
דברים ת DEUTERONOMY

INTRODUCTION

The essential theme of *Deuteronomy* (meaning the *Second Law* – the Hebrew title means ‘*Words*’) is a reaffirmation of the Covenant between God and the people of Israel. Herein, the laws and statutes of the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers (including the Ten Commandments) are not just repeated but re-assessed in terms more suitable to settled life in the Promised Land, rather than to the nomadic style of desert life.

There are numerous differences between the *Masoretic Text* and that represented by the *Septuagint*, most of which are minor or even trivial; the most significant divergences are mentioned in the footnotes. The Qumran Scroll, 4Q41 (4QDeutⁿ) is the oldest known copy of the Ten Commandments.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

The composition, authorship, and date of origin of the Torah (Pentateuch) have become the subjects of much debate between (and among) scholars and religious leaders. There are, essentially, two vastly different (and seemingly irreconcilable) opinions.

Since at least the early Christian era, the traditional, Jewish/Christian view is that the entire work was written by Moses, having been dictated to him by God during the Israelites’ 40-year sojourn in the desert, and neither Jesus nor his apostles question this (Jn 1:45, 5:45–47, Rm 10:5). Indeed, it is an article of faith for Rabbinic Jews that the current, ‘received text’ of the Torah is letter-perfect to that originally given/written.

However, many (if not most) biblical scholars today accept (to varying extents) the so-called, ‘Documentary Hypothesis’, first proposed in the 19th Century. According to this theory, the Pentateuch is an amalgam of four documents, issuing from different places and times (but all much later than Moses). The first two documents are the Yahwistic Source (J) and the Elohist Source (E); the former uses the Divine Name, ‘Yahweh’ and was supposedly written in Judah in the 10th Century BCE; the latter uses ‘Elohim’ and originates in Israel, a little later. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom, these two documents were combined into what is generally now known as the Old Epic Tradition (JE). After the reign of Josiah, the Deuteronomist Source (D) was added and, after the Exile, the Priestly Code (P) was further added, to give the work form and sinew. Though we do not, in this project, necessarily subscribe to this documentary hypothesis, we nevertheless colour the English text according to the source assigned by those scholars who do so: the [OLD EPIC](#) (JE) sections are in blue text, the [DEUTERONOMIST](#) (D) in brown and the [PRIESTLY CODE](#) (P) in purple.

Even within the strict, ‘Mosaic Authorship’ school-of-thought, many accept that the last chapter (an epilogue recounting the death of Moses) was probably written by Joshua, or one of his associates.

DEUTERONOMY 1

דברים פרק א

אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּמִדְבָּר בְּעַרְבָה מִזֹּל סוּף בֵּין-פָּאֶרָן
וּבֵין-תֹּפֶל וּלְבָן וְחִצְרֹת וְדִי זָהָב: ^ב אֶחָד עָשָׂר יוֹם
מִחֹרֵב דֶּרֶךְ הַר-שֵׁעִיר עַד קָדֵשׁ בָּרְנֶע: ^ג וַיְהִי
בְּאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בַּעֲשֵׁת־עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ
דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּלֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה
אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים: ^ד אַחֲרֵי הִכְתּוּ אֶת סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי
אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן וְאֶת עֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן אֲשֶׁר-
יוֹשֵׁב בְּעַשְׁתָּרֹת בְּאֶדְרֵעִי: ^ה בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ
מוֹאָב הוֹאִיל מֹשֶׁה בְּאֶרֶץ אֶת-הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת
לֵאמֹר:

¹ These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan, in the desert, in the Arabah, opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Di Zahab. ² Now, it is an eleven-day journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-Barnea. ³ However, it was in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses told the Israelites everything that Yahweh had ordered him to tell them. ⁴ This took place after he had defeated Sihon, the king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan, who lived at Ashtaroth and Edrei. ⁵ There, in the land of Moab beyond the Jordan, Moses took it upon himself to expound this law. He said:

DEUTERONOMY 1

- ¹ Following the title (v. 1a), this paragraph gives additional indications of place and time, with a view to linking Deuteronomy to the Book of Numbers. 'Suph' (סוּף) is otherwise unattested and its location is unknown; perhaps it is Khirbet Sufah, 6 Km SSE of Madaba, Jordan. 'Paran' (פָּאֶרָן) is the well-known desert area between Mount Sinai and Kadesh Barnea (cf. Nb 10:12, 12:16). 'Tophel' (תֹּפֶל) refers possibly to et-Tafileh, 25 Km SE of the Dead Sea, or to Da'bilu, another name for Paran. 'Laban' (לָבָן) perhaps refers to Libnah (Nb 33:20); 'Hazeroth' (חִצְרֹת) probably refers to Ain Khadra; and 'Di Zahab' (דִּי זָהָב) may refer to Mina al-Dhahab on the eastern Sinai coast.
- ² An 'eleven-day journey' was about 235 Km.
- ³ The 'fortieth' year is counting from the Exodus (Ex 19:1, 40:17); here, there is a contrast between the ordinary time of 11 days (v. 2) and the actual time of 40 years.
- ⁴ 'Heshbon' (חֶשְׁבּוֹן) is probably modern Tell Hesba'n, about 12 Km south SW of Amman, Jordan; 'Ashtaroth' (עַשְׁתָּרֹת) is probably Tell Ashtarrah, about 35 Km due east of the Sea of Galilee; and 'Edrei' (אֶדְרֵעִי) is probably modern Der'aa, 95 Km south of Damascus (see Nb 21:33, Jos 12:4, 13:12, 31).
- ⁵ The Hebrew noun, תּוֹרָה ('law'), is derived from the verb 'to teach' and, here, it refers to the Book of Deuteronomy, not the Pentateuch as a whole.

יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ דְּבַר אֱלֵינוּ בַּחֲרֵב לֵאמֹר רַב-לָכֶם
שָׁבַת בְּהַר הַזֶּה: אֲפֹנִי וְסַעֲוֹ לָכֶם וּבָאוּ הָרָה אֲמַרִי
וְאֶל-כָּל-שְׁכֵנָיו בְּעֶרְבָה בְּהַר וּבְשִׁפְלָה וּבְנִגְבַּ
וּבְחוֹף הַיָּם אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַלְבָּנוֹן עַד-הַנָּהָר הַגָּדֹל
נְהַר-פָּרָת: חֲרָא נָתַתִּי לְפָנֵיכֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ בָּאוּ
וּרְשׁוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לַאֲבֹתֵיכֶם
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לָתֵת לָהֶם וּלְזֶרְעָם
אַחֲרֵיהֶם:

ט וְאֵמַר אֲלֵכֶם בָּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר לֹא-אוּכַל לְבַדִּי
שָׂאת אֶתְכֶם: יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הָרַבָּה אֶתְכֶם
וְהִנֵּכֶם הַיּוֹם כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַב: יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתְכֶם יִסֹּף עֲלֵיכֶם כָּכֶם אֵלֶּף פְּעָמִים וּבִרְדָּ
אֶתְכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דְּבַר לָכֶם: יב אֵיכָה אֲשָׂא לְבַדִּי
טִרְחַכֶּם וּמִשְׁאָכֶם וּרִיבֵיכֶם: יג הֲבֹ לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים

⁶ “Yahweh our God said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. ⁷ Get up, resume your journey; go to the highlands of the Amorites and to all the places near there; in the Arabah, in the highlands, in the lowlands, in the Negeb and in the coastlands; the land of Canaan and Lebanon, as far as the great river Euphrates. ⁸ Look, this is the land I have given to you; go and take possession of the land that Yahweh promised on oath to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their seed after them.”

⁹ “It was at that time that I spoke to you, saying: I am unable to carry the burden of you by myself. ¹⁰ Yahweh your God has multiplied you, so that, today, you are like the stars of heaven in number; ¹¹ indeed, may Yahweh, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times more numerous, and bless you just as he promised. ¹² Therefore, how can I cope by myself with the bitter burden that you are, and with your

⁶ The first discourse of Moses (1:6–4:40) is a summary of Israelite history, from the stay in Sinai to the arrival at Pisgah, in sight of the River Jordan, followed by a restatement of the Covenant and the obligations that it imposes: the Exile is predicted as the punishment for infidelity, but conversion and subsequent return from exile are offered as a consoling possibility.

⁷ The literal translation of ‘get up’ is ‘turn’. The Israelite empire extended ideally to the Euphrates (Gn 15:18), the northern limit of David’s conquests (2S 8:3).

⁸ The NRSV & NETB use the pronoun, ‘I’, in place of ‘Yahweh’, as it is the LORD who is speaking here. For ‘Look’, the WEBBE has ‘Behold’.

⁹ This paragraph is a composite account (compare vv. 9–12 with Nb 11:14–17 and vv. 13–17 with Ex 18:13–27). Here, there is no reference to Jethro’s initiative to lighten Moses’ burden.

¹⁰ The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם may be translated ‘heaven(s)’ or ‘sky’ depending on the context.

¹¹ This verse is a theological correction to Nb 11:11–15, where Moses complains that the Israelites have grown too numerous. Here, the growth in numbers is interpreted as a sign of God’s blessing.

¹² For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “But how can I bear the heavy burden of your disputes all by myself?”

חֲכָמִים וְנִבְנִים וַיִּדְעִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם וְאַשִּׁימָם
 בְּרָאשֵׁיכֶם: ^י וַתַּעֲנֵנִי אֹתִי וַתֹּאמְרוּ טוֹב-הַדָּבָר
 אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: ^{טו} וְאָקַח אֶת-רָאשֵׁי
 שִׁבְטֵיכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וַיִּדְעִים וְאֵתָן אוֹתָם
 רָאשִׁים עֲלֵיכֶם שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשָׂרֵי מֵאוֹת וְשָׂרֵי
 חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֵת וְשֹׁטְרִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם:
^{טז} וְאַצִּוֶּה אֶת-שֹׁפְטֵיכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר שִׁמְעוּ
 בֵּין-אֲחֵיכֶם וּשְׁפֹטֶתֶם צֶדֶק בֵּין-אִישׁ וּבֵין-אֲחִיו
 וּבֵין גֵּרֹ: ^{יז} לֹא-תִכְיֹרוּ פָנִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט כִּקְטֹן כִּגְדֹל
 תִּשְׁמָעוּן לֹא תִגְוְרוּ מִפְּנֵי-אִישׁ כִּי הַמִּשְׁפָּט
 לֵאלֹהִים הוּא וְהַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִקְשֶׁה מִכֶּם תִּקְרְבוּן
 אֵלַי וּשְׁמַעְתִּיו: ^{יח} וְאַצִּוֶּה אֶתְכֶם בְּעֵת הַהוּא אֵת
 כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן:

^{יט} וַנֵּסַע מִחֹרֵב וְנָלַךְ אֶת כָּל-הַמִּדְבָּר הַגָּדוֹל
 וְהַנּוֹרָא הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתֶם דֶּרֶךְ הַר הָאֱמֹרִי

bickering? ¹³ Bring me wise men, shrewd and tested, out of each of your tribes, therefore, and I will make them your leaders. ¹⁴ And you answered me, “The plan you have proposed is a good one.” ¹⁵ Therefore, I selected tribal leaders for you, wise, experienced men, and I appointed them to lead you: captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, captains of fifties, captains of tens, and scribes for your tribes too. ¹⁶ At that same time, I told your judges: You must give your brothers a fair hearing and see justice done between a man and his brother or the stranger who lives with him. ¹⁷ You must be impartial in judgement and give an equal hearing to small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any human person, for the verdict is God’s. Should a case be too difficult, bring it to me and I will hear it; ¹⁸ and I charged you at that time for everything you were to do.

¹⁹ “So, we left Horeb and came to the vast and terrible desert you have seen. We made for the highlands of the Amorites, as Yahweh our God

¹³ The Hebrew word וְנִבְנִים (*‘shrewd and tested’*) is a Niphal verb referring to skill or intelligence.

¹⁴ In place of *‘the plan you have proposed’*, here following the NRSV, the NJB has *‘your plan’*.

¹⁵ In this context, *‘wise’* could also mean *‘practical’*, and an alternative reading for *‘experienced’* (as NJB) is *‘reputable’* (as NRSV).

¹⁶ The Hebrew word צֶדֶק (*‘fair’*) carries the basic idea of conformity to a norm of expected behaviour or character, one established by God himself; fair judgment adheres strictly to that norm or standard.

¹⁷ The phrase, *‘be impartial’*, translates literally as, *‘not raise your face’*, i.e. not show benevolence or, more particularly, favouritism in judgement (16:19, Lv 19:15). Judges are to imitate the sovereign impartiality of God (see #10:17 and Pr 24:23). This is also a recurrent theme with the prophets (Is 10:2, Jr 5:28, Ezk 22:12, Am 2:6, 5:7, 10, Mi 3:9, 11).

¹⁸ In place of *‘charged you’*, here following the NRSV, the NJB has *‘gave you directions’*.

¹⁹ The NRSV places the phrase, *‘as the LORD our God had ordered us’* at the beginning of the verse; here, we follow the NJB & NETB.

כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲתָנוּ וַנֵּבֵא עַד קָדֵשׁ
בְּרִנֵּעַ: ^כ וְאָמַר אֲלֵכֶם בְּאַתֶּם עַד־הָר הָאֲמָרִי
אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ: ^{כא} רְאֵה נָתַן יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ עֲלֶה רֵשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ לָךְ אֶל־תִּירָא וְאֶל־תַּחַת:

^{כב} וַתִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי כְּלָכֶם וַתֹּאמְרוּ נִשְׁלַח אַנְשִׁים
לְפָנֵינוּ וַיַּחְפְּרוּ־לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיָּשִׁבוּ אֲתָנוּ דְּבָר
אֶת־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר נֵעְלָה־בָּהּ וְאֵת הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר נִבֵּא
אֲלֵיהֶן: ^{כג} וַיִּיטֹב בְּעֵינַי הַדָּבָר וְאָקַח מִכֶּם שְׁנַיִם
עָשָׂר אַנְשִׁים אִישׁ אֶחָד לַשִּׁבְט: ^{כד} וַיִּפְּנוּ וַיַּעֲלוּ
הַהָרָה וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד־נַחַל אֶשְׁכּוֹל וַיִּרְגְּלוּ אֹתָהּ:
^{כה} וַיִּקְחוּ בִידֵם מִפְּרִי הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּרְדּוּ אֵלֵינוּ וַיָּשִׁבוּ
אֲתָנוּ דְּבָר וַיֹּאמְרוּ טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ:

had ordered, and arrived at Kadesh-Barnea. ²⁰ Then I said to you: Now you have reached these Amorite highlands that Yahweh our God is giving to us. ²¹ See, Yahweh your God has made over this land to you. March in, take possession of it as Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, has said; do not be afraid or discouraged.

²² “Then you all came to me and said, “Let us send men ahead of us to explore the country for us; they will bring back a report to us regarding the route by which we must go and what towns we shall come to.”

²³ This plan seemed good to me and I selected twelve of your men, one from each tribe. ²⁴ They made towards the highlands and went up into them; they reached the valley of Eshcol and reconnoitred it. ²⁵ They collected some of the fruit of the country and brought it down to us; and they made us this report, “It is a prosperous land that Yahweh our God has given us.”

²⁰ The Hebrew participle translated ‘is giving’ has an imminent future sense here.

²¹ The literal translation of ‘made over the land to you’ is ‘placed before you the land’. This assurance of victory is characteristic of the holy war and recurs frequently in Deuteronomy (see v. 29, 7:21, 20:1, 30:8).

²² In contrast to Nb. 13:2, where Yahweh orders the despatching of the explorers, here the people suggest it. Their action is represented as a lack of faith and conditions the rest of the story: the refusal to enter Canaan and the ensuing punishment. Deuteronomy makes this faithless incident the reason for Moses’ later exclusion from the Promised Land, whereas Nb 20:12–13 attributes this to the incident at Meribah: so here, too, the theme of the Promised Land is emphasised.

²³ The literal translation of ‘seemed good to me’ is ‘was good in my eyes’.

²⁴ The ‘valley of Eshcol’ is a verdant valley near Hebron, still famous for its viticulture (cf. Nb 13:22–23); the name ‘Eshcol’ (אֶשְׁכּוֹל) means ‘trestle’, which is the frame on which grape vines grow.

²⁵ The literal translation of ‘collected’ is ‘took in their hand’.

כֹּז וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לַעֲלֹת וּתְמָרוּ אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: כֹּז וּתְרַגְנוּ בְּאֵהֲלֵיכֶם וּתְאָמְרוּ בְּשִׁנְאֹת
 יְהוָה אֲתָנוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְתֵת אֶתָּנוּ בְּיַד
 הָאֲמֹרִי לְהַשְׁמִידָנוּ: כֹּחַ אָנָּה | אֲנַחְנוּ עַל־יְמֵינוּ
 הַמָּסוּ אֶת־לִבֵּבְנוּ לֵאמֹר עִם גְּדוֹל וְרֵם מִמֶּנּוּ עָרִים
 גְּדֹלֹת וּבְצוּרֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְגַם־בְּנֵי עֲנָקִים רָאִינוּ שָׁם:
 כֹּס וְאָמַר אֲלֵכֶם לֹא־תִרְצֹן וְלֹא־תִירָאוּן מֵהֶם:
 לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלַךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם הוּא יִלָּחֶם לָכֶם
 כָּל־כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶתְכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם לַעֲיִנֵיכֶם:
 לֹא וּבַמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַף יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 כָּאֲשֶׁר יִשְׂאֵאִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ בְּכָל־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר
 הֵלַכְתֶּם עַד־בְּאֵכֶם עַד־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: לִב וּבַדְּבָר
 הַזֶּה אֵינְכֶם מֵאֲמִינִם בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: לֵג הֵהָלַךְ

26 “Yet, you refused to go up; you rebelled against Yahweh your God.
 27 You grumbled in your tents, saying “Because Yahweh hates us, he brought us out of the land of Egypt to hand us over to the Amorites to destroy us. 28 Where are we headed? Our brothers have made us lose heart, saying: The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are huge, with walls up to the sky; and we saw Anakim there too.”
 29 “And I responded to you: Do not tremble and do not be afraid of them.
 30 Yahweh your God, who is about to go in front of you, will be fighting on your side, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your very eyes. 31 You have seen him in the desert, too: Yahweh your God continued to support you, as a man supports his son, all along the road you followed until you reached this place. 32 Nevertheless, through all of this, you have put no faith in Yahweh your God, 33 who had gone in

26 Literally translated, this verse ends, “you rebelled against the mouth of Yahweh your God;” however, to include ‘the mouth’ would make for odd English style: the mouth stands by metonymy for Yahweh’s command, which in turn represents God himself.

27 The phrase ‘in your tents’ here means ‘in private’ (NETB has ‘among yourselves’).

28 The ‘Anakim’, as also ‘Emim’, ‘Rephaim’ and ‘Zamzummim’, or ‘Zuzim’ (2:10–11, 20–21, see Gn 14:5), are legendary names for the aboriginal inhabitants of Palestine and Transjordan. These were identified with the fabulous Nephilim of Gn 6:4 or Giants of Nb. 13:33, the raisers of megalithic monuments (see 3:11). In the days of Joshua, the Anakim still constituted an aristocracy in the highlands of Hebron and in the coastal region (Jos 11:21ff, 14:12–15, 15:13–15, 21:11). The Rephaim persisted in the country known as Bashan (3:13, Jos 12:4ff), while in Judaea their memory was preserved in the Valley of the Rephaim, southwest of Jerusalem (Jos 15:8, 18:16, 2S 5:18).

29 NETB combines the two synonyms ‘tremble’ and ‘be afraid’ and reads, ‘do not be terrified’.

30 The Hebrew participle translated ‘is about to go’ indicates imminent future action here.

31 In place of ‘as a man supports his son’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘as one carries a child’.

32 In place of ‘faith’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘trust’ and NETB has ‘confidence’.

33 The NRSV opens this verse with ‘who goes’ rather than ‘who had gone’, here following the NJB.

לפניכם בדרך לתור לכם מקום לחנותכם באש
לילה לראתכם בדרך אשר תלכוֹבָהּ ובעֲנָן
יוֹמָם:

לֹד וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹל דְּבָרֵיכֶם וַיִּקְצֹף וַיִּשְׁבַּע
לֵאמֹר: ^{לֵה} אִם־יֵרְאֶה אִישׁ בְּאַנְשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה הַדּוֹר
הָרַע הַזֶּה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לָתֵת
לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם: ^{לוֹ} זֹלָתִי כָּלֵב בֶּן־יִפְנֶה הוּא יֵרָאֶה וְלֹ־
אַתָּן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר דָּרַדְבָּה וּלְבָנָיו יַעַן אֲשֶׁר
מָלֵא אַחֲרֵי יְהוָה: ^{לִי} גַם־בִּי הִתְאַנֵּף יְהוָה בְּגִלְלֵכֶם
לֵאמֹר גַּם־אַתָּה לֹא־תָבֵא שָׁם: ^{לֵה} יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נוּן
הָעֹמֵד לִפְנֵיךָ הוּא יָבֵא שָׁמָּה אִתּוֹ חֹזֶק כִּי־הוּא
יִנְחִלָנָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{לִט} וְטַפְכֶּם אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתֶּם לְבָז
יְהִיָּה וּבְנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ הַיּוֹם טוֹב וְרָע הֵמָּה
יָבֹאוּ שָׁמָּה וְלָהֶם אֶתְנַנָּה וְהֵם יִירָשׁוּהָ: ^מ וְאַתֶּם
פָּנוּ לָכֶם וְסַעֲדוּ הַמִּדְבָּרָה דֶּרֶךְ יַם־סוּף:

front of you on the journey to find you a place to pitch your tents, by night in the fire, by day in the cloud, to show you the route you ought to take.

³⁴ “Yahweh heard this talk of yours and, was angry, and swore: ³⁵ “Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the rich land that I swore to give to your fathers, ³⁶ except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He shall see it. To him and to his sons I will give the land he has set foot on; for, he has fully followed Yahweh.” ³⁷ Yahweh was angry with me too, on your account. “You shall not go in either,” he said. ³⁸ “Your assistant Joshua son of Nun, he shall be the one to enter. Give him encouragement, for he is the one who shall bring Israel to take possession of the land. ³⁹ But your little ones who, you said, would be seized as booty, these children of yours who do not yet know good from evil, these shall go in there; I will give it to them and they shall possess it. ⁴⁰ As for you, turn round, go back into the desert, towards the Sea of Suph.”

³⁴ The literal translation of ‘took this oath’ is simple ‘swore’.

³⁵ Literally translated, this verse opens, “Not a man among these men.”

³⁶ ‘Caleb’ had, with Joshua, brought back to Israel a minority report from Canaan urging a conquest of the land, for he was confident of Yahweh’s power (Nb 13:6, 8, 16, 30, 14:30, 38).

³⁷ Here, Moses is not punished for his own sin (Nb 20:10–13, 27:12–23) but vicariously bears the divine wrath on Israel’s account.

³⁸ The literal translation of ‘assistant’ is ‘the one who stands before you’.

³⁹ The phrase ‘do not yet know good from evil’ is a figure of speech called a merism (suggesting a whole by referring to its extreme opposites). Other examples are the tree of ‘the knowledge of good and evil’ (Gn 2:9), the boy who knows enough ‘to reject the wrong and choose the right’ (Is 7:16, 8:4), and those who ‘cannot tell their right hand from their left’ (Jon 4:11). A young child is characterised by lack of knowledge.

⁴⁰ The pronoun ‘you’ here is plural. Many English translations have ‘Red Sea’ in place of ‘Sea of Suph’ (here following the NJB), but ‘Reed’ is a better translation of סוּף. The name ‘Red Sea’ is based on the LXX, which referred to it as ἔρυθρὰς θαλάσσης.

מֵאָז וַתַּעֲנֵנִי וַתֹּאמְרוּ אֵלַי חָטֵאנוּ לַיהוָה אֱנַחֲנוּ נַעֲלֶה וְנִלְחַמְנוּ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַתַּחֲגֹרוּ אִישׁ אֶת-כְּלָיו מִלְחָמָתוֹ וַתִּהְיוּ לַעֲלֹת הַהָרֶה׃
מֵב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אֲמַר לָהֶם לֹא תַעֲלוּ וְלֹא-
תִלְחַמְּנוּ כִּי אֵינֶנִּי בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְלֹא תִנְגְּפוּ לִפְנֵי
אֹיְבֵיכֶם׃ מֵג וַאֲדַבֵּר אֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא שְׁמַעְתֶּם וַתִּמְרוּ
אֶת-פִּי יְהוָה וַתִּזְדּוּ וַתַּעֲלוּ הַהָרֶה׃ מֵד וַיֵּצֵא הָאֱמֹרִי
הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּהָר הַהוּא לִקְרֹאתְכֶם וַיִּרְדְּפוּ אֶתְכֶם
כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂינָה הַדְּבָרִים וַיִּכְתּוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּשִׁעִיר
עַד-חֲרָמָה׃ מֵה וַתָּשׁוּבוּ וַתִּבְכוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא-שָׁמַע
יְהוָה בְּקִלְלָכֶם וְלֹא הֶאֱזִין אֲלֵיכֶם׃ מֵו וַתָּשׁוּבוּ בְּקֹדֶשׁ
יָמִים רַבִּים כִּימִים אֲשֶׁר יֹשְׁבֵתָם׃

⁴¹ “You answered me then, “We have sinned against Yahweh our God. We will go up and fight as Yahweh our God has ordered us.” So, each one of you buckled on his arms and blithely marched up into the highlands. ⁴² But Yahweh said to me, “Tell them this: Do not go up and fight. I am not among you. You will be defeated by your enemies.” ⁴³ I told you, but you would not listen, and you rebelled against Yahweh: you still dared to go up into the highlands. ⁴⁴ The Amorites, who live in that country of hills, came swarming out against you like bees, pursued you and struck you down in Seir and as far away as Hormah. ⁴⁵ When you returned you shed tears in the presence of Yahweh, but he did not listen to your cries and paid no heed to you. ⁴⁶ That was why you had to stay at Kadesh as long as you did.

⁴¹ For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “So all of you strapped on your battle gear, and thought it easy to go up into the hill country;” and NETB has, “So you each put on your war apparel and prepared to go up to the hill country.”

⁴² In place of ‘among you’ (here following the NJB) NETB has ‘with you’.

⁴³ Before ‘Yahweh’, the MT has the words ‘the mouth of’ (see #26).

⁴⁴ ‘Hormah’ (חֲרָמָה) is probably Khirbet El-Meshash, 9 Km west of Arad and 12 Km SE of Beersheba; its name is a derivative of the verb ‘to exterminate’ (see Nb 21:3).

⁴⁵ Literally translated, the phrase ‘paid no heed to you’ is ‘did not hear your voice and did not turn an ear to you’.

⁴⁶ The literal translation for ‘as long as you did’ is ‘like the days which you lived’; this refers to the rest of the 40-year period in the desert before Israel arrived in Moab.

דברים פרק ב

א וַנִּפְּן וְנָסַע הַמִּדְבָּרָה דֶּרֶךְ יַם־סוּף כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלַי וְנָסַב אֶת־הַר־שְׁעִיר יָמִים רַבִּים: {ס}
ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ג רַב־לָכֶם סָב אֶת־הָהָר הַזֶּה פָּנּוּ לָכֶם צָפֹנָה: ד וְאֶת־הָעָם צוּ לֵאמֹר אַתֶּם עֲבָרִים בְּגִבּוֹל אֲחֵיכֶם בְּנֵי־עִשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשְׁעִיר וַיִּירָאוּ מִכֶּם וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּם מְאֹד: ה אַל־תִּתְּגְרוּ בָם כִּי לֹא־אֶתֵּן לָכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ עַד מִדְּרֹךְ כַּף־רֶגֶל כִּי־יִרְשָׁה לְעִשָׂו נִתְּתִי אֶת־הָהָר שְׁעִיר: ו אַכֹּל תִּשְׁבְּרוּ מֵאֲתָם בַּבֶּסֶף וְאֹכְלֹתָם וְגַם־מַיִם תִּכְרוּ מֵאֲתָם בַּבֶּסֶף וּשְׁתִּיתֶם: ז כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בֵּרַכְךָ בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ יִדַּע לְכַתְּבֶךָ אֶת־הַמִּדְבָּר הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה | אַרְבָּעִים

DEUTERONOMY 2

1 “We then turned and made for the desert, by way of the Sea of Suph, as Yahweh had ordered me. For many days, we skirted Mount Seir.
2 “Yahweh then said to me, 3 “You have wandered in these highlands long enough: Go north; 4 and give the people this order: You are about to pass through the territory of your kinsmen, the sons of Esau who live in Seir. They are frightened of you; but take care 5 not to provoke them, for I will not give you even so much as a foot’s length of their land. I have given Mount Seir to Esau as his domain. 6 Pay them in money for what food you eat and pay them in money for all the water you drink.
7 Yahweh your God has blessed you in all you do; he has watched over your journeying through this vast desert. Yahweh your God has been

DEUTERONOMY 2

- 1 As in the Nb 14:25, the ‘Sea of Suph’ is given as the primary direction but Deuteronomy elaborates by indicating a route through the desert towards Moab and Ammon.
- 2 Here, following the NJB, we do not translate the opening conjunction (literally, ‘and’); the NRSV has ‘then’ and NETB has ‘at this point’.
- 3 In place of ‘wandered in these highlands’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘skirting this hill country’ and NETB has ‘circled around this mountain’.
- 4 The ‘sons of Esau’ (בְּנֵי־עִשָׂו) – the phrase also occurs in 2:8, 12, 22, 29) are the inhabitants of the land otherwise known as Edom, south and east of the Dead Sea; Jacob’s brother Esau had settled there after his bitter strife with Jacob (Gn 36:1–8). ‘Edom’ means ‘reddish’, probably because of the red sandstone of the region, but also by popular etymology because Esau, at birth, was reddish (Gn 25:25).
- 5 The Edomites, descended from Abraham (Gn 36) and the Moabites and Ammonites (vv. 9 & 19), descended from Lot (Gn 19:30ff) have, like the Israelites, been settled by God in territories formerly belonging to other races, the names of which are recorded in the additional verses (vv. 10–12 & 20–23). ‘Mount Seir’ is synonymous with ‘Edom’.
- 6 The literal translation of ‘money’ is ‘silver’ (twice in this verse).
- 7 Literally translated, the phrase ‘all you do’ is ‘all the work of your hands’.

שָׁנָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עִמָּךְ לֹא חִסְרָת דָּבָר: ^ח וְנַעֲבֹר
מֵאֵת אַחֵינוּ בְּנֵי־עֵשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשֶׁעִיר מִדְרָךְ
הָעֲרָבָה מֵאֵילָת וּמֵעֵצִין גְּבֵר {ס}

וְנִפְּלֹ וְנַעֲבֹר דֶּרֶךְ מִדְבָּר מוֹאָב: ^ט וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי
אַל־תִּצֹר אֶת־מוֹאָב וְאַל־תִּתְּגֹר בָּם מִלְחָמָה כִּי
לֹא־אֶתֶּן לָךְ מֵאֶרְצוֹ יְרֵשָׁה כִּי לְבְנֵי־לֹוט נָתַתִּי אֶת־
עַר יְרֵשָׁה: ^י הָאָמִים לְפָנַי יֹשְׁבוּ בָהּ עַם גָּדוֹל וְרַב
וְרַם כְּעֲנָקִים: ^{יא} רִפְאִים יֹחֲשָׁבוּ אֲפֹהֶם כְּעֲנָקִים
וְהַמֶּאֱבִים יִקְרְאוּ לָהֶם אָמִים: ^{יב} וּבְשֶׁעִיר יֹשְׁבוּ
הַחֲרִים לְפָנַי וּבְנֵי עֵשָׂו יִירָשׁוּם וַיִּשְׁמִידוּם
מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיֹּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֶרֶץ
יְרֵשָׁתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן יְהוָה לָהֶם: ^{יג} עַתָּה קֵמוּ וְעִבְרוּ
לָכֶם אֶת־נַחַל זֶרֶד וְנַעֲבֹר אֶת־נַחַל זֶרֶד: ^{יד} וְהַיָּמִים
אֲשֶׁר־הִלְכְּנוּ מִקָּדֵשׁ בְּרִנֵּעַ עַד אֲשֶׁר־עָבְרָנוּ אֶת־
נַחַל זֶרֶד שְׁלֹשִׁים וּשְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנָה עַד־תֵּם כָּל־הַדֹּר

with you these forty years and you have never been in want.” ⁸ So, we passed beyond those kinsmen of ours, the sons of Esau who live in Seir, by the Arabah and Elath and Ezion-Geber road.

“Then, changing direction, we took the road towards the Plains of Moab.

⁹ Yahweh said to me, “Make no attack on Moab and do not provoke him to fight, for I will give you none of his land. I have given Ar into the possession of the sons of Lot.” (¹⁰ At one time the Emim lived there, a great and numerous people, tall as the Anakim; ¹¹ and, like the Anakim, they were accounted Rephaim, though the Moabites call them Emim.

¹² And the Horim lived in Seir at one time; but they were dispossessed and destroyed by the sons of Esau who settled there in place of them, just as Israel did in their own land, the heritage they received from Yahweh.) ¹³ “Forward, then! Cross the Wadi Zered!” So, we crossed the Wadi Zered. ¹⁴ Now from Kadesh-Barnea to the Wadi Zered, our wanderings had taken thirty-eight years, so that the whole generation

⁸ ‘Elath’ (אֵילָת) was a port city at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, known today as Tell el-Kheleifeh. ‘Ezion-Geber’ (עֵצִין גְּבֵר) was also a port city (1K 22:48–49) and may be the same as the modern site Gezirat al-Fauran, 24 Km SSW of Tell el-Kheleifah.

⁹ ‘Ar’ (עַר) was a Moabite city on the Arnon River east of the Dead Sea; it is mentioned elsewhere in the ‘Book of the Wars of Yahweh’ (Nb 21:15, cf. 21:28, Is 15:1). Here, it is synonymous with the whole land of Moab.

¹⁰ ‘Emim’ (compare v. 20, 3:11–13) is a name reflecting the ancient view that the aborigines were giants.

¹¹ The infamous giant race of the ‘Rephaim’ lived around Ashteroth Karnaim, in the Bashan plateau east of the Sea of Galilee.

¹² The ‘Horim’ (חֲרִים) here can hardly be identified with the Hurrians mentioned in cuneiform texts, who entered Palestine only c. 1500 BCE, and then in very small numbers. Proper names attest their presence in a few towns west of the Jordan but never in Transjordan.

¹³ The ‘Wadi Zered’, now known as Wadi El-Hesa, was a valley marking the boundary between Moab to the north and Edom to the south.

¹⁴ In place of ‘warriors’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘men fit for war’.

