body. What comfort is there in the adding of our decayed body to those of "our fathers"?
545. God *is* concerned with the actions and thoughts of His people. Has He changed?
546. Advertising by song is not new. We can remember more what is sung and what we sing. Who knew this before Madison Avenue?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 31:16-22

16 And the Lord said to Moses, Behold, you shall sleep with your fathers; and this people will rise up, and play the harlot after the strange gods of the land where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me, and break My covenant which I have made with them.

17 Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?

18 And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done in turning to other gods.

19 And now write this song for you, and teach it to the Israelites; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the Israelites.

20 For when I have brought them into the land which I swore to their fathers, that flows with milk and honey, and they have eaten and filled themselves, and become fat; then they will turn to other gods, and serve them, and despise and scorn Me, and break My covenant.

21 And when many evils and troubles have befallen them, this [sacred] song will confront them as a witness, for it will never be

forgotten from the mouths of their descendants; for I know their strong desire and the purposes which they are forming even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swore to give them.

22 Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the Israelites. [See 32:1-43.]

### COMMENT 31:16-22

The song of Moses follows in chapter 32. The essence of vv. 16-18 we have seen repeated again and again in Deuteronomy: The forsaking of God and his commandments will have devastating consequences.

THEY SHALL HAVE EATEN AND FILLED THEMSELVES, AND WAXED FAT . . . AND BREAK MY COVENANT (v. 20)—See 6:10-12, 8:7-20, 11:10-16, etc.

THIS SONG SHALL TESTIFY BEFORE THEM AS A WITNESS (v. 20)—The word of God stands as our guide, lamp, and source of life. But if we depart from it, it can only act as a witness and judge against us. *The same words* condemn or justify, depending on the lives of those who receive them. In the present case, God, in his foreknowledge, knew (as we have seen so many times) that Israel would rebel and disobey: FOR I KNOW THEIR IMAGINATION WHICH THEY FRAME THIS DAY, BEFORE I HAVE BROUGHT THEM INTO THE LAND (v. 21)—As we have attempted to explain elsewhere, the fact that God *knows in advance* that a person or persons will commit sin does not *compel* the individual to commit it. In the present case, it should be observed that Israel was already notoriously rebellious against God and his law—and the Lord knew this rebellion would persist. They were already making plans for various wicked practices in which they could participate as soon as they crossed over the Jordan. And nearly the entire book of Judges chronicles the historical accuracy of this prediction.

The above phrase brings to the memory such passages as Gen. 6:5 and 8:21. Baumgartner would define *yetser* ("imagination") in *all* these passages as "form, purpose"—that is, of the mind. What powers has the mind! Powers to conceive, imagine, visualize, conceptualize, arrange, design. But conceive or design *what?* That is the greatest question of the ages! And that is why *all* are in need of a *renewed* mind (Rom. 12:2, Eph. 4:22-24). Then the mind can imagine and scheme for *Christ* and the advancement of his kingdom!

## c. JOSHUA CHARGED AND ENCOURAGED (31:23)

23 And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them: and I will be with thee.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 31:23

547. In face of the promises of defection, how could Joshua be "strong and of good courage"? There is a lesson in this for us. For which generation is each man responsible?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 31:23

23 And [the Lord] charged Joshua son of Nun, Be strong and courageous and firm; for you shall bring the Israelites into the land which I swore to give them; and I will be with you.

## COMMENT 31:23

See also vv. 7, 8, and God's words to Moses' successor in Josh. 1:5-9. Surely the new leader needed this encouragement, for he had witnessed the ups and downs of Israel during the entire journey from Egypt. But what leader in the Lord's work does not thrill to the encouragement given to Joshua? And what leader does not need such words of assurance? Surely *part* of Joshua's success in the years that followed are attributable to the encouragement of his predecessor!

## B. THE PRESERVATION OF THE BOOK

(31:24-29)

24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, 25 that Moses commanded the Levites, that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, saying, 26 Take this book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. 27 For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against Jehovah; and how much more after my death? 28 Assemble unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you;

and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 31:24-29

548. What is included in "this law" of verse 24?  
 549. What is in the ark? Was there a receptacle along side of the ark?  
 550. Wouldn't the strong words of verse 29 offend the elders? Discuss.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 31:24-29

24 And when Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end,

25 He commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord,

26 Take this book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.

27 For I know your rebellion and stubbornness; behold, while I am yet alive with you, today you have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death!

28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call Heaven and earth to witness against them.

29 For I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because you will do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.

### COMMENT 31:24-29

It will be noticed that we have here

1. The words of the law finished (v. 24)
2. The words of the law preserved (vv. 25, 26)
3. The words of the law as a witness to Israel (vv. 27-29)

MOSES . . . MADE AN END OF WRITING THE WORDS OF THE LAW IN A BOOK (v. 24)—See also v. 9. Whether this passage refers to more than Deuteronomy has been long debated. (Compare our discussion under 27:3). But it is well to notice there is no limiting of the size of the

book; nor are we told if other materials were included in it. The phrasing of vv. 24-25 would lead us to believe all of Deuteronomy, at least, was included in Moses' book. Very likely more is meant:

"The 'book' here spoken of would contain the whole of the Pentateuch up to this verse, and be 'the book of Moses,' called generally by the Jews 'the Law' (Cp. St. Matt. xxii. 40; Gal. iv. 21)." (F. C. Cook)

By comparing v. 9 it appears two copies were made, J. F. B., commenting on vv. 9-13 as well as v. 26, states,

"It was usual in cases of public or private contract for two copies of the engagement to be made—one to be deposited in the national archives, or some secure place for reference, should occasion require; the other to remain in the hands of the contracting parties (Jeremiah 32:12-14). The same course was followed on this renewal of the covenant between God and Israel. Two written copies were prepared, the one of which was delivered to the public representatives of Israel, viz., the priests and the elders . . . The second copy of the law . . . was deposited for greater security and reference in a little chest *beside* the ark of the covenant . . ."

THE LEVITES THAT BARE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (v. 25)—As in v. 9, "the priests the sons of Levi, that bare the ark . . ." According to Num. 4:4 ff. this was the job of the Kohathites, who, though of the priestly tribe, were not priests. It was they who carried the ark on their journey through the wilderness. But it was only the priests who could touch the ark, and the Kohathites carried the ark only after it was carefully wrapped and prepared by the priests. On special occasions, however, the priests themselves *did* carry the ark: Josh. 3:3, 4:9, 10; 6:6, 12; 8:33, I K. 8:3.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

*Moses, being one hundred and twenty years old and about to die, calls the people together, and exhorts them to courage and obedience, 1-6. Delivers a charge to Joshua, 7, 8. Delivers the law which he had written to the priests, with a solemn charge that they should read it every seventh year, publicly to all the people, 9-13. The Lord calls Moses and Joshua to the tabernacle, 14. He appears to them, informs Moses of his approaching death, and delivers to him a prophetic and historical song, or poem, which he is to leave with Israel, for their instruction and reproof, 15-21. Moses writes the song the same day, and teaches it to the Israelites, 22; gives Joshua a charge, 23; finishes writ-*

ing the book of the law, 24. Commands the Levites to lay it up in the side of the ark, 25, 26. Predicts their rebellions, 27. Orders the elders to be gathered together, and shows them what evils would befall the people in the latter days, 28, 29, and repeats the song to them, 30.

### C. THE SONG OF MOSES (31:30—32:47)

The song is difficult to outline, but the main contents may be grouped as follows:

#### INTRODUCTION 31:30—32:1, 2

1. The greatness and faithfulness of *God*, in contrast with the faithlessness of Israel (32:3-18)
2. The chastisement and the need of its infliction by God (32:19-33).
3. God's compassion upon his people in their low and humbled state (32:34-42).

30 And Moses spake in the ears of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were finished.

1 Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak;  
And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain,  
My speech shall distil as the dew;  
As the small rain upon the tender grass,  
And as the showers upon the herb:

GIVE EAR YE HEAVENS . . . LET THE EARTH HEAR (v. 1)—another way of appealing to the witness of God. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall utterly perish from off the land . . ." (4:26). The whole universe is called to witness the procedure. Let all eyes and ears testify to the reading.

3 For I will proclaim the name of Jehovah;  
Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

4 The Rock, his work is perfect;  
For all his ways are justice:  
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,  
Just and right is he.

5 They have dealt corruptly with him, *they are* not his children,  
*it is* their blemish;  
*They are* a perverse and crooked generation.



6 Do ye thus requite Jehovah,  
O foolish people and unwise?  
Is not he thy father that hath brought thee?  
He hath made thee, and established thee.

7 Remember the days of old,  
Consider the years of many generations:  
Ask thy father, and he will show thee;  
Thine elders, and they will tell thee.

8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,  
When he separated the children of men,  
He set the bounds of the peoples  
According to the number of the children of Israel.

9 For Jehovah's portion is his people;  
Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

10 He found him in a desert land,  
And in the waste howling wilderness;  
He compassed him about, he cared for him,  
He kept him as the apple of his eye.

11 As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,  
That fluttereth over her young,  
He spread abroad his wings, he took them,  
He bare them on his pinions.

12 Jehovah alone did lead him,  
And there was no foreign god with him.

13 He made him ride on the high places of the earth,  
And he did eat the increase of the field;  
And he made him to suck honey out of the rock,  
And oil out of the flinty rock;

14 Butter of the herd, and milk of the flock,  
With fat of lambs,  
And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats,  
With the finest of the wheat;  
And of the blood of the grape thou drankest wine.

15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked:  
Thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art become sleek;  
Then he forsook God who made him,  
And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

16 They moved him to jealousy with strange *gods*;  
With abominations provoked they him to anger.

17 They sacrificed unto demons, *which were no God*,

To gods that they knew not,  
 To new *gods that* came up of late,  
 Which your fathers dreaded not.  
 18 Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful,  
 And hast forgotten God that gave thee birth.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 31:30—32:18

551. Who is "The Rock" of verse 4? Why use this name?  
 552. There are some very strong comparisons and contrasts between Jehovah and Israel. List three of them.  
 553. Israel has endearing names. List three of them.  
 554. There are several figurative descriptions of Israel that will describe the "Israel of God" today. Mention two.  
 555. Sin, Servitude, Sorrow, Salvation; this is the vicious circle of Israel's history. How can this circle be broken?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 31:30—32:18

30 And Moses spoke in the hearing of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

#### CHAPTER 32

Give ear, O heavens, and I [Moses] will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

2 My message shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the light rain upon the tender grass, and as the showers upon the herb.

3 For I will proclaim the name [and presence] of the Lord. Concede and ascribe greatness to our God.

4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are law and justice, a God of faithfulness, without breach or deviation, just and right is He.

5 They [Israel] have spoiled themselves. They are not sons to Him, that is their blemish. A perverse and crooked generation!

6 Do you thus repay the Lord, you foolish and senseless people? Is not He your father Who acquired you for His own? Who made and established you [as a nation]?

7 Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.

8 When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the Israelites.

9 For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob [Israel] is the lot of His inheritance.

10 He found him in a desert land, in the howling void of the wilderness; He kept circling around him, He scanned him (penetratingly), He kept him as the pupil of His eye.

11 As an eagle that stirs up her nest, that flutters over her young, He spread abroad His wings; He took them, He bore them on His pinions. [Luke 13:34.]

12 So the Lord alone led him; there was no foreign god with Him.

13 He made Israel ride on the high places of the earth, and he ate the increase of the field; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock;

14 Butter and curds of the herd and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan and he-goats, with the finest of the wheat; and you drank wine of the blood of the grape.

15 But Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat and kicked. You became fat, you grew thick, you were gorged and sleek! Then he forsook God Who made him, and forsook and despised the Rock of his salvation.

16 They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations they provoked Him to anger.

17 They sacrificed to demons, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods lately come up, whom your fathers never knew or feared.

18 Of the Rock that bore you you were unmindful; you forgot the God Who travailed in your birth.

### COMMENT 31:30—32:18

THE ROCK (v. 4)—A central figure of God in the song (vv. 13, 15, 18, 30, 31). And note in vv. 37-38 Israel is rebuked for placing their confidence not in the Rock but in the "rock" of their own making—an idol. God is the essence of immutable and impregnable strength—traits this figure of speech depicts. Cf. Gen. 49:24, I Sam. 2:2, Ps. 18:2, Matt. 16:18, Jn. 1:42, etc.

THY FATHER THAT BROUGHT THEE (v. 6)—Thus, they were a redeemed people (Ex. 6:6). HE HATH MADE THEE, AND ESTABLISHED THEE (v. 6)—As David could say

He brought me up also out of a horrible pit,  
 out of the miry clay;  
 And he set my feet upon a rock,  
 and established my goings.

—Ps. 40:2

**JEHOVAH ALONE DID LEAD HIM, AND THERE WAS NO FOREIGN GOD WITH HIM** (v. 12)—A verse that at once sets forth the strength and independence of God's power. **HE** it was that led Israel, supplied Israel, preserved Israel, protected Israel—**HE** and no other! It was not a multitude of heathen gods that did it, it was **THE ALMIGHTY** God! *And he depends upon no other source of power.* Note 8:3 and notes, 4:35-39. Yet there was ever the tendency to attribute God's power to heathen deities: "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32:4, I K. 12:28, 29). And throughout much of Israel's history Jehovah-worship and idolatry were mixed together in a confusing and contradictory hodge-podge! Note, for example, the story of Micah and his house of idols (Judges, Ch. 17). It was not a matter of totally leaving God—or totally leaving Jehovah-worship. Rather, "They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away" (II K. 17:33). It should hardly need saying that such luke warm dedication to God and his word is a stench in the nostrils of the Almighty.

**AND HE MADE HIM TO SUCK HONEY OUT OF THE ROCK** (v. 13)—This phrase, along with v. 14, has a parallel in Ps. 81:16, "He would feed them also with the finest of the wheat; And with the honey out of the rock would I satisfy thee." Rocks or ledges, of course, are places for bees to construct their honeycombs and deposit honey—especially *under* them, or in the crevices *between* them. And it was this metaphor of prosperity and God's goodness that led the song writer F. A. Graves to pen the words of his well-known hymn:

Have you "tasted that the Lord is gracious?"  
 Do you walk in the way that's new?  
 Have you drunk from the living fountain?  
 There's Honey in the Rock for you.

Oh, there's Honey in the Rock, my brother, . . .  
 There's Honey in the Rock for you.  
 Leave your sins for the blood to cover,  
 There's Honey in the Rock for you.

OIL OUT OF THE FLINTY ROCK (v. 13)—That is, olive oil would be plentiful in this new land, and olive trees, because of God's blessing, would grow even in the most obstinate soil. It would be "a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and honey" (8:8). Olive oil was (and is) used widely for food in the near east.

BUT JESHURUN WAXED FAT AND KICKED (v. 15)—Jeshurun is a symbolical or poetical name of endearment for Israel. Gesenius says it is "a tender and loving appellation of the people of Israel." At the same time, he believes there is an allusion to the idea of rectitude or uprightness. He mentions the possibility of it being a diminutive form of *Israel* and meaning something like "the righteous little people." Whatever its precise meaning, it is always used in place of Israel. It occurs only here, 33:5, 26, and Isa. 44:2.

THEN HE FORSOOK GOD (v. 15)—i.e., the prosperity of Israel (though given by God) became their undoing. Cf. the warning of 8:11 ff.

19 And Jehovah saw *it*, and abhorred *them*,  
 Because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.  
 20 And he said, I will hide my face from them,  
 I will see what their end shall be:  
 For they are a very perverse generation,  
 Children in whom is no faithfulness.  
 21 They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God;  
 They have provoked me to anger with their vanities:  
 And I will move them to jealousy with those that are not a people;  
 I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.  
 22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger,  
 And burneth unto the lowest Sheol,  
 And devoureth the earth with its increase,  
 And setteth on fire the foundations of the mountains.  
 23 I will heap evils upon them;  
 I will spend mine arrows upon them:  
 24 *They shall be* wasted with hunger, and devoured with burning heat  
 And bitter destruction;  
 And the teeth of beasts will I send upon them,  
 With the poison of crawling things of the dust.  
 25 Without shall the sword bereave,  
 And in the chambers terror;

*It shall destroy* both young man and virgin,

The suckling with the man of gray hairs.

26 I said, I would scatter them afar,

I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men;

27 Were it not that I feared the provocation of the enemy,

Lest their adversaries should judge amiss,

Lest they should say, Our hand is exalted,

And Jehovah hath not done all this.

28 For they are a nation void of counsel,

And there is no understanding in them.

29 Oh that they were wise, that they understood this,

That they would consider their latter end!

30 How should one chase a thousand

And two put ten thousand to flight,

Except their Rock had sold them,

And Jehovah had delivered them up?

31 For their rock is not as our Rock,

Even our enemies themselves being judges.

32 For their vine is of the vine of Sodom,

And of the fields of Gomorrah:

Their grapes are grapes of gall,

Their clusters are bitter:

33 Their wine is the poison of serpents,

And the cruel venom of asps.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 32:19-33

556. What is meant by the use of the word "provocation"?

557. What foreign people are meant in verse 21?

558. Where is "Sheol"? Explain the use of this term here.

559. Something will restrain God's wrath as mentioned in verses 26 and 27. What is it?

560. Itemize what Israel was as contrasted with what they should have been.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 32:19-33

19 And the Lord saw it, He spurned and rejected them, from indignation with His sons and His daughters.

20 And He said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be. For they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faithfulness.

21 They have moved Me to jealousy with what is not God; they have angered Me with their idols; so I will move them to jealousy with those not a people; I will anger them with a foolish nation.

22 For a fire is kindled by My anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth with its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.

23 And I will heap evils upon them; I will spend My arrows upon them.

24 They shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured with burning heat and poisonous pestilence; and the teeth of beasts will I send against them, with the poison of crawling things of the dust.

25 From without the sword shall bereave, and in the chambers shall be terror, destroying both young man and virgin, the sucking child with the man of gray hairs.

26 I said, I would scatter them afar, and I would have made the remembrance of them to cease from among men,

27 Had I not feared the provocation of the foe, lest their enemies misconstrue it, and lest they should say, Our own hand has prevailed; all this was not the work of the Lord.