אֲנָשֵׁי הַמִּלְחָמָה מִקֶּרֶב הַמַּחֲנֶה כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
יְהוָה לָהֶם: ^{טו} וְגַם יַד־יְהוָה הָיְתָה בָּם לְהַמָּס מִקֶּרֶב
הַמַּחֲנֶה עַד תָּמָס: ^{טז} וַיְהִי כַאֲשֶׁר־תָּמּוּ כָּל־אֲנָשֵׁי
הַמִּלְחָמָה לְמוֹת מִקֶּרֶב הָעָם: {ס}

^{יז} וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: ^{יח} אַתָּה עֹבֵר הַיּוֹם אֶת־
גְּבוּל מוֹאָב אֶת־עַר: ^{יט} וְקִרְבַּת מוֹל בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן אֶל־
תְּצַרֵם וְאֶל־תִּתְּנָר בָּם כִּי לֹא־אֶתֶּן מֵאֶרֶץ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן
לְךָ יִרְשָׁה כִּי לְבְנֵי־לוֹט נָתַתִּיהָ יִרְשָׁה: ^כ אֶרֶץ־
רַפָּאִים תַּחֲשֹׁב אֲפִי־הוּא רַפָּאִים יִשְׁבּוּ־בָהּ לְפָנַי
וְהָעַמֻּמִּים יִקְרְאוּ לָהֶם זַמְזֻמִּים: ^{כא} עַם גָּדוֹל וְרַב
וְרַם כְּעַנְקִים וַיִּשְׁמִידֵם יְהוָה מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָשׁוּם
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם: ^{כב} כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְבְנֵי עִשָׂו הַיֹּשְׁבִים
בְּשֶׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁמִיד אֶת־הַחֲרִי מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָשׁוּם
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ^{כג} וְהָעוֹשִׁים הַיֹּשְׁבִים
בְּחִצְרִים עַד־עֵזָה כְּפָתוּרִים הַיִּצְאִים מִכְּפָתוֹר

of warriors was lost to the camp, as Yahweh had sworn to them. ¹⁵ The hand of Yahweh fell upon them in the camp until they had perished entirely. ¹⁶ “When all the warriors had been carried off by death from among the people, down to the last man,

¹⁷ “Yahweh said this to me, ¹⁸ “You are now about to cross Ar, the land of Moab, ¹⁹ and to approach the frontier of the Ammonites. Do not attack or provoke them, for I will give you none of the land belonging to the Ammonites. I have given it to the children of Lot as their domain.” ⁽²⁰ This also was accounted a land of Rephaim; at one time, the Rephaim lived there, though the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, ²¹ a great and numerous people, tall as the Anakim. Yahweh destroyed them before the Ammonites, who settled there in place of them, ²² as he had destroyed the Horim in front of the children of Esau who live in Seir, so they could dispossess them and settle there in place of them to this day. ²³ As for the Avvim who had their encampments as far as Gaza: the

¹⁵ For this verse, the NRSV reads, “Indeed, the LORD’s own hand was against them, to root them out from the camp, until all had perished.”

¹⁶ This verse is, grammatically, part of the next paragraph, but is retained here in the translation in keeping with the divisions in the MT.

¹⁷ Literally translated, this verse (here following the NJB) reads, “Yahweh spoke to me, saying.”

¹⁸ The territory of the Ammonites lay to the north of that of Sihon, on the upper waters of the River Jabbok (see 3:16, Nb 21:24).

¹⁹ Following the destruction of the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, as God’s judgment, Lot fathered two sons by his two daughters, namely, Moab and Ammon (Gn 19:30-38); thus, these descendants of Lot in and around Ar were the Moabites.

²⁰ Just as the Moabites called Rephaim by the name ‘Emim’, the Ammonites called them ‘Zamzummim’ (or Zazites: Gn 14:5).

²¹ In place of ‘the Ammonites’, the MT has simply ‘them’; the referent is here specified for clarity.

²² In place of ‘Horim’, here following the NRSV, the NJB & NETB have ‘Horites’.

²³ The ‘Caphtorim’ were the Philistines, coming from Crete or from Asia Minor (see #13:2).

הַשְׁמִידִם וַיֵּשְׁבוּ תַּחְתָּם: כִּי קוּמוּ סְעוּ וְעָבְרוּ אֶת־
נַחַל אַרְנֹן רְאֵה נָתַתִּי בְיָדְךָ אֶת־סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ־חֶשְׁבֹּן
הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶת־אַרְצוֹ הַחֵל רֶשֶׁת וְהַתְּגַר בּוֹ מִלְחָמָה:
כֹּה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֶחַל תֵּת פַּחַדְךָ וִירָאתְךָ עַל־פְּנֵי
הָעַמִּים תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן שְׁמֶעְךָ
וְרָגְזוּ וַחֲלוּ מִפְּנֶיךָ:

כֹּי וְאֶשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים מִמִּדְבָּר קִדְמוֹת אֶל־סִיחֹן
מֶלֶךְ חֶשְׁבֹּן דְּבַרִי שָׁלוֹם לֵאמֹר: כֹּי אֶעְבְּרָה
בְּאַרְצְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶלְךָ לֹא אֶסּוּר יָמִין וּשְׂמָאוֹל:
כֹּי אֶכֶל בֶּכֶסֶף תִּשְׁבְּרֵנִי וְאֶכְלָתִי וַיְמִים בֶּכֶסֶף תִּתֶּן
לִי וְשִׁתִּיתִי רַק אֶעְבְּרָה בְּרַגְלִי: כֹּי פֶּאֶשֶׁר עָשׂוּ־לִי
בְּנֵי עָשׂוּ הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּשַׁעִיר וְהַמּוֹאָבִים הַיֹּשְׁבִים
בְּעַר עַד אֲשֶׁר־אֶעְבֹּר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ: לֹא אָבָה סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ
חֶשְׁבֹּן הָעִבְרָנוּ בּוֹ כִּי־הִקְשָׁה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־

Caphtorim, coming from Caphtor, destroyed them, settling there in place of them.)²⁴ “Break camp, set out and cross the Wadi Arnon. See, I am putting Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, at your mercy, and his country too. Conquer it and engage him in battle.²⁵ Today I will begin to put the dread and fear of you among all the peoples under heaven: all who hear the sound will tremble and fear your coming.”

²⁶ “So, from the desert of Kedemoth I sent envoys to Sihon king of Heshbon with the following terms of peace: ²⁷ I mean to pass through your land. I will travel only along the road; I will stray neither to the right nor to the left. ²⁸ What food I eat, sell me in return for money; and I will pay money for all the water I drink. Only give me leave to march through, ²⁹ just as the children of Esau who live in Seir gave me leave, and likewise the Moabites who live in Ar, until I cross the Jordan into the land that Yahweh our God is giving us. ³⁰ But Sihon king of Heshbon would not give us leave to pass through his land: Yahweh your God has

²⁴ ‘Heshbon’ is the name of a prominent site (now Tell Hesba’n, about 12 Km south SW of Amman, Jordan); ‘Sihon’ made it his capital after having driven Moab from the area and forced them south to the Arnon (Nb 21:26–30).

²⁵ The literal translation of ‘your coming’ is ‘before you’.

²⁶ Vv. 26–37 follow the primitive tradition for the historic conquest of Sihon, as also for the legendary story of Og (3:1–11). ‘Desert of Kedemoth’ could also be translated as, ‘eastern desert’.

²⁷ The literal translation of ‘only along the road’ is ‘in the way in the way’ (בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ): the repetition lays great stress on the idea of resolute determination to stick to the path.

²⁸ The literal translation of ‘money’ is ‘silver’ (twice in this verse).

²⁹ The NJB lacks the word ‘likewise’, here following the NRSV.

³⁰ In place of ‘your God’, here following the MT (with a 2MS pronoun), the NJB & NRSV, NETB, following the LXX (θεὸς ἡμῶν), has ‘our God’.

רוחו ואמץ את־לִבּוֹ לִמְעַן תִּתּוּ בְיָדְךָ כִּיּוֹם
הַזֶּה: {ס}

לא וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי רְאֵה הִחַלְתִּי תֵּת לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת־
סִיחֹן וְאֶת־אַרְצוֹ הִחַל רֶשׁ לְרֶשֶׁת אֶת־אַרְצוֹ:
לב וַיֵּצֵא סִיחֹן לִקְרָאתָנוּ הוּא וְכָל־עַמּוֹ לַמִּלְחָמָה
יִהְיֶה: לג וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְפָנֵינוּ וַנֶּךְ אֹתוֹ
וְאֶת־בָּנָיו [בְּנָיו] וְאֶת־כָּל־עַמּוֹ: לד וַנִּלְכֹּד אֶת־כָּל־
עָרָיו בַּעַת הַהוּא וַנַּחֲרֵם אֶת־כָּל־עִיר מֵתָם
וְהַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף לֹא הִשְׁאֲרָנוּ שְׂרִיד: לה רַק הַבְּהֵמָה
בָּזְזָנוּ לָנוּ וְשָׁלַל הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר לִכְדָּנוּ: לו מִמֶּעְרֶר
אֲשֶׁר עַל־שְׂפַת־נַחַל אַרְנֹן וְהָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּנַחַל וְעַד־
הַגִּלְעָד לֹא הָיְתָה קְרִיָּה אֲשֶׁר שָׁגְבָה מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת־
הַכָּל נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְפָנֵינוּ: לי רַק אֶל־אַרֶץ בְּנֵי־
עַמּוֹן לֹא קִרְבָּתָ כָּל־יָד נָחַל יַבֵּק וְעָרֵי הָהָר וְכָל
אֲשֶׁר־צֻוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

made his spirit obstinate and his heart stubborn, so as to leave him at your mercy, as he still is.

³¹ “Yahweh said to me, “You see, I have begun to deliver Sihon and his land over to you. Set about the conquest; seize his land.” ³² Sihon then, with all his people, marched out against us to give battle at Jahaz; ³³ and Yahweh our God delivered him over to us: we defeated him, with all his sons and all his people. ³⁴ Then we captured all his cities and laid whole towns under ban, men, women and children; we spared nothing ³⁵ but the livestock that we took as our spoil, as also the plunder from the towns we captured. ³⁶ From Aroer on the height above the Wadi Arnon, and from the town at the bottom of the ravine, as far as Gilead, not one town was beyond our reach; Yahweh our God delivered them all over to us. ³⁷ The country of the Ammonites alone you did not go near, neither the region of Wadi Jabbok nor the towns of the hill country, nor anywhere forbidden us by Yahweh our God.

³¹ For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Begin now to take possession of his land.”

³² ‘Jahaz’ is probably Khirbet El-Medeiyineh.

³³ The translation, ‘his sons’, follows the Qere (בְּנָיו); the Ketiv has the singular, ‘his son’ (בְּנוֹ); this variance, following the Leningrad Codex (and UXL), is shown in neither the MAM text nor by Mechon Mamre.

³⁴ The phrase ‘under ban’ refers to God’s designation of certain persons, places, and things as objects of his special wrath and judgment because, in his omniscience, he knows them to be impure and hopelessly unrepentant.

³⁵ For this verse, NETB reads, “We kept only the livestock and plunder from the cities for ourselves.”

³⁶ Now known as Araáir, on the northern edge of the Arnon river, ‘Aroer’ marked the southern limit of Moab and, later, of the allotment of the tribe of Reuben (Jos 13:9, 16).

³⁷ The River Jabbok makes a wide bend south and thus forms the western border of Ammon.

DEUTERONOMY 3

דברים פרק ג

^א וַנִּפְּן וְנָעַל דֶּרֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן וַיֵּצֵא עֹוג מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן לִקְרָאתָנוּ הוּא וְכָל-עַמּוֹ לְמִלְחָמָה אֲדָרְעִי:
^ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶל-תִּירָא אֹתוֹ כִּי בִיָּדִי נָתַתִּי אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ וְאֶת-אֶרְצוֹ וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ לְסִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן:
^ג וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּיָדֵנוּ גַם אֶת-עֹוג מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ וְנָפְלוּ עַד-בִּלְתִּי הַשְּׂאִיר-לוֹ שְׂרִיד:
^ד וְנִלְכַּד אֶת-כָּל-עָרָיו בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֹא הָיְתָה קְרִיָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-לָקַחְנוּ מֵאֲתָם שְׂשִׁים עִיר כָּל-חֶבֶל אֲרָגָב מִמְּלֶכֶת עֹוג בַּבָּשָׁן:
^ה כָּל-אֵלֶּה עָרִים בְּצִרְתָּ חוֹמָה גְּבוּהָ דִלְתִּים וּבְרִיחַ לְבַד מֵעָרֵי הַפְּרָזִי הִרְבֵּה מְאֹד:
^ו וַנַּחֲרֵם אוֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂינוּ לְסִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ חֶשְׁבּוֹן הַחֶרֶם כָּל-עִיר מֵתָם הַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף:
^ז וְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה וְשָׁלַל הָעָרִים בָּזָזְנוּ לָנוּ:

¹ “We then turned towards Bashan and went up there; and Og king of Bashan marched out against us, he and all his people, to give battle at Edrei. ² Yahweh said to me, “Do not fear him, for I have put him at your mercy, with all his people and his land. Deal with him as you dealt with Sihon the king of the Amorites who lives in Heshbon.” ³ So, Yahweh our God put Og king of Bashan at our mercy too, with all his people. We struck him down and not a thing remained to him. ⁴ We captured all his towns at that time; there was not a town of theirs we did not take: sixty towns, the whole confederation of Argob, Og’s capital in Bashan, ⁵ all the strongholds enclosed in high walls and fortified with gates and bars, besides a great many villages. ⁶ We laid them under ban as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon, laying each occupied town, men, women and children, under the ban; ⁷ but we seized the livestock and the plunder from these towns as spoil for ourselves.

DEUTERONOMY 3

- ¹ ‘Bashan’, a plateau country, famous for its oaks (Is 2:13) and cattle (Dt 32:14, Am 4:1), was north of Gilead along the Jarmuk River. ‘Edrei’ was on the extreme south border of Bashan, probably modern Deràa, 95 Km south of Damascus.
- ² In place of ‘people’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘army’ (as also in v. 1).
- ³ The NRSV & NETB omit the final ‘to him’, considering the phrase redundant in contemporary English; here, we follow the NJB.
- ⁴ ‘Argob’ is a sub-district of Bashan, perhaps north of the Jarmuk River.
- ⁵ In place of ‘besides a great many villages’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB, following the LXX (πλὴν τῶν πόλεων τῶν Περιζαίων τῶν πολλῶν σφόδρα) has ‘not to mention the Perizzite towns, which were very numerous’; the ‘Perizzites’ were country folk whose towns were unfortified.
- ⁶ The literal translation of ‘occupied town’ is ‘town of men’.
- ⁷ In place of ‘plunder’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘spoil’, and in place of ‘spoil for ourselves’ the NJB has ‘our plunder’.

ח וַנִּקַּח בָּעֵת הַהוּא אֶת־הָאָרֶץ מִיַּד שְׁנֵי מְלָכֵי
הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן מִנְּחַל אַרְנֹן עַד־הַר
חֶרְמוֹן: ט צִידָנִים יִקְרְאוּ לְחֶרְמוֹן שָׂרִין וְהָאֲמֹרִי
יִקְרְאוּלוֹ שֵׁנִיר: י כָּל־עָרֵי הַמִּישֹׁר וְכָל־הַגְּלָעַד
וְכָל־הַבָּשָׁן עַד־סֹלְכָה וְאֶדְרֵי עָרֵי מַמְלַכַת עֹג
בַּבָּשָׁן: יא כִּי רָק־עֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן נִשְׂאָר מֵיִתֵּר
הָרֶפָּאִים הִנֵּה עֶרְשׁוֹ עֶרֶשׁ בְּרֹזֶל הָלָה הוּא בְּרַבַּת
בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן תִּשַׁע אַמּוֹת אָרְכָּה וְאַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת רָחְבָּהּ
בְּאַמַּת־אִישׁ:

יב וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת יִרְשֻׁנוּ בָּעֵת הַהוּא מֵעֶרְוֶר
אֲשֶׁר־עַל־נְחַל אַרְנֹן וְחֻצֵי הַר־הַגְּלָעַד וְעָרָיו נָתַתִּי
לְרְאוּבֵנִי וּלְגָדִי: יג וְיִתֵּר הַגְּלָעַד וְכָל־הַבָּשָׁן מַמְלַכַת
עֹג נָתַתִּי לְחֻצֵי שִׁבְט הַמְּנַשֶּׁה כָּל חֶבֶל הָאֲרָגָב
לְכָל־הַבָּשָׁן הַהוּא יִקְרָא אֶרֶץ רֶפָאִים: יד יֵאִיר בֶּן־
מְנַשֶּׁה לָקַח אֶת־כָּל־חֶבֶל אֲרָגָב עַד־גְּבוּל הַגִּשּׁוּרִי

8 “Thus, by then we had taken the country of the two Amorite kings that were beyond the Jordan, stretching from the Wadi Arnon to Mount Hermon⁹ (the Sidonians call Hermon ‘Sirion’ and the Amorites call it ‘Senir’);¹⁰ all the towns of the tableland, and all Gilead and all Bashan, as far as Salecah and Edrei, the capital cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.¹¹ (For Og king of Bashan was the last survivor of the Rephaim; and his bedstead was the bedstead of iron that can still be seen at Rabbah of the Ammonites, nine cubits in length and four cubits in width, in the common cubit.)

12 “At that time, we occupied this land; to the Reubenites and Gadites, I gave from Aroer on the Wadi Arnon and half the highlands of Gilead with its towns.¹³ To the half-tribe of Manasseh, I gave the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, Og’s kingdom. (The whole region of Argob, and the whole of Bashan, is called the land of the Rephaim.¹⁴ Jair the Manassite took all the region of Argob to the border of the Geshurites and Maaca-

⁸ ‘Mount Hermon’ is the famous peak at the southern end of the Anti-Lebanon mountain range; known today as Jebel es-Sheik, it is probably the mountain of Jesus’ transfiguration (Mk 9:2).

⁹ The name ‘Sirion’ is attested in the Ugaritic texts; ‘Senir’ was probably one of the peaks of Hermon and not the main mountain (Sg 4:8, 1Ch 5:23) and is mentioned in a royal inscription of Shalmaneser III of Assyria.

¹⁰ ‘Salecah’ is today known as Salkhad, in Jordan, about 50 Km east of the Jordan River in the Hauran Desert.

¹¹ Og’s ‘bedstead of iron’ was possibly one of the ferrous basalt cromlechs near Amman; it was a ‘museum piece’ in Rabbah, a city on the Ammonite border. ‘Nine cubits’ is approximately 4 metres. The NJB lacks the word, ‘still’ (here following the NRSV).

¹² The NJB places the phrase ‘from Aroer on the Wadi Arnon’ immediately after ‘this land’; here, we follow the NRSV.

¹³ In place of ‘is called’, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads ‘used to be called’.

¹⁴ The NJB translates the name ‘Havvoth-Jair’ into ‘the Encampments of Jair’.

והמעבתי ויקרא אתם על-שמו את-הבשן חות
יאיר עד היום הזה: ^{טו} ולמכיר נתתי את-הגלעד:
^{טז} ולראובני ולגדי נתתי מן-הגלעד ועד-נחל ארנן
תוך הנחל וגבל ועד יבק הנחל גבול בני עמון:
^{יז} והערבה והירדן וגבל מכנרת ועד ים הערבה ים
המלח תחת אשדת הפסגה מזרחה:

^{יח} ואצו אתכם בעת ההוא לאמר יהוה אלהיכם
נתן לכם את-הארץ הזאת לרשתה חלוצים
תעברו לפני אחיכם בני-ישראל כל-בני-חיל:
^{יט} רק נשיכם וטפכם ומקנכם ידעתי כי-מקנה רב
לכם ישבו בעריכם אשר נתתי לכם: ^כ עד אשר-
יניח יהוה | לאחיכם ככם וירשו גם-הם את-
הארץ אשר יהוה אלהיכם נתן להם בעבר הירדן
ושבתם איש לרשתו אשר נתתי לכם: ^{כא} ואת-
יהושוע צויתי בעת ההוא לאמר עיניך הראת את
כל-אשר עשה יהוה אלהיכם לשני המלכים
האלה בן-יעשה יהוה לכל-הממלכות אשר אתה

thites and gave his name to those towns, Havvoth-Jair, to this day.) ¹⁵ To Machir I gave Gilead. ¹⁶ To the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave from Gilead to the Wadi Arnon, the middle of the wadi marking the border, and up to the wadi Jabbok, which is the border of the Ammonites. ¹⁷ The Arabah also, the Jordan being the border, from Chinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), under the slopes of Pisgah on the east.

¹⁸ “And I gave you this command at that time, saying: although Yahweh your God has given you this land for your own, all you fighting men must take up arms and march at the head of your brothers, the Israelites. ¹⁹ Only your wives, your children and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall stay behind in the towns I have given you. ²⁰ When Yahweh gives rest to your brothers, as he has to you, and they too have occupied the land that Yahweh your God is giving them beyond the Jordan, then you shall return, each to the property I have given to you. ²¹ I then gave Joshua this order: You have seen with your own eyes everything that Yahweh has done to these two kings; Yahweh will do the same to all the kingdoms into which you are about to pass.

¹⁵ ‘Machir’ was the name of another descendant of Manasseh (cf. Nb 32:41, 1Ch 7:14–19); eastern Manasseh was thus divided between the Jairites and the Machirites.

¹⁶ NETB places the clause ‘the middle of the wadi marking the border’ in parentheses.

¹⁷ The territory included the eastern part of the Jordan Valley, or Arabah.

¹⁸ The NJB lacks the word ‘although’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁹ For the clause in parentheses (here following the NRSV), NETB reads ‘of which I know you have many’.

²⁰ In place of ‘gives rest to your brothers’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘settles your brothers’ and NETB has ‘gives your brothers victory’.

²¹ In place of ‘into which you are about to pass’, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads ‘through which you pass’.

עֲבַר שְׁמָה: כִּי לֹא תִירָאוּם כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא
הַנִּלְחָם לָכֶם: {ס}

כִּי וְאֶתְחַנֵּן אֶל־יְהוָה בַּעַת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: כִּי אֲדֹנָי
יְהוָה אַתָּה הַחֲלוּת לְהִרְאוֹת אֶת־עַבְדְּךָ אֶת־גְּדֻלָּתְךָ
וְאֶת־יָדְךָ הַחֲזָקָה אֲשֶׁר מִי־אֵל בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה כַּמַּעֲשִׂיךָ וְכַגְּבוּרָתְךָ: כִּי אֶעְבְּרָה־נָּא
וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן
הַהָר הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה וְהַלְבָּנוֹן: כִּי וַיִּתְּעַבֵּר יְהוָה בִּי
לִמְעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי רַב־לְךָ
אֶל־תּוֹסֵף דִּבֶּר אֵלַי עוֹד בַּדְּבָר הַזֶּה: כִּי עָלָה רֹאשׁ
הַפִּסְגָּה וְשָׂא עֵינַיִךְ יָמָה וְצַפְנָה וְתִימָנָה וּמִזְרָחָה
וְרֹאֶה בְּעֵינַיִךְ כִּי־לֹא תַעֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה: כִּי וַיְצַו
אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְחִזְקָהוּ וְאַמְצָהוּ כִּי־הוּא יַעֲבֹר לִפְנֵי
הָעָם הַזֶּה וְהוּא יִנְחִיל אוֹתָם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
תִּרְאֶה: כֹּט וַנָּשָׁב בְּגִיא מוֹל בֵּית פְּעוֹר: {פ}

²² Do not be afraid of them: Yahweh your God himself is fighting for you.

²³ “And I pleaded at that time with Yahweh, ²⁴ saying, “My Lord Yahweh, you that have begun to reveal your greatness and your power to your servant, you whose works and mighty deeds no one in heaven or on earth can rival, ²⁵ please permit me to go across and see this prosperous land beyond the Jordan, this prosperous country of hills and the Lebanon?” ²⁶ But, on your account, Yahweh was angry with me and would not listen to me. He said, “Enough of that! Speak to me no more of this matter. ²⁷ Climb to the top of Pisgah; turn your eyes towards the west, the north, the south and the east. Look well, for across this Jordan you shall not go. ²⁸ But give Joshua your instructions; and encourage him and strengthen him; for, it is he who shall go across at the head of his people; and it is he who shall put them in possession of the land that you will see.” ²⁹ We then stayed in the valley, close to Beth-Peor.

²² God fights for the people of Israel; faith is response to God’s dynamic presence in the events (20:1–20).

²³ The NJB lacks the opening conjunction, here following NETB.

²⁴ The incomparability of Yahweh, who performs ‘mighty deeds’ of salvation, is an ancient theme of hymnal praise (Ex 15:11, Ps 89:5–8). The word, ‘Lord’, translates אֲדֹנָי (‘Adonai’).

²⁵ In place of ‘please permit me to’, the NJB has ‘may I not’, the NRSV has ‘let me’ and NETB has ‘let me please’.

²⁶ The literal translation of ‘enough of that’ is ‘much to you’ (an idiom). On Moses vicarious suffering, see #1:37.

²⁷ On Mount Pisgah, see #34:1.

²⁸ The literal translation of ‘give Joshua your instructions’ is ‘command Joshua’.

²⁹ ‘Beth-Peor’ is the spot near Pisgah where Balaam tried to curse Israel (Nb 23:28); the Moabites also worshiped ‘Baal-of-Peor’ there (Nb 25:1–5).

דברים פרק ד

DEUTERONOMY 4

א ועתה ישראל שמע אלהיך ואלה המשפטים אשר אנכי מלמד אתכם לעשות למען תחיו ובאתם וירשתם את הארץ אשר יהוה אלהי אבותיכם נתן לכם: ב לא תספו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם ולא תגרעו ממנו לשמר את מצות יהוה אלהיכם אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם: ג עיניכם הראות את אשר עשה יהוה בבבל פער כי כל האיש אשר הלך אחרי בעל פער השמידו יהוה אלהיך מקרבך: ד ואתם הדבקים ביהוה אלהיכם חיים כלכם היום: ה ראה למדתי אתכם חקים ומשפטים כאשר צוני יהוה אלהי לעשות כן בקרב הארץ אשר אתם באים שמה לרשתה: ו ושמרתם ועשיתם כי הוא חכמתכם

1 “And now, Israel, take notice of the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you today and observe them, so that you may have life and may enter and possess the land that Yahweh, the God of your fathers, gives you. 2 You must neither add anything to the word that I command you, nor must you take anything away from it, but keep the commandments of Yahweh your God just as I lay them down for you. 3 You can see with your own eyes what Yahweh has done at Baal-Peor; all the followers of the Baal of Peor have been wiped out from among you by Yahweh your God; 4 but you who stayed faithful to Yahweh your God are still alive today, every one of you. 5 Look: as Yahweh my God commanded me, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, for you to observe in the country which you are about to enter and occupy. 6 Keep them, therefore, and put them into practice, and they will demonstrate

DEUTERONOMY 4

- 1 The technical terms מִשְׁפָּטִים and חֻקִּים ('statutes' and 'ordinances') occur repeatedly throughout the Book of Deuteronomy to describe the covenant stipulations to which Israel had been called to subscribe (see, in this chapter alone, vv. 1, 5, 6 & 8). The word חֻקִּים derives from the verb חק ('to inscribe') and מִשְׁפָּטִים from שפט ('to judge'); they are virtually synonymous and are used interchangeably in Deuteronomy.
- 2 The literal translation of 'lay ... down for you' is 'commanding you'.
- 3 In place of 'at Baal Peor', here following the MT & NJB, the LXX (τῷ Βεελφεγωρ), NRSV & Peshitta have ('to Baal Peor').
- 4 The incident at Peor (Nb 25:1-9) teaches that obedience to God's law is the condition for life in Canaan and a testimony to the wisdom that Yahweh graciously imparts.
- 5 The primary sense of the word, 'Torah' is 'instruction': in this is to be included all religious worship and all human conduct, inspired by a growing awareness of the Covenant and of the God who has proposed and ratified it (see #Gn 15:1).
- 6 In place of 'prudent', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'discerning'.

וּבִינְתְּכֶם לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת כָּל־
הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ רַק עַם־חָכָם וְנָבוֹן הִגְוִי
הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה: ^ז כִּי מִי־גֹוִי גָדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֱלֹהִים
קְרִבִּים אֵלָיו כִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכָל־קְרָאֵנוּ אֵלָיו:
^ח וּמִלִּי גֹוִי גָדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים צְדִיקִים
כְּכָל־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נָתַן לִפְנֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם:
^ט רַק הִשָּׁמַר לָךְ וּשְׁמַר נַפְשְׁךָ מֵאֵד פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־
הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וּפְנִי־סוּרוּ מִלִּבְבְּךָ כָּל־
יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וְהוֹדַעְתָּם לְבְנֶיךָ וּלְבְנֵי בְנֶיךָ: ^י יוֹם אֲשֶׁר
עָמַדְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּחָרֵב בְּאָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי
הִקְהֵל־לִי אֶת־הָעָם וְאִשְׁמַעֵם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר
יִלְמְדוּן לִירְאָה אֹתִי כָל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם חַיִּים עָלַי־
הָאָדָמָה וְאֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם יִלְמְדוּן: ^{יא} וְתִקְרְבוּן וְתַעֲמִדוּן
תַּחַת הָהָר וְהָהָר בָּעָר בְּאֵשׁ עַד־לֵב הַשָּׁמַיִם חֲשָׁךְ
עָנָן וְעֶרְפֶּל: ^{יב} וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֲלֵיכֶם מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ קוֹל
דְּבָרִים אֲתֶם שֹׁמְעִים וְתִמוּנָה אֵינְכֶם רֹאִים זֹלָתִי

your wisdom and understanding to the peoples, who, when they come to know of all these laws, they will exclaim, “No other people is as wise and prudent as this great nation.” ⁷ Indeed, what great nation is there that has its gods so near to them as Yahweh our God is to us whenever we call him? ⁸ And what great nation is there that has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire Law that I put before you today?

⁹ “But take care what you do and be on your guard. Do not forget the things your eyes saw, lest they slip from your heart, all the days of your life; tell them to your children and to your children’s children. ¹⁰ The day you stood at Horeb in the presence of Yahweh your God, Yahweh said to me, “Assemble the people round me that I may let them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days they live on earth and teach this to their children.” ¹¹ Therefore, you came and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain was blazing up to the very sky, shrouded by dark clouds. ¹² And then Yahweh spoke to you from out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words but saw no shape,

⁷ Whereas the other books of the Pentateuch emphasise the distance between God and the human race (see #Ex 33:20), Deuteronomy calls attention to God’s loving intimacy with his people in whose midst he dwells (12:5). This same outlook is found in the narrative of the dedication of the Temple (1K 8:10–29) and the idea recurs in Ezk 48:35. The NT gives it supreme expression (see #Jn 1:14).

⁸ In this context, the Hebrew phrase הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת (*this entire Law*) refers specifically to the Book of Deuteronomy.

⁹ Literally translated, the 1st sentence reads, “But watch yourself and watch your soul carefully.”

¹⁰ The revelation at Sinai-Horeb (Ex 19–20) should be a constant reminder to fear (i.e. reverence) Yahweh.

¹¹ The NJB, following the LXX, ends this verse, “a sky darkened by cloud, murky and thunderous” (σκότος, γνόφος, θύελλα, φωνή μεγάλη); here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹² At Horeb, Israel heard Yahweh’s voice but ‘saw no shape’ – a warning against idolatry and image worship (vv. 15–18).

קול: י' וַיִּגַּד לָכֶם אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם
לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲשֵׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים וַיִּכְתֹּבם עַל־שְׁנֵי לַחֹת
אֲבָנִים: י' וְאֵתִי צִוָּה יְהוָה בָּעֵת הַהוּא לְלַמֵּד
אֶתְכֶם חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים לַעֲשׂוֹתָם אַתֶּם בָּאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:

טו וַנִּשְׁמַרְתֶּם מְאֹד לִנְפְשֵׁיכֶם כִּי לֹא רָאִיתֶם כָּל־
תְּמוּנָה בַּיּוֹם דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֵלֵיכֶם בְּחָרֵב מִתּוֹךְ
הָאֵשׁ: טז פֶּן־תִּשְׁחָתוּן וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם פֶּסֶל תְּמוּנַת
כָּל־סִמָּל תְּבִנִית זָכָר אֹו נְקֵבָה: יז תְּבִנִית כָּל־
בְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ תְּבִנִית כָּל־צִפּוֹר כָּנָף אֲשֶׁר
תָּעוֹף בַּשָּׁמַיִם: יח תְּבִנִית כָּל־רֶמֶשׂ בָּאֲדָמָה תְּבִנִית
כָּל־דָּגָה אֲשֶׁר־בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ: יט וּפְנֵי־תִשָּׂא
עֵינֶיךָ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וּרְאִיתָ אֶת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְאֶת־הַיָּרֵחַ
וְאֶת־הַכּוֹכָבִים כֹּל צָבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנִדְחָתָה

there was only a voice;¹³ and Yahweh revealed his Covenant to you and commanded you to observe it, the Ten Words, which he inscribed on two tablets of stone.¹⁴ And Yahweh ordered me then to teach you the statutes and ordinances that you might observe them in the land towards which you are going to enter and make it your own.

¹⁵ “Therefore, be very careful what you do. Since you saw no shape that day at Horeb when Yahweh spoke to you from the heart of the fire,¹⁶ see that you do not corrupt yourselves by making an image in the shape of anything whatever: be it statue of man or woman,¹⁷ or a statue of any animal on the earth, or a statue of any bird that flies in the heavens,¹⁸ or a statue of anything that crawls on the ground, or a statue of any fish in the waters under the earth.¹⁹ And, when you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and all the array of heaven, lest you be tempted to worship them and serve them.

¹³ The NRSV uses ‘the ten commandments’ in place of ‘the Ten Words’.

¹⁴ The author makes a distinction between the ‘Ten Commandments’ written by God himself on the stone tablets (5:4–22, Ex 34:28) and the ‘laws and customs’, i.e. the Deuteronomic Code (see 12:1, 26:16).

¹⁵ The homiletic passage of vv. 15–18 justifies the prohibition of images because during the theophany at Horeb, Yahweh allowed himself to be heard, but not to be seen. However, God did allow certain privileged persons to see him: Moses (Ex 33:18–23) and the Elders (Ex 24:10–11).

¹⁶ The imageless worship of the invisible God was a fundamental tenet of Mosaic faith (Ex 20:4). Here, it is grounded in the Covenant (v. 23) made by the Lord of history and creation (v. 32).

¹⁷ In pagan religions, gods were represented in both human and animal form.

¹⁸ In place of ‘anything’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘any reptile’ and NETB has ‘any insect’.

¹⁹ In the Hebrew text, the verbal sequence here is “lest you raise your eyes ... and see ... and be tempted to worship them and serve them;” however, the first two actions are not prohibited in and of themselves: the prohibition pertains to the final three actions (the first two verbs describe actions that are logically subordinate to the following actions and can be treated as temporal or circumstantial).

וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לָהֶם וַעֲבַדְתָּם אֲשֶׁר חָלַק יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
אֹתָם לְכָל הָעַמִּים תַּחַת כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם: כ' וְאֹתְכֶם
לָקַח יְהוָה וַיּוֹצֵא אֶתְכֶם מִכּוּר הַבְּרָזָל מִמִּצְרַיִם
לִהְיוֹת לוֹ לְעָם נַחֲלָה בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה:

כא וַיְהִי הַתְּאַנָּף־בִּי עַל־דְּבָרֵיכֶם וַיִּשָּׁבַע לְבַלְתִּי
עֲבְרִי אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן וּלְבַלְתִּי־בֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה
אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה: כב כִּי אֲנֹכִי מֵת
בָּאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֵינֶנִּי עֹבֵר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן וְאַתֶּם עֹבְרִים
וַיִּרְשְׁתֶּם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה הַזֹּאת: כג הַשְׁמְרוּ
לָכֶם פְּנוֹת־שִׁכְחוּ אֶת־בְּרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר
כָּרַת עִמָּכֶם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם פֶּסֶל תְּמוּנֹת כָּל אֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: כד כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵשׁ אֹכֵלָה
הוא אֵל קַנָּא: {פ}

כה כִּי־תוֹלִיד בָּנִים וּבָנִי בָנִים וְנוֹשְׁנֶתָם בָּאָרֶץ
וְהִשְׁחָתָם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם פֶּסֶל תְּמוּנֹת כָּל וַעֲשִׂיתֶם הָרַע

Yahweh your God has allotted them to all the peoples under heaven.