28 For they are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them.

29 O that they were wise, and would see through this [present triumph] to their ultimate fate!

30 How could one have chased 1,000 and two put 10,000 to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had delivered them up?

31 For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.

32 For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom, and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of (poisonous) gall, their clusters are bitter;

33 Their wine is the (furious) venom of serpents, and the pitiless poison of vipers;

### COMMENT 32:19-33

AND I WILL MOVE THEM TO JEALOUSY WITH THOSE THAT ARE NOT A PEOPLE . . . A FOOLISH NATION (v. 21)—See also Rom. 10:16-19. Those not in God's service are important as eternal souls, but if they are not in fact his children, they are "a foolish nation"—even as we were "no people" (I Pet. 2:10) before coming to Christ. They are those "having no hope and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12).

What nation is referred to here? It is hard to say which of the many invaders of Israel (if a *specific* one is indeed being referred to) the Holy Spirit intends. Both Assyria and Babylon attacked while Israel was filled with idolatry (note vv. 16, 17).

. . . FIRE . . . BURNETH UNTO THE LOWEST SHEOL (v. 22)—The A. V. has "unto the lowest hell," but in either case the reader might be misled. the word *sheol* literally signifies the unseen state, or the unseen *place*. Baumgartner defines it here, "waste, no-country, underworld." The present passage *could* be a *general* description of God as a consuming fire. But it seems better to apply it to the immediate case: God's wrath would be upon their *whole land* when they were disobedient: Their crops, fields, houses, grain-storage bins—all would be destroyed; Clarke remarks on this phrase, ". . . the very deepest destruction; a total extermination, so that *the earth*—their land and *its increase*, and all their property should be seized; and the *foundations of their mountains* [v. 22]—their strongest fortresses, should be razed to the ground. All this was fulfilled in a most remarkable manner in the last destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, so that of the fortifications of that city not one stone was left on another."

AND THE TEETH OF BEASTS WILL I SEND UPON THEM (v. 24)—See also Lev. 26:22. In 7:22 we saw the strategy of defeating Israel's enemies was to be little by little "lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee." But disobedience would also bring them. We do not have a *recorded* instance of this as far as the Israelites themselves are concerned. But in II K. 17:24-26 we have such an act of God toward the foreign occupants of Samaria brought in by the Assyrians.

I SAID, I WOULD SCATTER THEM AFAR, I WOULD MAKE THE REMEMBRANCE OF THEM TO CEASE (v. 26)—See Ex. 32:9-14, Deut. 9:13, 14; 25-29. The wrath of God was stayed, not because of a deserving Israel, but "Lest their adversaries should judge amiss," etc. (v. 27). ". . . lest their enemies misconstrue it" (Amplified).

The translation of The Torah is helpful from vv. 26-30:

- 26 I might have reduced them to naught,  
 Made their memory cease among men,  
 27 But for fear of the taunts of the foe,  
 Their enemies who might misjudge  
 And say, "Our own hand has prevailed;  
 None of this was wrought by the Lord!"



- 28 For they [the heathen nations] are a folk  
void of sense,  
Lacking in all discernment.
- 29 Were they wise, they would think upon this,  
Gain insight into their future:
- 30 How could one have routed a thousand,  
Or two put ten thousand to flight,  
Unless their rock had sold them,  
The Lord had given them up?"

Verse 30 shows the weakness of Israel *without Jehovah*. No foe can stand before him, but enemies can overrun his own people if he has abandoned them.

Oh! how would one have chased a thousand,  
And two put ten thousand to flight,—  
Were it not that their Rock had sold them,  
And Yahweh had abandoned them;

(Rotherham)

The idea, of course, is that Israel's defeat at the hand of their enemies would have been impossible unless God had abandoned his people.

FOR THEIR ROCK IS NOT AS OUR ROCK (v. 31)—a statement equivalent of saying, "For their god(s) are not as our God." To foreign nations, whose god (rock) was powerless and dead, his physical presence or non-presence made no *actual* difference in the outcome of battles—or any other event for that matter. But Israel lost no battles "unless their Rock had sold them." The powerless rock of the heathen "is not as our Rock," who is omnipotent.

EVEN OUR ENEMIES THEMSELVES BEING JUDGES (v. 31)—i.e., Israel's enemies can testify to the above truth. The Egyptians, for example, were helpless before Israel's God, shouting, "Let us flee from the face of Israel; for Jehovah fighteth for them against the Egyptians" (Ex. 14:25). See also Ex. 15:14-16, Deut. 2:25.

VINE OF SODOM . . . FIELDS OF GOMORRAH (v. 32)—To become like these became (Gen. 19:23-28) would be to become a desolate waste, unproductive and sterile. See 29:22-28, notes. Whatever would be produced in Israel, as in vv. 32-33 would be of the poorest quality. But it is possible that this picturesque phrase means more. "Sodom and Go-

morrah are here advanced as types of what is depraved, and to the moral taste nauseous (cf. Isa. i. 10; Jer. xxiii. 14)." (Pulpit)

GRAPES OF GALL (v. 32)—See 29:18-20, notes. Vv. 32-33 could be taken to describe a degenerate *people* as well as a degenerate *land*.

34 Is not this laid up in store with me,  
Sealed up among my treasures?  
35 Vengeance is mine, and recompense,  
At the time when their foot shall slide:  
For the day of their calamity is at hand,  
And the things that are to come upon them shall make haste.  
36 For Jehovah will judge his people,  
And repent himself for his servants;  
When he seeth that *their* power is gone,  
And there is none *remaining*, shut up or left at large.  
37 And he will say, Where are their gods,  
The rock in which they took refuge;  
38 Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices,  
*And* drank the wine of their drink-offering?  
Let them rise up and help you,  
Let them be your protection.  
39 See now that I, even I, am he,  
And there is no god with me:  
I kill, and I make alive;  
I wound, and I heal;  
And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.  
40 For I lift up my hand to heaven,  
And say, As I live for ever,  
41 If I whet my glittering sword,  
And my hand take hold on judgment;  
I will render vengeance to mine adversaries,  
And will recompense them that hate me.  
52 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,  
And my sword shall devour flesh;  
With the blood of the slain and the captives,  
From the head of the leaders of the enemy.  
43 Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people:  
For he will avenge the blood of his servants,  
And will render vengeance to his adversaries,  
And will make expiation for his land, for his people.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 32:34-43

561. What does God have laid up in His treasury?  
 562. How is it possible to say of God that He repents?  
 563. Are we to believe God takes some type of delight in bloodshed?  
 Cf. Verses 41-32.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 32:34-43

34 Is not this laid up in store with Me, sealed up in My treasures?  
 35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slide; for the day of their disaster is at hand, and their doom comes speedily.

36 For the Lord will pass sentence for His people, and relent for His servants' sake, when He sees that their power is gone, and none remain, whether bond or free.

37 And He will say, Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge.

38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you, let them be your protection.

39 See now that I, I am He, and there is no god beside Me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; and there is none who can deliver out of My hand.

40 For I lift up My hand to Heaven, and swear, As I live for ever,

41 If I whet My lightning sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will wreak vengeance on My foes, and recompense those who hate Me.

42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the foe.

43 Rejoice with His people, O you nations, for He avenges the blood of His servants, and vengeance He inflicts on His foes, and clears guilt from the land of His people.

## COMMENT 32:34-43

MY TREASURES (v. 34)—The Hebrew word *otsar*, according to Tregelles, means properly, what is laid up, a store, stock. Thus God has reserved in his "treasure" such items as vengeance (v. 35) and judgment (v. 36).

FOR JEHOVAH WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE . . . AND REPENT HIMSELF (v. 36)—Better, as in the R.S.V. and others, "For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone," etc.

Ferrar Fenton has,

Then the LORD will redress His  
People;—  
For His servants He deeply grieves,  
When he sees their power departing,  
And fail, and fade, and decay.  
Then He asks, "Where now are  
their godlings?  
The power upon whom they  
trust—

In Israel's despair and desperation, they would come to realize the uselessness and worthlessness of their heathen gods. Finally, the living God would rescue his chosen nation (vv. 39-43). Again and again this is Israel's history, especially in the period of the Judges, between the death of Joshua and the anointing of Saul.

44 And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he and Hoshea the son of Nun. 45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel; 46 and he said unto them, Set your heart unto all the words which I testify unto you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, *even* all the words of this law. 47 For it is no vain thing for you; because it is your life, and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 32:44-47

564. Who is Hoshea? Cf. Num. 13:16.  
565. What is involved in fulfilling the injunction to "set your heart"?  
566. Hearing, heeding, living, the word of God will give us \_\_\_\_\_?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 31:44-47

44 And Moses came and spoke all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he and Hoshea (Joshua) son of Nun.

45 And when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel,

46 He said to them, Set your [minds and] hearts on all the words which I command you this day, that you may command them to your children, that they may be watchful to do all the words of this law.

47 For it is not an empty and worthless trifle for you; it is your very life; by it you shall live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess.

### COMMENT 32:44-47

HOSHEA (v. 44)—that is, Joshua. Num. 13:16 informs us that "Moses called Hoshea ['Jehovah is help'] the son of Nun Joshua ['Jehovah saves']." Depending on the version used, Hoshea may be rendered "Oshea," and Joshua "Jehoshua."

SET YOUR HEART UNTO ALL THE WORDS (v. 46)—Give heed to them and carefully abide by them BECAUSE IT IS YOUR LIFE (v. 47)—a phrase reminiscent of 4:1, 8:3, 30:19-20. Heeding God's word, in whatever dispensation it might be given, has always meant *life!* See Jn. 6:63, 68. In Israel's case, as Moses emphasized again and again, this meant not only life eternal, but THROUGH THIS THING YE SHALL PROLONG YOUR DAYS IN THE LAND (v. 47).

### QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY-THREE

(31:1—32:47)

#### OVER CHAPTER 31

1. How old is Moses now?
2. Who is appointed as his successor, and who appoints him?
3. List at least three factors (or incidents) in this man's life that show he possessed the qualities needed as Israel's leader.
4. Show that he was a *spiritual* man, as well as one with good military leadership. (Overlaps with 3.)
5. Do you remember the words of encouragement Moses gave to Israel (also found in the book of Hebrews)?
6. To whom was the law delivered?
7. How often was it to be read before all Israel—How often was it *actually* read?
8. The "tent of meeting" is a name for \_\_\_\_\_, and also for \_\_\_\_\_.
9. What is said about Israel's *imagination*? What *could* and should have been said about it?
10. Where was the "book of the law" kept?

## OVER CHAPTER 32

11. What material object, more than any other, is the central figure for *God* in this chapter?
12. What traits does it bring to mind?
13. Do you recall any phrases that show how *much* God cared for Israel in the wilderness?
14. Explain: "honey out of the rock . . . oil out of the flinty rock" (v. 13).
15. How would Israel's new found prosperity effect them?
16. Who or what is Jeshurun?
17. Distinguish between "Rock" and "rock" in this chapter.
18. Who are "those that are not a people" (v. 21)?
19. God's fire would be kindled because of Israel's wickedness. How extensively would it destroy?
20. What (in this chapter) restrained God from completely obliterating Israel from the face of the earth?
21. Would Israel ever be vindicated and restored?
22. Whose help did (does) God *not* need to deliver Israel?
23. Why should Israel set their hearts to these words?

## LESSON TWENTY-FOUR 32:48—34-12

### D. MOSES COMMANDED TO ASCEND MOUNT NEBO (32:48-52)

48 And Jehovah spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying, 49 Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession; 50 and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: 51 because ye trespassed against me in the midst of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. 52 For thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither into the land which I gave the children of Israel.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 32:48-52

567. What day is meant by the expression "that selfsame day"?
568. There are three names used: Abarim, Nebo, and Pisgah, are these all names of the same place?
569. In death Moses was "to be gathered unto thy people"—just where are his people that death would unite the two?
570. Please notice carefully the sin of Moses at Kadesh—there is something far more serious than speaking or striking the rock—what is it?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 32:48-52

48 And the Lord said to Moses that same day,

49 Get up into this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho; and look at the land of Canaan, which I give to the Israelites for a possession;

50 And die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people;

51 Because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah of Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because you did not set Me apart as holy in the midst of the Israelites.

52 For you shall see the land over opposite you, but you shall not go there, into the land which I give the Israelites.

## COMMENT 32:48-52

GET THEE UP INTO THIS MOUNTAIN (v. 49)—See also 3:23-28, 34:1 ff. There is no practical purpose for distinguishing between Pisgah and Nebo, the former the name of Nebo in 3:27.

Because of Moses' transgression at the waters of Meribah (Num. 20:2-13), neither Moses nor Aaron were allowed to enter the Promised Land proper. We find no indication on their part of bitterness or inner rebellion against God because of this prohibition—in fact, all scripture with reference to their death leads us to believe they had long since quietly acquiesced to the will of God in this matter. Yet, what deep and overwhelming emotion must have engulfed Moses' soul as he ascended that mountain! Surely from this distance it is impossible to imagine it! See further on this under 34:1.

AS AARON . . . DIED IN MOUNT HOR (v. 50)—See Num. 20:22-29, and note that, as in the case of Moses, Aaron could not enter Canaan "because ye rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah" (Num. 20:24. Compare v. 51 of this chapter). Aaron had died on the first day of the fifth month of this year (Num. 33:38). Moses' death was not too much later, for even after the events of Deuteronomy, Moses' death, the thirty days of mourning, and Joshua's leading of Israel across Jordan, we are only in the tenth day of the first month of the next year (Josh. 4:19).

BECAUSE YE SANCTIFIED ME NOT (v. 51)—See notes under 1:37. There is much misunderstanding concerning the nature of Moses' (and Aaron's) sin—sin so great in *God's* eyes to keep this great man of faith from taking part in the final victory and entering Canaan with Israel. It is frequently explained that God condemned him because of his disobedience in striking the rock (an act which *had* been commanded of him in a previous instance, Ex. 17:6), instead of merely speaking to it as instructed. And though this may be part of Moses' violation, it is not mentioned as a reason for preventing his entrance into Canaan. See Numbers 20, especially v. 12. Moses did not *sanctify* God in the eyes of the people, "Because ye believed not in me . . ." In whom or what, then, *did* Moses have faith? It seems to have been *himself*, along with Aaron. And perhaps, too, (though it is hard to believe!) in the powers of his rod—the rod he had previously used to perform such feats as splitting the waters of the Red Sea or bringing forth water at Rephidim. Had Moses come to think of his rod as a "magic stick"? We do not know. At any rate, as he and Aaron stood before Israel, the shout of Moses



was, "Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?" The name of God was not mentioned. The people only saw Moses and Aaron.

If ever there is a reminder of God's demand for his own glory to be reflected in our words and lives, it is illustrated here. His words must be followed, and the credit for his power (no matter who he works *through*) *must* be given to HIM!

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

*The prophetic and historical song of Moses, showing forth the nature of God's doctrine, 1-3. The character of God, 4. The corruption of the people, 5, 6. They are called to remember God's kindness, 7, and his dealings with them during their travels in the wilderness, 8-14. Their ingratitude and iniquity, 15-18. They are threatened with his judgments, 19-28. A pathetic lamentation over them because of their sins, 29-35. Gracious purposes in their behalf, mixed with reproaches for their manifold idolatries, and threatenings against his enemies, 36-42. A promise of salvation to the Gentiles, 43. Moses, having finished the song, warmly exhorts the people to obedience, 44-47. God calls him up to the mount, that he may see the good land and then die, 48-52.*

### E. THE BLESSING OF MOSES (33:1-29)

Having spoken his song in the previous chapter, Moses now pronounces his blessing upon the people. Both were probably spoken on the same day, just prior to his ascension into mount Nebo and his death. In both he is bidding farewell to Israel; both are poetic in nature, and both look to the future of God's chosen people. The one may be regarded as the counterpart of the other. In his song, however, Moses has dwelt especially on the *calamities* and *chastizements* that shall come upon Israel; in his blessing, he reveals the blessings of the future through the favor, generosity, and love of God. "The tone of the one is sombre and minatory; the tone of the other is serene and cheering. The one presents the darker side, the other the brighter side, of Israel's fortunes." (Pulpit)

This chapter falls into a rather natural three-fold division: (1) An introduction (vv. 1-5), (2) a series of benedictions on the twelve tribes (vv. 6-25), and (3) a conclusion (vv. 26-29).

## 1. INTRODUCTION (33:1-5)

And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. 2 And he said,

- Jehovah came from Sinai,  
 He rose from Seir unto them;  
 He shined forth from mount Paran,  
 And he came from the ten thousands of holy ones:  
 At his right hand was a fiery law for them.
- 3 Yea, he loved the people;  
 All his saints are in thy hand:  
 And they sat down at thy feet;  
*Every one* shall receive of thy words.
- 4 Moses commanded us a law,  
 An inheritance for the assembly of Jacob.
- 5 And he was king in Jeshurun,  
 When the heads of the people were gathered,  
 All the tribes of Israel together.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:1-5

571. Compare and contrast chapters 32 and 33.  
 572. In what sense was it true that "Jehovah came from Sinai?"  
 573. Jehovah came to them from Mt. Sinai but in a greater sense—"he came from ten thousand of holy ones!"—who were the "holy ones"? Where were they?  
 574. Compare John 10:27-30 with verse 3.  
 575. Who is the "King" of verse 5?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:1-5

This is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the Israelites before his death.

2 He said, The Lord came from Sinai and beamed upon us from Seir; He flashed forth from Mount Paran, from among ten thousands of holy ones, a flaming fire, a law, at His right hand.

3 Yes, He loves [the tribes] His people; all those consecrated to Him are in Your Hand. They followed in Your steps; they [accepted Your word and] received direction from You,

4 When Moses commanded us a law, as a possession for the assembly of Jacob.

5 [The Lord] was King in Jeshurun (Israel) when the heads of the people were gathered, all the tribes of Israel together.

### COMMENT 33:1-5

Some of the outstanding manifestations of God's power or goodness toward Israel are reviewed here, as a proper introduction to the blessings to be described in the immediate verses following. It is poetry appropriate for the past forty years of Jehovah's guardianship!

**JEHOVAH CAME FROM SINAI (v. 2)**—See also Ps. 68:8. "And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire . . . And Jehovah came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount: and Jehovah called Moses to the top of the mount" (Ex. 19:18, 20) all, of course, in preparation for the giving of the law (v. 4). This was well known, but its mention emphasized at once the *power* of God, and his desire to use his power *for Israel's good*. The next phrase again demonstrates these characteristics of the Father.

**AND ROSE FROM SEIR UNTO THEM (v. 2)**—"Mount Seir," "the land of Seir," and "the field of Edom," are, for most practical purposes, synonymous. This is the mountainous tract which runs along the eastern side of the Arabah, and was occupied by the descendants of Esau. It was through the divine intervention of God that Israel was enabled to pass through their land. See 2:1-8, especially the comments on v. 4.

**HE SHINED FORTH FROM MOUNT PARAN (v. 2)**—perhaps a peak in the wilderness of Paran (Jebel Makrah?). If so, it is most likely used here by metonymy for that high limestone plateau containing the very important station of Kadesh Barnea. As in 1:1, it is difficult to restrict Paran to a small area. But as we saw in chapters one and two, Kadesh, more than any other place, was the hub of Israel's activity in the wilderness.

**HE CAME FROM THE TEN THOUSANDS OF HOLY ONES (v. 2)**—Translators have had great difficulty with the last half of this verse. Perhaps no other passage in Deuteronomy has been so variously rendered. Rotherham has:

He shone forth out of Mount Paran,  
Yea he came out of holy myriads,—  
Out of his right hand [proceeded] fire to guide them.

What fire? At the hazard of being very obvious, could this refer to the pillar of fire that (along with the cloud by day) "abode in the wilderness of Paran" (Num. 10:12)? Israel, after all, "abode in Kadesh many days" (1:46), which necessarily meant a prolonged stay by night of the pillar of fire—a token both of God's nearness and leading. See Ex. 13:21, 22.

Whatever the interpretation of the above phrase, the *purpose* of all these acts of God is made clear in the next verse:

YEA, HE LOVETH THE PEOPLE; ALL HIS SAINTS ARE IN THY HAND (v. 3)—And this is why he has protected and cared for Israel—and why he *will* do so. He loves his children, and he could say with his son, "no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (See Jn. 10:27-30).

MOSES COMMANDED US A LAW, etc. (vv. 4, 5)—Ferrar Fenton renders these verses (beginning with v. 3),

On your hand let them trust,  
At your word rise and march,  
Let Moses give them Laws  
As Prince of Jacob's Host  
And be Yeshurun's Leader  
Controlling the Nation's Chiefs,  
Uniting Israel's Tribes.

But the overwhelming majority of translators (as well as the lexicons of Baumgartner and Gesenius), refer this kingship to *God*. Compare Ps. 84:3, 149:2, etc. "Thus the Lord became king in Jeshurun . . ." (R.S.V.).

## 2. BLESSINGS PRONOUNCED UPON THE TWELVE TRIBES (33:6-25)

It will be noticed that the tribe of Simeon is not mentioned in this list. This was because of their father's anger, cruelty, and disobedience (see especially Gen. 34:24-31). Referring to both Simeon and Levi, Jacob said,

I will divide them in Jacob,  
And scatter them in Israel.

—Gen. 49:7

In the case of Simeon, this meant being absorbed in the tribe of Judah (Josh. 19:1, Jud. 1:3). In the case of Levi, it meant no in-

heritance in Israel as a tribe—only scattered cities. Thus, although there are a few exceptions, we can usually say that the history of Judah is the history of Simeon.

a. REUBEN (v. 6)

- 6 Let Reuben live, and not die;  
Nor let his men be few.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:6

576. Read the Amplified Translation and notice the difference in this verse—why is there such a difference?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:6

6 Let [the tribe of] Reuben live, and not die out, but \*let his men be few.

COMMENT 33:6

Compare the pronouncement of Gen. 49:3, 4. Though he would "not have the preeminence," his numbers or power would not be lost.

NOR LET HIS MEN BE FEW—Or, *But* let etc. The latter rendering is preferred by many modern translators.

May Reuben live and not die,  
Though few be his number.

—The Torah.

The latter rendering is more in accord with history. There is only a slight decline in Reuben's population between the first and second numberings—46,500 to 43,730 (Num. 1:21, 26:7). But Reuben's later history is a tragic one. His numbers did indeed become few. The Amplified Bible states:

\*The earlier Bible translators could not believe that Moses meant to say of Reuben, "let his men be few," so they put "not" in it in italics: "let *not* his men be few." But Reuben had committed a grave offense (Gen. 49:3,4), which canceled his birthright, and God meant exactly what He directed Moses to say, as continuous fulfillment of the prophecy proves. "In Judg. 5:16 the tribe [of Reuben] is scorned for its failure to join the others against the Canaanites, and except for 1 Chron. 5:3-20 it does not again appear in Israel's history. Nor does Misha of Moab, ninth century, B.C. name it" (*Cambridge Bible*). Furthermore, by 1951 A.D. no Jew was permitted to enter the territory once allotted to the tribe of Reuben. "The whole territory, which is . . . quite capable of cultivation, is now deserted by its settled inhabitants" (*Davis' Bible Dictionary*). It was then being restored, not by Israelites, but by Arabs.

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#### b. JUDAH (v. 7)

- 7 And this *the blessing* of Judah: and he said,  
Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah,  
And bring him in unto his people:  
With his hands he contended for himself;  
And thou shalt be a help against his adversaries.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:7

577. Why is the tribe of Judah considered especially worthy? Cf. Gen. 49:8-12. When was this prophesy fulfilled?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:7

7 And this [Moses] said to Judah: Hear, O Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him to his people! With his hands he contended for himself, but You be a help to him against his enemies.

### COMMENT 33:7

WITH HIS HANDS HE CONTENDED FOR HIMSELF—

Or, Though his own hands strive for him, etc.

Or, Make his hands strong for him . . .

Or, With thy hands contend for him . . .

God promises his aid to this worthy tribe. Compare Gen. 49:8-12. And, as in that passage, one can point to relatively immediate fulfillments in Israel's history. The glorious reigns of Solomon and David are obvious literal fulfillments. Surely at that time God was a help against Judah's adversaries. But the prophecies are more completely fulfilled in the Messiah—"the Lion of the tribe of Judah." In all things he will become the preeminent One.

## c. LEVI (vv. 8-11)

- 8 And of Levi he said,  
 Thy Thummim and thy Urim are with thy godly one,  
 Whom thou didst prove at Massah,  
 With whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;
- 9 Who said of his father, and of his mother, I have not  
 seen him;  
 Neither did he acknowledge his brethren,  
 Nor knew he his own children:  
 For they have observed thy word,  
 And keep thy covenant.
- 10 They shall teach Jacob thine ordinances,  
 And Israel thy law:  
 They shall put incense before thee,  
 And whole burnt-offering upon thine altar.
- 11 Bless, Jehovah, his substance,  
 And accept the work of his hands:  
 Smite through the loins of them that rise up against him,  
 And of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:8-11

578. What were the Thummim and the Urim? Where were they? For what purposes were they used? Cf. Ex. 28:30, Lev. 8:8.
579. Read Ex. 17:3-7 and the twentieth chapter of Numbers for and understanding of 8b.
580. When was verse nine fulfilled? Read Ex. 32 for an answer.
581. Levi had no tribal allotment—his privileges were greater—in what way?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:8-11

8 And of Levi he said, Your Thummim and Your Urim [by which the priest sought God's will for the nation] are for your pious one

[Aaron for the tribe], whom You tried and proved at Massah, with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah; [Num. 20:1-13.]

9 [Aaron], who \*said of his father and mother, I do not regard them, nor did he acknowledge his brothers, or openly recognize his own children. For the priests observed Your word and kept Your covenant [as to their limitations].

10 [The priests] shall teach Jacob Your ordinances, and Israel Your law; they shall put incense before You, and whole burnt offering upon Your altar.

11 Bless, O Lord, [Levi's] substance, and accept the work of his hands; crush the loins of his adversaries, and of those who hate him, that they arise no more.

### COMMENT 33:8-11

THUMMIM AND URIM (v. 8)—These words mean literally *perfection and light*, "indicating the clearness with which God would impart to the High Priest the knowledge of his will, when that knowledge was sought by means which He had appointed" (Nichols). These were items (never exactly described in scripture) placed on (or in) the breastplate of the high priest—the "breastplate of judgment" (Ex. 28:30, Lev. 8:8).

The priests, who so often act as God's mouthpiece, consulted the Urim and Thummim on matters that were otherwise obscure or unknown, and especially on matters of national import, or a national crisis. See Num. 27:18-21, I Sam. 28:5, 6, Ezra 2:63. Obviously, the possession of the Urim and Thummim was a great privilege and honor for the priestly tribe. It was an honor for "thy godly one" (or as others have it) "him whom thou lovest" (v. 8).

WHOM THOU DIDST PROVE AT MASSAH (vv. 8, 6:16, 9:22)—The reference is to that *tempting*, or *proving* (the meaning of *massah*) recorded in Ex. 17:3-7.

STRIVE AT MERIBAH (v. 8)—Another play on words (*meribah* means *strife*). Both the above event and perhaps also that recorded in Num. ch. 20 may be referred to.

\*The law required that the high priest act as impartially when one of his immediate family died as if the departed were no kin to him (Lev. 21:10-12). This throws light on Christ's attitude toward His mother and brethren in Matt. 12:46-50. Cp. Heb. 8:1-6; 3:1-3.



Did the tribe of Levi, in some special way, precipitate the strife and turmoil at Massah and/or Meribah? We have no record of such beyond what is said here, except, of course, the well-known part of Moses and Aaron (Levites). See 1:37, notes. In these trials, even though Moses and Aaron stumbled, the tribe proved itself faithful and godly, rising up in defence and honor of Jehovah and in support of the covenant. Note the next verse.

WHO SAID OF HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, etc. (v. 9)—An obvious reference to the events of Ex. Ch. 32 at the foot of Sinai. When Moses asked "Whoso is on Jehovah's side, let him come unto me," we are told "all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." And at Moses' request they did not hesitate to take up the sword against their own fellows who, in their revelry, were flagrantly flaunting their allegiance to the Lord. How the disobedient ones were related to them was not a consideration as to who should or should not be slain. Their allegiance had been to God, and now Moses could say "they have observed thy word." It would appear from the Exodus account that most of the tribe was, in fact, faithful; and few Levites had to turn upon members of their own tribe to put down the revolt. But in the zeal for God and the cause of *right*, the Levites absolutely disregarded blood relationship.

The ramifications of the principle endorsed by the Levites are infinite. What comes first, *principle* or personal friendship considerations? The Levites decided quickly and decisively on the side of God—then proceeded to take appropriate action. Compare the teaching of Jesus, Matt. 10:34-39.

#### d. BENJAMIN (v. 12)

12 Of Benjamin he said,  
The beloved of Jehovah shall dwell in safety by him;  
He covereth him all the day long,  
And he dwelleth between his shoulders.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:12

582. There is some difference in the prediction here of Benjamin and that given in Gen. 49:27. Why?
583. Just what specific promise did God make to the tribe of Benjamin?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:12

12 Of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall \*dwell in safety by Him; He covers him all the day long, and makes His dwelling between his shoulders.

## COMMENT 33:12

This is a kindlier prediction than Jacob's (Gen. 49:27)—at least the stigma of having a wolf-like character is not depicted here. The word *Benjamin* means literally "son of my right hand" and he who was so beloved of his father (see Gen. 42:36-38) was also beloved of God.

The relatively small area occupied by Benjamin north of the tribe of Judah included the plains of Jericho that Lot found so attractive (Gen. 13:10). Josephus, in fact, says that Benjamin's allotment was small owing to "the goodness of the land"\*\*\* And though the upland regions are mountainous and stony and have little water, there is much good land on the western slopes. We remember this tribe especially for the two Sauls—the first king of Israel and the Apostle Paul from Tarsus.

As is shown particularly in the book of Judges, the tribe became an efficient war machine—particularly as archers and slingers. This ability is a partial fulfillment of God's promise that Benjamin shall "dwell in safety by him".

## e. JOSEPH—EPHRIAM AND MANASSEH (vv. 13-17)

- 13 And of Joseph he said,  
 Blessed of Jehovah be his land,  
 For the precious things of heaven, for the dew,  
 And for the deep that coucheth beneath.
- 14 And for the precious things of the fruits of the sun,  
 And for the precious things of the growth of the moons,
- 15 And for the chief things of the ancient mountains,  
 And for the precious things of the everlasting hills,
- 16 And for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof,

\*The temple in Jerusalem was located almost between the ridges of the territory of Benjamin, suggesting "between his shoulders" (cp. Josh. 15:8). Moses sees it as a symbol of the Lord's presence covering Benjamin continually.

\*\**Antiquities of the Jews*, V, i. 22.

And the good will of him that dwelt in the bush:  
 Let *the blessing* come upon the head of Joseph,  
 And upon the crown of the head of him that was separate  
 from his brethren.

- 17 The firstling of his herd, majesty is his;  
 And his horns are the horns of the wild-ox:  
 With them he shall push the peoples all of them,  
*even* the ends of the earth:  
 And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim,  
 And they are the thousands of Manasseh.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:13-17

584. By reading verses 13 thru 16 what particular benefits are promised by God to the sons of Joseph?  
 585. Read Gen. 49:22-26 and mark the parallels to this passage.  
 586. Manasseh was the eldest but Ephraim is treated as the "first-born"—explain Cf. Gen. 48:8.  
 587. In what respect was Ephraim and Manasseh like oxen?  
 588. The name Ephraim took on larger meaning than one tribe. Read Ps. 78:67, 68. What was the larger meaning?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:13-17

13 And of Joseph he said, Blessed by the Lord be his hand, with the precious gifts of Heaven, from the dew, and from the deep that couches beneath,

14 From the precious things of the fruits of the sun, and from the precious yield of the months,

15 From the chief products of the ancient mountains, and from the precious things of the everlasting hills,

16 With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, and the favor and good will of Him Who dwelt in the bush. Let these blessings come upon the head of Joseph, upon the crown of the head of him who was separate and prince among his brothers. [Exod. 3:4.]

17 Like a firstling young bull his majesty is, and his horns like the horns of the wild ox; with them he shall push the peoples, all of them, to the end of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.

## COMMENT 33:13-17

Joseph's name, of course, is not left on the land of his posterity, but that of his sons—Ephraim and Manasseh.

Vv. 13-16 depicts the general prosperity and blessings to come upon Joseph's offspring. As we saw in 3:12-17 (notes), Manasseh inherited a much larger total land mass than his brother. Yet prosperity and increase were especially to attend Ephraim ("fruitful"). See Gen. 48:17-20. And the blessing on all of Joseph, Gen. 49:22-26, has some striking parallels in the present passage. "Jacob described the growth of Joseph under the figure of a luxuriant branch of a fruit tree planted by the water; whilst Moses fixes his eye primarily upon the land of Joseph, and desires for him the richest productions" (Keil).

The I.S.B.E. states of Ephraim's land, "It is torn by many gorges, and is rocky and unfruitful. The long slopes to the westward, however, furnish much of the finest land in Palestine. Well watered as it is, the valleys are beautiful in season with cornfields, vineyards, olives and other fruit trees."

THE GOOD WILL OF HIM THAT DWELT IN THE BUSH (v. 16)—  
i.e. God, who spoke from the burning bush, Ex. 3:4. Our omnipresent God is not limited by space or time.

V. 17 depicts more specific blessings to be conferred upon Joseph.

Like a firstling bull in his majesty,  
He has horns like the horns of the wild-ox;  
With them he gores the people  
The ends of the earth one and all.  
These are the myriads of Ephraim,  
Those are the thousands of Manasseh.

—The Torah

"The oxen are Joseph's sons, all of whom were strong, but the firstborn excelled the rest, and was endowed with majesty. It is Ephraim that is referred to, whom Jacob raised to the position of the firstborn (Gen. 48:8, etc.)."—Pulpit. With his great power and might he would gore even distant peoples. (Horns depict strength, might, power).

By such representatives as Joshua and Samuel, this tribe became, in many ways, the leading tribe in the early days of Israel in Canaan. Shechem and Shiloh were early centers of worship. Later, after the separation of the ten northern tribes, "Ephraim" was often used by

metonymy for Israel (Isa. 7:2, 5, 17). Thus the northern tribes are depicted by their most powerful element. Indeed, it may be said that the tribes of Ephraim and Judah played the most important part in the history of the whole nation, and there was a constant duel for political power (hegemony) between the two.

Note how v. 17 corresponds to the prophecy of Jacob (Gen. 48:19). Ephraim (the younger) is to have his ten thousands (Heb. *rebabah*, myriads, a large unlimited number) while Manasseh was to have his thousands (though possessing more territory).

At the time Moses wrote these lines Manasseh, however, far outnumbered Ephraim. Ephraim lost great numbers in the wilderness trek.

	Num. 1:32-35	Num. 26:28-37
Ephraim	40,500	32,500
Manasseh	32,200	52,700

Thus Moses' words surely were not based on recent history!

Later, we have the population of Joseph growing (as shown in the book of Joshua), but we have no statistics on the numerical dominance of Ephraim.

For many years the descendants of Joseph played a leading role in Israel's history. But with their corruption went the corruption of the ten northern tribes. Thus their fate is bewailed in the Psalms:

Moreover he [God] refused the tent of Joseph,  
And chose not the tribe of Ephraim,  
But chose the tribe of Judah,  
The mount Zion which he loved.