²⁰ But as for you, Yahweh has taken you, and brought you out from the iron-smelter, out from Egypt, to be for him a people of inheritance, as you still are today.

²¹ “Now, Yahweh has been angry with me on your account; and he has sworn that I shall not cross over the Jordan, and that I shall not enter the prosperous land that Yahweh your God is giving you as an inheritance.

²² Yes, I am to die in this country; I shall not go across this Jordan; but you will go over and take possession of that rich land. ²³ Take care therefore not to forget the Covenant that Yahweh your God has made with you, by making a carved image of anything that Yahweh your God has forbidden you; ²⁴ for Yahweh your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

²⁵ “When you have fathered children and grandchildren and you have grown old in the land, if you act perversely, making a carved image in

²⁰ A כּוּר (*‘iron-smelter’*) was not a source of heat but a crucible in which precious metals were melted down and their impurities burned away; the term is a metaphor for intense heat. Here, it refers to the suffering Israel endured in Egypt and, since a crucible was used to burn away impurities, it is possible that the metaphor views Egypt as a place of refinement to bring Israel to a place of submission to divine sovereignty.

²¹ NETB omits the words *‘as an inheritance’*.

²² The literal translation of *‘that rich country’* is *‘this rich country’* – earlier in the verse, Moses refers to the Transjordan as *‘this country’*.

²³ The literal translation of *‘forbidden’* is *‘commanded’*.

²⁴ God’s *‘jealousy’* is the extravagance of his love (see 5:9, 6:15, 32:16, 21, etc., Ex 20:5, 34:14, Nb 25:11, Ezk 8:3–5, 39:25, Zc 1:14, 2Co 11:2). For the *‘fire’*, see Ex 13:22 and 24:17. The juxtaposition of the terms אֵשׁ (*‘fire’*) and קַנָּא (*‘jealous’*) is interesting in light of 6:15, where Yahweh is seen as a jealous God whose anger bursts into a destructive fire.

²⁵ The infinitive construct here translated as *‘angers’* is understood here as indicating the result, not the intention, of their actions.

בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְהַכְעִיסוֹ: כו הַעִידֹתִי בָכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ כִּי־אֲבֹד תֹּאבְדוּן מִהָרָמָל מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא־תֹארִיכּוּ יָמִים עָלֶיהָ כִּי הַשָּׁמַד תִּשְׁמְדוּן: כז וְהִפִּיץ יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם בְּעַמִּים וּנְשֹׂאֲרֹתֶם מִתִּי מִסֵּפֶר בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יִנְהַג יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה: כח וְעַבַּדְתֶּם־שָׁם אֱלֹהִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם עֵץ וְאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִרְאוּן וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּן וְלֹא יֹאכְלוּן וְלֹא יִרְיֹחוּ:

כט וּבִקְשַׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִצֵּאתָ כִּי תִדְרֹשׁוּ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: ל בִּצְרָה לָךְ וּמִצָּאוֹךְ כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים וְשָׁבַת עַד־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי: לא כִּי אֵל רַחוּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא יִרְפֶּךָ וְלֹא יִשְׁחִיתֶךָ וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת־בְּרִית אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָהֶם: לב כִּי שֶׁאֵל־נָא לַיָּמִים רִאשׁוֹנִים אֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ לְפָנֶיךָ לְמֶן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים | אָדָם עַל־הָאָרֶץ

one shape or another, doing what is evil in the sight of Yahweh and angers him, ²⁶ on that day I will call heaven and earth to witness against you; and at once you will vanish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You shall not prolong your days there; you shall be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ Yahweh will scatter you among the peoples and only a small number of you will remain among the nations where Yahweh will have driven you. ²⁸ There you will pay service to gods that human hands have made, of wood and of stone, which cannot see or hear, eat or smell.

²⁹ “But you will seek Yahweh your God from there, and if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul, you shall find him. ³⁰ You shall suffer; everything I have said will befall you, but in the final days, you will return to Yahweh your God and listen to his voice. ³¹ For, Yahweh your God is a merciful God and will not desert or destroy you or forget the Covenant he made on oath with your fathers.

³² “Put this question, then, about the ages that are past, which went before you, from the time God created man on earth, and ask from one

²⁶ The formula, ‘I will call heaven and earth to witness against you’ was commonly used in the ancient Middle Eastern world in legal contexts and in the OT as a forensic or judicial device to draw attention to Israel’s violation of Yahweh’s covenant with them (see 30:19, Is 1:2, 3:13, Jr 2:9).

²⁷ This verse refers to the ‘remnant’ of which Isaiah and the prophets speak, i.e. the sole survivors of the nation’s trial.

²⁸ Moses is here prophesying the subservience of the Israelites to pagan peoples.

²⁹ An alternative reading for ‘all your heart and ... soul’ is ‘all your mind and ... being’.

³⁰ Here, the phrase, ‘final days’, refers to a future time when Israel will be punished for its sin and experience exile (see 31:29).

³¹ Divine wrath is a temporary reaction to specific situations: God is fundamentally and unchangeably a ‘merciful God’ (Ex 34:6–7).

³² The term אָדָם (‘man’) may refer either to Adam or to the human race; the idea here seems more universal in scope.

וּלְמִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם וְעַד־קֶצֶה הַנְּהִיָּה בְּדָבָר
הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה אִם הִנֵּשְׁמַע כְּמָהוּ: ^{לג} הַשְּׁמַע עִם קוֹל
אֱלֹהִים מְדַבֵּר מִתּוֹךְ־הָאֵשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַעְתָּ אֹתָהּ
וַיְחִי: ^{לד} אִם הִנֵּסָה אֱלֹהִים לָבוֹא לִקְחַת לּוֹ גּוֹי
מִקֶּרֶב גּוֹי בְּמִסַּת בְּאֹתָת וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה
וּבִיד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדֹלִים כָּכָל
אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לָכֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֶיךָ:
^{לה} אֹתָהּ הִרְאֵתָ לָדַעַת כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֵין
עוֹד מִלְּבָדּוֹ: ^{לו} מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם הַשְּׁמִיעַךְ אֶת־קוֹלּוֹ
לִיסְרָךְ וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ הִרְאָךְ אֶת־אֲשׁוֹ הַגָּדוֹלָה
וּדְבָרָיו שָׁמַעְתָּ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ: ^{לי} וַתַּחַת כִּי אָהַב אֶת־
אֲבֹתֶיךָ וַיִּבְחַר בְּזֶרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו וַיֹּצֵאֲךָ בְּפָנָיו בְּכַחוֹ
הַגָּדֹל מִמִּצְרַיִם: ^{לז} לְהוֹרִישׁ גּוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים וְעַצְמִים
מִמֶּךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ לְהַבְיֵאֲךָ לְתַת־לָךְ אֶת־אֶרֶצַם נַחֲלָה
כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ^{לט} וַיִּדְעַתָּ הַיּוֹם וְהִשְׁבַּתָּ אֶל־לִבְבְּךָ כִּי

end of heaven to the other: has anything as great as this ever happened, or has its like ever been heard of? ³³ Did ever a people hear the voice of a god speaking from the heart of the fire, as you heard it, and remain alive? ³⁴ Or, has God ventured to take to himself one nation from the midst of another by ordeals, by signs, and wonders, by war with mighty hand and outstretched arm, by fearsome terrors – all this that Yahweh your God did for you before your very eyes in Egypt?

³⁵ “This he showed you so that you might know that Yahweh is God indeed and that there is no other. ³⁶ He let you hear his voice out of heaven for your instruction; on earth, he let you see his great fire, and from the heart of the fire, you heard his word. ³⁷ Because he loved your fathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out from Egypt, openly showing his presence and his great power, ³⁸ driving out in front of you nations greater and more powerful than yourself, and brought you into their land to give it you for your inheritance, as it is

³³ In place of ‘a god’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB, following the LXX (θεοῦ ζώντος) has ‘the living God’.

³⁴ The NJB & NRSV have ‘any god’ in place of ‘God’ (here following NETB) at the beginning of this verse: the translation assumes the reference is to Israel’s God, in which case the point is that God’s intervention in Israel’s experience is unique in the sense that he has never intervened in such power for any other people on earth – the focus is thus on the uniqueness of Israel’s experience.

³⁵ This verse is an explicit assertion of the non-existence of other gods (see Is 43:10–11, 44:6, 45:5). The Decalogue simply forbade the worship of foreign gods, long regarded as inferior to Yahweh, impotent and contemptible; but now a new step has been reached: these gods do not exist.

³⁶ Literally translated, this verse ends, “and his words you heard from the midst of the fire.”

³⁷ For ‘their descendants’, here following the LXX (σπέρμα αὐτῶν), Samaritan Pentateuch, Peshitta, Tg & Vg (semen eorum), the MT reads ‘his descendants’; quite likely, the MT should be emended in this instance.

³⁸ ‘Inheritance’ here is in the sense of something that can be passed on to one’s descendants.

יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ
מִתַּחַת אֵין עוֹד: ^מ וְשִׁמְרָתָּ אֶת-חֻקָּיו וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתָיו
אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִיטֵב לָךְ וּלְבִנְיָךְ
אֲחֵרֶיךָ וּלְמַעַן תִּאֲרִיךְ יָמִים עַל-הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ כָּל-הַיָּמִים: {פ}

^{מא} אַז יִבְדִּיל מֹשֶׁה שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן
מִזְרָחָה שָׁמֶשׁ: ^{מב} לָנֶס שָׁמָּה רוֹצֵחַ אֲשֶׁר יִרְצַח
אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ בְּבִלְי־דַעַת וְהוּא לֹא-שָׁנָא לוֹ מִתַּמָּל
שְׁלֹשִׁים וְנֹס אֶל-אַחַת מִן-הָעָרִים הָאֵל וְחָי: ^{מג} אֶת-
בָּצָר בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ הַמִּישֹׁר לְרֵאוּבֵנִי וְאֶת-רָאמֹת
בְּגִלְעָד לְגָדִי וְאֶת-גּוֹלָן בְּבָשָׁן לְמְנַשֵּׁי:

^{מד} וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר-שָׂם מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
^{מה} אֵלֶּה הָעֲדוֹת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּצֵאתָם מִמִּצְרָיִם: ^{מו} בְּעֵבֶר
הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּנִיאַ מוֹל בֵּית פְּעוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ

still today. ³⁹ Understand this today, therefore, and take it to heart: Yahweh is God indeed, in heaven above as on earth beneath, he and no other. ⁴⁰ Keep his laws and commandments as I am commanding you today, so that you and your children may prosper and live long in the land that Yahweh your God gives you forever."

⁴¹ Then Moses set apart three cities to the east, beyond the Jordan, ⁴² where a man might find refuge who had killed his fellow unwittingly and with no feud against him previously: by taking flight to one of these cities he could save his life. ⁴³ These were, for the Reubenites, Bezer in the desert on the tableland; for the Gadites, Ramoth in Gilead; for the Manassehites, Golan in Bashan.

⁴⁴ And this is the Law that Moses presented to the Israelites. ⁴⁵ These are the stipulations, the statutes and the ordinances that Moses gave the Israelites after they had come forth out of Egypt, ⁴⁶ beyond the Jordan in the valley near Beth-Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who

³⁹ This verse reaffirms the monotheistic message of v. 35.

⁴⁰ In place of 'I am commanding you', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'I give them to you'.

⁴¹ This note (vv. 41–43) on the cities of refuge (see #Jos 20:1) separates two discourses of Moses.

⁴² The literal translation of 'previously' is 'yesterday and a third (day)'; the point is that there was no animosity between the two parties at the time of the accident and therefore no motive for the killing.

⁴³ NETB has 'plateau' in place of 'tableland', here following the NJB & NRSV.

⁴⁴ Vv. 44–49 give a brief indication of time and place of the second discourse of Moses (5:1–11:32), which serves as an introduction to the great Deuteronomic Code (12:1–26:15 and then continuing in 26:12–28:68).

⁴⁵ The literal translation of 'Israelites' is 'sons of Israel'.

⁴⁶ NETB places the text from 'Moses and the Israelites' to the end of the chapter in parentheses.

הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּצֵאתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם: ^{מז} וַיִּירְשׁוּ אֶת-אֶרְצוֹ
 וְאֶת-אֶרֶץ עֹג מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן שְׁנֵי מַלְכֵי הָאֱמֹרִי
 אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן מִזְרַח שֶׁמֶשׁ: ^{מח} מֵעֶרְוֶר אֲשֶׁר
 עַל-שְׂפַת-נַחַל אַרְנוֹן וְעַד-הָר שִׁיאוֹן הוּא חֶרְמוֹן:
^{מט} וְכָל-הָעֲרָבָה עַבְרַת הַיַּרְדֵּן מִזְרָחָהּ וְעַד יַם
 הָעֲרָבָה תַּחַת אֲשֶׁדֶת הַפִּסְגָּה: {פ}

lived at Heshbon. Moses and the Israelites had defeated him when they came forth out of Egypt. ⁴⁷ They had taken possession of his land and of the land of Og king of Bashan – two kings of the Amorites who were to the east beyond Jordan, ⁴⁸ from Aroer, which is on the height above the Wadi Arnon as far as Mount Siyon (which is Hermon) – ⁴⁹ and of all the Arabah east of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah.

⁴⁷ In place of 'to the east beyond Jordan', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'on the eastern side of the Jordan'.

⁴⁸ The NJB & NRSV have 'Sirion' (cf. 3:9) in place of 'Siyon', here following the MT (שִׁיאוֹן), LXX (Σηων) and NETB; this should not be confused with Mount Zion.

⁴⁹ The meaning of the Hebrew term אֲשֶׁדֶת is unclear. It is usually translated either 'slopes' (NJB, NRSV, NIV) or 'watershed' (NETB, NEB).

DEUTERONOMY 5

דברים פרק ה

^א וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַחֲקִים וְאֶת-הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דֹבֵר בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם וּלְמַדְתֶּם אֹתָם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשֹׂתָם: ^ב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּרַת עִמָּנוּ בְרִית בְּחָרֵב: ^ג לֹא אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵינוּ כָּרַת יְהוָה אֶת-הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת כִּי אֲתָנוּ אֲנִיכֶם הַיּוֹם כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּיכֶם: ^ד פָּנִים בְּפָנִים דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ: ^ה אֲנִי עֹמֵד בֵּין יְהוָה וּבֵינֵיכֶם בַּעַת הַהוּא לְהַגִּיד לָכֶם אֶת-דְּבַר יְהוָה כִּי יִרְאֶתֶם מִפְּנֵי הָאֵשׁ וְלֹא-עָלִיתֶם בְּהָר לֵאמֹר: {ס}

^ו אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: לֹא-יְהִי־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פָּנֶי: ^ז לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ פֶסֶל | כְּלִתְמוֹנָה אֲשֶׁר

¹ Then Moses called the whole of Israel together and said to them: “Listen, O Israel, to the statutes and ordinances that I proclaim in your hearing today, so that you may learn them and take care to observe them. ² Yahweh our God made a Covenant with us at Horeb. ³ It was not with our fathers that Yahweh made this Covenant, but with us, with us who are here, all living today. ⁴ On the mountain, from the heart of the fire, Yahweh spoke to you face to face, ⁵ and I stood all the time between Yahweh and yourselves to tell you of Yahweh’s words, because you were afraid of the fire and had not gone up the mountain. And he said:

⁶ “I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no gods before me. ⁷ You shall not make yourself any image or likeness of anything in heaven

DEUTERONOMY 5

- ¹ This verse is a general announcement of the Deuteronomic Law, not merely of the ‘Word’ (v.5) of the Decalogue: see also 6:1.
- ² On the making of the Covenant, see Ex 24.
- ³ The making of the Covenant was not just a past ceremony involving another generation but it is a contemporary covenant ‘with us who are here, all living today’ (see #Ex 13.8). The language may reflect a liturgy in which the Covenant was periodically recalled and renewed (26:16–19, 31:10–11).
- ⁴ Again, God was not distant when making the Covenant but spoke to the people as a congregation.
- ⁵ Much of this verse (up to ‘and he said’) is parenthetical in nature.
- ⁶ This version of the Decalogue differs only slightly from that in Ex 20:2–17. The NJB (& NRSV) includes the last sentence as a separate verse (v. 7); therein, subsequent verse numbers are accordingly incremented; here, we follow the MT.
- ⁷ The literal translation of ‘any image or likeness’, here following the NJB, is ‘an image, any likeness’; the NRSV has ‘an idol ... in the form of’.

בַּשָּׁמַיִם | מִמַּעַל וְאֶשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֶשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם |
 מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ: ^ח לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם
 כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא פֶקֶד עֵוֹן אָבוֹת עַל־
 בָּנִים וְעַל־שָׁלָשִׁים וְעַל־רִבְעִים לְשֹׂנְאָי: ^ט וְעָשָׂה
 חֶסֶד לְאֲלָפִים לְאַהֲבִי וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי מִצְוֹתַי: {ס}
 ' לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּא כִּי לֹא
 יִנָּקֶה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׂא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ לְשׁוּא: {ס}
^{יא} שָׁמֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקֹדֶשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר צֻוֶּה | יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ^{יב} שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל־
 מְלָאכָתְךָ: ^{יג} וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת | לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל־מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ
 וַאֲמָתְךָ וְשׁוֹרְךָ וַחֲמֹרְךָ וְכָל־בְּהֵמָתְךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר
 בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ לְמַעַן יָנוּחַ עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ כָּמוֹךָ: ^{יד} וְזָכַרְתָּ
 כִּי־עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ | בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּצֵאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 מִשָּׁם בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֹרַע נְטוּיָה עַל־כֵּן צֻוֶּה יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: {ס}

above or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth. ⁸ You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, punishing the fathers' fault in the sons, the grandsons and the great-grandsons, of those who hate me; ⁹ but I show faithful love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

¹⁰ "You shall not misuse the Name of Yahweh your God, for Yahweh will not leave unpunished anyone who uses his Name for what is false.

¹¹ "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Yahweh your God has commanded you. ¹² Six days you shall labour and do all your work ¹³ but the seventh is a Sabbath for Yahweh your God; you shall do no work, you, your son, your daughter, your servants, male or female, nor your ox, your donkey, any or your animals, nor the alien in your towns; so, your servants, male and female, may rest as you do. ¹⁴ Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and that Yahweh your God brought you out from there with mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore, Yahweh your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

⁸ 'Hate' (שֹׂנֵא) here means 'reject' or 'disobey'; see #Ex 20:5.

⁹ The theologically rich term 'faithful love' (חֶסֶד) describes God's loyalty to those who keep covenant with him. The NRSV reads: "... but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me ...". The Kethib/Qere difference here warrants an explanation.

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'misuse the Name' is 'take up the Name to emptiness'; the idea here is not cursing or profanity in the modern sense of these terms but the use of the divine Name for unholy, mundane purposes, that is, for meaningless (שׁוּא) and empty ends.

¹¹ To 'keep it holy' here means to put it to special use for sacred purposes (cf. vv. 12-14).

¹² For this verse, here following the NJB (and, aside from the opening 'for', the NRSV), NETB has, "You are to work and do all your tasks in six days."

¹³ There is some degree of paronomasia (wordplay) here: the 'seventh' (הַשְּׁבִיעִי) day is the 'Sabbath' (שַׁבָּת); otherwise, the words have nothing in common, since 'Sabbath' is derived from the verb שָׁבַת ('to cease'). The literal translation of 'towns' is 'gates'.

¹⁴ The explanatory reason for the Sabbath is not the same as that in Ex 20:11.

טו כְּבֹד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר צֻוְּךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַמַּעַן יָאֲרִיכֶן יָמֶיךָ וְלַמַּעַן יִיטֵב לָךְ עַל
הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ: {ס}

טז לֹא תִרְצַח: {ס}

וְלֹא תִנָּאֵף: {ס}

וְלֹא תִגְנוֹב: {ס}

וְלֹא־תַעֲנֶה בְרַעְיָךְ עַד שְׁוֹא: {ס}

יז וְלֹא תַחְמֹד אִשְׁתִּי רֵעֶךָ {ס}

וְלֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ שְׂדֵהוּ וְעַבְדּוֹ וְאִמָּתוֹ
שׁוֹרוֹ וְחִמְלּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לִרְעֶךָ: {ס}

יח אֵת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־כָּל־קְהֵל־כֶּם
בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ הָעֹנֵן וְהָעֶרְפֶּל קוֹל גָּדוֹל וְלֹא יִסָּף
וַיִּכְתְּבֵם עַל־שְׁנֵי לַחַת אֲבָנִים וַיִּתֵּן אֵלֶי: יט וַיְהִי
כַּשְּׁמַעְכֶּם אֶת־הַקּוֹל מִתּוֹךְ הַחֹשֶׁךְ וְהָהָר בֹּעֵר
בָּאֵשׁ וַתִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי כָּל־רֹאשֵׁי שְׁבֻטֵיכֶם וְזִקְנֵיכֶם:
כ וַתֹּאמְרוּ הֵן הִרְאָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדוֹ וְאֶת־

15 “Honour your father and your mother, as Yahweh your God has commanded you, so that you may have long life and may prosper in the country that Yahweh your God is giving you.

16 “You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not give false evidence against your fellow.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbour’s spouse.

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house, or field, or servant – man or woman – or ox, or donkey or anything of your neighbour’s.”

18 “These words Yahweh spoke with a loud voice to your whole assembly on the mountain, from the heart of the fire, in cloud and thick darkness. He added nothing, but wrote them on two tablets of stone, which he gave to me. 19 Now when you had heard this voice coming out of the darkness, while the mountain was all on fire, you approached me, your heads of tribes and elders, 20 and said, “See, Yahweh our God has

15 The literal translation of ‘honour’ (כְּבֹד) is ‘regard as heavy’; the meaning is that great importance must be ascribed to parents by their children.

16 In the NRSV (& NETB), the 4 lines of this verse are separate verses (therein, vv. 17–20 – see #6); here, we follow the MT (and NJB). Note that the *Mechon Mamre* text does not include the *Sof Pasuq* at the end of each of the 1st 3 lines but the MAM text, following the *Leningrad Codex*, does.

17 The verb used in the first line for ‘covet’ (חָמַד) is different from that in the next line (אָיַה); the former has sexual overtones (‘lust’ or the like, cf. Sg 2:3) whereas the latter has more the idea of a desire or craving for material things.

18 While the Decalogue was given directly to the people (vv. 4–5), the rest of the laws were mediated to the people through Moses (v. 31, 4:14).

19 In place of ‘approached me, your’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘you came to me, all of you’.

20 For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Today we have seen that God may speak to someone and the person may still live.” (NETB has, “It is now clear to us that God can speak to human beings and they can keep on living.”)

גָּדְלוֹ וְאֶת־קִלְוֹ שָׁמַעְנוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
 רָאִינוּ כִּי־יִדְבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם וְחַי: ^{כא} וְעַתָּה
 לָמָּה נָמוּת כִּי תֹאכְלֵנוּ הָאֵשׁ הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת אִם־
 יִסָּפִים | אֲנַחְנוּ לְשָׁמַע אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עוֹד
 וּמִתְּנוּ: ^{כב} כִּי מִי כָל־בָּשָׂר אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע קוֹל אֱלֹהִים
 חַיִּים מִדְּבַר מִתּוֹךְ־הָאֵשׁ כָּמֵנוּ וַיְחַי: ^{כג} קָרַב אֶתָּה
 וּשְׁמַע אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַתָּה |
 תִּדְבֹּר אֵלֵינוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 אֵלֶיךָ וּשְׁמַעְנוּ וְעָשִׂינוּ: ^{כד} וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קוֹל
 דְּבָרֶיכֶם בְּדִבְרֶכֶם אֵלַי וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי שְׁמַעְתִּי
 אֶת־קוֹל דְּבָרֵי הָעָם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבְּרוּ אֵלַיךָ הִיטִיבוּ
 כָּל־אֲשֶׁר דִּבְּרוּ:

^{כה} כִּי־מִיֵּיתָן וְהָיָה לְבָבָם זֶה לָהֶם לִירְאָה אֹתִי וּלְשֹׁמֵר
 אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי כָּל־הַיָּמִים לְמַעַן יִיטֵב לָהֶם
 וּלְבָנֵיהֶם לְעֹלָם: ^{כו} לָךְ אָמַר לָהֶם שׁוּבוּ לָכֶם

shown us his glory and his greatness and we have heard his voice from the middle of the fire. Today we have seen that God can speak with man and man still live. ²¹ Why should we die now, when this great fire is ready to devour us, and when we are sure to perish if we hear the voice of Yahweh our God a second time? ²² For what creature of flesh, after hearing, as we have heard, the voice of the living God, speaking from the heart of the fire, could possibly live? ²³ You then, go near and hear everything Yahweh our God will say and tell us all that Yahweh our God says to you; we will listen and observe it.” ²⁴ And Yahweh heard the voice of your words, when you spoke to me, and Yahweh said to me, “I have heard the voice of this people’s words. They are right in all that they have spoken.

²⁵ “If only their heart were always so, set on the fear of me and the keeping of my commandments, so that they and their children might prosper forever! ²⁶ Go and say to them: Return to your tents. ²⁷ But as for

²¹ The NRSV reads, “So now why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer, we shall die.”

²² To assert that God is ‘living’ is one of the primary formulae of faith in the true God (see #6:4), since it implies rejection of all the false gods, who are as lifeless as their images (Jos 3:10, 1S 17:26, 36, Ps 84:2, Is 37:4, Jr 10:8–10, Ho 2:1, and see Mt 16:16, 26:23, Rm 9:26, 1Th 1:9, 1Tm 3:15).

²³ In place of ‘observe’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘do’.

²⁴ For the last sentence, here following the NJB and NRSV, NETB has, “They have spoken well.”

²⁵ The NRSV opens this verse, here following the NJB, with, “If only they had such a mind as this ...”

²⁶ The details of the Law were given to Moses only (see #18).

²⁷ For ‘commandments’, the MT actually has a singular noun (הַמִּצְוָה), suggesting, perhaps, that the following terms (חֻקִּים – ‘statutes’ and מִשְׁפָּטִים – ‘ordinances’) are in epexegetical apposition; that is, the phrase could be translated ‘the entire command, namely, the statutes and ordinances’. Moses is no mere legislator but is a teacher or expositor of God’s will (1:5). Hence, the ‘laws and the customs’ (Chs 12–26, compare Ex 20:23–23:19) are expressed in a sermonic appeal to do God’s will in the concrete situations of life.

לְאַהֲלֵיכֶם: כִּי וְאַתָּה פֹה עִמָּד עִמָּדִי וְאִדְבַּרְהָ אֵלַיִךְ
אֶת כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר
תִּלְמָדֶם וַעֲשׂוּ בָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי נָתַן לָהֶם
לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: כֹּחַ וּשְׁמֶרְתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹת כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲתֶכֶם לֹא תִסְרוּ יְמִין וּשְׂמָאל: כֹּס בְּכָל־
הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲתֶכֶם תֵּלְכוּ לְמַעַן
תִּחְיִיו וְטוֹב לָכֶם וְהֶאֱרַכְתֶּם יָמִים בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
תִּירְשׁוּ:

you, stand here by me and I shall tell you all the commandments, the statutes and the ordinances, which you must teach them, and which they must observe in the land I am giving them for their possession.”
²⁸ Keep this, therefore, and observe it. This is what Yahweh our God has commanded you. Stray neither to right hand nor to left. ²⁹ You must follow the whole way that Yahweh has marked for you and you shall live, you shall prosper, and you shall live long in the land that you are to possess.

²⁸ After the historical survey comes the catechistic part: a succession of small homiletic developments, summing up the spirit of Deuteronomic religion.

²⁹ In place of ‘you must follow the whole way’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘you must follow exactly the path’.

דברים פרק ו

א וְזֵאת הַמִּצְוָה הַחֲקִים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לִלְמַד אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ב לִמְעַן תִּירָא אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת-כָּל-חֻקֹּתָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מֵצִוְּךָ אֵתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וְלִמְעַן יֵאָרְכּוּ יָמֶיךָ: ג וְשָׁמַעְתָּ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשָׁמַרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִיטֵב לָךְ וְאֲשֶׁר תִּרְבּוֹן מְאֹד כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ לָךְ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבָשׁ: {פ} ד שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד: ה וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ: ו וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר

DEUTERONOMY 6

¹ These then are the commandments, the laws and the customs that Yahweh your God has charged me to teach you to observe in the land you are going to make your own. ² So, if, all your lives, you fear Yahweh your God and keep all his statutes and commandments, which I am laying down for you today, you will live long, you, your child, and your grandchild. ³ Listen then, Israel, keep and observe what will make you prosper and give you great increase, as Yahweh the God of your fathers has promised you, giving you a land where milk and honey flow. ⁴ “Hear, Israel: Yahweh our God is the one, the only Yahweh. ⁵ You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. ⁶ Keep these words, which I urge on you today, in your

DEUTERONOMY 6

- ¹ The word מִצְוָה (*‘commandments’*) is actually singular, serving as a comprehensive term for the whole stipulation section of the book.
- ² Here, the terms are not the usual חֲקִים & מִשְׁפָּטִים (*‘laws’ & ‘customs’*, as in v. 1) but חֻקֹּת (*‘statutes’*) and מִצְוֹת (*‘commandments’*); it is clear that these terms are used interchangeably and that their technical precision ought not be overly stressed.
- ³ Reverent obedience will result in divine blessings of long life, fruitfulness and welfare (5:33, 6:18–19).
- ⁴ Alternative readings are: “... Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone;” or “... Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one.” The phrase is certainly a declaration of monotheism, later to be used as the opening words of the *‘Shema’* (שְׁמַע – ‘Hear’), a prayer central to Jewish piety. Note that the ע in שְׁמַע and the ד in אֶחָד are presented as enlarged letters, just as they are in almost all *Hebrew MSS*.
- ⁵ Loving God is not a matter of choice: it is a command. This love, echo of God’s love for his people (4:37, 7:8, 10:15), embraces the fear of God, the duty of service and the observance of precepts (v. 13, 10:12–13, 11:1 and see 30:2). Outside Deuteronomy, there is no explicit command to love God but its equivalent is found in 2K 23:25 and Ho 6:6.
- ⁶ In place of *‘urge on’*, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has *‘command’*.

אֲנֹכִי מְצֹנֶה הַיּוֹם עַל־לִבְבִי: ז' וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ
וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ
וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: ח וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ
לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: ט וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזוּזֹת בֵּיתְךָ
וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: {ס}

י' וְהָיָה כִּי יָבִיֵאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק לְיַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר וְלִיעֲקֹב לָתֵת לָךְ
עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת וְטֹבֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־בָנִיתָ: יא וּבָתִּים
מְלֵאִים כָּל־טוֹב אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מְלָאתָ וּבְרֹת חֲצוּבִים
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־חָצַבְתָּ כְּרָמִים וְזֵיתִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִטְעַתָּ
וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ: יב הִשְׁמַר לָךְ פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־יְהוָה
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאָךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים: יג אֶת־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִירָא וְאֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד וּבְשִׁמּוֹ תִשָּׁבַע:
יד לֹא תִלְכֹּן אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים מֵאֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים
אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבוֹתֶיכֶם: טו כִּי אֵל קָנָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

heart.⁷ Recite them to your children and say them over to them whether at rest in your house or walking abroad, at your lying down or at your rising.⁸ Fasten them on your hand as a sign and on your forehead as a headband,⁹ and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

¹⁰ “When Yahweh has brought you into the country which he swore to your ancestors Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob that he would give you, with great and prosperous cities you have not built,¹¹ and houses full of good things you have not provided, with wells that you have not dug, with vineyards and olive trees that you have not planted, and then, when you have eaten as much as you want,¹² be careful you do not forget Yahweh who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.¹³ You shall fear Yahweh your God, you shall serve him, and by his name alone, you shall swear.¹⁴ Do not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples round you;¹⁵ for, Yahweh your God who

⁷ The word here translated as ‘recite’ (שִׁנַּנְתָּם) is from the root שָׁנַן, means essentially to ‘engrave’, that is, ‘to teach incisively’ (Piel).

⁸ Alternative translations for ‘headband’ are ‘emblem’ and ‘frontlet’. Putting this law on the hand, forehead, and doorpost (compare Ex 13:9) signifies that it is to be ‘in your heart’ (v. 6), i.e. constantly thought about and acted upon (Ps 1:2).

⁹ The term מְזוּזֹת refers both to the door frames and to small cases attached on them containing scripture texts (always in Dt 6:4–9 & 11:13–21; and sometimes in the Decalogue, Ex 13:1–10, 11–16 & Nb 10:35–36).

¹⁰ In place of ‘great and prosperous’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘fine, large’.

¹¹ In place of ‘wells that you have not dug’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘hewn cisterns that you did not hew’.

¹² In place of ‘the land of Egypt, the house of slavery’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘Egypt, the place of slavery’.

¹³ The love of God is blended with fear, i.e. reverence before God’s holy majesty (4:9–15).

¹⁴ The NJB lacks ‘any of the’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁵ Divine jealousy is associated with divine wrath (4:24, Jos 24:19–20); both are expressions of God’s holiness, which will not tolerate idolatry.

בְּקִרְבְּךָ פִּנְיָיִךְ אֶפְיֵהוּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּדָד וְהִשְׁמִידֶךָ
מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה: {ס}

טז לֹא תִנְסֶה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר נִסִּיתָם
בַּמִּסָּה: יז שְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיכֶם
וְעֲדֹתָיו וְחֻקָּיו אֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ: יח וְעָשִׂיתָ הַיָּשָׁר וְהַטּוֹב
בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְמַעַן יִיטֵב לָךְ וּבָאתָ וִירַשְׁתָּ אֶת־
הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לֵאבֹתֶיךָ: יט לְהַדְּף
אֶת־כָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: {ס}

כ כִּי־יִשְׁאַלְךָ בִּנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מָה הָעֲדֹת וְהַחֻקִּים
וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵתְכֶם:
כא וְאָמַרְתָּ לְבִנְךָ עֲבָדִים הָייִנוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם
וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה: כב וַיֹּתֶן יְהוָה
אוֹתֹת וּמִפְתֹּת גְּדֹלִים וָרַעִים בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּפָרְעָה
וּבְכָל־בֵּיתוֹ לְעֵינֵינוּ: כג וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם לְמַעַן

dwells among you is a jealous God; his anger could blaze out against you and wipe you from the face of the earth.

16 “Do not put Yahweh your God to the test as you tested him at Massah.

17 You must diligently keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and his decrees and laws that he has given you. 18 Do what is right and good in the eyes of Yahweh so that you may prosper and take possession of the rich land that Yahweh swore to give to your fathers, 19 driving out your enemies before you, as Yahweh has spoken.

20 “In times to come, when your son asks you, “What is the meaning of the decrees and statutes and ordinances that Yahweh our God has laid down for you?” 21 you shall tell your son, “Once we were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, and Yahweh brought us out of Egypt by his mighty hand. 22 Before our eyes, Yahweh worked great and terrible signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh and his entire House. 23 He

16 The place name ‘Massah’ (מִסָּה) derives from a root נִסָּה, meaning ‘to test’, ‘to try’; the reference here is to the experience in the Sinai desert when Moses struck the rock to obtain water (Ex 17:1–2). The complaining Israelites had, thus, ‘tested’ Yahweh, a wickedness that gave rise to the naming of the place (Ex 17:2–7, cf. Dt 9:22, 33:8 & Mt 4:7).

17 The NJB lacks the opening words (‘you must diligently’), here following the NRSV; the MT uses the infinitive absolute before the finite verb for emphasis. The imperfect verbal form is used here with an obligatory nuance that can be captured in English through the imperative.

18 The literal translation of ‘right’ is ‘upright’ (NETB has ‘proper’).

19 In place of ‘driving’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘thrusting’.

20 Children are to be taught the marvellous story of God’s redeeming acts, which is the background and basis of the Law (see v. 7, Ex 13:14–16).

21 The image is of a warrior with weapon in hand, overcoming his enemies; Yahweh is often depicted as a warrior in Dt (cf. 5:15, 7:8, 9:26, 26:8).

22 In place of ‘House’ (representing Pharaoh’s family), here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘household’.

23 An alternative reading of ‘brought us out’ (NJB, NRSV) is ‘delivered us’ (NETB).

הָבִיֵּא אֹתָנוּ לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ: כִּי וַיְצַוֵּנוּ יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־הַחֻקִּים
הָאֵלֶּה לִּירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְטוֹב לָנוּ כָּל־
הַיָּמִים לְחִיתָנוּ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: כִּי וַצִּדְקָה תִּהְיֶה־לָּנוּ
כִּי־נִשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּנוּ: {ס}

brought us out from there to lead us into the land he swore to our fathers
he would give to us. ²⁴ Yahweh has commanded us to observe all these
laws and to fear Yahweh our God, so as to be happy forever and to
survive, as we do to this day. ²⁵ For us, right living will mean this: to
keep and observe all these commandments in obedience to Yahweh our
God, as he has commanded us."

²⁴ In place of 'so as to be happy for ever', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'for our lasting good'.

²⁵ The term 'commandments' (מִצְוָה), although here in the singular, refers to the entire body of covenant stipulations (cf. #8:1).

DEUTERONOMY 7

דברים פרק ז

א כִּי יִבְיֹאֵךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה
בא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְנָשַׁל גּוֹיִם־רַבִּים | מִפְּנֶיךָ
הַחֲתִי וְהַגִּרְגָּשִׁי וְהָאֹמִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחִוִּי
וְהַיְבוּסִי שִׁבְעָה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וְעַצוּמִים מִמֶּךָ: ב וְנָתַתָּם
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִפְנֶיךָ וְהִכִּיתָם הַחֲרָם תַּחֲרִים אֹתָם
לֹא־תִכְרֹת לָהֶם בְּרִית וְלֹא תַחֲנֹם: ג וְלֹא תִתְּחַתֵּן
בָּם בִּתְּךָ לֹא־תִתֵּן לְבָנָו וּבִתּוֹ לֹא־תִקַּח לְבִנְךָ:
ד כִּי־יִסֹּר אֶת־בְּנֶךָ מֵאַחֲרַי וְעָבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וַחֲרָה אִפ־יְהוָה בָּכֶם וְהִשְׁמִידֶךָ מִהָרָ: ה כִּי־אִסְּפָה
תַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִזְבְּחֹתֵיהֶם תִּתְּצוּ וּמַצְבֹּתָם תִּשְׁבְּרוּ
וְאֲשִׁירֵיהֶם תִּגְדְּעוּן וּפְסִילֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בָּאֵשׁ: ו כִּי
עִם קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּךְ בָּחַרְוּ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֵהיוֹת לוֹ לְעַם סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר
עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה:

¹ When Yahweh your God has led you into the land you are entering to possess, many nations will fall before you: Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you. ² And when Yahweh your God delivers them over to you and you conquer them, you must utterly destroy them. Make no covenant with them and show them no pity. ³ Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for this would turn away your sons from following me to serve other gods, and the anger of Yahweh would erupt against you and soon destroy you. ⁵ Instead, deal with them like this: tear down their altars, smash their standing-stones, cut down their sacred poles and set fire to their idols. ⁶ For, you are a people consecrated to Yahweh your God; of all the peoples on earth, you have been chosen by Yahweh your God to be his own people.

DEUTERONOMY 7

- ¹ The 'Canaanites' were the original Semitic population of Palestine and the 'Amorites' are later Semitic peoples (end of the 3rd Millennium BCE). The 'Hittites' are a people of Asia Minor; the term is here used in a vague sense and indicates a non-Semitic people resident in Palestine (Gn 23). The 'Girgashites', 'Perizzites' and 'Hivites' are of least importance and the 'Jebusites' are the ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem (see #2S 5:9).
- ² In the Hebrew, the infinitive absolute before the finite verb 'destroy' emphasises the statement: the imperfect has an obligatory nuance here.
- ³ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "You must not marry with them; you must not give a daughter of yours to a son of theirs, not take a daughter of theirs for a son of yours."
- ⁴ In place of 'erupt', here following NETB, the NJB has 'blaze out' and the NRSV has 'be kindled'.
- ⁵ Sacred poles, or 'Asherim' (אשרים), were the emblems of Asherah (Astarte, Ashteroth), goddess of love and fecundity.
- ⁶ This verse declares Israel's election, as in 14:2.

ז לא מרַבְּכֶם מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים חֶשֶׁק יְהוָה בָּכֶם וַיִּבְחַר
 בָּכֶם כִּי־אַתֶּם הַמֵּעֵט מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים: ח כִּי מֵאֲהַבְתָּ
 יְהוָה אֱתָכֶם וּמִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־הַשְּׁבָעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע
 לְאַבְרָהָם הַזֶּה הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וַיִּפְדֶּךָ
 מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים מִיַּד פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם: ט וַיִּדְעַתָּ
 כִּי־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן שֹׁמֵר
 הַבְּרִית וְהַחֲסֵד לְאַהֲבָיו וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָו לְאַלֹף
 דָּוָר: י וּמִשְׁלָם לְשֹׂנְאָיו אֶל־פָּנָיו לְהַאֲבִידוֹ לֹא
 יֹאחֵז לְשֹׂנְאָו אֶל־פָּנָיו יִשְׁלַם־לוֹ: יא וְשִׁמְרָתָ אֶת־
 הַמִּצְוָה וְאֶת־הַחֲקִים וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי
 מְצַוֶּךָ הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם: {פ}

יב וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמָעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה
 וְשִׁמְרָתֶם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְשֹׁמֵר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ
 אֶת־הַבְּרִית וְאֶת־הַחֲסֵד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם:
 יג וְאַהֲבָךָ וּבִרְכָךָ וְהִרְבָּךָ וּבִרְכָּךָ פְּרִי־בִטְנְךָ וּפְרִי־

7 “It was not because you outnumbered other people that Yahweh set his heart on you and chose you: you were the least of all peoples. 8 It was for love of you and to keep the oath he swore to your fathers that Yahweh brought you out with his mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. 9 So, realise that Yahweh your God is the true God, the faithful God who keeps his covenant loyally, with those who love him and keep his commandments, for a thousand generations, 10 but repays in their own persons those who hate him. He destroys anyone who hates him, immediately; and he repays them in their own persons. 11 So, keep the commandments, laws and customs that I lay down for you today.

12 “If you heed to these ordinances, by diligently observing them, Yahweh your God will keep the covenant loyally he promised to your fathers solemnly. 13 He will love you, bless you and increase your numbers; he will bless the fruit of your body and the produce of your

7 Vv. 7–8 explain the reasons for God’s choice, namely, loyalty to the promises that, of his own loving will, he had made to the Fathers (see 4:37, 8:18, 9:5, 10:15). This choice, ratified by the Covenant (v. 9, 5:2–3), makes Israel a dedicated people (here and 26:19).

8 The Hebrew verb translated ‘redeemed’ (from the root פדה) has the idea of redemption by the payment of a ransom; the initial symbol of this was the Passover lamb, offered by Israel to Yahweh as ransom in exchange for deliverance from bondage and death (Ex 12:1–14).

9 The literal translation of ‘who keeps his covenant loyally’ is ‘who keeps covenant and loyalty’; the syndetic construction of בְּרִית and חֲסֵד should be understood not as ‘covenant’ plus ‘loyalty’ but as an adverbial construction in which חֲסֵד (‘loyalty’) modifies the verb שִׁמֵּר (‘keeps’).

10 Alternative translations for ‘immediately’ are ‘without delay’ or ‘without looking for anyone else’.

11 After ‘keep’, the NJB adds ‘and observe’; here, we follow NETB.

12 On the construction translated ‘keep the covenant loyally’, see #9.

13 The blessings do not come from the nature gods of Canaan but are bestowed by Israel’s God who delivered the people from bondage (Ho 2).

אֲדַמְתֶּךָ דָּגְנְךָ וְתִירֹשְׁךָ וַיִּצְהַרְךָ שְׁגֵר־אֲלֵפֶיךָ
וַעֲשִׂיתָרְתָּ צֹאנְךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתִּיךָ
לָתֵת לָךְ: ¹⁴ בָּרוּךְ תִּהְיֶה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים לֹא־יִהְיֶה בְּךָ
עֵקָר וְעֵקְרָה וּבְבֵה־מִתֶּךָ: ¹⁵ וְהִסִּיר יְהוָה מִמֶּךָ כָּל־
חֲלִי וְכָל־מַדּוּי מִצָּרִים הָרָעִים אֲשֶׁר יָדַעְתָּ לֹא
יִשְׁיִמָּם בְּךָ וְנָתַנָּם בְּכָל־שָׁנָאִיךָ: ¹⁶ וְאַכְלֹתָ אֶת־כָּל־
הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ לֹא־תַחֲוֹס עֵינֶיךָ
עָלֵיהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹד אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי־מוֹקֵשׁ הוּא
לָךְ: {ס}

¹⁷ כִּי תֹאמַר בְּלִבְבְּךָ רַבִּים הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה מִמֶּנִּי
אֵיכָה אוֹכֵל לְהוֹרִישָׁם: ¹⁸ לֹא תִירָא מֵהֶם זָכָר
תִּזְכֹּר אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָרְעָה וּלְכָל־
מִצְרָיִם: ¹⁹ הַמַּסֹּת הַגְּדֹלֹת אֲשֶׁר־רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ
וְהָאֲתֹת וְהַמִּפְתִּים וְהַיָּד הַחֲזָקָה וְהַזְרַע הַנִּטְוֶה
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּיַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

soil, your corn, your wine, your oil, the issue of your cattle, the young of your flock, in the land he swore to your fathers he would give you. ¹⁴ You will be the most blessed of peoples. No man or woman among you shall be barren, no male or female of your beasts shall be infertile. ¹⁵ Yahweh will keep all sickness far from you; he will not afflict you with those evil plagues of Egypt that you have known but will save them for all those who hate you. ¹⁶ Devour, then, all the peoples whom Yahweh your God delivers over to you, show them no pity, do not serve their gods, for otherwise you would be ensnared.

¹⁷ "If you should say in your heart, "These nations outnumber me; how shall I be able to dispossess them?" ¹⁸ You shall not be afraid of them: carefully recall how Yahweh your God dealt with Pharaoh and all Egypt, ¹⁹ the great ordeals your own eyes have seen, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the outstretched arm, with which Yahweh your God has brought you out. Thus, Yahweh your God

¹⁴ One of the ironies about the promises to the patriarchs concerning offspring was the characteristic barrenness of the wives of the men to whom these pledges were made (cf. Gn 11:30, 25:21, 29:31); their affliction is in each case described by the very Hebrew word used here (עֵקָרָה), an affliction that will no longer prevail in Canaan.

¹⁵ For the opening clause, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "The LORD will turn away from you every illness."

¹⁶ The verbal form translated 'devour' (a perfect with *vav* consecutive) is understood here as having an imperative or obligatory nuance (cf. the instructions and commands that follow); another option is to take the statement as a continuation of the preceding conditional promises and translate 'and you will devour'.

¹⁷ Israel should not fear mighty nations for, according to the conviction of holy war, 'Yahweh your God is present with you' (20:1-4).

¹⁸ The literal translation of 'carefully recall' (here following NETB) is 'recalling, you must recall'.

¹⁹ In place of 'ordeals', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'trials' and NETB has 'judgements'.

לְכָל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה יֹרָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם: כ וְגַם אֶת־
הַצִּרְעָה יִשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּם עַד־אֲבֹד
הַנְּשֹׂאֲרִים וְהַנִּסְתָּרִים מִפְּנֶיךָ:

כא לֹא תִירָץ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּקִרְבְּךָ אֵל
גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא: כב וְנִשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵל
מִפְּנֶיךָ מֵעַט מֵעַט לֹא תוּכַל כָּלָתָם מְהֵרָה פֶּן־תִּרְבֶּה
עָלֶיךָ חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה: כג וְנָתַנָּם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִפְנֵיךָ
וְהָמָם מִהוֹמָה גְּדֹלָה עַד הַשְׁמָדָם: כד וְנָתַן מַלְכֵיהֶם
בְּיָדְךָ וְהָאֲבֹדָת אֶת־שֵׁמָם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא־
יִתְיָצֵב אִישׁ בְּפָנֶיךָ עַד הַשְׁמָדְךָ אֹתָם:

כה פִּסְלֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בָּאֵשׁ לֹא־תַחֲמֹד כֶּסֶף
וְזָהָב עֲלֵיהֶם וְלִקְחָתָ לָךְ פֶּן תִּוָּקֵשׁ בּוֹ כִּי תֹעֲבָת
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא: כו וְלֹא־תָבִיא תֹעֲבָה אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ
וְהָיִיתָ חָרָם כָּמֹהוּ שִׁקָּץ | תִּשְׁקָצְנוּ וְתֵעֵב | תִּתְעַבְּנוּ
כִּי־חָרָם הוּא: {פ}

will deal with all the peoples whom you fear to face.²⁰ What is more, Yahweh your God will send hornets among them, to destroy those who remain and hide from you.

²¹ “Do not fear them, for Yahweh your God is among you, a great and awesome God. ²² Little by little, Yahweh your God will destroy these nations before you; you cannot make a quick end of them, lest the wild beasts overrun you. ²³ But Yahweh your God will deliver them up to you and will harass them until they are destroyed. ²⁴ He will hand their kings over to you and you will erase their very names from memory; none shall withstand you, until you have destroyed them.

²⁵ “You must burn all the carved images of their gods, not coveting the gold and silver that covers them, lest you are caught in a snare: it is detestable to Yahweh your God. ²⁶ Do not bring any detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will come under the ban too. You must utterly detest and abhor them, for they are under the ban.

²⁰ ‘Hornets’ (as NJB) could also be translated as ‘the pestilence’ (as NRSV); the meaning of the Hebrew (צִרְעָה) is uncertain.

²¹ In place of ‘awesome’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘terrible’.

²² This verse is parallel to Ex 23:29, just as v. 20 is parallel to Ex 23:28. Here we have the Deuteronomic explanation for the slowness of the conquest (see 2:11–15 and #Ex 23:30). However, 9:3 emphasises the terrifying intervention of Yahweh as War-God.

²³ The verb here translated ‘harass’ (following the NJB) means ‘shake’ or ‘stir up’ (see Rt 1:19, 1S 4:5, 1K 1:45, Ps 55:2); the accompanying cognate noun refers to confusion, unrest, havoc, or panic (1S 5:9, 11, 14:20, 2C 15:5, Pr 15:16, Is 22:5, Ezk 7:7, 22:5, Am 3:9, Zc 14:13).

²⁴ The literal translation of ‘erase their very names from memory’ (here following NETB) is ‘destroy their name from under heaven’.

²⁵ The word תֹּעֲבָת (‘detestable’) describes anything detestable to God because of its innate evil or inconsistency with his own nature and character.

²⁶ The verb שִׁקָּץ (‘utterly detest’) is essentially synonymous with the next verb (תֵּעֵב, ‘abhor’), though its field of meaning is more limited to cultic abomination (cf. Lv 11:11, 13, Ps 22:25).

DEUTERONOMY 8

דברים פרק ח

א כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת לְמַעַן תַּחְיִין וּרְבִיתֶם וּבִאתֶם וּירְשֶׁתֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם: ב וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת־כָּל־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הוֹלִיכָךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ זֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בַּמִּדְבָּר לְמַעַן עֲנֹתְךָ לְנִסְתָּךְ לָדַעַת אֶת־אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבְּךָ הִתְשַׁמַּר מִצְוָתוֹ אִם־לֹא: ג וַיַּעֲנֶךָ וַיִּרְעַבְךָ וַיֹּאכִלְךָ אֶת־הַמָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתָּ וְלֹא יָדְעוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן הוֹדִיעֶךָ כִּי לֹא עַל־הַלֶּחֶם לִבְדּוֹ יַחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל־כָּל־מוֹצֵא פִי־יְהוָה יַחְיֶה הָאָדָם: ד שְׁמַלְתְּךָ לֹא בִלְתָּה מֵעֲלֶיךָ וּרְגְלֶךָ לֹא בָצָקָה זֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה:

ה וַיִּדְעַתָּ עַם־לִבְבְּךָ כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר יִיסַר אִישׁ אֶת־בְּנוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִיִּסְרֶךָ: ו וּשְׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְיִרְאָה אֹתוֹ: ז כִּי יְהוָה

1 "All the commandments I enjoin on you today you must keep and observe so that you may live and increase in numbers and enter into the land that Yahweh promised on oath to your fathers, and make it your own. 2 Remember how Yahweh your God led you for forty years in the desert, to humble you, to test you and know your inmost heart – whether you would keep his commandments or not. 3 He humbled you, he made you feel hunger, he fed you with manna which neither you nor your fathers had known, to make you understand that man does not live on bread alone but that man lives on everything that comes from the mouth of Yahweh. 4 The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell, all those forty years.

5 "Learn from this that Yahweh your God was training you as a man trains his child, 6 and keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, and so walk in his ways and reverence him. 7 But Yahweh your God is

DEUTERONOMY 8

- 1 The singular term מִצְוָה ('commandments') includes the whole corpus of covenant stipulations, certainly the book of Deuteronomy at least (cf. 5:28, 6:1,25, 7:11, 11:8,22, 15:5, 17:20, 19:9, 27:1, 30:11, 31:5); the plural (מִצְוֹת) refers to individual stipulations (as in vv. 2, 6).
- 2 Unlike the prophets, who regarded the years spent in the desert as golden age (see #Ho 2:16), Dt presents the 40 years as an ordeal (see 4:34).
- 3 An alternative translation for, "everything that comes from the mouth of Yahweh" is, "anything that Yahweh decrees."
- 4 This verse reminds the Israelites of their being recipients of divine providence during the stay in the desert.
- 5 Suffering is here interpreted as discipline, analogous to a parent's correction of a child (Ho 11, Heb 12:3-11).
- 6 The 'ways' of Yahweh refer here to his moral standards as reflected in his commandments; the verb 'walk' is used frequently in the Bible (both OT & NT) for one's moral and ethical behaviour.
- 7 Alternative translations for 'flowing streams' (here following the NRSV – the NJB lacks 'flowing') are 'brooks' (NETB) and 'wadis'.

אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְבִיאֲךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחֲלֵי מַיִם
עֵינַת וּתְהַלֵּמַת יְצָאִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָרִ: ^ח אֶרֶץ חֹטֶה
וּשְׁעָרָה וְגֶפֶן וּתְאֵנָה וְרִמּוֹן אֶרֶץ־זֵית שֶׁמֶן וְדִבְשׁ:
^ט אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְמִסְכָּנָתָהּ תֹאכַל־בָּהּ לֶחֶם לֹא־
תַּחֲסֹר כָּל בָּהּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבָנֶיהָ בְּרוֹזָל וּמִהַרְרֵיהָ
תַּחֲצֹב נְחֹשֶׁת: ^י וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ:

^{יא} הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְבַלְתִּי
שָׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצֹוֶה
הַיּוֹם: ^{יב} פֶּן־תֹּאכַל וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבָתִּים טֹבִים תִּבְנֶה
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת: ^{יג} וּבִקְרָךְ וּצְאֲנֶךָ יִרְבּוּ וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב יִרְבֶּה־
לְךָ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־לְךָ יִרְבֶּה: ^{יד} וְרַם לִבְבֶּךָ וּשְׂכַחְתָּ אֶת־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמוֹצִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית
עַבְדִּים: ^{טו} הַמּוֹלִיכְךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר | הַגָּדֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא נַחֲשׁ |
שָׂרָף וְעֶקְרָב וְצִמְאֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵין־מַיִם הַמוֹצִיא לְךָ
מִמִּים מִצּוֹר הַחֲלָמִישׁ: ^{טז} הַמֵּאֲכִלְךָ מִן־בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר

bringing you into a fine country, a land of flowing streams and springs, of waters that well up from the deep in valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines, of figs, of pomegranates, a land of olive trees, of honey, ⁹ a land where you will eat bread without stint, where you will want nothing, a land where the stones are of iron, where the hills may be quarried for copper. ¹⁰ You will eat and will have all you want and will bless Yahweh your God in the rich land he has given you.

¹¹ “Take care not to forget Yahweh your God, neglecting his commandments and customs and laws that I give you today. ¹² When you have eaten your fill, when you have built fine houses to live in, ¹³ when you have seen your flocks and herds increase, your silver and gold abound and all you have grow great, ¹⁴ do not exalt yourselves. Do not then forget Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ¹⁵ who led you through this vast and dreadful desert, a land of fiery serpents, scorpions, and thirst. He, in this waterless place, brought you water from the hardest rock; ¹⁶ who, in this

⁸ In place of ‘olive trees’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘olives, of oil’, partially reflecting the LXX (ἐλαίας ἐλαίου).

⁹ Since iron deposits are rare in Palestine, ‘where the stones are of iron’ here is probably iron ore found in mines.

¹⁰ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “You shall eat your fill and bless the LORD your God for the good land that he has given you.”

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘give’ is ‘command’.

¹² In place of ‘eaten your fill’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘eaten and had all you want.’

¹³ In place of ‘all your possessions grow great’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘and all that you have is multiplied’.

¹⁴ In place of ‘exalt yourselves’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘become proud of heart’.

¹⁵ For ‘fiery serpents’, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads ‘poisonous serpents’; the Hebrew word is *seraph* (שָׂרָף) – see #Nb 21:6).

¹⁶ The literal translation of ‘to humble you and test you’ is ‘in order to humble you and in order to test you’ (cf. v. 2).

לֹא־יִדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן עֲנֶתְךָ וּלְמַעַן נִסְתֶּךָ
 לְהִיטְבֶּךָ בְּאַחֲרִיתֶךָ: ¹⁷ וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ כְּחִי וְעַצֵּם
 יָדִי עָשָׂה לִי אֶת־הַחֵיל הַזֶּה: ¹⁸ וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי הוּא הֵנִיחָן לָךְ כַּח לַעֲשׂוֹת חֵיל לְמַעַן
 הָקִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם בְּיוֹם
 הַזֶּה: {פ}

¹⁹ וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁכַח תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ
 אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְעַבַּדְתָּם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לָהֶם
 הִעֲדָתִי בָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֶבֶד תֵּאבְדוּן: ²⁰ כִּי בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר
 יְהוָה מֵאֲבִיד מִפְּנֵיכֶם כֵּן תֵּאבְדוּן עַקֵּב לֹא
 תִּשְׁמָעוּן בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: {פ}

desert, fed you with manna that your fathers had not known, to humble you and test you and so make you better in the future. ¹⁷ Beware of saying in your heart, “My strength and the might of my hand won this power for me.” ¹⁸ Remember Yahweh your God, who gave you this strength and won you this power, so keeping the Covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is today.

¹⁹ Be sure that if you forget Yahweh your God, if you follow other gods, if you serve them and bow down before them – I warn you today – you will most certainly perish. ²⁰ Like the nations Yahweh is to destroy before you, so you yourselves shall perish, for not having listened to the voice of Yahweh your God.

¹⁷ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.”

¹⁸ At the end of this verse, the Samaritan Pentateuch and Lucian add ‘Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’, the standard way of rendering this almost stereotypical formula (cf. 1:8, 6:10, 9:5,27, 29:13, 30:20, 34:4); however, the *lectio difficilior* of the MT presumptively argues for its originality.

¹⁹ Literally translated, this verse opens, “If forgetting, you forget ...” The infinitive absolute is used for emphasis; the translation indicates this with the words ‘be sure’.

²⁰ In place of ‘for not having listened’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘because you did not obey’.

DEUTERONOMY 9

דברים פרק ט

^א שִׁמַּע יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְּהָ עֲבַר הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לְבָא לְרֶשֶׁת גּוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים וְעַצְמִים מִמֶּךָ עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת וּבְצֻרֹת בַּשָּׁמַיִם: ^ב עַם־גְּדוֹל וָרִם בְּנֵי עֲנָקִים אֲשֶׁר אֶתְּהָ יָדַעְתָּ וְאֶתְּהָ שָׁמַעְתָּ מִי יִתְעַב לִפְנֵי בְנֵי עֲנָק: ^ג וַיִּדְעַתָּ הַיּוֹם כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא־הָעֹבֵר לִפְנֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֵכֹלָה הוּא יִשְׁמִידֵם וְהוּא יִכְנִיעֵם לִפְנֵיךָ וְהוֹרֶשְׁתָּם וְהֵאבַדְתָּם מִהֵר כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה לְךָ: ^ד אַל־תֹּאמַר בְּלִבְבְּךָ בַּהֲדָף יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲתָם מִלִּפְנֵיךָ לֵאמֹר בְּצַדִּיקְתִּי הֵבִיאֵנִי יְהוָה לְרֶשֶׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וּבְרִשְׁעַת הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה יְהוָה מוֹרִישָׁם מִפְּנֵיךָ: ^ה לֹא בְצַדִּיקְתְּךָ וּבִישׁוֹר לִבְבְּךָ אֶתְּהָ בָּא לְרֶשֶׁת אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן כִּי בְרִשְׁעַת הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מוֹרִישָׁם מִפְּנֵיךָ וּלְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב: ^ו וַיִּדְעַתָּ כִּי לֹא בְצַדִּיקְתְּךָ יְהוָה

¹ "Listen, Israel; today you are about to cross the Jordan, to go and dispossess nations greater and stronger than yourself, to capture great cities fortified to the sky. ² A people great and tall, these Anakim, as you know, having heard the saying: Who can stand up to the sons of Anak? ³ Be therefore sure today that Yahweh your God himself will go in front of you, a devouring fire that will destroy them, and he will subdue them for you; so, you will drive them out and kill them quickly as Yahweh has promised you. ⁴ Do not say in your heart, when Yahweh your God has driven them before you, "It is for my own goodness that Yahweh has brought me to possess this land;" when it is for their wickedness that Yahweh drives out these nations for you. ⁵ It is not for any goodness or sincerity of yours that you are entering their land to possess it; but, because of the wickedness of these nations, Yahweh your God is dispossessing them for you, and to keep the word that he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ⁶ Be in fact sure, then, that it is not

DEUTERONOMY 9

- ¹ The word here translated as 'sky' (following the NJB) can also mean 'heavens' (as NRSV).
- ² In place of 'Anakim', here following the MT (עֲנָקִים), NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'Anakites'; and, at the end of the verse, the NRSV repeats 'Anakim' in place of 'sons of Anak', here following the MT (בְּנֵי עֲנָק) & NJB.
- ³ In place of the 2nd occurrence of 'Yahweh', NETB uses the pronoun, 'he', to avoid redundancy.
- ⁴ The NRSV has 'say to yourself' in place of 'say in your heart', here following the NJB, and NETB has 'think to yourself'.
- ⁵ A more literal translation of 'sincerity' is 'uprightness of heart'; the word צַדִּיקָה ('righteousness'), though essentially synonymous here with יִשְׁרָאֵל ('uprightness'), carries the idea of conformity to an objective standard. The latter term has more to do with an inner, moral quality.
- ⁶ The Hebrew word translated 'stubborn' more literally means 'stiff-necked'.

אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה הַזֹּאת לְרִשְׁתָּהּ
כִּי עַם־קָשָׁה־עֲרָף אַתָּה:

זָכֹר אֶל־תְּשַׁכַּח אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הִקְצַפְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר לְמִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יֵצְאָתָּ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם עַד־בְּאֶכֶם עַד־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה מִמֵּרִים הֵייתֶם
עִם־יְהוָה: ^ח וּבַחֲרָב הִקְצַפְתָּם אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּתְאַנֶּף
יְהוָה בְּכֶם לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם: ^ט בַּעֲלַתִּי הָהָרָה
לָקַחְתָּ לִּוְחַת הָאֲבָנִים לִוְחַת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַת
יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם וְאַשְׁבַּ בָּהֶר אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים
לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַלְתִּי וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתִיתִי: ^י וַיִּתֵּן
יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶת־שְׁנֵי לִוְחַת הָאֲבָנִים כְּתָבִים בְּאֶצְבָּע
אֱלֹהִים וַעֲלִיהֶם כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה
עִמָּכֶם בָּהֶר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: ^{יא} וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ
אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה נָתַן יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶת־
שְׁנֵי לִחַת הָאֲבָנִים לְחֹת הַבְּרִית: ^{יב} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
אֵלַי קוּם רֵד מֵהָר מַזֶּה כִּי שַׁחַת עָמַךְ אֲשֶׁר
הוֹצֵאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם סֵרוּ מֵהָר מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִם

for any goodness of yours that Yahweh gives you this rich land to possess, for you are a stubborn people.

⁷ “Remember: never forget how you provoked Yahweh your God in the desert. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt, you have been rebels against Yahweh. ⁸ At Horeb also, you provoked Yahweh, and Yahweh was so angry with you that he was ready to destroy you. ⁹ I had gone up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the Covenant that Yahweh was making with you. I stayed forty days and forty nights on the mountain, eating no bread, and drinking no water. ¹⁰ Yahweh gave me the two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God, and all the words on them that Yahweh had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the Assembly. ¹¹ At the end of the forty days and forty nights, Yahweh had given me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the Covenant, ¹² and Yahweh said to me, “Leave this place, go down quickly, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have broken faith. They have been quick to turn aside from the way I marked out for them; they have made themselves

⁷ By juxtaposing the positive (זָכֹר, ‘remember’) with the negative (אֶל־תְּשַׁכַּח, ‘do not forget’), Moses makes a most emphatic plea.

⁸ In place of the 2 instances of the Divine Name (יְהוָה, ‘Yahweh’) in this verse, NETB has, respectively, ‘him’ and ‘he’.

⁹ The literal translation of ‘on the mountain’ is ‘in the mountain’.

¹⁰ On several occasions in Deuteronomy, the word קהל denotes the religious assembly of the people of God, especially on the day of the promulgation of the Law (18:16, and see 4:10, 23:2–9).

¹¹ In place of ‘Yahweh’, the NJB has here ‘after he’, and it lacks the opening conjunction of v. 12.

¹² For ‘an idol of cast metal’ (here following the NJB), the MT reads מִסְכָּה (‘a cast thing’) but some MSS and the Samaritan Pentateuch add עֲגֹל (‘calf’).

עָשׂוּ לָהֶם מִסֵּכָה: י' וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר רְאִיתִי
אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה עַם־קָשֶׁה־עֶרְף הוּא: י"ד הֲרַף
מִמֶּנִּי וְאַשְׁמִידֵם וְאַמְחָה אֶת־שְׁמָם מִתַּחַת
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָךְ לְגוֹי־עַצוֹם וְרַב מִמֶּנּוּ:

ט"ו וְאַפֵּן וְאֵרַד מִן־הָהָר וְהָהָר בָּעֵר בָּאֵשׁ וּשְׁנֵי
לוּחַת הַבְּרִית עַל שְׁתֵּי יָדַי: ט"ז וְאֵרָא וְהִנֵּה חֲטָאתֶם
לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם עֲשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם עֵגֶל מִסֵּכָה סֶרֶתֶם
מִהָר מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם: י"ז וְאַתָּפֹשׁ
בְּשֵׁנִי הַלַּחַת וְאַשְׁלֹכֶם מֵעַל שְׁתֵּי יָדַי וְאַשְׁבֵּרֶם
לְעֵינֵיכֶם: י"ח וְאַתְּנַפֵּל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה כְּרֹאשְׁנָה אַרְבָּעִים
יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַלְתִּי וּמַיִם לֹא
שָׁתִיתִי עַל כָּל־חֲטֹאתֶכֶם אֲשֶׁר חֲטָאתֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת
הָרַע בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה לְהַכְעִיסוֹ: י"ט כִּי יִגְרַתִּי מִפְּנֵי הָאֵף
וְהַחֲמָה אֲשֶׁר קִצַּף יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם
וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֵלַי גַּם בַּפֶּעַם הַהוּא: כ' וּבָאֵהָרֹן
הַתָּאֲנָף יְהוָה מֵאֵד לְהַשְׁמִידוֹ וְאַתָּפֹלֵל גַּם־בְּעַד
אַהֲרֹן בַּעַת הַהוּא: כא וְאַת־חֲטֹאתֶכֶם אֲשֶׁר־

an idol of cast metal.” ¹³ Then Yahweh said to me, “I have seen this people, and what a stubborn people they are! ¹⁴ Let me alone that I may destroy them, and wipe out their name from under heaven, and make out of you a nation mightier and greater than they.”

¹⁵ “So, I turned and went down the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire, and in my two hands were the two tablets of the Covenant; ¹⁶ and I looked and there you were, you had sinned against Yahweh your God. You had made yourself a calf of cast metal; you had been quick to leave the way Yahweh had marked out for you. ¹⁷ So, I seized the two tablets, and with my two hands threw them down and shattered them before your eyes. ¹⁸ Then I fell prostrate before Yahweh; as before, I passed forty days and forty nights eating no bread and drinking no water, for all the sin you had committed, provoking the anger of Yahweh by doing what was evil in his sight. ¹⁹ For I was terrified of this anger and fury, which so roused Yahweh against you, that he was ready to destroy you and, once more, Yahweh heard my prayer. ²⁰ Yahweh was enraged with Aaron too and was ready to destroy him, and I

¹³ See #6 on the word ‘stubborn’.

¹⁴ The NJB omits the words ‘alone, that I may’, here following the MT & NRSV.

¹⁵ In place of ‘turned and went down the mountain’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘went down the mountain again’.

¹⁶ On the phrase ‘calf of cast metal’ see #12.

¹⁷ NETB omits the words ‘with my two hands’, considering them redundant in contemporary English.

¹⁸ The NJB ends this verse, here (loosely) following the NRSV, with, “in doing what was displeasing to Yahweh, thus arousing his anger.”

¹⁹ NETB interprets the phrase ‘anger and fury’ as a hendiadys – ‘intense anger’.

²⁰ In place of ‘pleaded’, here following the NJB, the NJB has ‘interceded’ and NETB has ‘prayed’.