—Ps. 78:67, 68

#### f. ZEBULUN AND ISSACHAR (vv. 18, 19)

- 18 And of Zebulun he said,  
Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out;  
And, Issachar, in thy tents.
- 19 They shall call the peoples unto the mountain;  
There shall they offer sacrifices of righteousness:  
For they shall suck the abundance of the seas,  
And the hidden treasures of the sand.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:18, 19

589. In what sense would Zebulun be "going out"?
590. What "mountain" is meant in verse 19?

591. What is involved in the phrase "they shall suck the abundance of the seas?"

592. What are "the hidden treasures of the sand"?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:18, 19

18 And of Zebulun he said, \*Rejoice, Zebulun, in your interests abroad; and you, Issachar, in your tents [at home].

19 They shall call the people unto Mount [Carmel]; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness for \*\*they shall suck the abundance of the seas, and the treasures hid in the sand.

### COMMENT 33:18, 19

As adjacent tribes( whose founders were both sons of Leah) soon to occupy the corridor running Northwest and southwest and including the Kishon river, the Great Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel, these tribes are treated together. And historically, many of their activities were jointly accomplished.

IN THY GOING OUT (v. 18)—A phrase usually depicting commerce, trade, business.

THEY SHALL CALL THE PEOPLES UNTO THE MOUNTAIN; THERE SHALL THEY OFFER SACRIFICES (v. 19)—What mountain? Or is a specific one meant? Some would refer us to Mount Carmel, that prominent mountain of Elijah's contest and sacrifice (I K. 18). But there is no evidence that it became a specific mountain designated for sacrifices, though it lies on the southwest border of Zebulun. In Ex. 15:17 the land of Israel is termed "the mountain of thine inheritance . . . The sanctuary . . ." It seems that this general sense is retained here (though we *may* have a specific reference to Zion, where the temple was later erected). The mountain-country of Canaan would be the place of Jehovah's worship and praise, thus his sanctuary. In that worship Zebulun and Issachar would wholeheartedly join.

\*Not until 1934 was this prophecy notably in process of fulfillment, when Haifa's bay became one of the great harbors of the Mediterranean, with commerce affecting the whole world.

\*\*The great oil pipeline path across Palestine was first opened in 1935. Until then this prophecy fell far short of fulfillment. But 3400 years before, Moses sent out the inspired headlines, "Zebulun . . . Issachar . . . shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sand." Our omnipotent God was "declaring the end *and* the result from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand" (Isa. 46:10).

THE ABUNDANCE OF THE SEAS (v. 19)—Zebulun, bordering the Mediterranean, would utilize her resources. The boundaries (Josh. 19:10-16) are difficult to exactly define. But that she would make use of her seashore position is also foretold in Jacob's prophecy (Gen. 49:13). Her position not only enabled her to carry on fishing, but she was literally able to "suck the abundance of the seas" by means of her strategic position for maritime trade. The great caravan route, *via maris*, passed directly through this territory. In modern times, Haifa, with its beautiful harbor, has become a world port.

THE HIDDEN TREASURES OF THE SAND (v. 19)—"The riches of the sea in general. It is however noteworthy that the sand of these coasts was especially valuable in the manufacture of glass; and glass was a precious thing in ancient times (cp. Job xxviii. 17). The mure from which the highly-prized purple dye was extracted, was also found here." (F. C. Cook)

#### g. GAD (vv. 20, 21)

- 20 And of Gad he said,  
 Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad:  
 He dwelleth as a lioness,  
 And teareth the arm, yea, the crown of the head.
- 21 And he provided the first part for himself,  
 For there was the lawgiver's portion reserved;  
 And he came *with* the heads of the people;  
 He executed the righteousness of Jehovah,  
 And his ordinances with Israel.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:20, 21

593. Gad had a reputation—for what?  
 594. Reuben, Gad and the half of Manasseh had some priority—why?  
 Does verse 21 have reference to this priority?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:20, 21

20 And of Gad he said, Blessed be He Who enlarges Gad! Gad lurks like a lioness, and tears the arm, yes, the crown of the head.

21 He selected the best land for himself, for there was the leader's portion reserved; yet he came with the chiefs of the nation, and the righteous will of the Lord he performed, and His ordinances with Israel. [Num. 32:29-33.]

## COMMENT 33:20, 21

BLESSED BE HE THAT ENLARGETH GAD (v. 20)—Gad was strong in war and gave great help to the other tribes, particularly in the conquest of Canaan. In return, he would receive God's blessing. See Gen. 49:19. His area, (nearly synonymous with Gilead) to the east of the Jordan, became the chief theater of war in the long struggle between Israel and the Syrians (I K. ch. 22). These verses appear to anticipate this and other struggles in the territory—and the fierce way in which God would fight to protect it.

THE LAWGIVER'S PORTION RESERVED (v. 21)—“for that was the commander's portion” (Berkeley. Similarly, R.S.V., Rotherham). i.e., Gad, as a leader and aggressive fighter for Israel, was given an appropriate “first part for himself.” Gad chose for himself a tract of land east of the Jordan, and the portion he had chosen was sacredly kept for him, though he also went with his brethren in the conquest of Canaan proper.

## h. DAN (v. 22)

22 And of Dan he said,  
Dan is a lion's whelp,  
That leapeth forth from Bashan.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:22

595. The territory of Dan is not in Bashan—how then could this prophesy be fulfilled? Cf. Judges 18.  
596. Samson was a Danite—how does he relate to this verse?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:22

22 Of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp that leaps forth from Bashan.

## COMMENT 33:22

This passage appears to look ahead to that time when Dan would conquer Laish (Judges 18) in northern Bashan near mount Herman, and from there “leap forth” in other exploits.

Perhaps no one so embodied the tribal characteristics as well as Samson. They were to be unsteady, unscrupulous, violent, possessed of a certain grim humor, and stealthy in tactics (“a serpent in the way,” Gen. 49:17). Dan is “a lion's whelp,” a phrase describing one who was swift and strong in striking.



## i. NAPHTALI (v. 23)

- 23 And of Naphtali he said,  
 O Naphtali, satisfied with favor,  
 And full with the blessing of Jehovah,  
 Possess thou the west and the south.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:23

597. The physical, geographical location of Naphtali made the words of this verse easy of fulfillment—why?  
 598. Just how was Naphtali to “possess . . . the west and the south”—read the Amplified Translation for one answer.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:23

23 Of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, \*satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the Lord, possess the sea [of Galilee] and [its warm, sunny climate like] the south.

## COMMENT 33:23

Both Moses' and Jacob's prophecies (Cf. Gen. 49:21) are very favorable toward this tribe. Occupying the territory to the west and north of the Sea of Galilee and the upper Jordan, Naphtali enjoyed a free life in his spacious uplands.

POSSESS THOU THE WEST AND THE SOUTH (v. 23)—This phrase has been variously translated and interpreted. As it stands it would appear to describe what their position was to be *in relation to the sea of Galilee* (Chinnereth). Their territory spread to the west and around to the north and south to the Jordan river. “Take possession on the west and south” (R.S.V.). The conjecture of the Amplified Bible is a little ingenious: “Possess the sea [of Galilee] and [its warm, sunny climate like] the south.”

## j. ASHER (vv. 24, 25)

- 24 And of Asher he said,  
 Blessed be Asher with children;

\*For many centuries much of the territory of upper Naphtali was little more than a miasmatic swamp, unfit for man or beast. But when the Jews last returned to Palestine they drained and redeemed the area, and by 1940 it was dotted over with thriving colonies, as Moses had foretold, “satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the Lord.”

Let him be acceptable unto his brethren,  
And let him dip his foot in oil.

- 25 Thy bars shall be iron and brass;  
And as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:24, 25

599. The expression "let him dip his foot in oil" is interpreted in two ways. Read the Comment and the Amplified Translation—what is your opinion?
600. Asher was promised great prosperity—but was this fulfilled? How? Cf. Judges 5:17.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:24, 25

24 Of Asher he said, Blessed above sons be Asher; let him be acceptable to his brothers, and \*let him dip his foot in oil.

25 Your castles and strongholds shall have bars of iron and bronze; and as your day so shall your strength, your rest and security, be.

### COMMENT 33:24, 25

LET HIM DIP HIS FOOT IN OIL (v. 24)—The tribe of Asher was not a warlike tribe, and raised no military hero in all of Israel's history. But it was a different matter in the case of agriculture and the commerce connected with it.

Asher received the strip of coastland north of mount Carmel (Joshua 19:24-31). Much of her commerce and business is blended with that of her neighbors, the Phoenicians. Indeed, such a town as Tyre, though within her borders, ever remained in Phoenician hands. And Asher may have blended his business enterprise with those of Phoenicia, Compare Judges 1:31-32. "But the valleys breaking down westward and opening on the plains have always yielded fine crops of grain. Remains of an ancient oak forest still stand to the N. of Carmel. The vine, the fig, the lemon and the orange flourish. Olive trees abound, and the supplies of olive oil which to this day are exported from the district recall the word of the old-time blessing, 'Let him dip his foot in oil.'" (I.S.B.E.). Compare the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. 49:20.

\*The maps of the territory of Asher suggest sometimes the sole of a foot, sometimes the shape of a leg and foot; but in either case the Great International Iraq-Petroleum Enterprise, opened in 1935, crossed the area just at the toe of Asher's "foot." Oil brought nearly 1,000 miles across the sands from Mesopotamia began pouring through pipes into the Haifa harbor a million gallons of oil a day. Jacob had said, "In the latter days . . . Asher, his bread shall be fat" (Gen. 49:1,20), and here Moses says of Asher, "Let him dip his foot in oil"!

THY BARS SHALL BE IRON AND BRASS (v. 25)—“May your doorbolts be iron and copper, And your security last all your days” (The Torah). “*Iron and brass shall be thy fortress*; i.e. his dwelling should be strong and impregnable” (Pulpit). Asher would fulfill his name, *happy*.

AS THY DAYS, SO SHALL THY STRENGTH [or *security*, or *rest*] BE (v. 25)—“May . . . your strength be equal to your days” (Berkeley). The whole tenor of Asher’s blessing points toward a peaceful, prosperous, and secure situation. But from all we can learn about this tribe, it was a peace bought at the price of blending, accommodating, and adjusting with his heathen neighbors. When he should have joined his brethren to throw off the yoke of Sisera,

Asher sat still at the haven of the sea,  
And abode by his creeks.

—Judges 5:17

k. BLESSINGS UPON ALL ISRAEL (vv. 26-29)

- 26 There is none like unto God, I Jeshurun  
Who rideth upon the heavens for thy help,  
And in his excellency on the skies.
- 27 The eternal God is *thy* dwelling-place,  
And underneath are the everlasting arms:  
And he thrust out the enemy from before thee,  
And said, Destroy.
- 28 And Israel dwelleth in safety  
The fountain of Jacob alone,  
In a land of grain and new wine;  
Yea, his heavens drop down dew.
- 29 Happy art thou, O Israel:  
Who is like unto thee, a people saved by Jehovah,  
The shield of thy help,  
And the sword of thy excellency!  
And thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee;  
And thou shalt tread upon their high places.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 33:26-29

601. What a promise of assurance and protection!: “The eternal God is *thy* dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms:”—why was Israel ever defeated with such a One for their God?
602. From victory to victory God promised to lead Israel—how sad that it was not true—is there meaning in this for us?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 33:26-29

26 There is none like God, O Jeshurun [Israel], Who rides through the heavens to your help, and in His majestic glory through the sky.

27 The eternal God is your refuge and dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms; He drove the enemy before you and thrust them out, saying, Destroy!

28 And Israel dwells in safety, the fountain of Jacob alone in a land of grain and new wine; yest His heavens drop dew.

29 Happy are you, O Israel, and blessing is yours! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, the sword that exalts you! Your enemies shall come fawning and cringing, and submit feigned obedience to you, and you shall march on their high places.

## COMMENT 33:26-29

This passage comprises a beautiful song of *praise to God* as well as the assurance of his blessing. As we have seen again and again in Deuteronomy, the *continuence* of such promises are contingent upon Israel's *faithfulness*. We see no reason to discard this principle in the present instance.

JESHURUN (v. 26)—Israel. See 32:15, note.

THE FOUNTAIN OF JACOB ALONE (v. 28)—That is, the issue or offspring of Jacob (Israel), as the special recipient of God's favor, rested solely upon his might. He would fight for them (1:30) and he would not fail them or forsake them (31:6-8, Josh. 1:5-9). They were therefore in a happy and blessed condition (v. 29), "saved by Jehovah," their shield.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Moses delivers a prophetic blessing to the children of Israel, 1. The introduction, 2-5. Prophetic declarations concerning Reuben, 6; concerning Judah, 7; concerning Levi, 8-11; concerning Benjamin, 12; concerning Joseph, 13-17; concerning Zebulun, 18, 19; concerning Gad, 20, 21; concerning Dan, 22; concerning Naphtali, 23; concerning Asher, 23, 35. The glory of the God of Jeshurun, and the glorious privileges of his true followers, 26-29.

## F. THE DEATH OF MOSES (34:1-12)

## 1. MOSES SHOWN THE PROMISED LAND FROM MOUNT NEBO; DIES AND IS BURIED (34:1-8)

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, 2 and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the hinder sea, 3 and the South, and the Plain of the valley of Jericho the city of palm-trees, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. 5 So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. 6 And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. 7 And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. 8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 34:1-8

603. Locate on a map the following places: (1) Gilead, (2) Dan, (3) Naphtali, (4) Ephraim and Manasseh, (5) Judah, (6) the hinder sea, (7) the South, (8) the Plain of the Valley of Jericho.
604. How was Moses buried? Why?
605. What do you imagine was the predominant thought of Moses on this occasion?

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 34:1-8

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is opposite Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land, Gilead to Dan,

2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, to the western [Mediterranean] sea.

3 And the South (the Negeb) and the Plain, that is, the valley of Jericho the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.

4 And the Lord said to him, This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, I will give it to your descendants. I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.

5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord,

6 And He buried him in the valley of the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows where his tomb is to this day.

7 Moses was 120 years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural forces abated. [But cf. 31:2]

8 And the Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

### COMMENT 34:1-8

**MOUNT NEBO, TO THE TOP OF PISGAH (v. 1)**—See 3:27, (notes), 32:49. Pisgah and Nebo are usually synonymously, though we understand Pisgah to be the peak or summit. Much of the land, of course, was only seen as mountain tops from this point. He could also see:

**THE HINDER SEA (v. 2)**—that is, the Mediterranean, doubtless seen as only a shroud of glimmering blue in the distant west.

**AND JEHOVAH SHOWED HIM ALL THE LAND (v. 1)**—One can only begin to imagine the emotion and feeling that must have seized the very soul of Moses at this hour. He had himself many times written of this land of milk and honey. Yet, so far as we know, this was his only view of it. He was still well enough to take in all the view, for "his eye was not dim" (v. 7).

Moses has taken this journey up the mountain knowing just when and where he should die. His death, as his life, was in obedience to God's word and will. It is not easy for us to enter into his feelings then. "God called him up to a mountain top, and rolled away all the mists that might have covered that fair land, and there it all lay outspread. He saw its smiling green meadows at his feet, between which the Jordan swiftly flowed, and to the right his eye glanced along the valleys and woods, and bright waving corn [grain] fields that stretched away into the dim distance, where rose the purple, snow-crowned hills of Lebanon. To his left he saw the mountains swelling, like mighty billows of the sea, all struck into stillness . . ." (Gray and Adams). How much of the future did God reveal to Moses now? We can only imagine. This great nation was soon to cover the land he viewed. Across the Dead Sea and high on the distant Judean hills was the great city of David to be established—and become Jerusalem, the site of the temple and the center of Jehovah worship for a thousand years. Someday out-

side its walls on a nearby hill, a mere speck on the landscape, a cross shall one day stand, and the Son of God shall die to save the world.

But the mind of Moses must surely have gone back for a moment, too. His entire life had, in a definite sense, led to this very point. His mission was not complete—a mission that had really begun with his birth.

His life in Pharaoh's palace, the forty years in Midian, the contest with Pharaoh, the crossing of the Red Sea, the defeat of the Amalakites, the giving of the Law, rebellion of Israel, and setting up of the tabernacle at Sinai, the ill-fated report of the spies and consequent years of wandering, the endless, continual, incessant murmurings of his own countrymen—then the victories over the Sihon, Og, and the east side tribes. And now, what would become of this vast people encamped below him? Like Daniel (Dan. 7:15, 28), his own inspired prophecies doubtless troubled his own mind. He had been "moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21) as he spoke, but what did these words *mean*? What would the future of this people be? What would happen to them? Surely Moses must have passed from this life with such questions still lingering in his mind.

THOU SHALT NOT GO OVER THITHER (v. 4)—It was to be the job of Joshua, a type of the risen Savior, to lead Israel to the Promised Land—not him who represented the law. God had forbidden Moses' entrance into that land because His servant had failed to sanctify Him in the eyes of the children of Israel (See Num. 20:12, Cf. Deut. 1:37 [notes] 3:23-29, 32:50, 51).

AND HE BURIED HIM IN THE VALLEY (v. 6)—In 32:50 Moses is commanded to go up into the mount, die, "and be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people". The latter phrase normally infers a burial (Gen. 35:29, 49:29, 33). But the translators, (whether the A.V. of 1611 or the modern versions) uniformly translate the passage "and he [that is, God] buried him in the valley." The marginal reading, "he was buried" seems highly improbable not only from a standpoint of linguistic scholarship, but also from the additional statement of fact: the whereabouts of his burying place was not known. Surely it *would* have been known had Moses been buried by the Israelites! A monument or memorial of permanence would most certainly have been erected at his grave! We suspect it might have been a sore temptation as a shrine or object

of worship. So God himself took care of Moses, and the temptation to defy their leader was averted.

HIS EYE WAS NOT DIM, NOR HIS NATURAL FORCE ABATED (v. 7)  
—The phrase "I can no more go out and come in" of 31:2 should, in view of this statement, be understood in the light of Moses' realization that God was now about to take him. He was not yet spent, physically, but his time was up, for his service as leader of Israel through the wilderness and to the promised land was completed. But how often we have seen men taken in death "before their time." Someone has said "Death cannot come to him untimely who is fit to die", and so it was with Moses. His work was done, he had fought the good fight, and the crown of life awaited him.