עֲשִׂיתָם אֶת־הָעֵגֹל לְקַחְתִּי וְאֲשָׁרְךָ אֲתוֹ | בָּאֵשׁ
וְאַכְתָּ אֲתוֹ טָחוֹן הֵיטֵב עַד אֲשֶׁר־דָּק לְעֹפֹר וְאֲשַׁלְּךָ
אֶת־עֹפְרוֹ אֶל־הַנָּחַל הַיֵּרֶד מִן־הָהָר:

כב וּבַתְּבַעְרָה וּבַמָּסָה וּבַקְּבֹרֶת הַתְּאֹנָה מִקְצָפִים
הָיִיתָם אֶת־יְהוָה: כג וּבְשַׁלַּח יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם מִקְדָּשׁ
בְּרַנֵּעַ לֵאמֹר עֲלוּ וּרְשׁוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי
לָכֶם וְתַמְרוּ אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְלֹא הָאֲמַנְתֶּם
לֹא וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלִי: כד מִמֶּרֶס הָיִיתָם עִם־יְהוָה
מִיּוֹם דַּעַתִּי אֶתְכֶם:

כה וְאַתְּנַפֵּל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶת אַרְבָּעִים הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־
אַרְבָּעִים הַלַּיְלָה אֲשֶׁר הִתְנַפַּלְתִּי כִּי־אָמַר יְהוָה
לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם: כו וְאַתְּפַלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה וְאָמַר אֲדֹנִי
יְהוָה אֶל־תִּשְׁחַת עַמְּךָ וְנַחֲלֶתְךָ אֲשֶׁר פָּדִיתָ בְּגִדְלֶךָ
אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצָאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה: כז זָכֹר לַעֲבָדֶיךָ
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב אֶל־תִּפְּן אֶל־קִשֵׁי הָעָם

pleaded for Aaron.²¹ That work of sin, the calf you had made, I took it, burned it with fire and crushed it and, grinding it to fine dust, I threw its dust into the stream that comes down from the mountain.

²² “At Taberah too, and at Massah and Kibroth-ha-Taavah, you provoked Yahweh.²³ When Yahweh wanted you to leave Kadesh-Barnea, saying, “Go up and take possession of the land I have given you,” you rebelled against the command of Yahweh your God and did not believe him or listen to his voice.²⁴ You have been rebels against Yahweh from the day I first knew you.

²⁵ “So, I fell down before Yahweh and lay there these forty days and forty nights; for, Yahweh had said he would destroy you;²⁶ and I prayed to Yahweh, saying, “My Lord Yahweh, do not destroy your people, your heritage whom you have redeemed in your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with your mighty hand.²⁷ Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; take no notice of this people’s

²¹ The NJB reads ‘burned and broke to pieces’ in place of ‘burned it with fire and crushed it’, here following the NRSV.

²² By popular etymology, the name ‘Taberah’ (תְּבַעְרָה) derives from the Hebrew verb ‘to burn’; the reference is to Yahweh’s fiery wrath against Israel because of their constant complaints against him (Nb 11:1–3).

²³ The literal translation of ‘command’ is ‘mouth’.

²⁴ The NJB and NRSV, following the LXX (τῆς ἡμέρας, ἧς ἐργάσωμαι ὑμῖν) and Samaritan Pentateuch, end this verse with ‘the day he was made know to you’, changing the subject of the clause from Moses to God; here, we follow the MT & NETB.

²⁵ Vv. 25–29 paraphrase Ex 32:11–14. In Deuteronomy, Moses is portrayed as the ideal prophet (34:10–12) who intercedes for the people and who suffers on their behalf (1:37, compare Is 53).

²⁶ The phrase ‘Lord Yahweh’ (אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה) is traditionally rendered in English as ‘Lord GOD’.

²⁷ In place of ‘take no notice of’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘pay no attention to’ and NETB has ‘ignore’.

הַזֶּה וְאֶל־רָשָׁעוֹ וְאֶל־חַטָּאתוֹ: כִּי פָנִי־אֶמְרוּ הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָנוּ מִשָּׁם מִבְּלִי יִכְלֹת יְהוָה לְהַבְיֵאֵם
אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר לָהֶם וּמִשְׁנֵאתוֹ אוֹתָם
הוֹצִיאָם לְהַמָּתָם בַּמִּדְבָּר: כֹּט וְהֵם עִמָּךְ וְנִחַלְתָּךְ
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ בְּכֹחַךְ הַגָּדֹל וּבְזַרְעֶךָ הַנְּטוּיָה: {פ}

stubbornness, their wickedness, and their sin, ²⁸ lest the land you brought us out of should say, “Yahweh was not able to bring them to the land he promised them; because he hated them, he brought them out to kill them in the desert.” ²⁹ Yet, they are your people, your heritage, whom you brought out by your great power and outstretched arm.”

²⁸ Before ‘the land’, the Samaritan Pentateuch adds ‘the people of’, as does the LXX (οἱ κατοικοῦντες τήν); here, we follow the MT.

²⁹ In place of ‘outstretched arm’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has simply ‘power’.

DEUTERONOMY 10

דברים פרק י

א בַּעַת הַהוּא אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי פֶּסֶל־לָךְ שְׁנֵי־לוּחֹת
אֲבָנִים כְּרָאשֹׁנִים וְעֹלָה אֵלַי הִהְרָה וַעֲשִׂיתָ לָךְ
אֲרוֹן עֹץ: ב וְאָכַתְבְּ עַל־הַלּוּחֹת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר
הָיוּ עַל־הַלּוּחֹת הָרִאשֹׁנִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁבַרְתָּ וְשָׂמַתָּם
בָּאֲרוֹן: ג וְאָעַשׂ אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים וְאָפֶסֶל שְׁנֵי־לּוּחֹת
אֲבָנִים כְּרָאשֹׁנִים וְאָעַל הִהְרָה וּשְׁנֵי הַלּוּחֹת בְּיָדַי:
ד וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלּוּחֹת כַּמִּכְתָּב הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶת עֲשֶׂר־
הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֲלֵיכֶם בְּהַר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ
בַּיּוֹם הַקֵּהֶל וַיִּתְּנֶם יְהוָה אֵלַי: ה וְאֶפֶן וְאֶרֶץ מִן־
הַהָר וְאָשַׁם אֶת־הַלּוּחֹת בָּאֲרוֹן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי וַיְהִי
שֵׁם כַּאֲשֶׁר צֻוֵּי יְהוָה:

ו וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נָסְעוּ מִבְּאֵרֶת בְּנֵי־יַעֲקֹב מוֹסֶרָה שֵׁם
מֵת אֶהָרֹן וַיִּקְבֹּר שָׁם וַיִּכְהֶן אֶלְעָזָר בֶּנוֹ תַּחְתָּיו:
ז מִשָּׁם נָסְעוּ הַגְּדָדָה וּמִן־הַגְּדָדָה יִטְבַּתָּה אֶרֶץ

1 "Yahweh then said to me, "Cut two stone tablets like the first, and come up to me on the mountain. Make an ark of wood; 2 on the tablets I shall inscribe the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke, and you will put them in the Ark." 3 Therefore, I made an ark of acacia wood, cut two stone tablets like the first and went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. 4 He inscribed the tablets as he had inscribed them before with the Ten Words that Yahweh had spoken to you on the mountain from the middle of the fire on the day of the Assembly. Then Yahweh gave them to me. 5 I came down the mountain again and put the tablets in the Ark I had made, and there they stayed as Yahweh had commanded me.

6 "The Israelites left Beeroth-Bene-Jaakan for Moserah, where Aaron died; he was buried there, and his son Eleazar succeeded him as priest. 7 From there, they set out for Gudgodah and from Gudgodah for

DEUTERONOMY 10

1 Vv. 1–3 rest on an ancient tradition that Moses made the Ark and put the stone tablets in it (1K 8:9; see Ex 24:15–18).

2 The care with which the replacement copy must be made underscores the importance of verbal precision in relaying Yahweh's commandments.

3 The 'acacia' (שִׁטִּים) is the most common timber tree of the Sinai region; most likely it is the species *Acacia raddiana*, which has the largest trunk.

4 The NRSV uses 'the ten commandments' in place of 'the Ten Words', here following the MT, and also the LXX (δέκα λόγους).

5 In place of 'there they stayed', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'there they are' and NETB has 'they are still there'.

6 The NJB has 'the wells of Bene-Jaakan' in place of 'Beeroth-Bene-Jaakan', here following the NRSV. Nb. 33:38 gives Mount Hor as the place where Aaron died; perhaps Moserah is the same place – it is otherwise unidentified.

7 'Gudgodah' is probably the same as Haggidgad, which is also associated with Jotbathah (Nb 33:33); 'Jotbathah', whose name can be translated 'place of wadis', is possibly modern Ain Ta-bah, just north of Eilat, or Ta-bah, 11 Km south of Eilat on the west shore of the Gulf of Aqaba.

נַחֲלֵי מַיִם: ^ח בָּעֵת הַהוּא הִבְדִּיל יְהוָה אֶת־שִׁבְט
הַלְוִי לְשָׂאת אֶת־אָרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה לַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה לְשָׁרְתוֹ וּלְבָרֵךְ בְּשֵׁמוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ^ט עַל־
כֵּן לֹא־הָיָה לַלְוִי חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עִם־אֶחָיו יְהוָה הוּא
נַחֲלָתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לוֹ:

^י וְאַנֹכִי עֹמְדָתִי בְּהָר כִּימִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים אַרְבָּעִים
יּוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֵלַי גַּם בַּפֶּעַם
הַהוּא לֹא־אָבָה יְהוָה הַשְׁחִיתָךְ: ^{יא} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
אֵלַי קוּם לֵךְ לְמַסַּע לִפְנֵי הָעָם וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיִּירָשׁוּ אֶת־
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְתָּם לָתֵת לָהֶם: {פ}

^{יב} וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׂאֵל מֵעַמְךָ כִּי
אִם־לִירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל־דֶּרֶכָיו
וּלְאַהֲבָה אוֹתוֹ וּלְעַבְדֹת אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ
וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: ^{יג} לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וְאֶת־
חֻקָּתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵצֹוֹךְ הַיּוֹם לְטוֹב לָךְ:

Jotbathah, a land of water streams. ⁸ Yahweh then set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of Yahweh's Covenant, to stand in the presence of Yahweh, to do him service and in his name to pronounce blessing as they still do today. ⁹ Levi therefore has no share or inheritance with his brothers: Yahweh is his inheritance, as Yahweh your God told him.

¹⁰ "Now, I stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights, as I had done the first time; and, once again, Yahweh listened to me and agreed not to destroy you. ¹¹ Yahweh said to me, "Now go on your way at the head of this people, so that they may go and take possession of the land I swore to their fathers I would give them."

¹² "And now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God ask of you? Only this: to fear Yahweh your God, to follow all his ways, to love him, to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and all your soul, ¹³ to keep the commandments and laws of Yahweh your God that, for your good, I lay down for you today.

⁸ In Ex 32:25–29, the Levites were given a special position in compensation for the slaughter of their brothers after sacrificing to the golden calf. However, according to Nb 1:50 & 3:6–8, the Levites were set apart to God as substitutes for the firstborn of Israel (Nb 3:12, 8:16).

⁹ As the priestly tribe, Levi would have no land allotment except for 48 towns set apart for their use (Nb 35:1–8, Jos 21:1–42), but theirs was a far greater inheritance, for Yahweh himself was their apportionment (Nb 18:20–24, Dt 18:2, Jos 13:33).

¹⁰ In place of 'listened to me', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'heard my prayer'.

¹¹ After the imperative the subordinated jussive forms, 'go' and 'take possession' (with prefixed *vav*) indicate purpose or result.

¹² The final section of the discourse (10:12–11:25) explains the demands made by the Covenant with God, borrowing the phraseology of human treaties of alliance: hence, the opening declaration (v. 12ff), the historical exposition (11:2–7), the description of the country (11:10–12, 24) and the blessings and curses (11:16–17, 22–23, 26–29).

¹³ The NJB, following the MT, lacks the words 'your God', here following the LXX (θεοῦ σου) & NRSV.

י' הֵן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַי הַשָּׁמַיִם הָאָרֶץ
 וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ: טו רַק בְּאַבְתִּיךָ חֶשֶׁק יְהוָה לְאַהֲבָה
 אוֹתָם וַיִּבְחָר בְּזֶרְעָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם בָּכֶם מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים
 כִּי־זֶה הַיּוֹם: טז וּמִלֹּתָם אֶת עֶרְלַת לְבַבְכֶם וְעֲרַפְכֶם
 לֹא תִקְשׁוּ עוֹד: יז כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי
 הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדָנִים הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד: יח עֲשֵׂה
 מִשְׁפָּט יְתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאָהֵב גֵּר לְתֵת לוֹ לֶחֶם
 וְשִׁמְלָה: יט וְאַהֲבַתָּם אֶת־הַגֵּר כִּי־גֵרִים הֵייתֶם
 בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: כ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ תִירָא אֹתוֹ
 תַעֲבֹד וּבּוֹ תִדְבָּק וּבְשִׁמּוֹ תִשָּׁבַע: כא הוּא תִהְלֹךְ
 וְהוּא אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה אִתָּךְ אֶת־הַגְּדֹלָת וְאֶת־
 הַנּוֹרָאֹת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ: כב בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ
 יָרְדוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִמָּה וְעַתָּה שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ
 כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב:

14 “Heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to Yahweh your God, and the earth and all it contains; 15 yet Yahweh set his heart in love on your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today. 16 Circumcise your heart then and be obstinate no longer: 17 for Yahweh your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, triumphant and terrible, free of favouritism, never to be bribed. 18 He it is who sees justice done for the orphan and the widow, who loves the strangers and gives them food and clothing. 19 Love the stranger then, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 20 You shall fear Yahweh your God; you must fear and serve; you must cling to him; in his name take your oaths. 21 He it is you must praise; he is your God: for you he has done these great and terrible things you have seen with your own eyes; 22 and though your fathers numbered only seventy when they went down to Egypt, Yahweh your God has made you as many as the stars of heaven.

14 ‘Heaven of heavens’ (the highest of heavens) is a Hebrew idiom to express the superlative.

15 The verb אָהַב (‘love’) juxtaposed with בָּחַר (‘choose’) describes God’s initiative in calling the patriarchs the founders of a people special to him.

16 Circumcision (see #Gn 17:10) brought spiritual obligations with it: ‘circumcision of the heart’ (see #Gn 8:21 and #Jr 4:4)

17 God bestows his favour with absolute freedom and impartiality (1:17, see also 2Ch 19:7, Job 34:19, Ws 6:7–8).

18 The NJB has the singular forms ‘stranger ... him’ in place of ‘strangers ... them’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

19 The verse implies the second great commandment of Lv 19:17–18 (see Ex 22:21, 23:9, Lv 19:34)

20 In place of ‘fear’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘revere’ (as also in v. 12).

21 The literal translation of ‘he it is you must praise’ is ‘he is your praise’; the pronoun is subjective and the noun ‘praise’ is used here metonymically for the object of their praise (Yahweh).

22 The term שָׁמַיִם may be translated ‘heaven’ (as NJB & NRSV) or ‘the sky’ (as NETB), depending on the context.

DEUTERONOMY 11

דברים פרק יא

א וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּשְׁמַרְתָּ מִשְׁמְרָתוֹ וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו כְּלֵהִימִים: ב וַיִּדְעַתֶּם הַיּוֹם כִּי לֹא אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא־רָאוּ אֶת־מוֹסַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֶת־גְּדֻלּוֹ אֶת־יְדוֹ הַחֲזָקָה וְזִרְעוֹ הַנְּטוּיָה: ג וְאֶת־אֲתָתָיו וְאֶת־מַעֲשָׂיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם לַפְּרָעָה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם וּלְכָל־אֶרְצוֹ: ד וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְחֵיל מִצְרַיִם לְסוֹסָיו וּלְרֶכֶבָּו אֲשֶׁר הֵצִיף אֶת־מִי יַם־סוּף עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם בְּרֹדֶפֶם אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיֹּאבֲדֵם יְהוָה עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: ה וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָכֶם בְּמִדְבָּר עַד־בְּאֵכֶם עַד־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: ו וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדָתְךָ וּלְאַבִּירֶם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב בֶּן־רְאוּבֵן אֲשֶׁר פָּצְתָה הָאֲרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַעֵם וְאֶת־בְּתֵיהֶם וְאֶת־אֹהֲלֵיהֶם וְאֶת כָּל־הַיְקוּם אֲשֶׁר בְּרַגְלֵיהֶם בְּקֶרֶב כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל: ז כִּי עֵינֵיכֶם הִרְאֹתָ

1 “Therefore, you must love Yahweh your God and always keep his injunctions, his statutes, his ordinances and his commandments. 2 And mark you, this day, that it is not your sons (for, they have not known or seen the lessons of Yahweh your God), but it is you who must acknowledge his greatness, the might of his hand, and the strength of his outstretched arm, 3 and the signs and the deeds that he performed in Egypt itself against Pharaoh the king of Egypt and all his land. 4 What he did to the armies of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots, and how Yahweh poured the waters of the Sea of Reeds over them as they pursued you, so that Yahweh left no trace of them to this day; 5 and what he did for you in the desert before you reached this place; 6 and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the Reubenite: how, right in the midst of all Israel, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, along with their households, their tents and every living being

DEUTERONOMY 11

- 1 This collocation of technical terms for elements of the covenant text lends support to its importance and also signals a new section of paraenesis, in which Moses will exhort Israel to obedience; the term מִשְׁמְרָתוֹ ('injunctions') sums up the 3 terms that follow: חֻקֹּתָיו & מִשְׁפָּטָיו & מִצְוֹתָיו.
- 2 The phrase, 'this day', appears frequently in Deuteronomy to emphasise the contemporary nature of the Covenant demands and promises.
- 3 The collocation of 'signs' and 'deeds' indicates that these acts were intended to make an impression on observers and reveal something about God's power (cf. v. 2^b).
- 4 Literally translated, this verse ends, "and Yahweh destroyed them to this day."
- 5 For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place."
- 6 The address follows the early tradition of Nb 16 concerning the revolt of Dathan and Abiram; note the silence about Korah's rebellion (Nb 16:3-11).

אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה הַגָּדֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:
 וְשִׁמְרַתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם
 לְמַעַן תַּחֲזִקוּ וּבִאתֶם וִירִשְׁתֶּם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר
 אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ^ט וּלְמַעַן תֹּארִיכוּ
 יָמִים עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתִּיכֶם
 לֵאמֹר לָהֶם וּלְזֶרְעָם אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ: {ס}

י כִּי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בֹא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא
 כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הִוא אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאתֶם מִשָּׁם אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע
 אֶת־זֶרְעֶךָ וְהִשְׁקִיתָ בְּרַגְלֶךָ כַּגֵּן הַיָּרֵק: ^י וְהָאָרֶץ
 אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֶרֶץ הָרִים
 וּבִקְעֹת לְמִטְרַת הַשָּׁמַיִם תִּשְׁתַּהֲמִים: ^{יב} אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ דֹרֵשׁ אֹתָהּ תָמִיד עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 בָּהּ מִרְשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה: {ס}

יג וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמַעַתְּ תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹתֵי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִכִּי
 מִצְוָה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

in their company. ⁷ For your own eyes have seen all this great work of Yahweh, which he has done. ⁸ Therefore, you must keep the commandments that I enjoin on you today, so that you may have the strength to conquer the land into which you are to cross to make it your own, ⁹ and to live long in the land which Yahweh swore to your ancestors to give to them and to their descendants, a land where milk and honey flow.

¹⁰ “For, the land you are about to enter and make your own is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where, having done your sowing, you had to water the seed by foot, as though in a vegetable garden. ¹¹ No, the land into which you are to cross to possess it is a land of hills and valleys that drinks the water of the rain from heaven. ¹² Yahweh your God takes care of this land, the eyes of Yahweh your God are on it always, from the year’s beginning to its end.

¹³ “And it is most sure that, if you faithfully obey the commandments I enjoin on you today, loving Yahweh your God and serving him with all

⁷ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “for it is your own eyes that have seen every great deed that the LORD did.”

⁸ The word translated as ‘the commandments’ (מִצְוָה) is actually singular, meaning the whole corpus of stipulations in Dt (cf. 6:1, 25, 7:11, 8:1).

⁹ The literal translation of ‘ancestors’ is ‘fathers’.

¹⁰ This verse alludes to that fact that the Nile valley must be irrigated through human effort; Palestine, however, is dependent upon seasonal rainfall. The difference is mentioned to show Israel’s dependence on Yahweh, who gives and withholds rain (v. 11, Am 4:7–9).

¹¹ In place of ‘that drinks the water of’, here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have ‘watered by’.

¹² The literal translation of ‘takes care of’ is ‘seeks’; the statement reflects the belief that God directly controlled storms and rainfall.

¹³ The term לְאַהֲבָה (‘loving’) draws attention to the reciprocation of divine love as a condition or sign of covenant loyalty (cf. 6:5).

וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁכֶם: י' וְנָתַתִּי
מִטֶּר־אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֶה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאִסְפַּת דְּגָנְךָ
וְתִירֶשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהַרְךָ: ט' וְנָתַתִּי עֵשָׂב בַּשָּׂדֶה לְבִהֵמָתְךָ
וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ: ט"ו הַשְּׁמִירוֹ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתֶּה לְבַבְּכֶם
וְסָרְתֶם וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם
לָהֶם: י" וְחָרָה אֶף־יְהוָה בָּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת־יְבוּלָהּ
וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מִהָרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה
נָתַן לָכֶם: י" וְשָׁמַתֶּם אֶת־דִּבְרֵי אֱלֹהִים עַל־לִבְבְּכֶם
וְעַל־נַפְשְׁכֶם וְקִשְׁרְתֶם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְכֶם וְהָיוּ
לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: י" וְלִמַּדְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם
לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ
וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: כ' וְכָתַבְתֶּם עַל־מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ
וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: כ"א לְמַעַן יִרְבּוּ יְמֵיכֶם וַיְמִי בְנֵיכֶם עַל
הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם לֵאמֹר לְתֵת לָהֶם
כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ: {ס}

your heart and all your soul, ¹⁴ I will give your land rain in season, autumn rain and spring, so that you may harvest your corn, your wine and your oil. ¹⁵ I shall provide grass in the fields for your livestock, and you will eat and have all you want.” ¹⁶ Take care your heart is not seduced, that you do not go astray, serving other gods and worshipping them. ¹⁷ For then the anger of Yahweh will blaze out against you, he will shut up the heavens and there will be no rain, the land will not yield its produce and you will quickly die in the prosperous land that Yahweh is giving you. ¹⁸ Let these words of mine remain in your heart and in your soul; fasten them on your hand as a sign and on your forehead as a headband. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children and say them over to them, whether at rest in your house or walking abroad, at your lying down or at your rising. ²⁰ Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, ²¹ so that you and your children may live long in the land that Yahweh swore to your fathers he would give them for as long as there is a sky above the earth.

¹⁴ The NRSV, following the LXX (δώσει), Samaritan Pentateuch and Vg (dabit), opens with ‘He will give’; in the NJB, following the MT, the speaker changes abruptly from Moses to God himself (see 7:4, 17:3, 28:20).

¹⁵ In place of ‘livestock’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘cattle’.

¹⁶ Literally translated, this verse reads, “Watch yourselves lest your heart turns and you turn aside and serve other gods and bow down to them.”

¹⁷ The literal translation of ‘blaze out’ is ‘become hot’.

¹⁸ Alternative translations for ‘headband’ are ‘emblem’ and ‘frontlet’.

¹⁹ In place of ‘whether at rest at home or walking abroad’, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads ‘when you are at home and when you are away’.

²⁰ NETB has ‘doorframes’ in place of ‘doorposts’, here following the NJB & NRSV.

²¹ NETB ends this verse, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, with, “like the days of heaven itself.”

כב כי אם־שָׁמַר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹתָהּ לְאַהֲבָהּ אֶת־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לֵלֶכֶת בְּכָל־דִּרְכָיו וּלְדַבְּקָה־בּוֹ:
כג וְהוֹרִישׁ יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה מִלְּפָנֶיכֶם
וִירְשִׁתֶּם גּוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים וְעֲצֻמִּים מִכֶּם: כד כָּל־הַמָּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר תִּדְרֹךְ בְּרִגְלֶיכֶם בּוֹ לָכֶם יִהְיֶה מִן־הַמִּדְבָּר
וְהַלְבָנוֹן מִן־הַנָּהָר נְהַר־פָּרָת וְעַד הַיָּם הָאֲחֵרוֹן
יִהְיֶה גְבֻלְכֶם: כה לֹא־יִתִּיצֵב אִישׁ בְּפָנֶיכֶם פֶּחַדְכֶם
וּמוֹרָאֲכֶם יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר תִּדְרֹכּוּ־בָּהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לָכֶם: {ס}

כו רְאֵה אֲנֹכִי נֹתֵן לְפָנֶיכֶם הַיּוֹם בִּרְכָה וּקְלָלָה:
כז אֶת־הַבִּרְכָּה אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם:
כח וְהַקְלָלָה אֲסִי־לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְסָרְתֶם מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה
אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לֵלֶכֶת אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־יִדְעֶתֶם: {ס}

22 “For, if you should faithfully keep and observe all these commandments that I enjoin on you today, loving Yahweh your God, following all his ways and clinging to him, 23 then Yahweh will dispossess all these nations for you, and you shall dispossess nations greater and more powerful than yourselves. 24 Wherever the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your territory shall stretch from the desert all the way to the Lebanon; and from the River, the River Euphrates, as far as the Western Sea. 25 No one will be able to resist you; Yahweh your God will make you feared and dreaded throughout the land that you tread, just as he promised you.

26 “Take note, I am setting before you today both a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, if you will listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I am commanding you today; 28 and the curse, if you will not listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God but turn aside from the way that I have marked out for you today, by going after other gods you have not known.

22 The word מִצְוָה (*‘commandments’*) is actually singular, serving as a comprehensive term for the whole stipulation section of the book.

23 In place of *‘Yahweh’*, here following the MT (יְהוָה), NJB and NRSV (which has *‘the LORD’*), NETB has the pronoun *‘he’*.

24 The territory is described in terms of the ideal limits of David’s empire (see #1:7). The *‘Western Sea’* is the Mediterranean.

25 In place of *‘throughout the land that you tread’*, here following the NJB, the NRSV has *‘on all the land on which you set foot’*.

26 The *‘blessing and the curse’* is an echo of an ancient covenant renewal, perhaps inaugurated at Shechem (v. 29, see Ch. 27).

27 For *‘listen to’*, here following the MT, the NJB has *‘obey’*.

28 For *‘will not listen to’*, here following the MT, the NJB has *‘disobey’*.

כט וְהָיָה כִּי יְבִיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־
 אָתָּה בֹא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְנָתַתָּה אֶת־הַבְּרָכָה עַל־
 הַר גְּרִזִּים וְאֶת־הַקְּלָלָה עַל־הַר עִיבָל: ל הֲלֹא־הֵמָּה
 בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן אַחֲרֵי דֶרֶךְ מְבוֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּאֶרֶץ
 הַכְּנַעֲנִי הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּעֶרְבָה מִוֶּל הַגִּלְגָּל אֵצֶל אֱלֹנֵי
 מֹרֶה: לא כִּי אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לְבֹא לְרִשְׁתָּהּ
 אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נָתַן לָכֶם וִירִשְׁתֶּם
 אֹתָהּ וַיִּשְׁבַּתֶּם־בָּהּ: לב וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל־
 הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לִפְנֵיכֶם
 הַיּוֹם:

²⁹ “And it shall happen that, when Yahweh your God brings you into the land, which you are to enter and possess, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. ³⁰ These mountains, as everyone knows, are on the other side of the Jordan on the westward road, in the territory of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, near the Terebinths of Moreh. ³¹ For you shall indeed cross the Jordan to enter and make the land your own that Yahweh your God is giving you; and you shall possess it and you shall live in it, ³² and you must keep and observe all the statutes and ordinances that I set before you today.

²⁹ These two mountains are near the ancient site of Shechem and the modern city of Nablus; the valley between them is like a great amphitheatre with the mountain slopes as seating sections. The place was sacred because it was there that Abraham pitched his camp and built his first altar after coming to Canaan (Gn 12:6); Jacob also settled at Shechem for a time and dug a well from which Jesus once requested a drink of water (Gn 33:18–20, Jn 4:5–7).

³⁰ The name ‘Gilgal’ (גִּלְגָּל) means ‘circle’ or ‘rolling’; is perhaps to be identified with Khirbet El-Metjir, 2 Km NE of Jericho.

³¹ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “When you cross the Jordan to go in to occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and when you occupy it and live in it.”

³² For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “you must diligently observe all the statutes and ordinances that I am setting before you today.”

DEUTERONOMY 12

דברים פרק יב

- ^א אֵלֶּה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ לָךְ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ כָּל-הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם חַיִּים עַל-הָאֲדָמָה:
- ^ב אַבֵּד תֵּאַבְדּוּן אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּקְדָּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר עֲבָדוּ-שָׁם הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם יֹרְשִׁים אִתָּם אֶת-אֱלֹהֵיהֶם עַל-הָהָרִים הָרָמִים וְעַל-הַגְּבָעוֹת וְתַחַת כָּל-עֵץ רֵעֵן:
- ^ג וְנִתְצָתָם אֶת-מִזְבְּחֹתָם וְשִׁבְרֹתָם אֶת-מַצֵּבֹתָם וְאֲשֵׁרֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בָּאֵשׁ וּפְסִילֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם תִּגְדְּעוּן וְאַבְדֹתָם אֶת-שֵׁמָם מִן-הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא:
- ^ד לֹא-תַעֲשׂוּן כֵּן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ^ה כִּי אִם-אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִכָּל-שְׁבִטֵיכֶם לָשׂוּם אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שָׁם לְשִׁכְנוֹ תִּדְרָשׁוּ וּבֵאתָ שָׁמָּה: ^ו וְהֵבֵאתֶם שָׁמָּה עֹלֹתֵיכֶם וְזִבְחֵיכֶם וְאֹת
- ¹ “Now these are the laws and customs that you must keep and observe, in the country that Yahweh, God of your ancestors, is giving you as yours, every day that you live in that country.
- ² “You must completely destroy all the places in which the nations you are about to dispossess have served their gods, on the mountain heights, on the hills, and under every leafy tree; ³ and you must tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars to pieces, burn their sacred poles with fire, cut down the carved images of their gods, and thus wipe out the memory of their name from that place.
- ⁴ “You shall not worship Yahweh your God in such ways. ⁵ You must seek Yahweh your God only in the place that he will choose from all your tribes, there to set his name and give it a home. ⁶ There you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, the offerings

DEUTERONOMY 12

- ¹ The Deuteronomic Code (Chs 12–26) represents, at the very least, the Law discovered in the Temple under Josiah (2K 22:8ff).
- ² The literal translation of ‘completely destroy’ is ‘destroying you must destroy’; the infinitive absolute precedes the verb for emphasis, which is reflected in the translation. The expression ‘every leafy tree’ refers to evergreens, which, because they keep their foliage throughout the year, provided apt symbolism for nature cults such as those practiced in Canaan; the deity particularly in view here is Asherah, who was considered the goddess of fertility and whose worship frequently took place at shrines near or among clusters (groves) of such trees (see also 7:5).
- ³ Sacred poles, or ‘Asherim’ (אֲשֵׁרִים), were the emblems of Asherah (Astarte, Ashteroth), goddess of love and fecundity.
- ⁴ The following law concerning the centralisation of worship is intended to guard Israel from the paganism that flourished in local shrines (vv. 29–31). For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Not so must you to behave towards Yahweh your God.”
- ⁵ The expression, ‘place that he will choose ... there to set his name’ (similarly in v. 21), or ‘as a home for his name’ (v. 11, and see 14:23, 16:11), or ‘there to have his name remembered’, (Ex 20:24), may mean any place where God has manifested himself and, hence, approved worship there.
- ⁶ The centralising of the nation’s worship in one place, though attributed to Moses, did not in fact take place until after Solomon (1K 3:4).

מַעֲשֵׂי־יָדְכֶם וְאֵת תְּרוּמַת יָדְכֶם וְנִדְבֹתֵיכֶם וּבְכֹרֹת בְּקָרְכֶם וּצְאֲנֵכֶם: ^ז וְאָכַלְתֶּם-שָׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם בְּכָל מַשְׁלַח יָדְכֶם אֲתֶם וּבְתֵיבֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ:

^ח לֹא תַעֲשֹׂון כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר אֲנַחֲנוּ עֹשִׂים פֹּה הַיּוֹם אִישׁ כִּלְ-הַיֵּשֶׁר בְּעֵינָיו: ^ט כִּי לֹא-בֵאתֶם עַד-עֹתָהּ אֶל-הַמְּנוּחָה וְאֶל-הַנַּחֲלָה אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ נָתַן לָךְ: ^י וְעִבְרָתֶם אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן וּשְׁבַתֶם בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִנְחִיל אֲתֶכֶם וְהָיָה לָכֶם מִכָּל-אֹיְבֵיכֶם מִסָּבִיב וּשְׁבַתֶם-בְּטָח: ^{יא} וְהָיָה הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בּוֹ לְשֹׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם שָׁמָּה תָבִיאוּ אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה אֲתֶכֶם עוֹלֹתֵיכֶם וְזִבְחֵיכֶם מַעֲשֵׂי־יָדְכֶם וְתִרְמַת יָדְכֶם וְכָל מִבְּחַר נִדְרֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּדְּרוּ לַיהוָה: ^{יב} וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲתֶם וּבְנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם וְעַבְדֵיכֶם וְאֹמֵהֲתֵיכֶם וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם כִּי אֵין לוֹ חֶלֶק וְנַחֲלָה אֲתֶכֶם:

from your hands, your votive offerings and your voluntary offerings, the firstborn of your herd and flock; ⁷ there you will eat in the presence of Yahweh your God and be thankful for all that your hands have presented, you and your household blessed by Yahweh your God.

⁸ “You must not act as we do here today: every man does what seems right to him, ⁹ for as yet you have not come to the resting place and the inheritance, which Yahweh your God is giving you. ¹⁰ You are about to cross the Jordan and live in the land that Yahweh your God grants you to inherit; he will give you relief from all the enemies that surround you, and you shall live in security. ¹¹ Then, to the place chosen by Yahweh your God as a home for his name, to that place you are to bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifice, your tithes, the offerings from your hands, and all the best of your possessions that you vow to Yahweh. ¹² There you shall rejoice in the presence of Yahweh your God, you and your sons and daughters, your serving men and women, and the Levite who lives in your towns, since he has no share or inheritance with you.

⁷ The Deuteronomic Code frequently emphasises the joy of the ritual meal and of the liturgical feasts (see vv. 12, 18, 16:11, 14).

⁸ The literal translation of ‘every man’ is simply ‘a man’.

⁹ For ‘resting place’, here following the NJB, the NRSV (following the MT more literally) has ‘rest’.

¹⁰ In the MT, vv. 10–11 are one long, complex sentence; for stylistic reasons the translation divides it up into two sentences.

¹¹ Literally translated, this verse opens, “it will be (to) the place where Yahweh your God chooses to cause his name to dwell you will bring.”

¹² The literal translation of ‘in your towns’ is ‘within your gates’.

י' הַשֹּׁמֵר לָךְ פְּנֵי-תַעֲלָה עֲלֵיתִיךָ בְּכָל-מָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר תֵּרְאָה: יד כִּי אִם-בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה בְּאַחַד שְׁבִטֶיךָ שָׁם תַּעֲלָה עֲלֵיתִיךָ וְשָׁם תַּעֲשֶׂה כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִּי מֻצְוֶיךָ:

טו רָק בְּכָל-אֹת נִפְשֶׁךָ תִּזְבַּח וְאָכַלְתָּ בָשָׂר כְּבָרְכַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָךְ בְּכָל-שְׁעָרֶיךָ הַטָּמֵא וְהַטָּהוֹר יֹאכְלֶנּוּ כַּצִּבִּי וְכַאֲיִל: טז רָק הַדָּם לֹא תֹאכְלוּ עַל-הָאָרֶץ תִּשְׁפְּכֶנּוּ בַּמַּיִם:

יז לֹא-תֹכֵל לֶאֱכֹל בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ מַעֲשֶׂר דִּגְגֶנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהָרְךָ וּבְכֹרֶת בְּקָרְךָ וּצֹאנֶךָ וְכָל-נִדְרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּדָּר וְנִדְבַתֶּיךָ וְתִרְוַמַת יָדְךָ: יח כִּי אִם-לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תֹאכְלֶנּוּ בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְשִׂמְחַת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל מְשֻׁלַּח יָדְךָ: יט הַשֹּׁמֵר לָךְ פְּנֵי-תַעֲזֹב אֶת-הַלְוִי כָּל-יְמֵיךָ עַל-אֲדָמְתְּךָ: {ס}

13 "Take care you do not offer your burnt offerings in all the sacred places you see; 14 but only in the place that Yahweh shall choose in one of your tribes may you offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all I command you.

15 "Still, whenever you want you may slaughter and eat flesh in any of your towns, as much as the blessing of Yahweh affords you. Clean or unclean may eat it, just as if it were gazelle or deer. 16 Only you must not consume the blood but pour it out like water on the ground.

17 "In your towns you may not consume the tithes of your corn, your wine or your oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock, or any of your votive gifts or freewill offerings or donations. 18 You must eat these in the presence of Yahweh your God, in the place Yahweh your God chooses, you, your son and your daughter, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates. You shall rejoice in the presence of Yahweh your God over all that your hands have presented. 19 In your land, take care never to neglect the Levite.

13 The 'sacred places' here may refer to those set up and/or used by the Canaanites.

14 This injunction to worship in a single and central sanctuary marks a departure from previous times when worship was carried out at local shrines (cf. Gn 8:20, 12:7, 13:18, 22:9, 26:25, 35:1, 3, 7, Ex 17:15).

15 Lv 17:3ff makes no distinction between the places allowed for slaughter and sacrifice (see #Lv 17:4 and 1S 14:32ff).

16 The ancient prohibition against eating blood must be maintained (vv. 23-24, see Gn 9:3-4, Lv 17:10-11).

17 Sacred donations (v. 26), which belong by right, or by dedication, to Yahweh, must be eaten at the central sanctuary.

18 After 'chooses', the NJB adds 'and there alone'.

19 For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Take care that you do not neglect the Levite as long as you live in your land."

כִּי־יִרְחִיב־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־גְּבֻלְךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־
 לְךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲכַלָּה בָשָׂר כִּי־תֵאָנוּה נֶפֶשׁ לֶאֱכֹל
 בָּשָׂר בְּכָל־אֲנוֹת נֶפֶשׁ תֹּאכַל בָּשָׂר: כֹּא כִי־יִרְחֹק
 מִמֶּךָ הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹם שְׁמוֹ
 שָׁם וְזִבְחָתָּ מִבְּקָרְךָ וּמִצֹּאֲנֶךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה לְךָ
 כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ בְּכָל אֲנוֹת נֶפֶשׁ:
 כֹּב אַךְ כַּאֲשֶׁר יֹאכַל אֶת־הַצִּבִּי וְאֶת־הָאֵיל בֵּן
 תֹּאכְלֶנּוּ הַטֶּמָּא וְהַטְּהוֹר יַחְדָּו יֹאכְלֶנּוּ: כֹּג רַק חֲזֹק
 לִבְלֹתִי אֲכַל הַדָּם כִּי הַדָּם הוּא הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְלֹא־תֹאכַל
 הַנֶּפֶשׁ עִם־הַבָּשָׂר: כֹּד לֹא תֹאכְלֶנּוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ
 תִּשְׁפְּכֶנּוּ בַּמַּיִם: כֹּה לֹא תֹאכְלֶנּוּ לְמַעַן יֵיטֵב לְךָ
 וּלְבִנֶיךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ כִּי־תַעֲשֶׂה הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה: כֹּו רַק
 קִדְּשִׁיךָ אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיוּ לְךָ וּנְדָרֶיךָ תִּשָּׂא וּבָאתָ אֵל־

²⁰ “When Yahweh your God enlarges your territory as he has promised you, and you say, “I want to eat meat,” when you want to eat meat, you may eat as much as you like. ²¹ If the place in which Yahweh your God chooses to set his name is too far away, you may kill of your herd or flock that Yahweh has given you in the way that I have laid down for you; you may eat in your towns as much as you will. ²² You must eat it as you would gazelle or deer; clean or unclean alike may eat it. ²³ Only take care not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the flesh. ²⁴ You must not eat it but pour it out like water on the ground. ²⁵ You must not eat it, and then you and your sons after you will prosper, doing what is right in the eyes of Yahweh. ²⁶ However, the holy things you have and those you have vowed you must go and take to the place that Yahweh chooses. ²⁷ The burnt offering of flesh and

²⁰ Literally translated, this verse ends, “according to all the desire of your soul you may eat meat.”

²¹ The literal translation of ‘towns’ is ‘gates’.

²² See #15 on the freedom to eat game.

²³ The phrase, ‘the blood is the life’ is a figure of speech (metonymy) in which the cause or means (the blood) stands for the result or effect (life); that is, life depends upon the existence and circulation of blood, a truth known empirically but not scientifically tested and proved until the 17th Century CE (cf. Lv 17:11).

²⁴ In place of ‘you must not consume it’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘do not eat it’ (as also in v. 25).

²⁵ At the end of this verse, the LXX adds ‘your God’ (τοῦ Θεοῦ σου) to create the common formula, ‘Yahweh your God’; the MT is preferred precisely because it does not include the stereotyped formula; thus, it more likely preserves the original text.

²⁶ Again, to complete a commonly attested wording the LXX adds after ‘chooses’ the phrase ‘to place his name there’ (ἐπικληθῆναι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκεῖ); this shows insensitivity to deliberate departures from literary stereotypes: the MT reading is to be preferred.

²⁷ The NJB lacks the word ‘other’; these ‘other sacrifices’ would be so-called peace or fellowship offerings whose ritual required a different use of the blood from that of burnt (sin and trespass) offerings (cf. Lv 3, 7:11–14, 19–21).

הַמִּקּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה: ^כוְעָשִׂיתָ עַל־זֵיתֶיךָ הַבָּשָׂר
וְהַדָּם עַל־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְדָם־זִבְחֶיךָ יִשְׁפֹּךְ
עַל־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהַבָּשָׂר תֹּאכְלוּ: ^{כח}שָׁמֹר
וְשָׁמַעְתָּ אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּךָ
לִמְעַן יִיטֵב לָךְ וּלְבִנְיֶיךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ עַד־עוֹלָם כִּי תַעֲשֶׂה
הַטּוֹב וְהַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: {ס}

^{כט}כִּי־יִכְרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה
בֹּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּ אוֹתָם מִפְּנֵיךָ וִירִשְׁתָּ אֹתָם
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָאָרֶץ: ^להִשָּׁמֶר לָךְ פֶּן־תִּנְקֹשׁ אַחֲרֵיהֶם
אַחֲרֵי הַשְׁמָדָם מִפְּנֵיךָ וּפֶן־תִּדְרֹשׁ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם
לֵאמֹר אֵיכָּה יַעֲבֹדוּ הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם
וְאֶעֱשֶׂה־כֵּן גַּם־אֲנִי: ^{לא}לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כֵּן לַיהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כָל־תּוֹעֵבֶת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁנָא עָשׂוּ
לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי גַם אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיהֶם יִשְׂרְפוּ
בָּאֵשׁ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם:

blood you shall offer on the altar of Yahweh your God; and, in your other sacrifices, the blood shall be poured out on the altar of Yahweh your God but the flesh you may eat yourselves. ²⁸ Be faithful in keeping all the instructions that I give you today and obey them, so that you and your children after you may be happy for always, doing what is good and right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.

²⁹ “When Yahweh your God has cut off before you the nations that you are to dispossess, and when you have dispossessed them, you will live in their country. ³⁰ Be careful you are not caught in a trap; beware of being entrapped into copying them, after they have been destroyed before you, and do not enquire after their gods, saying, “How did these nations worship their gods? I will go and do the same.” ³¹ This is not the way for you to behave towards Yahweh your God. For Yahweh detests all this and hates what they have done for their gods, even burning their sons and daughters in the fire for their gods.

²⁸ The NJB & NETB lack the word ‘today’, here following the NRSV.

²⁹ In the MT, vv. 29–30 are one long sentence; for stylistic reasons, the translation divides it into two.

³⁰ For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “I also want to do the same;” and NETB has simply “I will do the same.”

³¹ Literally translated, this verse opens, “you must not do thus to/for Yahweh your God.”

DEUTERONOMY 13

דברים פרק יג

א את כל־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם אֹתוֹ
תִּשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת לֹא־תִסְף עָלָיו וְלֹא תִגְרַע
מִמֶּנּוּ: {פ}

ב כִּי־יִקּוּם בְּקִרְבְּךָ נָבִיא אוֹ חֹלֶם חֲלוֹם וְנָתַן אֵלֶיךָ
אוֹת אוֹ מוֹפֵת: ג וּבָא הָאוֹת וְהַמּוֹפֵת אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר
אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר גִּלְכָּה אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־יָדַעְתָּם וְנַעֲבָדָם: ד לֹא תִשְׁמָע אֶל־דִּבְרֵי
הַנָּבִיא הַהוּא אוֹ אֶל־חֹלֶם הַחֲלוֹם הַהוּא כִּי מִנִּסָּה
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֶתְכֶם לִדְעַת הִישָׁכֶם אֱהָבִים אֶת־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּכָל־לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁכֶם:
ה אַחֲרֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם תֵּלְכוּ וְאֹתוֹ תִירָאוּ וְאֶת־
מִצְוֹתָיו תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּבְקִלּוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ וְאֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹדוּ וְבוֹ
תִּדְבָּקוּ: ו וְהַנָּבִיא הַהוּא אוֹ חֹלֶם הַחֲלוֹם הַהוּא
יוֹמֵת כִּי דִבֶּר־סָרָה עַל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַמוֹצִיא
אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְהַפְּדֶךָ מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

1 "You must be careful to observe everything in the words that I am commanding you; you shall not add to it nor take anything away from it.

2 "If a prophet or dreamer of dreams arises among you, offering you some sign or wonder, ³ and the sign or wonder comes about; and if he then says to you, "Let us follow other gods (hitherto unknown to you) and serve them," ⁴ you must not to listen to the words of that prophet or of that dreamer of dreams. Yahweh your God is testing you to know if you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and all your soul. ⁵ Yahweh your God you shall follow, him you shall fear, his commandments you shall keep, his voice you shall obey, him you shall serve, and to him you shall cling. ⁶ That prophet or that dreamer of dreams must be put to death, for he has preached apostasy from Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and he would have made you

DEUTERONOMY 13

- ¹ The NRSV includes this verse as 12:32 (as do most English translations); the remaining verse numbers of this chapter are, therein, accordingly decremented. Here, we follow the numbering scheme of the MT (and NJB).
- ² This law makes it clear that 'signs and wonders' (the NRSV uses 'omens and portents') are not in themselves proof that God has spoken; for, God may give false prophets power to perform wonders in order to test the people's faith (compare 8:2).
- ³ The expression אוֹת וְהַמּוֹפֵת ('sign or wonder') is speaking of ways to authenticate prophetic messages or other works of God (cf. 28:46, Is 20:3).
- ⁴ The literal translation of 'soul' is 'being'.
- ⁵ In place of 'cling', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'hold fast' and NETB has 'remain loyal'.
- ⁶ The punishment is severe because idolatry contaminates the health or holiness of the community.

לְהִדְיֹחַ מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לָלֶכֶת
בָּהּ וּבְעֵרַת הָרָע מִקִּרְבְּךָ: {ס}

יְכִי יִסִּיתֶךָ אָחִיךָ בֶן־אִמְךָ אוֹ־בִנְךָ אוֹ־בִתְּךָ אוֹ
אִשְׁתְּ חֵיקְךָ אוֹ רַעֲךָ אֲשֶׁר כִּנְפֶשְׁךָ בִּסְתֵּר לֹא־אָמַר
נָלֶכְהָ וְנַעֲבֹדָה אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַעְתָּ
אֹתָהּ וְאֲבֹתֶיךָ: ^ח מֵאֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֶיכֶם
הַקְּרִבִּים אֵלֶיךָ אוֹ הַרְחֵקִים מִמֶּךָ מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ
וְעַד־קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ: ^ט לֹא־תֹאבֶה לוֹ וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע אֵלָיו
וְלֹא־תַחֲסֹם עֵינְךָ עָלָיו וְלֹא־תַחְמֹל וְלֹא־תִכַּסֶּה
עָלָיו: ^י כִּי הָרַגְתָּ תִּהְיֶה־בּוֹ בְּרִאשׁוֹנָה
לְהַמִּיתוֹ וְיָד כָּל־הָעָם בְּאַחֲרָנָה: ^{יא} וְסִקְלֹתוֹ
בְּאַבְנִים וּמָת כִּי בִקֵּשׁ לְהִדְיֹחַ מֵעַל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
הַמוֹצִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: ^{יב} וְכָל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמְעוּ וִירְאוּ וְלֹא־יִוָּסְפוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת כַּדָּבָר
הָרָע הַזֶּה בְּקִרְבְּךָ: {ס}

יְכִי־תִשְׁמַע בְּאַחַת עָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן
לְךָ לְשִׁבְתָּ שָׁם לֵאמֹר: ^{יד} יֵצְאוּ אָנָּשִׁים בְּנֵי־בְלִיעַל

turn aside from the way that Yahweh your God marked out for you.
You must banish this evil from among you.

⁷ “If your brother, the son of your father or of your mother, or your son
or daughter, or the spouse you cherish, or your most intimate friend,
tries secretly to seduce you, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods,”
unknown to you or your ancestors before you, ⁸ gods of the peoples
surrounding you, whether near you or far away, from one end of the
earth to the other, ⁹ you must not consent, nor listen to him, you must
show him no pity, you must not spare or conceal his guilt. ¹⁰ No, you
must kill him; your hand shall be the first against him to put him to
death, the hand of all the people will come afterwards. ¹¹ You must stone
him to death with stones, for he has tried to lure you away from Yahweh
your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out from the house
of slavery. ¹² All Israel shall hear of it, and be afraid, and shall never
again commit such wickedness as this among you.

¹³ “If you hear that in one of the towns Yahweh your God has given you
for a home, ¹⁴ there are men, scoundrels from your own stock, who have

⁷ The phrase, ‘son of your father’, here following the LXX (ἐκ πατρός σου), Samaritan Pentateuch, NJB & NRSV is omitted by the MT.

⁸ In place of ‘from one end of the earth to the other’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has ‘anywhere throughout the world’.

⁹ For this verse, the NRSV reads, “you must not yield to or heed any such persons. Show them no pity or compassion and do not shield them.”

¹⁰ The words ‘against him’ are not in the MT but are here inserted to avoid the misleading reading, ‘first to put him to death’.

¹¹ Stoning is prescribed because this is a communal way of purging the evil that threatens the community (17:2–7).

¹² Some see in this verse an argument for the deterrent effect of capital punishment (17:13, 19:20, 21:21).

¹³ In place of ‘towns’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘cities’.

¹⁴ The word ‘scoundrels’ literally translates as ‘sons of Belial’.

מִקִּרְבָּךְ וַיִּדְּיחוּ אֶת־יֹשְׁבֵי עִירָם לֵאמֹר גִּלְכָּה
וְנַעֲבֹדָה אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתָּם:
^{טו} וַדְרֹשֶׁת וַחֲקֹרֶת וּשְׁאַלְתָּ הֵיטֵב וְהִנֵּה אָמַת נָכוֹן
הַדָּבָר נַעֲשֶׂתָה הַתּוֹעֵבָה הַזֹּאת בְּקִרְבְּךָ: ^{טז} הִבֵּה
תָּכָה אֶת־יֹשְׁבֵי הָעִיר הַהוּא לְפִי־חֶרֶב הַחֲרֹם
אֹתָהּ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ וְאֶת־בְּהֵמָתָהּ לְפִי־חֶרֶב:
^{יז} וְאֶת־כָּל־שְׁלָלָהּ תִּקְבֹּץ אֶל־תּוֹךְ רְחֻבָּהּ וְשָׂרַפְתָּ
בָּאֵשׁ אֶת־הָעִיר וְאֶת־כָּל־שְׁלָלָהּ כָּלִיל לַיהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִיְתָה תֵּל עֹלָם לֹא תִבְנֶה עוֹד: ^{יח} וְלֹא־
יִדְבֹק בִּידְךָ מְאוֹמָה מִן־הַחֲרֹם לְמַעַן יָשׁוּב יְהוָה
מִחֲרוֹן אָפּוֹ וְנָתַן־לָךְ רַחֲמִים וְרַחֲמֶךָ וְהִרְבָּךְ כַּאֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתִּיךָ: ^{יט} כִּי תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
לִשְׁמֹר אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוֶךָ הַיּוֹם
לַעֲשׂוֹת הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: {ס}

led fellow citizens astray, saying, “Let us go serve other gods,” whom you have not known, ¹⁵ you must inquire and make a thorough investigation. If it is indeed true that such a hateful thing has been done among you, ¹⁶ you must kill the inhabitants of that town without mercy, laying it under the ban, the town and all it contains – even putting its livestock to the sword. ¹⁷ You must gather all the wealth of it in the public square and set fire to the town and all its goods, offering it all to Yahweh your God. It shall be a ruin for all time, and never rebuilt. ¹⁸ From what is thus banned you must keep nothing back, so that Yahweh may turn from the ferocity of his anger, and show you mercy, and have pity on you, and increase your numbers as he swore to your fathers. ¹⁹ That is, provided you listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, keeping all the commandments of his that I enjoin on you today, and doing what is right in the eyes of Yahweh your God.

¹⁵ At the end of this verse, *Theodotion* adds ‘in Israel’, perhaps to broaden the matter beyond the local environment.

¹⁶ The *NJB*, following the *LXX*, lacks the clause ‘even putting its livestock to the sword’, here following the *MT* & *NRSV*; when a town has turned to idolatry, it must be put under the sacrificial ban and consumed as a burnt offering (v. 17).

¹⁷ The literal translation of ‘ruin’ (תֵּל) is ‘mound’; the word refers – to this day – to a ruin represented especially by a built-up mound of dirt or debris (cf. Tel Aviv, ‘Mound of Grain’).

¹⁸ In place of ‘thus banned’, here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has ‘devoted to destruction’.

¹⁹ In place of ‘right’, the *LXX* (τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ἀρεστὸν) & *Samaritan Pentateuch* have ‘good and pleasing’.

DEUTERONOMY 14

דברים פרק יד

א בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לֹא תִתְגַּדְדוּ וְלֹא-
תְשִׁימוּ קֶרֶחַח בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם לָמֵת: ב כִּי עַם קָדוֹשׁ
אַתֶּה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּבָךְ בָּחַר יְהוָה לְהִיזֹת לּוֹ לְעַם
סִגְלָה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה: {ס}

ג לֹא תֹאכַל כָּל-תּוֹעֵבָה: ד זֹאת הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר
תֹּאכְלוּ שֹׁר שֶׁה כְּשִׁבִים וְשֶׁה עֲזִים: ה אֵיל וְעֲבִי
וַיִּחְמֹר וְאֶקוּ וְדִישָׁן וְתֹאזוּ וְזֹמֶר: ו וְכָל-בְּהֵמָה
מִפְּרִסֵּת פֶּרֶסָה וְשִׁסְעַת שִׁסְעַת שְׁתֵּי פִרְסוֹת מַעֲלַת
גֶּרֶה בְּבֵהֶמָה אַתָּה תֹאכְלוּ: ז אֲדָךְ אֶת-זֶה לֹא
תֹאכְלוּ מִמַּעֲלֵי הַגֶּרֶה וּמִמִּפְרִיֵּי הַפֶּרֶסָה
הַשְּׂסוּעָה אֶת-הַגְּמֹל וְאֶת-הָאֲרֻנָּבֶת וְאֶת-הַשָּׁפָן
כִּי-מַעֲלָה גֶרֶה הֵמָּה וּפִרְסָה לֹא הִפְרִיסוּ טִמְאִים
הֵם לָכֶם: ח וְאֶת-הַחֲזִיר כִּי-מִפְרִיס פֶּרֶסָה הוּא

1 "You are the sons of Yahweh your God. You must not gash yourselves or shave your foreheads for the one who is dead. 2 For, you are a people consecrated to Yahweh your God, and Yahweh has chosen you out of all the peoples on the earth, to be his people, his treasured possession.

3 "You must not eat anything that is abhorrent. 4 These are the animals that you may eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, 5 the ibex, and the gazelle, and the roebuck, and the deer, and the antelope, and the wild goat and the mountain sheep. 6 You may eat every animal that has a divided and cloven hoof and that is a ruminant. 7 Nevertheless, of those, however, that are ruminant and that have a divided and cloven hoof, you may not eat the following: the camel, the hare, and the hyrax, which are ruminant but do not have a cloven hoof; you must hold them unclean. 8 So also the pig, which is not a ruminant: you must hold it

DEUTERONOMY 14

- ¹ 'The one who is dead' maybe Baal, whose death was commemorated at the beginning of summer (26:14, 1K 18:28), when the vegetation withered.
- ² In place of 'treasured', here following the NRSV, NETB has 'prized'; the term סִגְלָה describes Israel as God's choice people, those whom he elected and who are most precious to him (cf. Ex 19:4-6, Dt 14:2, 26:18, 1Ch 29:3, Ps 135:4, Qo 2:8, MI 3:17).
- ³ The word תּוֹעֵבָה ('abhorrent') describes anything detestable to God because of its innate evil or inconsistency with his own nature and character.
- ⁴ The NRSV & NETB omit the conjunction, 'and', before 'the goat', here following the NJB.
- ⁵ The terms, אֵיל ('ibex') and יִחְמֹר ('deer'), refer to types of deer. The term, דִּישָׁן ('antelope'), is a hapax legomenon; the animal is likely a variety of antelope (cf. NIV, NRSV 'ibex', NEB 'white-rumped deer'). The term, זֹמֶר ('mountain sheep'), is another hapax legomenon.
- ⁶ At the end of this verse, the MT adds 'among the animals'.
- ⁷ In place of 'hyrax' (הַשָּׁפָן), here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have 'rock badger'.
- ⁸ Before 'is not a ruminant', the NJB, NRSV & NETB, following the LXX (καὶ ὀνυχίζει ὄνυχας ὀπλῆς), Samaritan Pentateuch and Lv 11:7 (שִׁסְעַ וְשִׁסְעַ), add 'though it has a cloven hoof'; the clause probably dropped out of the MT by haplography.

וְלֹא גִרָה טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם מִבְּשָׂרָם לֹא תֹאכְלוּ
וּבְנִבְלָתָם לֹא תִגְעוּ: {ס}

ט אֵת־זֶה תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם כָּל אֲשֶׁר־לּוֹ
סִנְפִּיר וְקַשְׂקֶשֶׁת תֹאכְלוּ: י וְכָל אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לּוֹ
סִנְפִּיר וְקַשְׂקֶשֶׁת לֹא תֹאכְלוּ טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם: {ס}
יא כָּל־צִפּוֹר טְהוֹרָה תֹאכְלוּ: יב וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
תֹאכְלוּ מֵהֶם הַנֶּשֶׁר וְהַפֶּרֶס וְהַעֲזוּנִיָּה: יג וְהָרָאָה
וְאֶת־הָאֵיָה וְהַדִּיהַ לְמִינָהּ: יד וְאֵת כָּל־עֶרֶב לְמִינוֹ:
טו וְאֵת בֵּת הַיַּעֲנָה וְאֶת־הַתַּחֲמָס וְאֶת־הַשֹּׁחַף
וְאֶת־הַנֶּץ לְמִינָהּ: טז אֶת־הַכּוֹס וְאֶת־הַיִּנְשׁוּף
וְהַתְּנִשְׁמַת: יז וְהַקָּאֵת וְאֶת־הַרְחֻמָּה וְאֶת־הַשִּׁלָּךְ:
יח וְהַחֲסִידָה וְהָאֲנָפָה לְמִינָהּ וְהַדּוּכִיפֶת וְהַעֲטָלָף:
יט וְכָל שֶׂרֶץ הָעוֹף טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם לֹא יֹאכְלוּ: כ כָּל־

unclean. You must not eat the meat of such animals and you must not touch their dead bodies.

⁹ “Of all that lives in the water, you may eat the following: whatever has fins and scales may be eaten. ¹⁰ However, you must not eat anything that does not have fins and scales; you must hold it unclean.

¹¹ “You may eat of all clean birds, ¹² but, of the following birds you must not eat: the eagle, the vulture, and the osprey, ¹³ and the kite and the several kinds of buzzard, ¹⁴ and every raven or every kind, ¹⁵ and the ostrich, and the screech owl, and the seagull, and the several kinds of hawk, ¹⁶ and the owl, and the barn owl, and the ibis, ¹⁷ and the pelican, and the white vulture, and the cormorant, ¹⁸ and the stork, and the several kinds of heron, the hoopoe and bat. ¹⁹ You are to hold all winged insects to be unclean and they must not be eaten. ²⁰ You may eat

⁹ In the MT, the term here translated ‘fins’ is singular, as also in v. 10.

¹⁰ Throughout this section, NETB uses the phrase ‘ritually impure’ in place of ‘unclean’ (here following the NJB & NRSV).

¹¹ The identification of several of the birds in this paragraph is uncertain.

¹² The NJB reads: ‘... the griffon, the vulture, the osprey’.

¹³ The terms רָאָה, אֵיָה & דִּיהַ probably refer to species of kite but are impossible to identify precisely.

¹⁴ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads simply, “and every kind of raven.”

¹⁵ The NRSV reads: “the ostrich, the nighthawk, the seagull.”

¹⁶ The NRSV reads: “the little owl and the great owl, the water hen.”

¹⁷ The NRSV reads: “the desert owl (or pelican), the carrion vulture and the cormorant.”

¹⁸ The ‘bat’ is listed among the birds because it flies.

¹⁹ The MT has a Niphal (passive, לֹא יֹאכְלוּ) for an expected Qal (‘you must not eat’: cf. LXX – οὐ φάγεσθε); the more difficult reading should stand.

²⁰ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “You may eat any clean winged creature,” and NETB has “You may eat any clean bird.”

עוף טהור תאכלו: ^{כא} לא תאכלו כל־נבלה לגר
אשר־בשערֶיךָ תתננה ואכלה או מכל לנכרי כי
עם קדוש אתה ליהוה אלהיך לא־תבשל גדי
בחלב אמו: {פ}

^{כב} עֶשֶׂר תַּעֲשֶׂר אֶת כָּל־תְּבוּאָת זֶרַעְךָ הַיֵּצֵא
הַשָּׂדֶה שָׁנָה שָׁנָה: ^{כג} וְאָכַלְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר לְשָׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם מֵעֵשֶׂר דִּגְגָן
תִּירֹשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהָרְךָ וּבְכֹרֶת בְּקֶרֶךָ וּצְאֻנְךָ לְמַעַן תִּלְמַד
לִירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל־הַיָּמִים: ^{כד} וְכִי־יִרְבֶּה
מִמֶּךָ הַדֶּרֶךְ כִּי לֹא תוּכַל שְׂאתוֹ כִּי־יִרְחַק מִמֶּךָ
הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹם שְׁמוֹ שָׁם
כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ^{כה} וְנָתַתָּה בַּכֶּסֶף וְצִרְתָּ
הַכֶּסֶף בִּידְךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ: ^{כו} וְנָתַתָּה הַכֶּסֶף בָּכֶל אֲשֶׁר־תִּאְוָה
נַפְשְׁךָ בַּבָּקָר וּבַצֹּאן וּבִיַּיִן וּבִשְׁכָר וּבְכֹל אֲשֶׁר

anything winged that is clean. ²¹ You must not eat any animal that has died a natural death. You may give it to a resident alien to eat or sell it to a foreigner – for, you are a people consecrated to Yahweh your God. You must not boil a kid in its mother’s milk.

²² “Every year you must take a tithe of all that your sowing yields on the land. ²³ In the presence of Yahweh your God, in the place he chooses to give his name a home, you are to eat the tithe of your corn, your wine, your oil and the firstborn of your herd and flock; so shall you learn to fear Yahweh your God always. ²⁴ If the road is too long for you, if you cannot bring your tithe because the place in which Yahweh chooses to make a home for his name is too far, when Yahweh your God has blessed you, ²⁵ you must turn your tithe into money. With the money clasped in your hand you must go to the place chosen by Yahweh; ²⁶ there you may spend the money on whatever you like, oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink, anything your heart desires. You are to eat there in

²¹ The rationale for the last sentence is unclear but may be related to pagan ritual. The passage opens with a prohibition against heathen mourning rites (i.e., death, vv. 1–2) and closes with what appear to be birth and infancy rites; in the other places where the stipulation occurs (Ex 23:19 & Ex 34:26) it similarly concludes major sections.

²² ‘Tithe’ is paid to the owner of the land: it is therefore due to Yahweh, who owns the land of Israel. According to Deuteronomy, the produce of the soil is tithed and the tithe taken to the Temple (vv. 22–27, 12:6–7, 17–19). Every third year (vv. 28–29), it becomes the property of the poor. According to Nb 18:21–32, the tithe is paid, as God’s due, to the Levites; these make a tenth of it over to the priests.

²³ Before ‘wine’, NETB adds ‘new’ – referring to wine in the early stages of fermentation.

²⁴ Vv. 24–26 provide a special Deuteronomic provision, arising out of centralisation of worship.

²⁵ The literal translation of ‘money’ is ‘silver’.

²⁶ In place of ‘anything your heart desires’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘whatever you desire’.

תִּשְׂאֲלֶךָ נַפְשְׁךָ וְאֹכֶלֶתְךָ שֵׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ אִתָּהּ וּבֵיתֶךָ: כִּי וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר-בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ לֹא
תִעְזָבֶנּוּ כִּי אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עִמָּךְ: {ס}

כח מְקַצֶּה | שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים תּוֹצִיא אֶת-כָּל-מַעֲשֶׂר
תְּבוּאָתְךָ בַּשָּׁנָה הַהִוא וְהִנַּחְתָּ בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: כט וּבֹא
הַלְוִי כִּי אֵין-לוֹ חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עִמָּךְ וְהַגֵּר וְהִיתוֹם
וְהָאֶלְמָנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְאָכְלוּ וְשָׂבְעוּ לְמַעַן
יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-מַעֲשֶׂה יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר
תַּעֲשֶׂה: {ס}

the presence of Yahweh your God, you and your household rejoicing together. ²⁷ Do not neglect the Levite who lives in your towns, since he has no share or inheritance with you.

²⁸ “At the end of every three years you must take all the tithes of your harvest for that year and deposit them at your doors. ²⁹ The Levite, since he has no share or inheritance with you, and the stranger, the orphan and the widow in your towns, may come and eat their fill so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work that your hands undertake.

²⁷ It was impractical for all Levites to serve at the central sanctuary; therefore, special consideration was to be given to the town Levites (see 18:1, 26:12-15).

²⁸ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Every third year you shall bring out the full tithe of your produce for that year, and store it within your towns.”

²⁹ Note here the emphasis on the charitable aspect of the Law.

DEUTERONOMY 15

דברים פרק טו

אֵלֶּכֶם מִקֵּץ שִׁבְע־שָׁנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה שְׁמִטָּה: בִּזְוֹה דְבַר
הַשְּׁמִטָּה שְׁמוּט כָּל-בֶּעַל מְשֶׁה יָדוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשֶׁה
בִּרְעֵהוּ לֹא-יִגֹּשׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וְאֶת-אָחִיו כִּי-קָרָא
שְׁמִטָּה לַיהוָה: גִּ אֶת-הַנִּכְרִי תִגַּשׁ וְאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לָּךְ
אֶת-אֲחִיךָ תִשְׁמַט יָדְךָ: דִּ אִפֹּס כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה-בָּךְ
אֶבְיֹן כִּי-בִרְךָ יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁל יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן-לָךְ נַחֲלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: הֲ רַק אִם-שְׁמוּעַ
תִּשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-
הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מֵצִוְּךָ הַיּוֹם: וִ כִּי-יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בִּרְכֶכָּהּ בְּאֲשֶׁר דְּבַר-לָךְ וְהֶעֱבַטְתָּ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים
וְאֹתָהּ לֹא תַעֲבֹט וּמִשְׁלָלָהּ בְּגוֹיִם רַבִּים וּבָךְ לֹא
יִמְשְׁלוּ: {ס}

ז כִּי-יְהִיֶּה בָךְ אֶבְיֹן מֵאֶחָד אֲחִיךָ בְּאֶחָד שְׁעָרֶיךָ
בְּאֶרֶצְךָ אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ לֹא תֹאמַן אֶת-

¹ “At the end of every seven years, you must grant a remission. ² This is the manner of the remission: any creditor holding a personal pledge obtained from his fellow must release him from it; he must not exploit his fellow or his brother once he has appealed to Yahweh for remission.

³ A foreigner you may exploit, but you must remit whatever claim you have on your brother. ⁴ Let there be no poor among you then. For Yahweh will bless you in the land Yahweh gives you for your inheritance ⁵ only if you pay careful attention to the voice of Yahweh your God, keeping and observing all these commandments that I enjoin on you today. ⁶ If Yahweh your God blesses you as he promised, you will be creditors to many nations and debtors to none; you will rule over many nations but none will rule over you.

⁷ “If there is a poor man among you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you, you must not

DEUTERONOMY 15

¹ In Ex 23:10–11, the sabbatical year is for the sake of the poor; in Lv 25:1–7 it is a fallow year for the sake of the land. Here, the sabbatical year, like the jubilee year (Lv 25:8–55), is a time for remission of debts. The term שְׁמִטָּה (*‘remission’*) refers to the cancellation of the debt and even pledges for the debt of a borrower by his creditor; this could be a full and final remission or, more likely, one for the 7th year only.

² A debtor could make a contract to hand over one of his children as a slave, or himself to work for his creditor, in case of non-repayment.

³ The law does not apply to a *‘foreigner’* who visits for business (v. 6).

⁴ After *‘Yahweh’*, the NJB, following several MSS, the LXX (θεός σου) and many other versions, adds *‘your God’*, to complete the usual full epithet.

⁵ Literally translated, this verse opens, “if listening you listen to the voice of.”

⁶ The NRSV opens this verse with *‘when’*, rather than *‘if’* (here following the NJB), and NETB has *‘for’*.

⁷ The literal translation of *‘towns’* is *‘gates’*.