## 2. JOSHUA ASSUMES LEADERSHIP; A FINAL TRIBUTE TO MOSES (34:9-12)

9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses. 10 And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, 11 in all the signs and the wonders, which Jehovah sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, 12 and in all the great terror, which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 34:9-12

606. How could we compare and contrast Moses and Joshua?  
607. We can say that: "God came into closer fellowship with Moses than with any man since the fall of Adam"—in what sense was this true?  
608. What is meant by the expression: "whom Jehovah knew face to face"?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 34:9-12

9 And Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; so the Israelites listened to him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.

10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,



11 [None equal to him] in all the signs and wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land,

12 And in all the mighty power and all the great and terrible deeds which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.

### COMMENT 34:9-12

Joshua had again and again demonstrated the qualities of leadership in the wilderness wanderings. See 31:3, notes, and Num. 27:15-23. Now, himself no youngster and certainly no novice, he is to lead Israel across the Jordan. While Moses had served as lawgiver, prophet, judge, and exhorter, Joshua is to serve primarily as a military general—though a very godly one.

God spoke with Moses face to face (v. 10 Cf. Num. 12:5-8). That will ever be his highest distinction. God came into closer fellowship with Moses than with any man since the fall of Adam. His fellowship with Jehovah was real, personal, intimate, genuine. Thus though he was the meekest man in all Israel, he was also the strongest, for the closer one gets to *God*, the greater his inner power and personal courage. Moses, like Paul, found strength in his weakness and power in his helplessness. (No one sees the form of God, who is spirit and invisible. In the form of Jesus, he is declared or manifested in human flesh. See Jn. 1:18; compare Col. 1:15, I Tim. 1:17, 6:16, Heb. 11:27, I Jn. 4:12). The fact that Moses spoke with God "face to face" is descriptive of the *closest fellowship*; there was no mediator used between Moses and God; he was his own mediator.

In 18:5 ff. we saw Moses described as a type of Christ, the Prophet. As we see him passing from the scene, we are reminded of a few parallels: Both were preserved miraculously as infants; both had mighty contests with the power of Satan; both controlled the seas; both fasted forty days and nights; both endured great murmurings and persecutions from their own people; both miraculously fed the multitudes, both pled in intercessory prayer for their people; and both reappeared after death. But for all this, Moses most resembles the Savior in *character* and *life*, for both men were readily responsive to the will and teachings of the Father. Deuteronomy is an unmatched and peerless document; and Moses was the pure vessel through which it flowed from God to man.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Moses goes up to Mount Nebo to the top of Pisgah, and God shows him the whole extent of the land which he promised to give to the descendants of Abraham, 1-4. There Moses died, and was so privately buried by the Lord that his sepulchre was never discovered, 5, 6. His age and strength of constitution, 7. The people weep for him thirty days, 8. Joshua being filled with the spirit of wisdom, the Israelites hearken to him, as the Lord commanded them, 9. The character of Moses as a prophet, and as a worker of the most extraordinary miracles, both in the sight of the Egyptians, and the people of Israel; conclusion of the Pentateuch, 10-12.

## QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

(32:48—34:12)

(32:44-52)

1. From what vantage point is Moses told to view the Promised Land? How much of it could he see?
2. What reason is given *in this lesson* for Moses not entering into Canaan? How does this correspond to previous statements about this matter (as in Numbers 20, Deut. 1:37, 3:23 ff.)?

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

3. Jehovah's presence is said to have been seen in Sinai, Seir, and Paran (v. 2). Give at least one incident in each area which would show this.
4. Where are all his saints (v. 3)? What did Jesus teach about this?
5. Who or what is Jeshurun? Who is his (its) king?
6. What was to happen to Reuben's population? Any reason for this?
7. How would Judah rank as a political and military power in Israel?
8. What tribe had the Thummim and Urim? What purpose did it serve?
9. How is this tribe's fidelity toward God described and what incident is alluded to in the description?
10. Joseph (Manasseh and Ephraim) are likened to what animal's horns? What is he doing with them?
11. Population-wise, Manasseh was to have \_\_\_\_\_, while Ephraim was to have \_\_\_\_\_.

12. What does Zebulun's "going out" indicate? How is this confirmed by geography and history?
13. Seas and sand would be valuable to Zebulun and Issachar. How?
14. (Give one possible answer) On what mountain were they to call the people to sacrifice?
15. How did Gad provide (choose) "the first part for himself"?
16. From where would Dan (the lion's whelp) leap forth? How is this to be understood?
17. How would Naphtali possess "the west and the south"?
18. Asher would dip his foot in oil, and have doorbolts of iron and brass. Explain the implications of this prophecy.
19. Upon what other nation(s) would an obedient Israel be dependent?

#### CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

20. In view of the fact that no one can see God, who is invisible, how do you explain the declaration that Moses spoke with God "face to face"? What does this phrase mean?

# THE AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY\*

by

Joseph Bryant Rotherham

At first sight it might seem as though the translator of THE EMPHASIZED BIBLE had no need to trouble himself about the authorship of the Book of Deuteronomy. There it is: simply translate it, and leave all such questions to commentators and the higher critics. Even had this self-excusing policy prevailed, however, that would not have obliterated the impression naturally received in the process of rendering the book. It is true that the remanding of that impression into silence might have entailed no loss to the world. But there was another reason for offering an opinion, which was this. The design of this Bible—to give effect, among other things, to the interesting distinction between “narrative and speech”—made it imperative to take a definite attitude as to the literary question involved in this discussion. That is to say, it demanded of the translator not only an exercise of his own judgment as to what portions of the book of Deuteronomy were probably editorial, so that he might differentiate them in the margin, setting fully out to the left hand of the column portions that were *not* “speech”; but the very fact of doing this was sure to draw the inquisitive reader into the problem, by provoking the obvious question why some parts of Deuteronomy are marginally distinguished from other parts; why, for example, chaps. i. 1-5; ii. 10-12, 20-23; iii. 11, 13-14; iv. 41-43, 44-49, are thus separated from their contexts. It seemed better, therefore, to take the reader into confidence; and, first, by a few notes subjoined to the book itself, as at chaps. iv. 13; vi. 5; vii. 17; viii. 2 &c., and then by the present connected statement, to employ the book of Deuteronomy as a very elementary object-lesson, offered once for all, in that legitimate higher criticism which no honest man of reverent judgment needs fear to study.

The purpose thus defined may perhaps be most effectively attained by first presenting, substantially as it was written, a paper which appeared in a weekly magazine two years ago, and by then submitting such further observations as may appear to be called for.

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In this book we hear the voice of “the old man eloquent.” As an author, there may be more or less of Moses the man of God in the books

\*The article appears between the testaments in *The Emphasized Bible*.

of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers; but here we come within the sound of his living voice, and listen to his impassioned pleadings with Israel. No later writer could have so completely entered into the situation. Moses himself, as revealed in the foregoing history, now stands before us. We perceive in the Speaker, the teachings of the past, the realisation of the present, the fears for the future—revealing themselves in a manner perfectly inimitable. Such, at least, was the impression made on the mind of the translator when some years ago he wrote out his rendering of the book.

This impression was decidedly deepened when, later on, he carefully revised his translation. It is true that his previous conviction became slightly qualified, yet only in such wise as to strengthen the conclusion to which he had previously come. The more one became familiar with the mannerisms of the speaker's living voice, the more evident it was that here and there editorial annotations had been subsequently added. The rush and passion and vehement urgency that we feel as we hearken to Moses' voice are not easily to be reconciled with the deliberate presentation of antiquarian notes, as to the former dwellers in Edom and the other lands through which Israel had passed; far less with the measurements and present location of the bedstead of Og, king of Bashan. Granted here and there an editorial addition, and these things easily fall into their place. They do but momentarily interrupt the flowing periods of the living Moses; but assuredly they formed no part of the original spoken discourse. They enrich the book as we have it, but they would have marred the discourses as actually delivered by a man shortly to die.—This then is the modification to which the translator's first persuasion readily submitted itself.

But now, after a third survey of the book of Deuteronomy, how does the question of Authorship present itself? Briefly, as follows: That a little further extension of the supposed editorship goes a long way towards placing the first main impression upon an immovable basis. Not antiquarian notes alone betray editorship; but historical introductions, and at least one historical appendix. The historical appendix is, of course, seen and known of all men. Moses certainly did not record his own death and burial; and only a considerably later hand could have finally told how much greater Moses was than any who came after him. The historical introductions—of which there are principally two—are worthy of further attention. There is nothing to show that those introductions may not have been written by Joshua, Eleazar or Phineas, or some other contemporary of the great Prophet, within a few years of his

death. The introductions referred to are, first, a general one to the whole book (chap. i. 1-5); and second, an introduction to Moses' account of the "ten words: given on Horeb (chap. iv. 41-v.1). In both of these are found tokens of editorship which challenge our confidence, inasmuch as, in them, two distinct lines of evidence are seen converging to the conclusion that these portions are editorial. The first line consists in this—that, when the *Editor* writes, he refers to Moses in the third person: "Moses" said or did this or that; whereas when *Moses himself speaks*, he naturally alludes to himself as "I" or "me"; to Israel, including himself, as "we" or "us"; directly addressing his hearers as "ye" or "you". This of itself is clear enough as marking a distinction between the principal spoken addresses and any editorial supplements. Singularly enough, the line thus drawn is confirmed by the simple word "over" in relation to the river Jordan. Moses we know did not enter "the good land": Joshua and others did. To him, "over the Jordan" meant to the west: to them, after they had entered, "over the Jordan" meant to east, or, as the Editor of Moses is accustomed to add, "towards the rising of the sun." Now the persuasive coincidence is just this: That in those portions where we presume the Editor is writing because he refers to Moses in the third person,—in them we find that "over the Jordan" means to the east: on the other hand, where we feel sure that Moses himself is speaking, by the clear sign that he says "I", "we", "ye", "you",—in those very portions "over the Jordan" means to the west. There is but one exception, and that occurs in chap. iii. 8 in the midst of a sentence which by the usual token was spoken by Moses; whereas the phrase 'over the Jordan' which occurs in that sentence must mean eastward, as the locality spoken of conclusively shows. The difficulty is at once removed by the very easy hypothesis that that particular clause in the sentence was added as an editorial explanation. Then all is plain, and the exception proves the rule; which rule being a second one, and coinciding with a first entirely independent of it, generates an amount of confidence not easily shaken.

But the evidence of the Mosaic authorship of the speeches—of which, be it noted, the book of Deuteronomy is mainly composed—springs from something more subtle and more conclusive than the afore-said converging lines of evidence, however satisfactory in themselves those lines may be. It springs from the manner in which the speaker enters into the entire situation, leading us to exclaim, None but Moses could have *dome* it! Coupled with this, and constituting an especial form of it, is the profound emotionalism—in a word, the psychology which per-

vades the book, prompting us to say, None but Moses could have *felt* all this!

What, then, was the *situation* into which the speaker so completely enters? It was a situation created by time, place, event, and personality; and, naturally, owing to the concurrence of these causes, a situation that had never existed before and could never exist again. The *time* was after the forty years' wanderings, after the conquest of Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan; and just before the passage of the Jordan into Canaan: a momentous time, crowded with memories, throbbing with exciting expectations. The *place* was the Arabah of Moab, near the Jordan, over against Jericho, the centre of the whole east of Canaan, along which the people had skirted or into which they had penetrated—a place, therefore, which invited them to cross, to enter, to possess, without more delay. And what unique *events* had already happened: the sullen acquiescence in Israel's transit by Edom, Moab and Ammon, at the terrible cost of the slain over the matter of Baal-peor with which the names of Balak and Balaam are dishonourably associated; the unexpected conquest of the magnificent lands of Gilead and Bashan, with all the stir of war whetting the swords of Israel's warriors with keen eagerness for the great invasion. Then, finally, look at the *personalities* which enter into the situation: Caleb is there, and Joshua, both of whom knew personally something, still vivid in their memories, which, as spies, they had seen—of the inhabitants and cities and products of the land; and there are Eleazar and Phineas, son and grandson of Aaron, Moses' brother; there, also, the generation whose memories, many of them, reached back to the early days of the wanderings, who had seen that great and terrible desert, who had skirted Edom and Moab and Ammon, and penetrated Gilead and Bashan, many of whom had lost near relatives in the fearful revolt of Baal-peor; and towering above them all was the commanding personality of Moses himself. Now the contention here submitted is, that the speaker of those discourses, which constitute the chief portion of the book of Deuteronomy, so completely enters into the situation created by the time, the place, the events, and the personalities, that he could be no other than Moses himself. Only the man who lived then, and stood there, who had passed through those stirring events, who knew and confronted that generation, could possibly speak in the strain that here greets our eyes.

For note, finally, the marked psychology of this book. What a profound emotionalism the speaker displays! All the forms of speech that betoken depth of feeling are present here—repetitions, as if the

speaker could not make sure enough of having effected his purpose; digressions, caused by vivid memories crowding in upon him while he was speaking; appeals, remonstrances, recriminations, which none but Moses could have dared; and, especially confessions of disappointment and regret—so keen, so bitter, as if his heart would break—that he might not himself enter into the good land. Note well, also, the extremes that meet, and are melted into a living whole, by the intense feeling with which the speaker is borne along: "What nation so great! . . . "Oh foolish people and unwise!" Note also the labour—the travail—for the people's well-being into which his passionate love urges him. He speaks, and speaks; he must surely have spoken from day to day! When he has done speaking, then he writes, and writes on: adding perhaps a little, towards the end, which he had not actually spoken, but in penning which he feels as if he were still speaking. And when he has written all—all the law, all his repetition of the law, all his own recollections about the giving of the law, including perhaps variations (most natural in one who spoke and wrote from memory, but very unlikely to have been indulged in by anyone else), when he has done all this, then, Is there anything else he can do, any further stone he can turn, to stem and stay his people's apostasy? Yes, there is one thing he can do. He can resolve his passion into song—a song for the tongue, for the ear, for the memory; a song to live among the people, to be recited in their gatherings, to be accompanied by the harp. He has harangued them, he has warned them; now he will bewitch them. Thus is born his Witnessing Song (chap. xxxii.) This is not the place to analyze that marvellous composition. Read it; get into sympathy with it. Against the doubt whether Moses could have composed it, let it be enough to say, Could anyone else have composed it? With regard to the Song of "Blessing" which stands in the next chapter (chap. xxxiii.), the case in many ways is very different. Instead of seeming to grow out of the speeches which have gone before, it is couched in a totally opposite strain. It is blessing only—admiration only—felicitation only. What then? Shall we contradict Moses' editor, who records that "This is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death"? There is no need! One of two suppositions is open to us, both of which are perfectly rational, either of which would naturally account for the altered mood of the prophet-poet. We may conceive of the "Blessing" as now publicly produced. Or we may form another hypothesis: we may conclude that the mind of Moses passed into a serener atmosphere after the excitement and strain of the admonitory



speeches and song were over—in the consciousness that he had done his duty; knowing, moreover, that after all, there was hope in the end for Israel, how many soever her sins would be, how terrible soever the sufferings must be which should follow those sins (chap. xxxii. 43),—knowing this, his profound love for his people, his unshaken confidence in their destiny, stirred and guided by divine afflatus, now moved him to excogitate his most glowing idealisations of Israel's unique position, and to cast his thoughts into the form of a most lovely and loving song. And so, having prepared and pronounced his "Paradise Regained," he is parted from the beloved tribes—almost literally—with a "blessing" on his lips.

We have assumed that Moses was a poet. Why not? He was an Oriental—he was an educated man—he had been in love—he had enjoyed forty years of learned leisure in Midian. What wonder if the soul of a poet had been awakened within him, and the stylus of a poet had been trained to commit to papyrus or to parchment the musical numbers with which he had beguiled many a waiting hour during his banishment from his land and his people!

And even in this second song there are, if we mistake not, internal evidences of no small force that no one was ever so fitted to write it as Moses himself. If we wished to cite an example, we would say: The opening lines (chap. xxxiii. 2) descriptive of the Divine Appearing, when Yahweh came forth to meet Israel; Moses going forth at the head of his people, Yahweh advancing to meet them in a pillar of light and fire. Can we think of any human imagination so likely to have been profoundly and permanently impressed by that Theophany as that of Moses himself? What surprise if, before he died, he perpetuated his recollections in one of the most magnificent poems ever written?

In fine: the book of Deuteronomy must have had an author. Making reasonable allowances for editorial preservation and annotation, no man comes before us out of all the centuries of Hebrew history so fitted to be, so likely to have been, that author as Moses, the man of God, the leader of Israel out of Egypt to the confines of the promised land.

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Such is the paper as it originally appeared in print. There is little to add. Since it was written some attention has been given to what the critics who treat of the Literature of the Old Testament have to say,—without changing the general persuasion of the present writer. It is still conceived that, full allowance being made for the necessary editing

## DEUTERONOMY

of the Sacred Books, it is needless to disturb the internal claim to Authorship where, as in this case, it is plainly made in the writing itself, and where that claim is seen to rest on broad and general grounds of inherent probability. It is, of course, undesirable to get involved in technicalities. It matters little whether the term "author" is applied to Moses or to his Editors, provided it is well understood what is intended. The one weighty question is whether the great Lawgiver did actually deliver the substance of what is here put into his mouth, and whether his speeches have been honestly and competently edited for the purpose, and during the process, of being handed down to us.

# THE AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

The Testimony of Jesus\*

by

J. W. McGarvey

1. The Positions of the Parties. We now come to testimony which, if explicit and unambiguous, should settle this controversy finally and forever. But at the threshold we encounter from both extremes of the new criticism objections to the introduction of it. Kuenen expresses the objection of the radical wing in words so striking and emphatic that they have been quoted often as the keynote of opposition from that quarter. He says:

We must either cast aside as worthless our dearly bought scientific method, or must forever cease to acknowledge the authority of the New Testament in the domain of the exegesis of the Old (*Prophets and Prophecy* in Israel, 486).

Shocking as this statement must ever be to a believer in Christ, it presents the necessary position of unbelievers; for if Jesus Christ possessed no supernatural intelligence, he was incapable of giving competent testimony in regard to the authorship of Old Testament books. As a witness he must be ruled out, and ruled out he is, directly or indirectly, by all the analytical critics. On the contrary, to all believers in him his testimony settles all questions on which he has designed to speak.