לִבְבְּךָ וְלֹא תִקְפֹּץ אֶת־יָדְךָ מֵאֲחִיךָ הָאֲבִיּוֹן: ^ח כִּי־
 פָּתַח תִּפְתָּח אֶת־יָדְךָ לוֹ וְהֶעֱבַט תַּעֲבִיטֵנוּ דֵּי
 מַחֲסָרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִחָסֵר לוֹ: ^ט הַשְׁמַר לָךְ פֶּן־יִהְיֶה דְבַר
 עִם־לִבְבְּךָ בְּלִיעַל לֵאמֹר קִרְבָּה שְׁנַת־הַשְּׁבַע שְׁנַת
 הַשְּׁמִטָּה וְרָעָה עֵינֶיךָ בְּאֲחִיךָ הָאֲבִיּוֹן וְלֹא תִתֵּן לוֹ
 וְקָרָא עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵהוּ וְהָיָה בְּךָ חַטָּא: ^י נָתַתָּן תִּתֵּן
 לוֹ וְלֹא־יָרַע לִבְבְּךָ בְּתַתָּךְ לוֹ כִּי בְּגִלְלָהּ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה
 יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וּבְכָל מַשְׁלַח
 יָדְךָ: ^{יא} כִּי לֹא־יִחָדֵל אֲבִיּוֹן מִקְרֵב הָאָרֶץ עַל־כֵּן
 אֲנִכִּי מְצֹוֶה לֵאמֹר פָּתַח תִּפְתָּח אֶת־יָדְךָ לְאֲחִיךָ
 לְעֵנֶיךָ וּלְאֲבִינֶךָ בְּאַרְצְךָ: {ס}

^{יב} כִּי־יִמְכַר לָךְ אֲחִיךָ הָעֶבְרִי אוֹ הָעֶבְרִיָּה וַעֲבַדְךָ
 שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים וּבַשְּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּשְׁלַחְנוּ חֲפָשִׁי
 מֵעִמָּךְ: ^{יג} וְכִי־תִשְׁלַחְנוּ חֲפָשִׁי מֵעִמָּךְ לֹא תִשְׁלַחְנוּ
 רִיקָם: ^{יד} הָעֵנִיק תַּעֲנִיק לוֹ מִצֹּאֲנֶךָ וּמִגִּרְנֶךָ וּמִקִּבְּךָ

harden your heart or close your hand against that poor brother of yours.

⁸ Instead, be open-handed with him and lend him enough for his needs, whatever they may be. ⁹ Do not allow this mean thought in your heart: “The seventh year, the year of remission is near,” and look coldly on your poor brother and give him nothing; he could appeal against you to Yahweh and it would be a sin for you. ¹⁰ When you give to him, you must give with an open heart. For this, Yahweh your God will bless you in all you do and in all your giving. ¹¹ Of course, there will never cease to be poor in the land; I command you therefore: Always be open-handed with your brother, and with anyone in your country who is in need and poor.

¹² “If your fellow Hebrew, man or woman, is sold to you, he can serve you for six years. In the seventh year, you must set him free, ¹³ and in setting a male slave free, you must not let him go empty-handed. ¹⁴ Provide generously from your flock, your threshing-floor and your

⁸ Literally translate, this verse ends, “whatever his need that he needs for himself.”

⁹ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “and you would incur guilt.”

¹⁰ The LXX (καὶ δάνειον δανειῖς αὐτῷ ὅσον ἐπιδέεται) and Origen add ‘you shall surely lend to him sufficient for his need’, a suggestion based on the same basic idea in v. 8, but such slavish adherence to stock phrases is without warrant in most cases, and certainly here.

¹¹ For the phrase ‘be open-handed’, the MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with ‘always’ (as NJB).

¹² Elsewhere in the OT, the Israelites are called ‘Hebrews’ (עֲבָרִי) by outsiders, rarely by themselves (cf. Gn 14:13, 39:14, 17, 41:12, Ex 1:15–16, 19, 2:6–7, 11, 13, 1S 4:6, Jon 1:9). Here, עֲבָרִי is probably used as a term to remind Israel that when they were ‘Hebrews’, that is, when they were in Egypt, they were slaves and, now that they are free, they must not keep their fellow Israelites in economic bondage (see v. 15).

¹³ The NJB has the pronoun ‘him’ for ‘a male slave’.

¹⁴ For ‘provide’, the MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with ‘generously’.

אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִתֵּן-לוֹ: ^{טו} וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי
עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּפְדֶּךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל-
כֵּן אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶךָ אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה הַיּוֹם:

^{טז} וְהָיָה כִּי-יֹאמַר אֵלֶיךָ לֹא אֵצֵא מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי אֶהְבֶּךָ
וְאֶת-בֵּיתְךָ כִּי-טוֹב לוֹ עִמָּךְ: ^{יז} וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת-הַמְרִצֵּעַ
וְנָתַתָּה בְּאָזְנוֹ וּבִדְלַת וְהָיָה לְךָ עֶבֶד עוֹלָם וְאִף
לֹא-מָתָךְ תַּעֲשֶׂה-כֵן: ^{יח} לֹא-יִקְשֶׁה בְּעֵינֶיךָ בְּשַׁלְחֶךָ
אֹתוֹ חֲפָשִׁי מֵעִמָּךְ כִּי מִשְׁנֶה שָׂכָר שָׂכִיר עֶבְדְּךָ
שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים וּבֵרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר
תַּעֲשֶׂה: {פ}

^{יט} כָּל-הַבְּכוֹר אֲשֶׁר יוֹלֵד בִּבְקָרְךָ וּבִצְאֲנֶךָ הַזָּכָר
תִּקְדָּשׁ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲבֹד בִּבְכוֹר שׁוֹרְךָ וְלֹא
תִּגְזוּ בְכוֹר צֹאנֶךָ: ^כ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תֹאכְלֻנּוּ
שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחָר יְהוָה אֹתָהּ
וּבֵיתְךָ: ^{כא} וְכִי-יְהִי בּוֹ מוֹם פֶּסֶחַ אוֹ עוֹר כָּל מוֹם

winepress. As Yahweh your God has blessed you, so you must give to him. ¹⁵ Remember you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that Yahweh your God redeemed you; thus, I lay this charge on you today.

¹⁶ “But if he says to you, “I do not want to leave you,” if he loves you and your household and is happy with you, ¹⁷ you are to take an awl and drive it through his ear into the door and he shall be your servant for all time. You are to do the same for your maidservant. ¹⁸ Do not think it hard on you to have to give him his freedom; he is worth twice the cost of a hired servant and has served you for six years; so shall Yahweh your God bless you in all you do.

¹⁹ “You must consecrate every firstborn male from born to your herd and to your flock to Yahweh your God. You must not work the firstborn of your herd nor shear the firstborn of your flock. ²⁰ You must eat it, you and your household, each year, before Yahweh your God, in the place Yahweh chooses. ²¹ If it has a blemish, if it is lame or blind, or has any

¹⁵ In place of ‘thus’, the NJB, NRSV & NETB have ‘therefore’.

¹⁶ The imperfect verbal form of ‘leave’ indicates the desire of the subject here.

¹⁷ ‘Bondman’ is an alternative for ‘servant’, as is ‘bondwoman’ for ‘maidservant’: unlike the older law, male and female slaves are put on the same level. When the bond-slave’s ear was drilled through ‘into the door’, the door in question was that of the master’s house; in effect, the bond-slave is declaring his undying and lifelong loyalty to his creditor.

¹⁸ Obeying the law should be easy (compare Jr 34:8–16, Ne 5:5). The term מִשְׁנֶה (‘twice’) could mean ‘equivalent to’ (cf. NRSV, ‘worth’) or, more likely, ‘double’; the idea is that a hired worker would put in only so many hours per day whereas a bond-slave was available around the clock.

¹⁹ In place of ‘consecrate’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘set apart’; the traditional translation for the term (תִּקְדָּשׁ) is ‘sanctify’.

²⁰ The NRSV has ‘in the presences of’ in place of ‘before’, here following the NJB & NETB.

²¹ The literal translation of ‘any serious defect at all’ is ‘any evil blemish’.

רַע לֹא תִזְבַּחְנוּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ^{כב} בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ
 תֹאכְלֶנּוּ הַטֶּמֶא וְהַטָּהוֹר יַחְדָּו בְּצִבִּי וּכְאִיל: ^{כג} רַק
 אֶת־דָּמֹו לֹא תֹאכַל עַל־הָאָרֶץ תִּשְׁפְּכֶנּוּ
 בַּמַּיִם: {פ}

serious defect at all, you must not sacrifice it to Yahweh your God.

²² You must eat it at home, unclean and clean together, as you would

gazelle or deer; ²³ only you must not eat the blood but pour it out as

water on the ground.

²² The verse makes it clear that the meal is not a ritual one. After ‘unclean and clean’, the LXX adds ‘among you’ (ἐν σοι) to make clear that the antecedent is the people and not the animals; that is, the people, whether ritually purified or not, may eat such defective animals.

²³ As ever, the blood of the animal is its life and, as such, must not be consumed.

DEUTERONOMY 16

דברים פרק טז

^א שְׁמֹר אֶת־חֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב וְעָשִׂיתָ פֶּסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי בַחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב הוֹצִיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם לַיְלָה: ^ב וּזְבַחְתָּ פֶּסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ צֹאן וּבָקָר בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה לְשָׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם: ^ג לֹא־תֹאכַל עָלָיו חֶמֶץ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תֹּאכַל־עָלָיו מִצּוֹת לֶחֶם עֲנִי כִי בַחֲפוּזוֹן יֵצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לִמְעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ: ^ד וְלֹא־יֵרָאֶה לָּךְ שְׂאֹר בְּכָל־גְּבֻלְךָ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְלֹא־יֵלִין מִן־הַבֶּשֶׂר אֲשֶׁר תִּזְבַּח בָּעֶרֶב בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן לַבֹּקֶר: ^ה לֹא תֹכַל לִזְבַּח אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בְּאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָּךְ: ^ו כִּי אִם־אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם תִּזְבַּח אֶת־הַפֶּסַח בָּעֶרֶב כִּבּוֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מוֹעֵד צֵאתְךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם: ^ז וּבִשְׁלָתָּ וְאָכַלְתָּ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ וּפָנִיתָ בַּבֹּקֶר וְהִלַּכְתָּ

¹ "Observe the month of Abib and keep the Passover for Yahweh your God; for, in the month of Abib, Yahweh your God brought you out of Egypt by night. ² You must sacrifice a Passover of the flock or herd for Yahweh your God in the place where Yahweh chooses to give his name a home. ³ You must eat no leaven with this; seven days you must eat it with unleavened bread – the bread of affliction – for, in haste you came out of the land of Egypt; so, you will remember, all the days of your life, the day you came out of the land of Egypt. ⁴ No leaven must be found in any house throughout your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the meat that you sacrifice in the evening of the first day remain until morning. ⁵ You may not sacrifice the Passover in any of the towns that Yahweh your God gives you; ⁶ but only in the place where Yahweh your God chooses to give his name a home must you sacrifice the Passover, in the evening at sunset, at the hour at which you came out of Egypt. ⁷ You must cook it and eat it in the place Yahweh your God chooses and,

DEUTERONOMY 16

- ¹ The month 'Abib', later called Nisan (Ne 2:1, Est 3:7), corresponds to March-April in the modern calendar. An alternative reading opens: "Observe the new moon of Abib ..."
- ² The NRSV reads 'flock and herd' in place of 'flock or herd', here following the NJB & NETB.
- ³ For 'the bread of affliction', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'symbolic of affliction'.
- ⁴ Literally translated, this verse opens, "leaven must not be seen among you in all your border."
- ⁵ The literal translation of 'towns' is 'gates'.
- ⁶ The MT's אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם ('unto the place') should, following the Samaritan Pentateuch, Peshitta, Tg & Vg (*in loco*), be emended to בַּמָּקוֹם ('in the place').
- ⁷ The word translated 'cook' (בִּשַׁל) here is translated 'boil' in other places (e.g. Ex 23:19, 1S 2:13-15), seeming to contradict Ex 12:9.

לֹאֲהֲלִיךָ: ^ח שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצֹּת וּבֵיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי עֲצַרְתָּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה
מְלָאכָה: {ס}

^ט שִׁבְעָה שָׁבָעַת תִּסְפְּרֶלָּךְ מֵהַחֵל חֲרַמְשׁ בְּקָמָה
תֵּחַל לִסְפֹּר שִׁבְעָה שָׁבָעוֹת: ^י וְעָשִׂיתָ חַג שָׁבָעוֹת
לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִסֹּת נִדְבַת יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּתֵּן כְּאֲשֶׁר
יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ^{יא} וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ וְהַלְוִי
אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְהַגֵּר וְהִיתּוֹם וְהָאֲלֻמָּנָה אֲשֶׁר
בְּקִרְבְּךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשֹׁכֵן
שְׁמוֹ שָׁם: ^{יב} וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי־עַבְדָּ הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְשִׁמַּרְתָּ
וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה: {פ}

^{יג} חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בְּאַסְפֹּף
מִגֶּרְנֶךָ וּמִקִּבְּךָ: ^{יד} וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ בְּחֻגְךָ אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ
וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהִיתּוֹם
וְהָאֲלֻמָּנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: ^{טו} שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תַּחֲגֹ

in the morning, you may return to your tents. ⁸ For six days, you shall eat unleavened bread; on the seventh day, there shall be an assembly for Yahweh your God; and you must do no work.

⁹ “You are to count seven weeks, counting them from the time you begin to put your sickle into the standing corn. ¹⁰ You must then celebrate the feast of Weeks for Yahweh your God with the gift of a voluntary offering in proportion to the way that Yahweh your God has blessed you. ¹¹ You must rejoice before Yahweh your God, you, your son and daughter, your serving men and women, the Levite who lives in your towns, the strangers, orphans and widows among you, in the place where Yahweh your God chooses to give his name a home ¹² Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and carefully observe these laws.

¹³ “You must keep the feast of Tabernacles seven days, after you gather from your threshing-floor and winepress. ¹⁴ Rejoice at your feast, you, your son and daughter, your serving men and women, the Levite, the stranger, orphan, and widow in your towns. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall

⁸ At the end of this verse, NETB adds ‘on that day’, for clarity.

⁹ In place of the pronoun ‘them’, here following NETB, the MT repeats ‘the seven weeks’.

¹⁰ The phrase חַג שָׁבָעוֹת (‘the Weeks’) is otherwise known in the OT (Ex 23:16) as הַקִּצִּיר (‘the harvest’) and in the NT as πεντηκοστή (‘Pentecost’).

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘towns’ is ‘gates’.

¹² In place of ‘laws’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘statutes’.

¹³ ‘Feast of Tabernacles’ is the traditional translation of חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת; the term ‘booths’ (as NRSV, NAB & NASB) is a more accurate translation of סֻכּוֹת, but ‘booths’ are frequently associated with trade shows and craft fairs in contemporary English.

¹⁴ The literal translation of ‘towns’ is ‘gates’.

¹⁵ Literally translated, ‘your undertakings’ is ‘the work of your hands’.

לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה כִּי יִבְרַכְךָ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל תְּבוּאָתְךָ וּבְכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ
וְהָיִיתָ אִךְ שִׂמְחָה: טז שְׁלוֹשׁ פְּעָמִים | בַּשָּׁנָה יֵרָאֶה
כָּל־זְכוּרְךָ אֶת־פָּנָיו | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
יִבְחַר בַּחֹג הַמִּצּוֹת וּבַחֹג הַשְּׁבָעוֹת וּבַחֹג הַסִּכּוֹת
וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה אֶת־פָּנָיו יְהוָה רִיקָם: יז אִישׁ כַּמִּתְנַת יָדוֹ
כַּבְרֶכֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ: {ס}

יח שֹׁפְטִים וְשֹׁטְרִים תִּתֵּן־לְךָ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ לְשִׁבְטֶיךָ וּשְׁפָטוּ אֶת־הָעָם
מִשֹּׁפֶט־צָדֵק: יט לֹא־תִטֶּה מִשְׁפָּט לֹא תִכְרֹם פָּנִים
וְלֹא־תִקַּח שֹׁחַד כִּי הַשֹּׁחַד יַעֲוֹל עֵינֵי חֲכָמִים
וַיִּסְלֹף דְּבָרֵי צְדִיקָם: כ צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדֹּף לְמַעַן
תִּחְיֶה וִירֶשֶׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן
לְךָ: {ס}

כא לֹא־תִטֵּעַ לְךָ אֲשֶׁרָה כָּל־עֵץ אֲצֶל מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ: כב וְלֹא־תִקֵּים לְךָ מִצֵּבָה
אֲשֶׁר שָׂאָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: {ס}

keep the feast for Yahweh your God in the place Yahweh chooses; for, Yahweh your God will bless you in all your harvest and your labours, and you shall surely rejoice. ¹⁶ Three times a year all your men are to appear before Yahweh your God in the place he chooses: at the feast of Unleavened Bread, at the feast of Weeks and at the feast of Tabernacles; they must not appear before Yahweh empty; ¹⁷ every man must give what he can, according to the blessing Yahweh your God gives you.

¹⁸ "You are to appoint judges and scribes in each of the towns that Yahweh is giving you, tribe by tribe; these must administer an impartial judgement to the people. ¹⁹ You must not pervert the law; you must be impartial, you must take no bribes, for a bribe blinds wise men's eyes and subverts the cause of the just. ²⁰ Strict justice shall be your ideal; so that you may live in rightful possession of the land, which Yahweh your God is giving you.

²¹ "You must not plant a sacred pole of any wood whatsoever beside the altar that you put up for Yahweh your God; ²² nor must you set up a standing-stone, a thing Yahweh your God would abhor.

¹⁶ NETB replaces the second occurrence of 'Yahweh' with 'him'.

¹⁷ Literally translated, this verse opens, "a man must give according to the gift of his hand."

¹⁸ Courts are to be set up in each town; cases beyond their competence are to be transferred to that of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ An alternative translation for 'subverts' (as NRSV) is 'distorts' (as NETB).

²⁰ The literal translation of 'strict justice' (צֶדֶק צֶדֶק) is 'justice justice'; the repetition is emphatic.

²¹ Sacred poles, or *Asherim*, were the emblems of Asherah (Astarte, Ashteroth), goddess of love and fecundity.

²² The term 'standing-stone' (מִצֵּבָה) refers to the *stelae* associated with Baal worship (see also Dt 7:5).

DEUTERONOMY 17

דברים פרק יז

- א לֹא־תִזְבַּח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שׁוֹר וְשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בּוֹ מוֹם כָּל דָּבָר רָע כִּי תוֹעֵבֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא: {ס}
- ב כִּי־יִמָּצֵא בְּקִרְבְּךָ בְּאֶחָד שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ אִישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הָרָע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה־אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲבֹר בְּרִיתוֹ: ג וְיִלְךָ וַיַּעֲבֹד אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וּלְשִׁמְשׁוֹ אוֹ לַיָּרֵחַ אוֹ לְכָל־צִבְּא שָׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־צִוִּיתִי: ד וְהִגַּדְתָּ לָּךְ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ וְדִרְשָׁתָּ הֵיטֵב וְהִנֵּה אָמֵת נָכוֹן הַדָּבָר נַעֲשִׂיתָה הַתּוֹעֵבָה הַזֹּאת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: ה וְהוֹצֵאתָ אֶת־הָאִישׁ הַהוּא אוֹ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוֹ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הָרָע הַזֶּה אֶל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ אֶת־הָאִישׁ אוֹ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה וְסָקַלְתֶּם בָּאֲבָנִים וּמָתוּ: ו עַל־פִּי שְׁנַיִם עֵדִים אוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה עֵדִים יוֹמֵת הַמָּת: ז לֹא יוֹמֵת עַל־פִּי עֵד אֶחָד: ז יְד הָעֵדִים תְּהִי־בּוֹ
- 1 "To Yahweh your God you must sacrifice nothing from herd or flock that has any blemish or defect, for Yahweh your God holds this detestable.
- 2 "If anyone, man or woman, is found among you in any of the towns Yahweh your God is giving you, who does what is evil in the sight of Yahweh your God by violating his Covenant, ³ who has gone and served other gods and worshipped them, and the sun or the moon or any of heaven's array – a thing I have forbidden – ⁴ and this person is denounced to you; if after careful enquiry it is found true and confirmed that this hateful thing has been done in Israel, ⁵ you must take the man or the woman who is guilty of this evil deed outside your city gates, and there you must stone that man or that woman to death. ⁶ A death sentence may be passed only on the word of two witnesses or three witnesses; and no one must be put to death on the word of one witness alone. ⁷ The witnesses shall be the first to raise their hands against him

DEUTERONOMY 17

- ¹ An unblemished sacrifice is frequently required in cultic laws (15:21, Lv 22:17–25).
- ² In place of 'what is evil in the sight of', here following the NRSV & MT, the NJB has 'what is displeasing to'.
- ³ In place of the MT reading, 'and (to) the sun', thus including the sun, the moon, and other heavenly spheres among the gods, Theodotion and Lucian read 'or to the sun', suggesting perhaps that the sun and the other heavenly bodies are not in the category of actual deities.
- ⁴ The literal translation of 'hateful thing' (תּוֹעֵבָה) is 'abomination'.
- ⁵ The penalty for idolatry is the same as for enticement to idolatry (Ch. 13).
- ⁶ The testimony of a single witness was insufficient for capital punishment.
- ⁷ The witnesses were to be the first to cast stones at the convicted person, followed by the entire community.

בְּרֹאשֹׁנָה לְהַמִּיתוֹ וַיֵּד כָּל־הָעָם בְּאַחֲרָנָה וּבְעֶרְתָּ
הָרָע מִקֶּרְבְּךָ: {פ}

ח כִּי יִפְּלֶא מִמֶּךָ דְּבַר לְמִשְׁפָּט בֵּין־דָּם | לְדָם בֵּין־
דֵּין לְדִין וּבֵין נָגַע לְנָגַע דְּבַר־יָבֵת בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ וְקִמַּתְּ
וְעָלִיתְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ:
ט וּבָאתְ אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם וְאֶל־הַשֹּׁפֵט אֲשֶׁר
יְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וְדִרְשָׁתְ וְהִגִּידוּ לָךְ אֶת דְּבַר
הַמִּשְׁפָּט: י וְעָשִׂיתְ עַל־פִּי הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִגִּידוּ לָךְ מִן־
הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה וְשִׁמַּרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת
כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יֹרֹד: יא עַל־פִּי הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר יֹרֹד
וְעַל־הַמִּשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְרוּ לָךְ תַּעֲשֶׂה לֹא תִסּוּר
מִן־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־יִגִּידוּ לָךְ יָמִין וּשְׂמָאל: יב וְהָאִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה בְּזִדּוֹן לְבַלְתִּי שָׁמַע אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן הָעֹמֵד
לְשֵׁרֵת שֵׁם אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אוֹ אֶל־הַשֹּׁפֵט וּמֵת
הָאִישׁ הַהוּא וּבְעֶרְתָּ הָרָע מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: יג וְכָל־הָעָם
יִשְׁמְעוּ וִירָאוּ וְלֹא יִזְדּוֹן עוֹד: {ס}

in putting him to death and afterward, all the people shall follow. So, you must banish this evil from your midst.

⁸ “If a case should come before you which is too hard for you, a case of murder, legal rights or assault, or any dispute at all in your towns, you must rise and go to the place Yahweh your God chooses, ⁹ where you shall consult with the Levitical priests and the judge of the days; and they will hold an inquiry and announce a decision for you. ¹⁰ You must then abide by the decision they pronounce for you in that place which Yahweh chooses, and you must diligently observe everything they instruct you. ¹¹ You must abide by the verdict they give you and by the decision that they declare, swerving neither to the right hand nor to the left of the sentence they have pronounced for you. ¹² And, as for anyone who presumes to disobey either the priest who is there in the service of Yahweh your God, or the judge, that man must die. Thus, you shall banish this evil from Israel. ¹³ Then all the people shall hear of it and be afraid, and not act presumptuously a second time.

⁸ At the end of this verse, several Greek recensions add ‘to place his name there’, thus completing the usual formula to describe the central sanctuary (cf. 12:5, 11, 14, 18, 16:6). However, the context suggests that the local Levitical towns, and not the central sanctuary, are in mind.

⁹ ‘They will hold an enquiry’ follows the LXX (ἐκζητήσαντες ἀναγγελοῦσίν – literally, ‘seeking after [the matter], they shall announce’) and Samaritan Pentateuch; the MT reads ‘you will hold and enquiry’.

¹⁰ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “take care to carry out all their instructions.”

¹¹ The NRSV opens this verse, here following the NJB, with, “You must carry out fully the law that they interpret for you or the ruling that they announce to you.”

¹² The literal translation of ‘presumes to disobey’ is ‘acts presumptuously not to listen’.

¹³ In place of ‘a second time’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘again’.

י¹⁴ כִּי־תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ וַיִּרְשָׁתָהּ וַיֵּשְׁבֶתָהּ בָּהּ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲשִׁימָה עָלַי מֶלֶךְ כְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתַי: ^{טו} שׁוּם תָּשִׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ מִקֶּרֶב אֲחִיךָ תָּשִׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ לֹא תֹכֵל לָתֵת עָלֶיךָ אִישׁ נָכְרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־אֲחִיךָ הוּא: ^{טז} רַק לֹא־יִרְבֶּה־לּוֹ סוּסִים וְלֹא־יֵשִׁיב אֶת־הָעָם מִצְרִימָה לְמַעַן הִרְבּוֹת סוּס וַיְהִי אָמַר לָכֶם לֹא תִסְפּוּן לָשׁוּב בְּדֶרֶךְ הַזֶּה עוֹד: ^{יז} וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה־לּוֹ נָשִׁים וְלֹא יִסּוֹר לִבּוֹ וַיִּכְסֶּף וַיִּזְהַב לֹא יִרְבֶּה־לּוֹ מָאֵד: ^{יח} וְהָיָה כְּשִׁבְתּוֹ עַל כִּסֵּא מַמְלָכְתּוֹ וַיִּכְתֹּב לוֹ אֶת־מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל־סֵפֶר מִלִּפְנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם: ^{יט} וְהָיְתָה עִמּוֹ וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל־יְמֵי חַיּוֹ לְמַעַן יִלְמַד לִירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתָם: ^כ לְבַלְתִּי רוּם־לִבּוֹ

¹⁴ “When you reach that land that Yahweh your God gives you, and you possess it and live there, if you say, “I should like to appoint a king to rule me – like all the surrounding nations,” ¹⁵ the king you select to rule you must of Yahweh your God’s choosing. One from among your brothers you may set as king over you; you are not to give yourself a foreign king who is no brother of yours. ¹⁶ Ensure that he does not increase the number of his horses, or make the people go back to Egypt to increase his cavalry, for Yahweh said to you, “You must never go back that way again.” ¹⁷ Nor must he increase the number of his wives, for that could lead his heart astray. Nor must he increase his gold and silver excessively. ¹⁸ When he has taken his royal throne, he must write a copy of this Law on a scroll for his use at the dictation of the Levitical priests. ¹⁹ It must never leave him and he must read it every day of his life and learn to fear Yahweh his God by keeping all the words of this Law and observing these laws. ²⁰ Therefore, his heart will not look down on his

¹⁴ This ‘law for the king’ is parallel to the one in 1S 8:11–18 and shows little sympathy with the monarchy.

¹⁵ For ‘select’, the MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis.

¹⁶ Not a verbatim quotation, but the thought is expressed in Nb 14:3ff (see Ex 13:17 and 14:11ff).

¹⁷ Apparently, vv. 16–20 allude to Solomon (see 1K 10:26ff and Ch. 11).

¹⁸ Here, the term תּוֹרָה (‘Law’) probably means only the Book of Deuteronomy and not the whole Pentateuch; the LXX reads here τὸ δευτερονόμιον τοῦτο (‘this second law’), and it is this phrase that gives rise to the name of the book in modern times. However, the MT’s expression מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה is better rendered ‘copy of this Law’.

¹⁹ The king, elected from among his own people (v. 15), is subject to God’s law, like any other citizen.

²⁰ The literal translation of ‘over his kingdom’ is ‘upon his kingdom’; the Samaritan Pentateuch reads ‘upon the throne of his kingship’, but this over-literalises what is a clearly understood figure of speech.

מֵאֲחֵיו וּלְבִלְתִּי סוֹר מִן־הַמִּצְוָה יִמִּין וּשְׂמָאוֹל לְמַעַן
יֵאָרִיךְ יָמָיו עַל־מַמְלַכְתּוֹ הוּא וּבָנָיו בְּקֶרֶב
יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

brothers and he will swerve neither right nor left from these
commandments. If he does this, he and his sons will have long days over
his kingdom in Israel.

DEUTERONOMY 18

דברים פרק יח

- א לֹא־יִהְיֶה לַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם כָּל־שֶׁבֶט לְוִי חֶלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֵׁי יְהוָה וְנַחֲלָתוֹ יֹאכְלוּ׃
ב וְנַחֲלָה לֹא־יִהְיֶה־לָּו בְּקָרֵב אָחִיו יְהוָה הוּא נַחֲלָתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לָו׃ {ס}
- ג וְזֶה יִהְיֶה מִשְׁפַּט הַכֹּהֲנִים מֵאֵת הָעָם מֵאֵת זִבְחֵי הַזֶּבַח אִם־שֹׁזֵר אִם־שֶׁה וְנָתַן לַכֹּהֵן הַזֶּרַע וְהַלְחִיִּים וְהַקֶּבֶה׃ ד רֹאשִׁית דִּגְנֶךָ תִּירֶשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהָרְךָ וְרֹאשִׁית גֶּזְ צֹאנֶךָ תִּתֶּן־לָו׃ ה כִּי בֹ בַחֵר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִכָּל־שִׁבְטֶיךָ לַעֲמֹד לְשָׁרֵת בְּשֵׁם־יְהוָה הוּא וּבָנָיו כָּל־הַיָּמִים׃ {ס}
- ו וְכִי־יָבֹא הַלְוִי מֵאֶחָד שְׁעָרֶיךָ מִכָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־הוּא גֵר שָׁם וּבָא בְּכָל־אֹתוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה׃ ז וְשָׁרֵת בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו כְּכָל־
- 1 “The Levitical priests – the whole of the tribe of Levi – shall have no share or inheritance with Israel; they may eat the foods offered to Yahweh and his heritage. 2 They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; Yahweh will be their inheritance as he promised them.
- 3 “This is the priests’ due from the people, from those who offer an ox or a sheep in sacrifice: they shall give the priest the shoulder, the cheeks and the stomach. 4 You must give him the first fruits of your corn, your wine, your oil, as well as the first fleece of your sheep. 5 For Yahweh your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand and minister in Yahweh’s name, him and his sons forever.
- 6 If a Levite leaves any of your towns in Israel, where he lives, and comes with all the desire of his soul to the place that Yahweh chooses, 7 he may minister there in the name of Yahweh his God like all his fellow Levites

DEUTERONOMY 18

- 1 The NRSV ends this verse with: “... they may eat the sacrifices that are Yahweh’s portion;” the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.
- 2 As a landless tribe, Levites are entitled to support from the sacrifices, i.e. to receive portions of the burnt offerings (Lv 2:2-3) and of the first fruits.
- 3 These specifications are to rule out abuses, as for instance those committed by the sons of Eli at Shiloh (1S 2:13).
- 4 In place of ‘first fruits’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘best’.
- 5 The NRSV uses the name ‘Levi’ in place of the pronoun ‘him’. After ‘stand’, the Samaritan Pentateuch and some LXX texts add ‘before the LORD your God’ to bring the language into line with a formula found elsewhere (10:8, 2Ch 29:11); this reading is not likely to be original, however.
- 6 Town Levites, whose former role was changed by the centralisation of worship, may take part in the services at the central sanctuary. This provision, however, proved impractical in Josiah’s time (2K 23:8-9).
- 7 The NJB has ‘shall minister’ in place of ‘may minister’, here following the NRSV.

אֲחִיו הַלְוִיִּם הָעֹמְדִים שָׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: ^ח חֶלֶק
כְּחֶלֶק יֹאכְלוּ לֶבֶד מִמִּכְרֵי עַל־הָאָבוֹת: {ס}

^ט כִּי אַתָּה בָּא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן
לָךְ לֹא־תִלְמַד לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּתוֹעֵבַת הַגּוֹיִם הָהֵם: 'לֹא־
יִמָּצֵא בְּךָ מַעֲבִיר בְּנוֹ־וּבִתּוֹ בָּאֵשׁ קֶסֶם קְסָמִים
מְעוֹנֵן וּמְנַחֵשׁ וּמַכְשֵׁף: ^{יא} וְחֹבֵר חֶבֶר וְשֹׂאֵל אוֹב
וְיֹדְעֵנִי וְדֹרֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים: ^{יב} כִּי־תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה כָּל־
עֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה וּבְגִלּוֹל תוֹעֵבַת הָאֵלֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
מוֹרִישׁ אוֹתָם מִפְּנֵיךָ:

^{יג} תָּמִים תִּהְיֶה עִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ^{יד} כִּי הַגּוֹיִם
הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה יוֹרֵשׁ אוֹתָם אֶל־מְעַנְנִים וְאֶל־
קְסָמִים יִשְׁמְעוּ וְאַתָּה לֹא כֵן נָתַן לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

who stand there before Yahweh, ⁸ eating equal shares with them – what he has from the sale of his patrimony notwithstanding.

⁹ “When you come into the land Yahweh your God gives you, you must not learn to copy the abominations of the natives. ¹⁰ There shall not be among you one who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who uses divination, a soothsayer, an augur, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who casts spells, consults ghosts or spirits, or a necromancer. ¹² For, whoever does these things is detestable to Yahweh your God; because of these abominations, Yahweh your God drives them out before you.

¹³ “You must be entirely faithful to Yahweh your God. ¹⁴ For these nations whom you are dispossessing may listen to soothsayers and diviners, but Yahweh your God does not permit you to do so. ¹⁵ Yahweh

⁸ The NRSV reads: “They shall have equal portions to eat, even though they have income from the sale of family possessions.” The verse ending is obscure. It possibly implies a measure against a means test: a Levite’s portion from the Temple to be fair shares, regardless of what personal property he might own. In fact, the regulation granting equal rights to all Levites was never applied (see #2K 23:9).

⁹ NETB omits ‘to copy’, here following the NJB (the NRSV has ‘to imitate’).

¹⁰ The first practice refers to an ordeal of passing through fire as a test of devotion to Molech, the god of Ammon (12:31); this pagan rite is frequently mentioned in the OT (Lv 18:21, 2K 16:3, 21:6, Jr 7:31, 19:5, 32:35, etc.). ‘Divination’ (קְסָמִים) was a means employed to determine the future or the outcome of events by observation of various omens and signs (cf. Nb 22:7, 23:23, Jos 13:22, 1S 6:2, 15:23, 28:8, etc.). A ‘soothsayer’ (מְעוֹנֵן) was thought to be able to conjure up spirits or apparitions (cf. Lv 19:26, Jg 9:37, 2K 21:6, Is 2:6, 57:3, Jr 27:9, Mi 5:11).

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘one who casts spells’ (חֹבֵר חֶבֶר) is ‘a binder of binding’: immobilising someone using magical words (Ps 58:6, Is 47:9, 12).

¹² The translation understands the Hebrew participial form, ‘driving’, as having an imminent future sense here.

¹³ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “You must remain completely loyal to the LORD your God,” and NETB has “You must be blameless before the LORD your God.”

¹⁴ The NJB ends this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “but this is not the gift that Yahweh your God gives to you.”

¹⁵ ‘Like myself’: Moses is regarded as the fountainhead of prophecy and the prototype of the true prophet (34:10–11).