Kuenen, in the remark just quoted, betrays the unexpressed conviction that his "dearly bought scientific method" must be pronounced worthless, and must be cast aside as such, if the authority of the New Testament is acknowledged. In this he proves himself more candid and more logical than are many of his half-way pupils who profess faith in Christ. And let it not slip from our memory that the most radical of

\*The following pages appear in *The Authorship of Deuteronomy*, published by Standard Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, but long out of print. This volume was printed while McGarvey was president of the College of the Bible, Lexington, Ky., and copyright in 1902. It was the author's final book, published when he was 73 years of age, and at once recognized both in this country and Great Britain as a work that had to be faced up to by the "higher critics" it assailed. We have included its final pages. It seems quite obvious that McGarvey was saving his strongest argument for the last.

destructive critics recognize and frankly admit an irreconcilable antagonism between their theories respecting the Old Testament, and the statements on the subject in the New Testament.

On the other hand, Prof. C. A. Briggs expresses the view of the "evangelical critics," in the following paragraph:

Those who still insist upon opposing higher criticism with traditional views, and with the supposed authority of Jesus Christ and his apostles, do not realize the perils of the situation. Are they ready to risk the divinity of Christ, the authority of the Bible, and the existence of the church, upon their interpretation of the words of Jesus and his apostles? Do they not see that they throw up a wall that will prevent any critic, who is an unbeliever, from ever becoming a believer in Christ and the Bible? They would force evangelical critics to choose between truth and scholarly research on the one side, and Christ and tradition on the other (*Bib. Study*, 196).

This author is equally opposed with Kuenen to the introduction of the testimony of the New Testament on this subject, but on opposite grounds. He has such confidence in the "dearly bought scientific method," that the thought of its being proved worthless does not excite his fears, but he sees in it great peril to "the divinity of Christ, the authority of the Bible, and the existence of the church." He sees in it the likelihood that no critic who is an unbeliever will ever become a believer, a change highly improbable under any circumstances; and he sees in it the dire necessity that such men as himself shall be forced to choose between the new criticism and Christ—a plain intimation that they would choose the new criticism.

And yet, this author, in another place, takes the highest ground in favor of submitting to the authority of Jesus and his apostles. He says:

The authority of Jesus Christ, to all who know him to be their divine Saviour, outweighs all other authority whatever. A Christian must follow his teachings in all things as the guide into all truth. The authority of Jesus Christ is involved in that of his apostles (*ib.*, 186).

Nothing could be better, or better said, than this. We should cast aside, then, all fear of consequences, and investigate with perfect candor the sayings of Jesus and the apostles on this subject. Whatever our conclusions derived from the study of the Old Testament may be, we

## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

must cast them aside as worthless, as Kuenen says, if we find them in conflict with the testimony of the New Testament; and whatever the result as respects critics who are now unbelievers, we must let Christ be true if it makes every man a liar.

In order that our investigation of this most important question may be thorough, taking nothing for granted, we shall inquire first, Did Jesus *know* the facts involved in the Old Testament criticism? If he did not, then any affirmation by him on the subject proves nothing. Second, Did he *affirm* anything on this subject? If he both knew and affirmed, it follows that what he affirmed must be received with implicit faith by those who believe in him. Had our investigation of the Old Testament, which we have just now concluded, led us to accept the conclusions of the adverse critics, a contrary affirmation on the part of Jesus would be sufficient ground for reversing the decision, supposing that we had been misled by ingenious sophistry; but as the matter stands, this new testimony is not really needed except for the purpose of finding more solid ground for our final convictions, that human judgment at its best can afford.

2. Did Jesus Know? To the question, Did Jesus know who wrote the books of the Old Testament, the great lights of modern criticism, such as Wellhausen and Kuenen, together with all the lesser lights of the radical school, answer with an emphatic "No." Denying, as they do, his miraculous power, they also deny his miraculous knowledge, and claim that he knew, on such subjects, only what he learned from his teachers. They limit the knowledge of the apostles in the same way. As a necessary consequence, the testimony of Jesus on such subjects, no matter how explicit and positive it may be, has, with them, no weight whatever.

When believing scholars began to favor the Old Testament criticism of these unbelievers, they soon perceived that the testimony of Jesus and the apostles would have to be reckoned with, and so they put their ingenuity to work in the search for some method of evading the apparent force of this testimony. The first effort in this direction that came under my own observation was an essay in the *Expositor* for July, 1891, from the pen of Dr. Alfred Plummer, under the heading, "The Advance of Christ in Sophia." Starting from the statement of Luke, that Jesus, when a child, "increased in stature and in wisdom" (*sophia* in the Greek), he argued that this increase in wisdom may have continued throughout the life of Jesus, and that, consequently, at every period of his life, even to the last, there may have been some

## DEUTERONOMY

things which he did not yet know, and among these the matters involved in Old Testament criticism. Add to the conclusion thus reached the fact that, according to his own statement, he did not know the day or the hour of his own second coming, and there remains but a short step to the conclusion that he may have been as yet ignorant of the authorship of the so-called book of Moses, and the reality of the facts recorded in it. A little later, Canon Gore introduced us to the doctrine of the *Kenosis*, as it is called, arguing the probability of our Lord's ignorance on critical subjects from the statement of Paul that though he was in the form of God, and thought it not a prize to be equal with God, he emptied himself, and took the form of a servant (Phil. ii. 6-8). This emptying included the laying aside of divine knowledge, so that he did not possess the latter while he was in the flesh. By this ingenious method of reasoning these gentlemen thought themselves justifiable in laying aside the testimony of him who had previously been regarded by all believers as the most important witness who could testify in the case. This they do "very reverently," and not with the irreverence with which infidel critics had already reached the same result. The accepted title of this process is "reverent criticism." Reverent it is in manner and tone, but not more so than the approach of Judas in the garden to kiss his Lord; and we are to see whether it is less deceptive.

I suppose that there is no intelligent person who now doubts that the knowledge of Jesus, during his infancy and his boyhood, was limited. But, after he received, at his baptism, the Holy Spirit without measure (John iii. 34), that Spirit which, in the words of Paul, knoweth all things, even the deep things of God (I Cor. ii. 10), who shall dare to assign any limit to his knowledge additional to that which he has himself assigned? Who but himself can now, or could then, have knowledge of even this limitation? He often displayed miraculous knowledge, as when he detected the unexpressed thoughts of men, when he gave directions to Peter with reference to the fish which he would catch with a starer in its mouth, and when he directed him and John about preparing the paschal supper. He also showed a conscious knowledge of his own pre-existence when he said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 56, 58); and when he prayed to his Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory that I had with thee before the world

## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

was" (John xvii. 4, 5). If he had miraculous knowledge, as these facts demonstrate, who shall dare to set a limit to his exercise of it? Can a "reverent" critic do so?

Our Lord's own statement that he knew not the day or the hour of his second coming is one of the most astonishing utterances that ever fell from his lips. Its singularity is not realized until it is considered in its connection with the other things belonging to his second coming, which he did know. He knew that it would occur after the destruction of Jerusalem, and after Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles; he knew by whom he will be accompanied—by all the angels of God; he knew what men will be doing when he comes—that they will be engaged in all the avocations of life, as when the flood came upon the world, and as when fire came down upon Sodom; he knew what he will do when he comes—that he will awake all the dead, sit on a throne of glory, assemble all the descendants of Adam before him, dividing them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; he knew that he will call those on his right hand into his eternal kingdom, and expel those on his left into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. He even knew that two men would be in the same bed, that two women would be grinding at the same handmill, and that in each instance one would be taken and the other left. If he knew all this respecting his second coming, how is it possible that he did not know the precise time of it? This question no man on earth can answer; and I presume that the same is true of the angels in heaven. It would be an absolutely incredible statement, had it not come from lips that can not speak falsely. And are we not here justifiable in saying that he who assigns any other limit to the knowledge of Jesus is guilty of a presumption that is near akin to blasphemy? I think so. And I think that the soul of every man who worships Jesus as Lord must shudder at the thought of charging him with ignorance respecting the Holy Scriptures, which were written by holy men guided by his own Holy Spirit.

3. Did Jesus affirm? We now ask, Did Jesus make any explicit affirmations in respect to the authorship of Old Testament books, or to the reality of events recorded in them? Before producing any instances of the kind, I will first quote some of the utterances of scholars who deny that he did, and try to test the grounds of their denial; and, as Professor Briggs has elaborated the argument on the negative side more extensively than any other recent writer of my acquaintance, he shall be heard first.

## DEUTERONOMY

Before I come to closer issues, it may benefit some readers to see how this professor deals with a sweeping remark by which it has become common to wave aside the whole discussion on which we are entering. Quoting this remark from its originator, the professor says:

Clericus went too far when he said that Jesus Christ and his apostles did not come into the world to teach criticism to the Jews. Then he adds: "The response of Herman Witsius, that Jesus came to teach the truth, and could not be imposed upon by common ignorance, or be induced to favor vulgar errors, is just" (*Bib. Study*, P. 184).

This answer must be approved by every one who has faith in Jesus as a teacher sent from God.

Immediately after pronouncing this just judgment, our professor proceeds to say: "And yet we can not altogether deny the principle of accommodation in the life and teachings of Jesus." He supports this assertion by referring to what Jesus says of the permission of divorce under Moses, saying that "Moses, because of the hardness of their hearts, suffered ancient Israel to divorce their wives for reasons which the higher dispensation will not admit as valid." This proves that God, under the former dispensation, gave Israel a law which he would not have given had the state of their hearts been different; but how does this show that the principle of accommodation is found "in the *life and teachings of Jesus*"? The proof and the proposition to be proved are as far apart as Moses and Jesus. Moreover, it is not correct to say that the reasons for this law were such as "the higher dispensation will not admit as valid;" for, in presenting them to his hearers, Jesus did admit that they were valid at the time in which they were acted upon. Moses did right in granting the privilege of divorce at will, although it was not permitted in the beginning, and was not to be permitted under the new dispensation.

In pursuance of this same line of thought, Professor Briggs quotes from Dr. S. H. Turner the following sentence:

It is not required in a religious or inspired teacher, nor, indeed, would it be prudent or right, to shock the prejudices of his uninformed hearers, by inculcating truths which they are unprepared to receive (*ib.*, p. 185).

So far as this is intended to apply to the question in hand, truths about the authorship and credibility of Old Testament books, it is wide of the mark; for no one claims that Jesus should have corrected pre-



vailing beliefs on critical questions. The only question is, Did he *affirm* the *correctness* of those beliefs? But, apart from this, the principle here laid down is untrue to the facts in the life of Jesus; for he was constantly shocking the prejudices of his hearers by inculcating truths which they were unprepared to receive; and it was on account of his persistence in inculcating such truths that they hated him and crucified him. The same is true of the apostles, and of all the prophets of Israel. The same is true also of Professor Briggs himself; for it was because of his inculcating, what he regards as just such truths on higher criticism, in the presence of a people not prepared to receive them on account of their alleged ignorance, that he was tried as a heretic and dismissed from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. This experience, which has come upon him since he wrote the book from which I quote, ought to convince him, if it has not, that the statement in question is erroneous.

On the next page (186) Professor Briggs repeats, in a slightly different form, but in closer connection with the question at issue, the remark just disposed of. He says: "There were no sufficient reasons why he should correct the prevailing views as to Old Testament books, and by his authority determine these literary questions." Of course, there were not; especially if those "prevailing views" were correct, as we believe. But no one claims that he should have corrected those views, even if they were incorrect. We claim only that, if they were incorrect, he could not have endorsed them; and the only question is, Did he, or did he not, endorse them?

Another evasive remark follows on the same page:

If they [Jesus and the apostles] used the language of the day in speaking of the Old Testament books, it does not follow that they adopted any of the views of authorship and editorship that went with these terms in the Talmud, or in Josephus, or in the apocalypse of Ezra; for we are not to interpret their words on this or any other subject by Josephus, or the Mishna, or the apocalypse of Ezra, or by any other external authorities, but by the plain grammatical and contextual sense of their words themselves.

All this is strictly true, but it amounts to nothing in this discussion. No one contends that the inspired utterances about Old Testament books involve an adoption of the views of any of the authors mentioned. Everybody agrees that these utterances are to be interpreted "by the

plain grammatical and contextual sense of their words;" but in this interpretation reference must invariably be had to the sense in which his hearers understood the words employed. Jesus could not, in addressing certain hearers, employ the deceptive trick of using "the language of the day" in a sense quite different from what was customary, without an intimation that he was doing so. When, then, he used "the language of the day" in speaking of Old Testament books, he used it as his hearers understood it, and his exact meaning is to be gathered from "the plain grammatical and contextual sense of the words themselves." I suppose that Professor Briggs would accept this modification of his remark.

After dealing with these general remarks of Professor Briggs intended to break in advance the force of any testimony of Jesus on critical questions, I now come to something more specific—his application of critical principles to the Book of Psalms. Here he does a gratuitous work by laboring to refute the idea that David wrote all of the psalms in this book. I think it impossible for any one who has ever read the Psalms to conclude that David wrote all of them, unless he should come to the question with a foregone conclusion, and employ the same kind of special pleading common with the destructive critics. A sample of this kind of sophistry, covering a whole page in fine type, is copied by the professor from an old Puritan commentary on Hebrews; and on reading it one is strikingly reminded of some later pages from the professor's own pen. Such is the New Testament evidence, however, in favor of the Davidic authorship of six of the Psalms, that on this evidence he admits them to be David's. This is an admission that the testimony of Jesus or an apostle on the question of authorship, when specific, is conclusive. Among the six is Psalm cx., and of this I wish to speak particularly, because it serves better than any other the purpose of determining whether the testimony of Jesus on the question of authorship is conclusive. Professor Briggs concedes that it is, at least in this instance, and yet he does not give the evidence its full force. His quotation of the words of Jesus is incomplete, and his argument based on them is weaker than the text justifies. But of this, more hereafter. (See *Bib. Study*, 187-190.)

Notwithstanding this decisive judgment expressed in *Biblical Study* in the year 1883, it is by no means certain that Professor Briggs is still of the same opinion. The critics of his school are progressive; and the conclusion of to-day may not be those of tomorrow. Six years later Professor Driver published his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old*

## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

*Testament*, and he, though considered a conservative, takes the opposite ground. He says:

This Psalm the 110th, though it may be ancient, can hardly have been composed by David (*Int.*, 384, note).

In support of this conclusion he indulges in some very singular reasoning. He first says: "If read without *prejudicium*, it produces the irresistible impression of having been written, not by a king with reference to an invisible spiritual being standing above him as his superior, but by a prophet *with reference to the theocratic king*." Just so. This is precisely the way in which Jesus interprets it. He claims that it was written with reference to the theocratic king; that is, with reference to himself after he entered upon his mediatorial reign. It was not written by a king with reference to "an invisible spiritual being standing above him," but a prophet, who was also a king, with reference to a glorified being in human form, yet destined to be far above every earthly king. The author goes on to give three reasons in support of this undisputed proposition; but as the proposition is admitted, it is not necessary to consider the reasons.

Not satisfied with this effort, the author, in the same paragraph, makes another and distinct attempt to get rid of the Lord's testimony. He says:

In the question addressed by our Lord to the Jews (Matt. xxii. 41-46; Mark xii. 35-37; Luke xx. 41-44) his object, it is evident, is not to instruct them on the *authorship* of the Psalm, but to argue from its *contents*; and though he assumes the Davidic authorship, accepted generally at the time, yet the cogency of his argument is unimpaired, so long as it is recognized that the Psalm is a Messianic one, and that the august language used in it of the Messiah is not compatible with the position of one who was a mere human son of David (*ib.*, 384, 385, note).

These remarks could be regarded as mere trifling were they not found in a volume written with the most serious purpose by a "reverent" author. They seem to have been written with only a vague remembrance of the words of Jesus to which they refer, and certainly without a close examination of them. Let us see what Jesus actually says:

"Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying What think ye of the Christ?

## DEUTERONOMY

whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith to them, How then doth David in the spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord saith to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I put thine enemies under thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?"

It is as clear as day that the argument of Jesus depends for its validity on the fact that David is the author. True, as Professor Driver says, his object was not to "instruct them on the authorship;" for that they perfectly understood; yet his argument is worthless if David was not the author. If the author was some other prophet that David, what would be the sense of demanding, "If David calleth him Lord, how is he his son?" That he was the son of the man who called him Lord, is *the essential fact* in the argument; and any attempt to eliminate or to obscure this fact, is a bad case of wresting the Scriptures.

Professor Cheyne, the most radical of English critics, unites with the German radicals in denying the Davidic authorship of this Psalm, but, unlike Professor Driver and other conservatives, he saves himself the hopeless task of trying to reconcile this denial with the words of Jesus. (See his *Commentary on the Psalms*, xvi. 301.) In thus ruling Jesus out of court as a witness in the case, he plays a daring game, but he saves himself the necessity of wresting away from the words of Jesus the only meaning which they can convey. It is not easy to decide which is the preferable alternative. The man who takes either alternative antagonizes Jesus gratuitously, and he does so at his peril.

I now come to the testimonies of Jesus respecting the authorship of the Pentateuch. But, before considering particular instances of this testimony, it may be well to quote what Professor Driver says on the general question of such testimony:

There is no record of the question, whether a particular portion of the Old Testament was written by Moses, or David, or Isaiah, having ever been submitted to him; and had it been so submitted, we have no means of knowing what his answer would have been (*Int.*, xii., xiii.).

This first statement is true; and it is equally true that no advocate of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch has ever claimed that such a question was submitted to Jesus. But Professor Driver knows, as well as he knows his own name, that a man may say who wrote a certain book, or part of a book, without having been questioned on the subject. I wonder if, in lecturing before his classes in the university, he never

## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

names the authors of books which he quotes till some student calls for the names. What kind of teacher would Jesus have been had he never given his hearers a piece of information till they called for it? And what would have been thought of him, if, in quoting books to his hearers, he had never given the names of the authors quoted till they were called for? How could this ingenious writer have penned the sentence just quoted without being conscious that he was evading the question which he was professing to discuss? If this is throwing doubt on his perfect candor, respect for his good sense forces me to it.

True, we have no record of the question being submitted, Did Moses or David or Isaiah write this or that? but what does this amount to if we find Jesus, at his own initiative, affirming that Moses or David or Isaiah wrote this or that? Is his voluntary affirmation to be called in question or explained away because no one had called for it? I think not. Turn, then, to what I shall style one of his indirect affirmations, and let us come to closer quarters in the argument. In his disputation with the Sadducees, Jesus demanded: "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake to him, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" (Mark xii. 26).

Now, it is admitted by all scholars that there was in the hands of the Jews at that period a book, always written as a single book, and known by them as "The Book of Moses." It is admitted that that book is the one known to us at the Pentateuch, now divided into five books. It is admitted that the Jews universally believed that this book was written by Moses, and that for this reason they called it "The Book of Moses." When, then, addressing men who thus believed, Jesus calls it "The Book of Moses," did he confirm their belief that Moses was its author, or did he not? To test this, we need only to suppose that, after the conversation, some one had said to the Sadducee who had been the spokesman of his party, "That man Jesus does not believe that Moses wrote the book from which you and he quoted;" what would the Sadducee have answered? Would he not have said, "You are mistaken; he called it 'The Book of Moses,' just as we do; and if he did not mean what he said, he talks deceitfully."

Here we are met by an argument which Professor Briggs has stated with as much force as can be given it, and it is endorsed by all the "critics," whether "radicals" or "evangelicals." Quoting and endorsing the words of Professor Brown, his colleague, he says:

## DEUTERONOMY

The use of a current pseudonym to designate the author no more committed Jesus to the declaration that that was the author's real name, than our use of the expression, "Junius says," would commit us to a declaration that the "Letters of Junius" were composed by a person of that name (*Bib. Study*, 189, 190, note).

This argument has more plausibility than the one quoted above from Professor Driver; but it is equally fallacious. To a class of students correctly informed as to the letters of Junius, Professor Briggs or Professor Brown could use the expression, "Junius says," without misleading them; but suppose either of them was addressing a class of students who were so ill-informed that they supposed a man whose real name was Junius to have been the author of these letters; and suppose that the professor, in addressing them, knew that they so thought; would he then feel at liberty to quote the letters again and again, saying, "Thus saith Junius"? Neither of them would think of doing it. They would be ashamed to do it. They would feel bound in honor to either inform the students, or quote the words as those of a distinguished writer without naming him. They would feel conscientiously bound to avoid committing themselves before that class to its own ignorant conception. Yet they openly charge on Jesus our Lord a practice in which they would themselves disdain to indulge.

We may try this argument by another example. Neither of the three professors, Driver, Briggs nor Brown, believes that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews; does any of them ever quote that document as an epistle of Paul? Does any of them ever say, "Thus saith the apostle Paul," and follow this with a quotation from Hebrews? They would consider it unmanly and deceptive to do so. Why, then, will they charge Jesus with quoting a book which he knew Moses did not write, and styling it "The Book of Moses"? How easily he could have avoided committing himself thus, by saying to the Sadducees, "Have ye not read in the book of your law?"

Such scholars as these would not thus wrest the words of Jesus, and do him this dishonor, were they not impelled by a false theory.

The testimony of Jesus respecting the authorship of Old Testament books has been passed over in a very cursory manner by most of the destructive critics. They have had little to say about it, because they have found little that they could say with profit to their own cause. Any position taken by respectable scholars which affects in the slightest degree the absolute authority belonging to all utterances of Jesus our

Lord, or the absolute sanctity of his character, demands our profoundest consideration before we can consider it with favor. If he made any affirmation which was not true, his authority as a teacher is invalidated; and he affirmed anything which he did not *know* to be true, he fell short of absolute truthfulness. Perfect veracity demands that a man shall not only avoid affirmations which he knows to be false, but all that he does not know to be true.

We ask, then, most solemnly, and with a view to the most candid answer, Did Jesus, on any occasion, affirm unequivocally the Mosaic authorship of the writings commonly ascribed to Moses? Let us try his words addressed to the Jews at the feast of tabernacles, and recorded in John vii. 19: Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?

That the Jews had at that time a book which they knew as the law of Moses, and which we know as the Pentateuch, is unquestioned and unquestionable. It is equally unquestionable that by "the law" Jesus here meant that book; for on any other hypothesis, we should have to suppose that he dealt uncandidly with his hearers. He could not have meant by "the law" some *nucleus* of the law which came from Moses, while the main body of it was an accumulation growing out of the experience of ages, as some critics have conjectured; for candor required him to use the expression as his hearers understood it. Neither could he have referred to any particular statute of the law which may have come from Moses, while the rest had some other origin; for his demand had reference to the law as a whole, of which he denied that any of them had kept it. They had all observed some parts of it, but none had kept it as a whole. There is no uncertainty, then, as to what he meant by "the law." What did he mean by the demand, "Did not Moses give you the law?" In this question he employs the rhetorical figure of *erotesis*, which is the most emphatic form of making an assertion. It assumes that neither with the speaker nor with his hearers is any other answer possible but the one implied. Another example is the demand, "Did I not choose you, the twelve?" (John vi. 70). Another, the well-known words of Paul, "Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized into the name of Paul?" (I. Cor. i. 13). His demand, then, is the most emphatic assertion possible that neither with himself nor with his hearers could there be any doubt that Moses gave them the law. Affirmation of the Mosaic authorship of the law more emphatic or more explicit there could not be. But Jesus could not thus affirm that which he did not know to be true; and it follows as an irresistible conclusion

that Jesus knew Moses to be the author of the law which the Jews connected with his name.

There is not room here for any of the evasive remarks employed by destructive critics to obscure the Lord's testimony. The illustration of the letters of Junius can not be applied; for, to make it applicable, both the speaker and the hearer should believe that the author of the letters was a man named Junius, and both would be deceived. Professor Briggs' remark that when Jesus ascribes a certain law to Moses, he does not assume that Moses wrote the book in which that law is now found, can not apply; for it is of the law as a whole, and not of any particular statute, that the demand is made. Neither can Professor Driver's assertion, that no question raised by modern criticism was presented to Jesus for an answer, apply in this case; for, while it is true that no such question was propounded, Jesus did, without a question, make the demand of his own accord, and use the unquestioned fact of the Mosaic authorship to condemn his enemies. If any other than Moses had given the law, his argument would have been fallacious.

Finally, we must not fail to observe that, if Jesus had not desired to commit himself on the authorship of the law, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for him to have avoided it without weakening the rebuke which he administered. He could have said, as even radical critics are now willing to say, "Did not God give you the law?" meaning that God gave it, not by inspiration, but in a providential way. Or he could have said, "Do you not *believe* that Moses gave you the law? and yet none of you doeth it."

The fact that he chose neither of these, nor any other form of speech which would have been non-committal on the question of authorship, and that instead thereof he chose to commit himself in the most emphatic manner that human speech without an oath would permit, proves that it was his deliberate intention to do so, and to thus leave on record his positive testimony on this important question. If he had known—and who may say that he did not?—that this question would arise in the coming ages, he could not have anticipated it with a more decisive answer. How vain the remark, then, which we have quoted from Professor Driver, that if critical questions had been propounded to Jesus, we have no means of knowing how he would have answered them!

The most specific affirmation by Jesus of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is found in the fifth chapter of John, and it reads thus: "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that



## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

accuseth you, *even* Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" In this passage three facts receive emphasis, and they are emphasized as the grounds on which the unbelievers addressed are condemned. The first is that Moses, the Moses on whom they "set their hope," is their accuser. Second, the ground on which Moses accuses them is, that they did not believe what he wrote of Jesus: "If ye believe Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me." A more explicit statement that Moses wrote of Jesus could not be framed in human speech. Third, the ground on which Moses accuses them is stated in another form, by the assertion that they believed not certain writings which are called his: "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

Now, it is a historical fact, unquestioned and unquestionable, as we have said before, that the Jews addressed by Jesus had certain writings which they knew as the writings of Moses. Jesus here distinctly recognizes them as such. Not only so, but by placing these writings of Moses in antithesis with his own words, he leaves as little room to doubt that these writings came from Moses as that his own words came from himself. Furthermore, he affirms, and makes it the basis of his argument, that in those writings Moses wrote of Jesus—in what passage or in what words, it is not needful that we now inquire—and he declares that Moses is the accuser of the unbelievers because they believed not what Moses thus wrote. If it was not Moses himself who thus wrote, and if the writings referred to as his were not his, then the argument of Jesus falls to the ground, and this whole passage from his lips is meaningless. And if here we have not an unequivocal and unmistakable affirmation of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, I defy any man to frame such an affirmation.

Perhaps some of my readers are ready to ask, What answer do the destructive critics give to this presentation? The question is pertinent. If they have no answer to give, they should hold their peace forever on the main issue. The radicals see the difficulty very clearly, and they answer, with all candor, that Jesus was mistaken. They make no effort to explain away his words. The Evangelicals, as Professor Briggs calls them, have seen the difficulty; it would be disparaging to them to hint that they have not; but, so far as my reading has extended, they have not grappled with it. This we shall now show as to Professors Driver and Briggs, by quoting all that they say on the subject.

4. The New Critics on This Testimony. Professor Driver formally introduces the issue on page xii. of the preface to his *Introduction*, and he states it thus:

It is objected, however, that some of the conclusions of critics respecting the Old Testament are incompatible with the authority of our blessed Lord, and that in loyalty to him we are precluded from accepting them.

After this very fair statement of the issue, he proceeds with a series of statements intended to show that the objection is not well taken. The first is a cautious approach to the discussion, and is stated in these words:

That our Lord appealed to the Old Testament as the record of a revelation in the past, and as pointing forward to himself, is undoubted; but these aspects of the Old Testament are perfectly consistent with a critical view of its structure and growth.

This remark is non-committal. Of course, these aspects of the Old Testament are consistent with a critical view of its structure and growth; for instance, with the critical view taken in Horne's *Introduction*, or in Bissell's *Origin and Structure of the Pentateuch*—the critical view which Driver and others now denounce as traditional. But the question is, Are they consistent with the critical view taken by Professor Driver? They are certainly not consistent with that taken by Kuenen and Wellhausen; for they both deny "a revelation" in the proper sense of the word, and they deny the "pointing forward" to Jesus of which Driver speaks. On the real issue, whether they are consistent with the critical views of Driver and those who stand with him, he thus far gives only his affirmation.

His next remark is this:

That our Lord, in so appealing to it, designed to pronounce a verdict on the authority and age of its different parts, and to foreclose all future inquiry into these subjects, is an assumption for which no sufficient ground can be alleged.

This remark is totally irrelevant. The expression, "in so appealing to it," means, in the connection, appealing to it as "the record of a revelation in the past, and pointing forward to himself." As a matter of course, in so alluding to it he pronounced no verdict on the authorship

## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

and age of its different parts; neither has anybody ever said that he did. Why answer objections that have never been made? Why not answer the objections which have been made, instead of thus setting up and assailing men of straw? This is the common resort of sophists when they are conscious of inability to answer the real objections of their opponents.

But our critic continues in the same strain by adding:

Had such been his aim, it would have been out of harmony with the entire method and tenor of his teaching.

Had what been his aim? The reference is to pronouncing a verdict on the authority and age of the different parts of the Old Testament. But nobody pretends that such was his aim. We are inquiring whether he affirmed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. We have never affirmed, and have never believed, that Jesus said anything about its age and its structure beyond what is involved in its authorship. Again we ask, why does so acute an author as Professor Driver continually evade the issue which he himself so clearly stated at the outset?

His next remark is this:

In no single instance, so far as we are aware, did he anticipate the results of scientific inquiry or historical research.

Perhaps he did not, when scientific inquiry and historical research are properly conducted; but what has this remark to do with the question at issue? Why did not Professor Driver say, In no single instance, so far as we are aware, did Jesus say who gave the law to Israel? This would have been in point; but this he could not say.

Again our author says:

The aim of His teaching was a religious one; it was to set before men the pattern of a perfect life, to move them to imitate it, to bring them to himself.

Very good; but did he not, in doing this, rebuke men for not keeping the law which he said Moses gave them, and for not believing the writings of Moses in whom they put their trust? Why continue thus to evade the issue by irrelevant remarks?

In the next sentence we find an indirect admission of the truth, with an attempt to break its force:

He accepted, as the basis of his teaching, the opinions of the Old Testament current around him. He assumed, in his allusions to it, the premises which his opponents recognized,

## DEUTERONOMY

and which could not have been questioned (even had it been necessary to question them) without raising issues for which the time was not yet ripe, and which, had they been raised, would have interfered seriously with the paramount purpose of his life.

Strip this sentence of its ambiguity, and what does it mean? It means that Jesus accepted as the basis of his teaching the opinion, among others, that Moses was the author of the law. Did he accept as the basis of his teaching an opinion which he knew to be false? He certainly did if Moses was *not* the author of the law. It means that "he assumed," in his allusions to the law, "the premises which his opponents recognized." Did he assume premises which he knew to be false? So Professor Driver must think; for he thinks that the assumption of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is a false assumption, yet he holds Jesus guilty of that assumption.

The additional assertion in the last quotation, that these opinions which he accepted could not have been questioned without rising issues for which the time was not ripe, is of no force whatever; for, as I have said before, Jesus did raise issues for which the time was not ripe, for some of which he was persecuted, and for one of which he was crucified. He knew nothing of that time-serving policy which accepts false opinions and makes false assumptions to avoid conflict which the fearless utterance of the truth would involve. Moreover, our contention is not that he should have corrected the opinion, supposing it to be false, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, but that he would not and could not affirm the truth of that opinion, knowing it to be false. That he did affirm it, I have abundantly proved.

In order to fully represent Professor Driver's discussion of this issue, I must make one more quotation which I have already made use of in a former connection. He says:

There is no record of the question, whether a particular portion of the Old Testament was written by Moses or David or Isaiah, having ever been submitted to him, and, had it been submitted, we have no means of knowing what his answer would have been.

As we have said before, the first of these two assertions is true; but it makes all the more significant the fact that, without a question being submitted, he volunteered to affirm that David wrote the 110th Psalm, and that Moses gave the law. As to his last assertion, nothing

that Professor Driver says in this whole discussion is wilder. When Jesus said, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you has kept it?" does not this indicate what his answer would have been if one of his hearers had asked him, "Did Moses give us the law?"? And when he said to another company of Jews, "If you do not believe Moses' writings, how can ye believe my words?" does this give no indication of what answer he would have given had one asked him, "Do you then believe that these writings came from Moses?"?

In conclusion, I ask the reader, how can you account for this evasive and irrelevant method, on the part of so learned and logical an author as Professor Driver, in discussing so simple a question? When he has an open path before him his reasoning is clear and cogent. He walks with a steady step, like a strong man on solid ground. Why, then, this faltering and wandering when he comes to discussing the affirmations of Jesus respecting the Old Testament? Why does the strong man here betray such weakness? Why, but because he here felt conscious of the weakness of his cause?

In *Biblical Study*, the most elaborate work written by Prof. Charles A. Briggs, a whole chapter is devoted to "The New Testament View of Old Testament Literature," and we shall now see more fully how he deals with the utterances of Jesus on the subject.

On page 192 he says: "Jesus speaks of the law of Moses (John vii. 23) and the book of Moses (Mark xii. 26)." He cites several other passages from Luke and Paul, and then adds:

These are all cases of *naming* books cited. They have as their parallel David as the name of the Psalter in Heb. iv. 7 and Acts iv. 25; Samuel, also of the Book of Samuel, Acts iii. 24. It is certainly reasonable to interpret Moses in these passages in the same way as the name of the work containing his legislation and the history in which he is the central figure.

We can judge of the correctness of these remarks only by seeing what is said in the passages cited. The first reads thus: "If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses be not broken, are ye wroth with me because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath?" Is this a mere case of "naming" a book? There is nothing said of the book except by implication; but there is something said of a law, and it is called "the law of Moses." If Jesus did not mean to commit himself to the fact that this law was given by Moses, how easily he could have avoided doing so by saying that the *law* might not

be broken. In the next preceding verse Jesus makes a statement preparatory to this, in which he recognizes as real the exact relation of this law to circumcision which is set forth in the Pentateuch. He says: "For this cause hath Moses given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on the sabbath ye circumcise a man." Here the fact that circumcision was first ordained in the time of the fathers, and not originated in the legislation of Moses, is set forth precisely as in our Pentateuch, and Moses is again credited with the legislation. It would be interesting to hear from Professor Briggs the reason why he deals thus with this passage. Had he quoted it, instead of merely citing it, he would scarcely have impugned the intelligence of his readers by using it as he does.

The second passage reads thus: "As touching the dead, that they are raised, have ye not read in the book of Moses, in the place concerning the bush, how God spake to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" This is the naming of a book, or, more properly speaking, it is calling a book by its name; but it is more: it is the recognition of that name as a proper one; for if Jesus had not known that Moses was the author of the book, we can not believe that he would have confirmed the mistaken belief of his hearers by so styling it. How easily he could have avoided this, and still made his reference explicit, by saying, "The book of the law." These two passages confirm the testimony which they are employed to invalidate, by showing that Jesus indorsed the belief that Moses was the author of the book ascribed to him by the Jews.

But Professor Briggs tries still further to escape from this conclusion by citing alleged parallels in the use of the names of David and Samuel. As to David, the language of the text is this: "Saying in David, after so long a time, To-day, as it hath been before said, To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." What right has Professor Briggs to say that the name "David" is here used "as the name of the Psalter"? The writer quotes from David, but not from the book of David, as Jesus quotes from "the book of Moses." The Jews knew no book of David. Their book of Psalms, like our own, contained some compositions ascribed to David, some to other writers, and many to no particular author. No Jew who had ever read the book through could have supposed that David wrote them all. When they quoted David, then, they quoted some Psalm which they supposed to have been written by David; and this passage in Hebrews assumes only that David wrote the Psalm from which the quotation is made.

## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

The professor's remark about Samuel, just quoted above, has reference to an argument advanced by him on a previous page, and one which I believe to be original with him. He makes much use of it, and it is worthy, on this account, of particular notice. On page 190 the author quotes the words of Peter, "All the prophets, from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days;" and he adds:

The reference here is to the Book of Samuel, for the reason that there is no Messianic prophecy ascribed to Samuel in the Old Testament. The context forces us to think of such an one. We find it in the prophecy of Nathan in the Book of Samuel. These historical books then bore the name of Samuel, and their contents are referred to as Samuel's.

This is an ingenious piece of argumentation; but it is marked by two fatal defects. First, it assumes as a fact that "these historical books then bore the name of Samuel," whereas they bore no name in the Hebrew text; they were styled the first and second books of Kingdoms in the Septuagint; and they were never called the first and second books of Samuel till A.D. 1488, when they were so styled in Bomberg's printed Hebrew Bible. Such a blunder is a severe satire on an expert in historical criticism, and to base a boasted original argument on it is not a brilliant illustration of the "scientific method." This fact demolishes the foundation of the argument. Furthermore, if it is true that no Messianic prophecy is ascribed to Samuel in the Old Testament, the fact that one is ascribed to him in the New Testamen ought to satisfy a man who believes in Christ and in the inspiration of his apostles. When Peter said that Samuel prophesied of the days of Christ, we ought to presume that Peter knew what he was talking about.

The second argument by Professor Briggs is expressed in the following paragraph:

Jesus represents Moses as a lawgiver, giving the Ten Commandments (Mark vii. 10), the law of the leper's offering (Mark i. 44, etc.), the law of divorce (Matt. xix. 7), the law in general (John vii. 19). The Epistle to the Hebrews represents Moses as giving the law of priesthood (Heb. vii. 14), and as a lawgiver whose law, when issued at the time, could not be disobeyed with impunity (Heb. x. 28). These passages all represent Moses to be the lawgiver that he appears to be in the narratives of the Pentateuch, but do not by any means

## DEUTERONOMY

imply the authorship of the narratives that contain these laws, any more than the reference in I. Cor. ix. 14 to the command of Jesus in Luke x. 7, and the institution of the Lord's Supper by Jesus (I. Cor. xi. 23), imply that he was the author of the Gospels containing his words (*Bib. Study*, p. 193).

Here, again, in the citations from Jesus, he hides among a number of sayings of the Master, which taken apart from others, are not specific affirmations of the authorship in question, one that is; viz.: the interrogation in John vii. 19, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?" Why did not the professor single out this passage, as his opponents have done, and show that it does not affirm the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch? If he could show that in the minds and speech of the Jews addressed by Jesus there was a distinction between the "law" and what we call the Pentateuch, he would have met the argument in part. But even then he would have had to show that Christ meant not the law as a whole, but only that nucleus of the law which critics ascribe to Moses, as distinguished from the civil law in Deuteronomy, and the Levitical law, both of which, as he himself affirms, were given by unknown persons many centuries after the death of Moses. Even what he does make out of the passage, that Moses gave "the law in general," contradicts his own conclusions and those of all critics with whom he stands.

There is another anomaly in these citations from Jesus. Because Jesus says, in Mark vii. 10, "Moses said, Honor thy father and mother," the professor says that Jesus, in these words, represents Moses as giving the Ten Commandments. Why this conclusion? Why not reason as he does about other remarks of the same kind, and say, This does not represent Moses as giving the whole of the Ten Commandments, "not by any means;" it shows only that he gave the one about honoring father and mother. Well, it suits the theory to admit that Moses gave the Decalogue, and so the mode of reasoning which in scientific and conclusive in analogous cases is tossed aside in this.

If Heb. vii. 14, as is asserted above, represents Moses as giving the law of priesthood, this contradicts the accepted critical theory of the priesthood; for it is claimed that there was no law of the priesthood till long after Moses; that Ezekial foreshadowed it, and that it was first made a law in the time of Ezra, or a short time previous. The passage reads thus: "For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests." The writer's argument assumes that if Moses spake nothing as respects priesthood in



## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

a certain tribe, then a man of that tribe could not be a priest. What more positive implication could we have that the law of the priesthood was all given by Moses, and not by an unknown priestly writer (P) a thousand years after the death of Moses?

The passage cited from Heb. x 28 reads: "A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses." This shows that all the statutes with the death penalty attached came from Moses. But these are scattered all through the Pentateuch, intermingled with the others too closely to be separated. Immediately after these citations the professor inadvertently gives his whole cause away, by saying: "These passages all represent Moses to be the lawgiver that he appears to be in the narratives of the Pentateuch." But in the narratives of the Pentateuch Moses is represented as receiving from God and giving to the people every single statute of the law, both civil and religious. These passages, then, either misrepresent Moses, or the critical theory of the origin of the law is false, according to Professor Briggs' own representation.

But the professor, not perceiving how completely he had given away his cause, makes the argument that while these passages prove Moses to be the lawgiver that he appears to be in the Pentateuch, they do not imply his authorship of the narratives that contain these laws, any more than Paul's allusions to teachings of Christ found in Luke's Gospel prove that Jesus wrote this Gospel. The conclusion does not follow, because the cases are not parallel. The author of this Gospel starts out with an explicit statement of his reason for writing in which he distinguishes between himself and Jesus. Secondly, no man among those to whom Paul wrote was laboring under the impression that Jesus wrote that Gospel, but all the readers to whom he and the other apostles wrote believed that Moses wrote the law, and they necessarily understood allusions to its authorship accordingly. Finally, when Paul wrote First Corinthians, Luke's Gospel was not yet in existence, and it is absurd to speak of Paul's making allusions to it. It was written several years later, and some of the professor's fellow critics place it at least twenty years later. He knows this perfectly well; but in his eagerness to make a point he ignored it and committed this absurdity. This is more inexcusable than the mistake about Samuel.

I now take up his third argument on these testimonies. He says:

Jesus represents Moses as a prophet who wrote of him (John v. 6); so Philip (John i. 45); Peter (Acts iii. 22-24); Stephen (Acts vii. 37); Paul (Acts xxvi. 22); and in Rom.

x. 5-19 the apostle refers to the address in Deuteronomy xxx. and the song in Deuteronomy xxxii. These passages maintain that certain *prophecies* came from Moses, but do not maintain that the Pentateuch, as a whole, or the narratives in which these prophecies occur, were written by Moses.

Here, again, the professor takes one of the most explicit of the testimonies of Jesus, and instead of attempting, in a direct manner, to refute the argument that is based upon it, mixes it up with a number of less explicit passages, and tosses them all aside as ascribing only certain *prophecies* to Moses. The passage thus treated can be styled a mere ascription of a certain prophecy to Moses only by ignoring an essential part of it. It reads thus: "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" "His writings!" What were meant by these? What writings did his hearers necessarily understand him to mean? There is no answer but one; he meant those writings known to his hearers and to us as the writings of Moses. He meant the Pentateuch; and I venture to say that Professor Briggs can not squarely face these words and deny it. He was not ignorant of these words when he wrote his book; why did he not face them squarely, and show, if he could, that they have a meaning consistent with his theory? I should be glad to see him or some of his friends undertake the task even now. I invite them to it.

The true method of treating all the sayings of Jesus and the apostles on this subject is to ascertain from some unambiguous utterances precisely what they taught, and then to interpret their other utterances in harmony with these. This I have endeavored to do; and by this process it is made clear that, when they speak of any law, statute, prediction, or other sayings, of Moses, they contemplate it as a part of the writing then and since ascribed to Moses; i.e., the Pentateuch.

Ten years later than the publication of *Biblical Study*, the work from which I have copied Professor Briggs' arguments thus far, he published a smaller book entitled *Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch*, in which he goes over the same ground again. In it he reproduces, word for word, the three arguments on which I have commented; but he has some additional matter to which, in justice to him, I should perhaps pay attention.

But some one will say, was it not the common opinion in the days of our Lord that Moses wrote the Pentateuch? We answer that, so far as we know, it was the common opinion

## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

that David wrote the Psalter. As to the Pentateuch, opinion was divided whether it was lost when the temple was destroyed by the king of Babylon, and restored or recast by Ezra or not (p. 28).

What kind of reasoning is this? He answers the question whether the Jews thought that Moses wrote the Pentateuch by stating that, "so far as we know, they thought that David wrote the Psalter." If I were asked, Has it not been the common opinion that Professor Briggs wrote *Biblical Study*, and were to answer, So far as we know, it was once the common opinion that Shakespeare wrote *Mother Goose's Melodies*, the answer would be equally relevant. "So far as we know" is well put in. It means that we know nothing about it. But we do know that no Jew of common sense who ever read the Psalter could have thought that David wrote the whole of it. And we do know, and Professor Briggs knows we know, that the Jews of our Lord's Day believed Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch. Even those who thought that the law was lost for a time and then restored by Ezra, if any of them lived this early, believed that it was originally written by Moses.

Following this on the same page, the professor demands, "Why should we interpret Jesus and his apostles by the opinions of the Jews of his time?" This question is easily answered. If I should step into the professor's classroom some day, and find him quoting to a class the Epistle to the Hebrews, and constantly saying with every quotation, Paul says this, and Paul says that, I might demand of him "Professor, do you not know that all the members of this class have fallen into the mistake that Paul wrote this epistle? And are you not confirming them in this false opinion by quoting it as Paul's?" I suppose he would turn upon me with indignation, and demand, "Why should I be interpreted by the opinions of this class?" Were I bold enough, my reply would be, "Why are you deceiving this class by propagating an opinion that you hold to be false?" This is the attitude in which his argument places Jesus.

He says on the same page:

If we should say that Jesus did not know whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not, we would not go beyond his own saying that he knew not the time of his own advent.

This is as much as to say, that because Jesus says of himself that he did not know a certain thing, we may say of him that he did not know another and very different thing. Because Professor Briggs says that he does not know the day and hour when he will die, I may say of

him that he does not know who his grandmother was. I rather think that he did not know anything about logic when he was writing this sentence. All that he ever knew of logic, like Nebuchadnezzar's dream, has passed from him for the time being.

One more quotation, taken from page 29, will bring us to the end of the professor's strange series of arguments, or, rather, of statements:

If, on the other hand, any one should say, Jesus must have known all things, and he ought not to have used language that might deceive men, we respond, that his language does not deceive men. Literally usage in all ages and in the Bible itself shows that it is equally truth and good language for the critics and the anti-critics. The question is, Shall we interpret the language of Jesus by the opinions of his contemporaries? This we deny. Jesus was not obliged to correct all the errors of his contemporaries. He did not correct their false views of science. He was the great Physician, but he did not teach medicine. He was greater than Solomon, and yet he declined to decide questions of civil law and politics. He never rebuked slavery. Is he responsible for slavery on that account? The Southern slaveholders used to say so. But even they are now convinced of their error.

Let us take up this string of assertions, and see what is in them. First, "His language does not deceive men." True, if Moses "gave the law," and if the books of the Pentateuch were "his writings," as Jesus positively affirms; but false if these writings, as Professor Briggs teaches, were written several centuries after Moses died. Second, "Jesus was not obliged to correct all the errors of his contemporaries." But nobody ever said that he was. We only say that he did not and would not affirm as truths any of their errors. Third, "He did not correct any of their false views of science." Of course not; but if he had affirmed any of them, as he affirmed their view of the authorship of the Pentateuch, we should never have heard the last of it from the lips of infidels; and Professor Briggs would have been unable to defend him. Fourth, "He was a great Physician, but he did not teach medicine." True; but suppose he had taught the false medical notions of his day, what would all of our M. D.'s of the present day have to say? Suppose he had taught what some people now call Christian Science! Fifth, "He declined to decide questions of civil law and politics." Yes; but suppose he had decided them. Suppose he had decided in favor of free silver at the ratio of

16 to 1; what would the gold-bugs have to say? And what a plank his decision would have been in the Democratic platform! Sixth, "He never rebuked slavery. Is he responsible for slavery on that account?" Of course not; and the Southern slaveholders never said he was. They only said what Professor Briggs says, that he never rebuked it. But suppose he had said that slavery was right, just as he said that Moses gave the law; what then? How then could Professor Briggs have said that slavery was wrong? And how can he now say that Moses did not give the law? He could have said the former only by denying the authority of Jesus, and this is the only way in which he can say the latter.

5. Did the Apostles Affirm? We have seen, in the preceding section, that Jesus our Lord most positively and explicitly affirmed the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. For proof of the fact that Moses was its author we need to go no further, for with believers in Christ no other proof can make stronger an explicit assertion by him. But lest, in the mind of some reader, the explicitness of his affirmations has not been made perfectly clear, we proceed to show how his apostles expressed themselves, and to show in this way both what they were led by the Holy Spirit to say, and how they understood the utterances on this subject of their divine Master. I am aware that with some persons who claim to attach full credit to the utterances of Christ, the testimony on such a question given by the apostles has little or no weight. The cry "Back to Christ," which has been of late shouted so vociferously, is by some, who shout it the loudest, meant not only for the disregard of all authority this side of the New Testament, but of apostolic authority as well. It means that nothing in the New Testament is to be regarded by them as authoritative except the personal utterances of Jesus himself. It means that even these are not to be regarded as authority until the reports of them in our Gospels pass through the crucible of "modern criticism," to determine whether they have been faithfully delivered. But this professed exaltation of Christ is in reality a disparagement of him; for it is his own authority which affirms the authority of his apostles, promising them infallible guidance, and saying to them, "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." On this point I am glad to quote again an utterance by Professor Briggs, who says: "The authority of Jesus Christ to all who know him to be their divine Saviour, outweighs all other authority whatever. A Christian man must follow his teachings in all things as the guide into all truth. The authority of Jesus Christ is involved in that of the apostles." No man who accepts this dictum can think of making the distinction of which we speak; and no

man who credits what Jesus says about the inspiration of the apostles, or regards what they say of their own inspiration as anything more than idle boasting, can call this dictum in question. We proceed, then, to cite the testimony of the apostles with full confidence that it will be implicitly credited by all but rationalists.

The apostle Peter shall be our first witness. In his second recorded sermon, he says: "Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul, which shall not hearken to that Prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." This is a free extract from Deuteronomy (xviii. 15-19); and Peter testifies that it was spoken by Moses. It is part of one of the speeches ascribed to Moses in that book. It is conceded that Peter's hearers credited the whole speech and the whole Book of Deuteronomy as having come from Moses; and as Peter uses the passage to show them that Moses predicted the coming of Jesus, his argument was both fallacious in itself, and deceptive to his hearers, if the book had any other origin. No ingenuity can set aside this conclusion or destroy the force of it.

Our next witness is the apostle John. In the first chapter of his Gospel, after setting forth the pre-existence and the advent of Jesus, and quoting a brief testimonial from John the Baptist, he says: "The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Here is the same testimony given by Jesus himself in a slightly different form. It is a positive affirmation that the law was given by Moses; and the person of Moses as the giver of the law is put in antithesis with the person of Christ as the bestower of grace and truth. Notice, further, it is not some particular law or statute that is spoken of, but "the law"—an expression which always in the speech of the Jews meant the work which we call the Pentateuch. John, then, was mistaken, and he misleads the readers of his Gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles, if the Pentateuch did not come from the hand of Moses.

The testimony of Paul is equally explicit. I shall use only one testimonial from him. In contrasting the righteousness of the law with that obtained through faith in Christ, he says: "For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby." Here Moses is represented as the writer; and what he is said to have written is not some particular sentence; for the words Paul uses are not found in the Pentateuch, but they set forth the substance of what Moses taught in reference to righteousness and the life which it

## AUTHORSHIP OF DEUTERONOMY

secures. It is, then, an assertion that the law in general was written by Moses, and, in arguing thus to Jewish readers whom he had especially in mind, Paul must be understood as using the term in the sense ascribed to it by the Jews. It is an assertion that Moses was the writer of the law, as explicit as the assertion by John that Moses gave the law.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who, I confidently believe, after having studied all the arguments to the contrary, was Paul, makes a greater number of assertions of the Mosaic authorship than any other New Testament writer, and with those who believe that this epistle had an inspired source, the authority of its author is not inferior to that of Peter and John. But if any question can be settled by the authority of inspired apostles, this one is already settled by the statements of Peter, John and Paul.

## CONCLUSION

In drawing this discussion to a close, it seems proper to state, in a summary form, what the author seems to himself to have accomplished.

After stating in the introduction the position of the parties to the discussion, and the exact issue between them, we have taken up, one by one, all of the evidences, from whatever source derived, which have been relied upon by the friends of the analytical theory as decisive proof of the late date which they assign to the Book of Deuteronomy, and have carefully considered their merits. We have presented these evidences in the words of such scholars as have set them forth in their most convincing forms. We have not knowingly failed to present the arguments by which these evidences are enforced, in their full strength. We have aimed to look at them from every point of view. We have dealt with them as an antagonist, but not, as the author knows himself, with the desire or the willingness to take any unfair advantage of them. The subject has been on the author's mind as a subject of serious thought, and during long periods a subject of absorbing thought, for more than forty years. Nothing of special importance that has been written on either side in that time has escaped his notice. He considers himself, therefore, competent to express a judgment on the course of the argumentation, and he can not feel that he is egotistic in expressing the conviction that he has refuted in Part First of this work all of the arguments supposed to be decisive in support of the so-called critical theory of Deuteronomy. That the final decision of believing scholars will be against that theory he can not doubt.

## DEUTERONOMY

On the other hand, while the array of evidence in proof of the Mosaic authorship which has been presented, is not exhaustive, the author feels thoroughly convinced of its conclusiveness; and he will hereafter, as heretofore, implicitly trust the representation which the book makes of itself, and which is made of it by our Lord and his inspired apostles. I can afford to believe what the apostles believed, what Jesus believed, and be satisfied. Humbly trusting that this product of my profoundest study and my maturest years may be blessed of God to help my readers into the same satisfaction, I now, with a sigh of relief from a severe and long-continued mental strain, commit my work to the fate which the Disposer of all things has prepared for it.



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