^{טו} נָבִיא מִקִּרְבְּךָ מֵאַחֶיךָ כַּמֶּנִי יָקִים לְךָ יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵלָיו תִּשְׁמָעוּן: ^{טז} כָּל אֲשֶׁר-שָׁאֲלַת מֵעַם
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּחֹרֵב בְּיוֹם הַקֹּהֵל לֵאמֹר לֹא אֶסֶף
 לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֶת-הָאֵשׁ הַגְּדֹלָה
 הַזֹּאת לֹא-אֶרְאֶה עוֹד וְלֹא אָמוּת: ^{יז} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה
 אֵלַי הִיטִיבוּ אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרוּ: ^{יח} נָבִיא אֶקִּים לָהֶם
 מִקִּרְבָּם אֲחֵיהֶם כַּמּוֹד וְנָתַתִּי דְבָרִי בְּפִיו וְדִבֶּר
 אֲלֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶנּוּ: ^{יט} וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
 לֹא-יִשְׁמָע אֶל-דְּבָרִי אֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר בְּשִׁמִּי אֲנֹכִי
 אֲדַרְשׁ מֵעַמּוֹ: ^כ אֵךְ הַנָּבִיא אֲשֶׁר יִזְדָּר לְדַבֵּר דְּבָר
 בְּשִׁמִּי אֵת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-צִוִּיתִיו לְדַבֵּר וְאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר
 בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וּמֵת הַנָּבִיא הַהוּא:

^{כא} וְכִי תֹאמַר בְּלִבְּךָ אֵיכָה נִדְּעַ אֶת-הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר
 לֹא-דִבְרוּ יְהוָה: ^{כב} אֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר הַנָּבִיא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה
 וְלֹא-יְהִי הַדָּבָר וְלֹא יָבֵא הוּא הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-
 דִּבְרוּ יְהוָה בְּזִדּוֹן דִּבְרוּ הַנָּבִיא לֹא תִגּוֹר מִמֶּנּוּ: {ס}

your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself, from among yourselves, from your own brothers; to him you must listen. ¹⁶ This is what you yourselves asked of Yahweh your God at Horeb on the day of the Assembly. “Do not let me hear again,” you said, “the voice of Yahweh my God, nor look any longer on this great fire, or I shall die;” ¹⁷ and Yahweh said to me, “All they have spoken is well said. ¹⁸ From their own brothers, I will raise up a prophet like yourself; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him. ¹⁹ The man who does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name, I myself shall hold answerable for it. ²⁰ But the prophet who presumes to say in my name a thing I have not commanded him to say, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.”

²¹ “If you wonder, “How are we to tell that a prophecy does not come from Yahweh?” ²² When a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh, and the thing does not happen or prove true, then Yahweh has not spoken it; the prophet has spoken presumptuously; you need not fear from him.

¹⁶ NETB interprets the pronouns ‘me’, ‘my’ and ‘I’ as a collective singular, reading ‘us’, ‘our’ and ‘we’, respectively.

¹⁷ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “Then the LORD replied to me: ‘They are right in what they have said,’” and NETB has “The LORD then said to me, ‘What they have said is good.’”

¹⁸ The NRSV reads: “... I will put my words into the mouth of the prophet...” (or ‘...mouths of the prophets...’).

¹⁹ The NRSV reads: “... that the prophet shall speak in my name...”

²⁰ The NRSV places the clause ‘who speaks in the name of other gods’ nearer the beginning of the verse.

²¹ How to distinguish between true and false prophets was an urgent problem in the times of the kings (1K 22, Jr 28).

²² The literal translation of ‘then Yahweh has not spoken it’ is ‘that is the word which Yahweh has not spoken’.

DEUTERONOMY 19

דברים פרק יט

^א כִּי־יִכְרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ אֶת־אֶרֶצָם וְיִרְשָׁתָם וְיִשְׁבָּתָּ בְּעָרֵיהֶם וּבְבִתְיֵיהֶם: ^ב שְׁלוֹשׁ עָרִים תִּבְדִּיל לָךְ בְּתוֹךְ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ^ג תִּכְיֶן לָךְ הַדֶּרֶךְ וְשָׁלַשְׁתָּ אֶת־גְּבוּל אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יִנְחִילָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהָיָה לְנוֹס שָׁמָּה כָּל־רֹצֵחַ: ^ד וְזֶה דְּבַר הָרֹצֵחַ אֲשֶׁר־יָנוּס שָׁמָּה וְחִי אֲשֶׁר יָבֹה אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ בְּבִלְי־דַעַת וְהוּא לֹא־שָׁנָא לוֹ מִתְּמָל שְׁלֹשָׁם: ^ה וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ בִיעֹר לַחֲטֹב עֲצִים וְנִדְחָה יָדוֹ בַּגִּרְזֵן לְכַרֵּת הָעֵץ וְנָשַׁל הַבְּרוֹזַל מִן־הָעֵץ וּמָצָא אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וּמָת הוּא יָנוּס אֶל־אַחַת הָעָרִים־הָאֵלֶּה וְחִי: ^ו פֶּן־יִרְדֹּף גֹּאֵל הַדָּם אַחֲרֵי הָרֹצֵחַ כִּי־יָחַם לִבָּבוֹ וְהִשִּׁיגוֹ כִּי־יִרְבֶּה הַדֶּרֶךְ וְהִכָּהוּ נֶפֶשׁ וְלֹא אֵין מִשְׁפַּט־מָוֶת כִּי לֹא שָׁנָא הוּא לוֹ מִתְּמָל שְׁלֹשָׁם: ^ז עַל־כֵּן אֲנִכִּי מֵצֹוֶךְ לֵאמֹר שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים

¹ “When Yahweh your God destroys the nations whose land Yahweh your God gives you, and you succeed them and live in their towns and in their houses, ² you shall set aside three cities in the land Yahweh gives you to possess. ³ You must maintain the roads to them and divide into three parts the area of the land Yahweh your God is giving you to possess, so that any homicide may be able to flee there. ⁴ Here is a case of how a man may save his life by taking refuge there. If anyone has struck his fellow accidentally, not having any previous feud with him ⁵ (for example, he goes with his fellow into the forest to cut wood; his arm swings the axe to fell a tree; the head slips off the handle and strikes his companion dead), that man may take refuge in one of these cities and save his life. ⁶ It must not be allowed that the avenger of blood, in the heat of his anger, should pursue the killer and that the length of the road should help him to overtake and fatally wound him; for, the man has not deserved to die, having had no previous feud with his

DEUTERONOMY 19

- ¹ In place of ‘destroys’, the WEBBE has the more literal translation, ‘cuts off’.
- ² These three cities are to be set apart in Canaan, besides the three in Transjordan (4:41–43).
- ³ The NRSV opens with: “You shall calculate the distances and divide...” It offers, as an alternative: “You shall prepare roads to them and divide...”
- ⁴ The literal translation of ‘previous feud’ is ‘a feud yesterday and a third (day)’ (as also in v. 6); the point is that there was no animosity between the two parties at the time of the accident and therefore no motive for the killing.
- ⁵ The literal translation of ‘his arm swings the axe’ is ‘he raises his hand with the iron’.
- ⁶ The literal translation of ‘has not deserved to die’ is ‘has no judgement of death’.

תְּבַדִּיל לָךְ: ^ח וְאִם־יִרְחִיב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־גְּבולֶיךָ
 כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם וְנָתַן לָךְ אֶת־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
 אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לָתֵת לְאַבְרָהָם: ^ט כִּי־תִשְׁמֹר אֶת־כָּל־
 הַמִּצְוֹת הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹתָהּ אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מֵצִוְךָ הַיּוֹם
 לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו כָּל־
 הַיָּמִים וְיִסְפָּת לָךְ עוֹד שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים עַל הַשָּׁלֹשׁ
 הָאֵלֶּה: ^י וְלֹא יִשְׁפֹךְ דָּם נָקִי בְּקֶרֶב אֶרֶץךָ אֲשֶׁר
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה וְהָיָה עָלֶיךָ דָּמִים: {פ}
^{יא} וְכִי־יִהְיֶה אִישׁ שָׂנֵא לְרֵעֵהוּ וְאַרְבַּ לּוֹ וְקָם עָלָיו
 וְהִכָּהוּ נֶפֶשׁ וּמָת וְנָס אֶל־אַחַת הָעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:
^{יב} וְשִׁלְחוּ זִקְנֵי עִירוֹ וּלְקַחוּ אֹתוֹ מִשָּׁם וְנִתְּנוּ אוֹתוֹ
 בְּיַד גֹּאֵל הַדָּם וּמָת: ^{יג} לֹא־תַחֲוֹס עֵינֶךָ עָלָיו וּבִעֲרַת
 דָּם־הַנָּקִי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְטוֹב לָךְ: {ס}
^{יד} לֹא תִסִּיג גְּבוּל רֵעֶךָ אֲשֶׁר גָּבְלוּ רִאשֹׁנִים
 בְּנַחֲלָתְךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּנְחַל בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 נָתַן לָךְ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: {ס}

companion. ⁷ I command you therefore: You are to set aside three cities.

⁸ And if Yahweh your God enlarges your territory, as he swore to your fathers he would, and gives you the whole land he promised to give your fathers – ⁹ provided you keep and observe all the commandments I enjoin on you today, loving Yahweh your God and always following his ways – then to those three cities you will add three more. ¹⁰ In this way, innocent blood will not be shed in the land Yahweh your God gives for your inheritance; otherwise, there would be bloodguilt on you.

¹¹ “But if a man at enmity with his fellow lies in wait, attacks him and wounds him fatally and he dies, and flees into one of these cities, ¹² the elders of his own town shall send to have him seized and hand him over to the avenger of blood to die. ¹³ Show no pity! You must banish the shedding of innocent blood from Israel, and then you will prosper.

¹⁴ “You must not displace your neighbour’s boundary mark, set by your forbears, in the inheritance you receive in the land Yahweh is giving into your possession.

⁷ The ‘three cities’ were later designated by Joshua – Kedesh of Galilee, Shechem and Hebron (Jos 20:7–9).

⁸ The literal translation of ‘territories’ is ‘borders’.

⁹ Nb 35 and Jos 20 provide for only six cities.

¹⁰ The phrase *דָּם נָקִי* (‘innocent blood’) means that of a person to whom no culpability applies; what he did was without malice aforethought.

¹¹ Yahwism admits consideration of intention in the penal code (see also Nb 35:20–23).

¹² The *גֹּאֵל הַדָּם* (‘avenger of blood’) would be one of the victim’s family who, after due process, would initiate the execution (cf. Nb 35:16–28).

¹³ The corporate nature of Israel’s life meant that the whole community shared in the guilt of un-avenged murder until or unless vengeance occurred.

¹⁴ This verse preserves an ancient law prohibiting the removal of a property boundary mark (Is 5:8, Ho 5:10, Pr 22:28).

^{טו} לֹא־יָקוּם עַד אֶחָד בְּאִישׁ לְכָל־עוֹן וּלְכָל־חַטָּאת
בְּכָל־חַטָּא אֲשֶׁר יַחַטָּא עַל־פִּי שְׁנֵי עֵדִים אֹז עַל־
פִּי שְׁלֹשֶׁה־עֵדִים יָקוּם דָּבָר: ^{טז} כִּי־יָקוּם עַד־חָמֶס
בְּאִישׁ לַעֲנוֹת בּוֹ סֵרָה: ^{יז} וְעַמְדוּ שְׁנֵי־הָאֲנָשִׁים
אֲשֶׁר־לָהֶם הָרִיב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לִפְנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים
וְהַשֹּׁפְטִים אֲשֶׁר יִהְיוּ בַיָּמִים הָהֵם: ^{יח} וְדִרְשׁוּ
הַשֹּׁפְטִים הַיָּטֵב וְהַנָּה עַד־שֶׁקֶר הָעֵד שֶׁקֶר עָנָה
בְּאָחִיו: ^{יט} וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר זָמַם לַעֲשׂוֹת לְאָחִיו
וּבַעֲרַתְּ הָרַע מִקִּרְבְּךָ: ^כ וְהַנְּשָׂאִים יִשְׁמְעוּ וִירְאוּ
וְלֹא־יִסָּפוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת עוֹד כַּדָּבָר הָרַע הַזֶּה בְּקִרְבְּךָ:
^{כא} וְלֹא תַחֲוֶה עֵינֶיךָ נֶפֶשׁ בְּנֶפֶשׁ עֵין בְּעֵין שֵׁן בְּשֵׁן
יָד בְּיָד רֶגֶל בְּרֶגֶל: {ס}

¹⁵ “A single witness cannot suffice to convict a man of any iniquity or of any sin that he commits; whatever the misdemeanour, the word of two witnesses or the word of three is required to sustain the charge. ¹⁶ If a malicious witness appears against a man to accuse him of rebellion, ¹⁷ both parties to this dispute before Yahweh must be brought before the priests and judges then in office. ¹⁸ The judges must make a careful inquiry, and if it turns out that the witness who accused his brother is a lying witness, ¹⁹ you must deal with him as he would have dealt with his brother. You must banish this evil from your midst. ²⁰ Others will hear of it, be afraid, and never again do such an evil thing among you. ²¹ You are to show no pity. Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘suffice to convict’ is ‘rise up (to testify) against’. Jesus quotes the 2nd part of this verse in Mt 18:16.

¹⁶ Malicious (חָמֶס – literally, ‘violent’) witness is prohibited in the Decalogue (Ex 20:16, compare Dt 23:1, Lv 19:16).

¹⁷ The case must come ‘before Yahweh’, i.e. to the supreme tribunal (17:8–13).

¹⁸ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “... if the witness is a false witness, having testified falsely against another.”

¹⁹ The literal translation of ‘banish’ (וּבַעֲרַתְּ) is ‘burn out’; like a cancer, un-avenged sin would infect the whole community: it must, therefore, be excised by the purging out of its perpetrators who, presumably, remained unrepentant (cf. 13:6, 17:7,12, 21:21, 22:21–22,24, 24:7).

²⁰ For this verse, the NRSV reads, “The rest shall hear and be afraid, and a crime such as this shall never again be committed among you.”

²¹ This kind of justice is commonly called *lex talionis* (‘measure for measure’ – cf. Ex 21:23–25, Lv 24:19–20); it is likely that it is the principle that is important and not always a strict application. This restatement of the law of retaliation is prompted by v. 19.

DEUTERONOMY 20

דברים פרק כ

א כִּי־תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל־אֹיְבֶיךָ וּרְאִיתָ סוּס וְרֶכֶב
עִם רֶב מִמֶּךָ לֹא תִירָא מֵהֶם כִּי־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עִמָּךְ
הַמַּעֲלֶיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: ב וְהָיָה בְּקִרְבְּכֶם אֶל־
הַמִּלְחָמָה וְנִגַּשׁ הַכֹּהֵן וְדִבֶּר אֶל־הָעָם: ג וְאָמַר
אֱלֹהִים שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם קְרִבִּים הַיּוֹם לְמִלְחָמָה
עַל־אֹיְבֵיכֶם אֲלֵי־יָרֵךְ לְבַבְכֶם אֲלֵי־תִירָאוֹ וְאֲלֵי־
תַחֲפֹזוֹ וְאֲלֵי־תַעֲרָצוֹ מִפְּנֵיהֶם: ד כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
הֵהָלֶךְ עִמָּכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם לָכֶם עִם־אֹיְבֵיכֶם לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
אֶתְכֶם:

ה וְדִבְרוּ הַשָּׂטְרִים אֶל־הָעָם לֵאמֹר מִי־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
בָּנָה בַּיִת־חָדָשׁ וְלֹא חֲנָכּוֹ יֵלֶךְ וְיָשֵׁב לְבֵיתוֹ פֶּן־
יָמוּת בַּמִּלְחָמָה וְאִישׁ אַחֵר יִחְנַכֵּנוּ: ו וּמִי־הָאִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר־נָטַע כָּרֶם וְלֹא חָלְלוֹ יֵלֶךְ וְיָשֵׁב לְבֵיתוֹ פֶּן־
יָמוּת בַּמִּלְחָמָה וְאִישׁ אַחֵר יַחְלִלְנוּ: ז וּמִי־הָאִישׁ
אֲשֶׁר־אָרַשׁ אִשָּׁה וְלֹא לָקָחָהּ יֵלֶךְ וְיָשֵׁב לְבֵיתוֹ פֶּן־

1 "When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than your own, you must not be afraid of them; Yahweh your God is with you, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. 2 When you are about to join battle, the priest is to come forward and address the people. 3 He is to say to them, "Listen, Israel; now that you are about to join battle against your enemies, do not be faint-hearted. Let there be no fear, trembling or alarm as you face them. 4 Yahweh your God goes with you to fight for you against your enemies and to save you."

5 "Then the officers are to address the people, saying, "Is there any man here who has built a new house and not yet dedicated it? Let him go home lest he dies in battle and another perform the dedication. 6 Is there any man here who has planted a vineyard and not yet enjoyed its fruit? Let him go home lest he dies in battle and another be the first to enjoy its fruit. 7 Is there any man here who has betrothed a wife and not yet

DEUTERONOMY 20

- 1 The premise of vv. 1–4 is that holy war is not a human enterprise but is an action in which Yahweh is personally engaged and in which the people respond with jealous devotion (Jg 5).
- 2 The reference to 'the priest' suggests also the presence of the Ark of the Covenant, the visible sign of God's presence.
- 3 In place of 'be faint-hearted', here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has 'lose heart'.
- 4 The NRSV & NETB have 'give you victory' in place of 'save you', here following the NJB.
- 5 The verb חָנַכּוּ ('dedicated') occurs elsewhere only with respect to the dedication of Solomon's temple (1K 8:63 = 2Ch 7:5).
- 6 The fruit of a vineyard could not be enjoyed (or, put to common use) until the fifth year (Lv 19:23–25).
- 7 In place of 'married/marry', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'taken/take'.

יָמוֹת בַּמִּלְחָמָה וְאִישׁ אֶחָד יִקְחָנָה: ^ח וַיִּסְפּוּ
הַשָּׂטָרִים לְדַבֵּר אֶל־הָעָם וְאָמְרוּ מִי־הָאִישׁ הִירָא
וְרָךְ הַלֵּבָב יֵלֶךְ וַיָּשֶׁב לְבֵיתוֹ וְלֹא יִמָּס אֶת־לֵבָב
אֶחָיו כָּל־בָּבוֹ: ^ט וְהָיָה כָּכֹלֶת הַשָּׂטָרִים לְדַבֵּר אֶל־
הָעָם וּפְקֻדּוֹ שָׂרֵי צְבָאוֹת בְּרֹאשׁ הָעָם: {ס}

יְכִיתְקָרֵב אֶל־עִיר לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ וּקְרָאתָ אֶל־הָ
לְשׁוֹם: ^{יא} וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁלוֹם תַּעֲנֶנָּה וּפִתְחָהּ לָךְ וְהָיָה
כָּל־הָעָם הַנִּמְצָא־בָּהּ יִהְיוּ לָךְ לִמָּס וְעַבְדּוֹךָ:
^{יב} וְאִם־לֹא תִשְׁלִים עִמָּךְ וְעָשִׂתָּה עִמָּךְ מִלְחָמָה
וְצָרָתָ עָלֶיהָ: ^{יג} וְנָתַנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּיָדְךָ וְהָפִיתָ
אֶת־כָּל־זְכוּרָהּ לַפִּי־חֶרֶב: ^{יד} רַק הַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף
וְהַבְּהֵמָה וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בָּעִיר כָּל־שְׁלָלָהּ תָּבֹז לָךְ
וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־שְׁלָל אִיבֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
לָךְ:

^{טו} כֵּן תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכָל־הָעָרִים הָרְחוֹקֹת מִמָּךְ מֵאֲדָ
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מִעָרֵי הַגּוֹיִם־הָאֵלֶּה הֵנָּה: ^{טז} רַק מִעָרֵי

married her? Let him go home lest he dies in battle and another marry her.” ⁸ The officers shall also address the people, saying, “Is there any man here who is fearful and faint of heart? Let him go home lest he makes his fellows lose heart too.” ⁹ And when the officers have finished speaking to the people, captains will be appointed to lead them.

¹⁰ “When you advance to attack any town, offer it terms of peace. ¹¹ If it accepts these and opens its gates to you, all the people found in it shall serve you as forced labour; ¹² but if it refuses peace and makes war with you, you must lay siege to it. ¹³ Yahweh your God shall deliver it into your power and you shall put the entire male population to the sword. ¹⁴ However, the women, the children, the livestock and all that the town contains, all its spoil, you may take for yourselves as booty. You will devour the spoil of your enemies that Yahweh your God has delivered to you.

¹⁵ “That is how you will treat the far-distant towns not belonging to the nations near you. ¹⁶ However, as regards the towns of those people

⁸ The size of the army is not important and, above all, those who are afraid or disheartened must be singled out (Jg 7:2-3).

⁹ For stylistic reasons, NETB omits the phrase ‘to the people’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.

¹⁰ When Deuteronomy was promulgated under Josiah, the occasion no longer existed for applying these regulations: there were no Canaanites left to be put under the curse of destruction (see #Jos 6:17) and the Israelites were no longer laying siege to foreign towns.

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘accepts these’ is ‘answers you peace’.

¹² In place of ‘makes war with you’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘offers resistance’.

¹³ The literal translation of ‘power’ is ‘hands’.

¹⁴ Before ‘children’, NETB adds the word ‘little’, to emphasise that the term refers to the very young.

¹⁵ The regulations so far given refer to towns that do not belong to Israel’s bordering territories.

¹⁶ Conquered Palestinian cities must be utterly destroyed, i.e. put under the sacrificial ban, lest the inhabitants corrupt Israel’s faith (9:1-6).

הַעַמִּים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה
 לֹא תַחִיָּה כָּל־נִשְׁמָה: ¹⁷ כִּי־הַחֶרֶם תַּחֲרִימֶם הַחַיִּי
 וְהָאֱמֹרִי הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי הַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוֹסִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צֻוֶּה
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ¹⁸ לִמְעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִלְמְדוּ אֶתְכֶם
 לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּכָל תּוֹעֲבֹתָם אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם
 וַחֲטֹאתֶם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: {ס}

¹⁹ כִּי־תִצּוֹר אֶל־עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֶם עָלֶיהָ
 לְתַפְשָׁהּ לֹא־תִשְׁחִית אֶת־עֵצָהּ לְנֹדַח עָלֶיהָ גְרוֹזָן כִּי
 מִמֶּנּוּ תֹאכַל וְאֹתוֹ לֹא תִכְרֹת כִּי הָאָדָם עִץ הַשָּׂדֶה
 לֶבֶא מִפְּנֵיךָ בַּמָּצוֹר: ²⁰ כִּי־רַק עֵץ אֲשֶׁר־תִּדְּעַ כִּי־לֹא־
 עֵץ מֵאֲכָל הוּא אֹתוֹ תִשְׁחִית וְכִרְתָּ וּבִנִית מָצוֹר
 עַל־הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה עִמָּךְ מִלְחָמָה עַד
 רִדְתָּהּ: {פ}

which Yahweh your God gives you as your own inheritance, you must not spare the life of any living thing.¹⁷ Instead, you must lay them under the ban, the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, as Yahweh your God commanded,¹⁸ so that they may not teach you to practise all the detestable practices they have in honour of their gods and so cause you to sin against Yahweh your God.

¹⁹ “If, when you are attacking a town, you have to besiege it for a long time before you capture it, you must not destroy its trees by taking an axe to them; eat their fruit but do not cut them down. Are the trees in the fields human beings, that they should come under siege from you?
²⁰ Any trees, however, which you know are not fruit trees, you may mutilate and cut down and use to build siege-works against the hostile town until it falls.

¹⁷ The centre of ‘Hittite’ power was in Anatolia (central modern Turkey); in the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BCE) they were at their zenith, establishing outposts and colonies near and far, and some elements were obviously in Canaan at the time of the Conquest (1400 –1350 BCE). Originally from the upper Euphrates region (Amurru), the ‘Amorites’ appear to have migrated into Canaan beginning around 2200 BCE. The ‘Canaanites’ were the indigenous peoples of the land of Palestine, going back to the beginning of recorded history (circa 3000 BCE); the OT identifies them as descendants of Ham (Gn 10:6), the only Hamites to have settled north and east of Egypt. The LXX adds ‘Girgashites’ (Γεργασαῖον) at the end of the list here, in order to list the full (and usual) complement of seven (#7:1).

¹⁸ Literally translated, the central part of this verse reads, “to do according to all their abominations which they do for their gods.”

¹⁹ Vv. 19–20 limit the wanton destruction of natural resources that, unlike the city and its booty, are gifts from God.

²⁰ The term מָצוֹר (‘siege-works’) may refer to encircling ditches or to surrounding stagings.

DEUTERONOMY 21

דברים פרק כא

^א כִּי־יִמָּצָא חָלָל בְּאֶדְמָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ נָפֵל בְּשָׂדֶה לֹא נֹדֵעַ מִי הִכָּהוּ: ^ב וַיָּצְאוּ זִקְנֶיךָ וּשְׁפִטֶיךָ וּמִדְּדוּ אֶל־הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבַת הַחָלָל: ^ג וְהָיָה הָעִיר הַקְּרֹבָה אֶל־הַחָלָל וּלְקַחֹוּ זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַהוּא עֲגֹלַת בָּקָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָבַד בָּהּ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מִשְׁכָּה בָעָל: ^ד וְהוֹרְדוּ זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַהוּא אֶת־הָעֲגֹלָה אֶל־נָחַל אִיתָן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֵעָבֵד בּוֹ וְלֹא יִזְרַע וְעָרְפוּ־שָׁם אֶת־הָעֲגֹלָה בְּנָחַל: ^ה וַיִּגָּשׁוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי לֵוִי כִּי בָם בָּחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁרְתּוֹ וּלְבָרֶךְ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְעַל־פִּיהֶם יִהְיֶה כָל־רִיב וְכָל־נִגָּע: ^ו וְכָל זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַהוּא הַקְּרֹבִים אֶל־הַחָלָל יֵרַחְצוּ אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־הָעֲגֹלָה הָעֲרוּפָה בְּנָחַל: ^ז וְעָנוּ וַאֲמָרוּ יְדֵינוּ לֹא שִׁפְכָה שָׁפְכוּ אֶת־

¹ “In the land Yahweh is giving you to possess, if a dead man is found lying in the field and it is not known who killed him, ² your elders and your judges must go and measure the distance to the surrounding towns, ³ The elders of the town nearest the victim are to take a heifer that has not yet been worked or drawn the yoke; ⁴ the elders of the town must bring the heifer down to a wadi, to a spot that is neither ploughed nor sown and there by the river they must break the heifer’s neck. ⁵ And the Levitical priests shall then come forward, for these are the men Yahweh your God has chosen to do him service and to bless in the name of Yahweh, and it is their business to settle all cases of dispute or of violence. ⁶ All the elders of the town nearest to the dead man must then wash their hands in the stream, over the slaughtered heifer. ⁷ They are to say, “Our hands did not shed this blood and our eyes did not see it.

DEUTERONOMY 21

- ¹ The law of vv. 1–9 is for expiation of murder when the slayer is unknown; this reflects the belief that bloodshed pollutes the land (vv. 8–9, 19:10, 13) and that the community must atone for the crime. The literal translation of ‘killed’ is ‘struck’ but, in the context, a fatal blow is meant.
- ² ‘Your judges’ follows the NRSV and MT; the NJB, following the Samaritan Pentateuch, has ‘scribes’; these are apparently Levites from the supreme tribunal of the sanctuary (v. 5, compare 17:8–13).
- ³ The ritual of vv. 3–4 is in some respects similar to that of Nb 19:2–10 (cf. Lv 14:4–7). In this case, the victim is a substitute for the guilty party.
- ⁴ The unworked heifer, fresh stream, and uncultivated valley speak of ritual purity – of freedom from human contamination.
- ⁵ The literal translation of ‘the Levitical priests’ (following NETB) is ‘the priests, the sons of Levi’.
- ⁶ The animal is bludgeoned to death in some deserted spot; there is no mention of the blood: not a sacrifice, therefore, but an old magical rite, comparable with those of Lv 14:2–9, 16:5–10, 21–22, Nb 19:2–10, which has been assimilated by Yahwism (see v. 8).
- ⁷ The elders, representing the people, absolve themselves by the symbolic washing of hands and by taking a solemn oath. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

הַדָּם הַזֶּה וְעֵינֵינוּ לֹא רָאוּ: ^ח כִּפֹּר לְעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֲשֶׁר-פָּדִיתָ יְהוָה וְאֶל-תִּתֵּן דָּם נָקִי בְּקֶרֶב עַמְּךָ
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִכְפַּר לָהֶם הַדָּם: ^ט וְאַתָּה תִּבְעַר הַדָּם
 הַנָּקִי מִקֶּרְבְּךָ כִּי-תַעֲשֶׂה הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה: {ס}
 י כִּי-תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל-אֹיְבֶיךָ וְנָתַנּוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 בְּיָדְךָ וְשָׁבִיתָ שְׁבִיּוֹ: ^{יא} וְרָאִיתָ בַּשְּׁבִיָּה אִשָּׁה יְפֹת-
 תֶּאֱרָךְ וְחָשַׁקְתָּ בָּהּ וְלִקַּחְתָּ לָּךְ לְאִשָּׁה: ^{יב} וְהִבֵּאתָהּ
 אֶל-תּוֹךְ בֵּיתְךָ וְגִלַּחְתָּ אֶת-רֹאשָׁהּ וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת-
 צַפְרָנֶיהָ: ^{יג} וְהִסִּירָהּ אֶת-שְׂמֹלֶת שְׁבִיָּהּ מֵעָלֶיהָ
 וַיֵּשֶׁבָה בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבִכְתָּהּ אֶת-אָבִיהָ וְאֶת-אִמָּהּ יָרַח
 יָמִים וְאַחֵר כֵּן תִּבּוֹא אֵלֶיהָ וּבַעֲלֹתָהּ וְהָיְתָה לָּךְ
 לְאִשָּׁה: ^{יד} וְהָיָה אִם-לֹא חָפְצָתָ בָּהּ וּשְׁלַחְתָּהּ
 לְנַפְשָׁהּ וּמָכַר לֹא-תִמְכְּרָנָה בַּכֶּסֶף לֹא-תִתְעַמֵּר
 בָּהּ תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר עָנִיתָהּ: {ס}

⁸ Forgive your people Israel, Yahweh, whom you have redeemed, and allow no innocent blood among your people Israel,” and this blood shall be forgiven them!” ⁹ You must banish all shedding of innocent blood from among you, if you mean to do what is right in the eyes of Yahweh.
¹⁰ “When you go to war against your enemies and Yahweh your God delivers them into your power and you take prisoners, ¹¹ if you see a beautiful woman among the prisoners and find her desirable, and wish to take her for your wife ¹² and bring her to your home. She is to shave her head and cut her nails ¹³ and take off her prisoner’s garb; she is to stay inside your house and must mourn her father and mother for a full month. Then you may go to her and be a husband to her, and she shall be your wife. ¹⁴ Should she cease to please you, you will let her go where she wishes, not selling her for money: you are not to make any profit out of her, since you have had the use of her.

⁸ The word, ‘forgive’, literally translates as ‘cover’ (the NRSV uses ‘absolve’). Originally, ‘to cover one’s face’ meant ‘to be favourable to’ (see Gn 32:21); the word later acquired a technical sense designating both expiation and the atonement rite (see #Ex 25:17 & #Lv 1:4).

⁹ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, because you must do what is right in the sight of the LORD.”

¹⁰ The literal translation of ‘delivers them into your power’ is ‘gives them into your hands’.

¹¹ In place of ‘and wish to’, here following the (gist of) the NRSV, the NJB has ‘you may’.

¹² This requirement for the woman to ‘shave her head’ may symbolise the putting away of the old life and customs in preparation for being numbered among the people of Yahweh; the same is true for the two following requirements.

¹³ The phrase ‘go (in)to her’ is a common euphemism for having sexual relations.

¹⁴ The term שְׁלַחְתָּהּ (‘let her go’) is a somewhat euphemistic way of referring to divorce, the matter clearly in view here (cf. 22:19, 29, 24:1, 3, Jr 3:1, Ml 2:16).

^{טו} כִּי־תֵהֵיִן לְאִישׁ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים הָאֶחָת אֲהוּבָה וְהָאֶחָת שְׂנוּאָה וְיִלְדוּ־לּוֹ בָנִים הָאֲהוּבָה וְהַשְּׂנוּאָה וְהָיָה הַבֵּן הַבְּכֹר לְשֵׁנִיָּאָה: ^{טז} וְהָיָה בְיוֹם הַנְּחִילֹ אֶת־בָּנָיו אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יְהִיָּה לוֹ לֹא יוּכַל לְבַכֵּר אֶת־בֶּן־הָאֲהוּבָה עַל־פְּנֵי בֶן־הַשְּׂנוּאָה הַבְּכֹר: ^{יז} כִּי אֶת־הַבְּכֹר בֶּן־הַשְּׂנוּאָה יִכִּיר לָתֵת לוֹ פִּי שְׁנַיִם בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יִמָּצֵא לוֹ כִּי־הוּא רֵאשִׁית אֲנֹו לוֹ מִשְׁפָּט הַבְּכֹרָה: {ס}

^{יח} כִּי־יִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ בֶּן סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרָה אֵינָנו שֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹל אָבִיו וּבְקוֹל אִמּוֹ וְיִסְרוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יִשְׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם: ^{יט} וְתִפְּשׁוּ בּוֹ אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ וְהוֹצִיאוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־זִקְנֵי עִירוֹ וְאֶל־שַׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ: ^כ וְאָמְרוּ אֶל־זִקְנֵי עִירוֹ בְּנֹנוּ זֶה סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרָה אֵינָנו שֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹלָנוּ זֹלָל וְסָבָא: ^{כא} וְרָגְמָהוּ כָּל־אֲנָשֵׁי עִירוֹ בָּאֲבָנִים וּמָת וּבַעֲרָתָ הָרָע מִקִּרְבָּךְ וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמְעוּ וִירָאוּ: {ס}

¹⁵ “If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and the loved one and the unloved both bear him sons, the firstborn son being of the unloved wife, ¹⁶ when the man bequeaths his goods to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved wife as the firstborn at the expense of the son of the unloved wife, the true firstborn. ¹⁷ As his firstborn, he must acknowledge the son of the unloved wife, giving him a double share of his estate, for this son is the first fruit of his vigour, and the right of the firstborn is his.

¹⁸ “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or mother and, though they punish him, will not heed them, ¹⁹ his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the town at the gate of that place. ²⁰ And they shall tell the elders of his town, “Our son is stubborn and rebellious and will not obey us; he is a glutton and a drunk.” ²¹ And all his fellow citizens shall stone him to death. You must banish this evil from your midst. All Israel will hear and fear.

¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘unloved’ (as NJB) is ‘hated’; for the idea of שְׂנוּאָה meaning to be rejected or loved less, see Gn 29:31–33, MI 1:2–3.

¹⁶ Literally translated, this verse opens, “when he causes his sons to inherit what is his.”

¹⁷ This arrangement in favour of the eldest son is paralleled in other oriental law codes; see 2K 2:9, where the expression is used metaphorically.

¹⁸ The literal translation of ‘obey’ is ‘listen to the voice of’.

¹⁹ The ‘elders’ sat at the town gate (Ruth 4:1–12), where they acted as a judicial council in legal matters. This case is an application of the fifth commandment (Ex 20:12).

²⁰ In place of ‘to the elders’, the LXX (τοῖς ἀνδράσιν) and Samaritan Pentateuch read ‘to the men’, probably to conform to this phrase in v. 21; however, since judicial cases were the responsibility of the elders in such instances (cf. 19:12, 21:3, 6, 25:7–8) the reading of the MT is likely correct here.

²¹ Like other ancient family laws (Ex 21:15, 17, Lv 20:9, cf. Dt 27:16), this law is severe.

כב וְכִי־יִהְיֶה בְּאִישׁ חַטָּא מִשְׁפָּט־מוֹת וְהוֹמַת
וְתִלִּית אֹתוֹ עַל־עֵץ: כג לֹא־תֵלִין גְּבֻלָּתוֹ עַל־הָעֵץ
כִּי־קִבֹּר תִּקְבְּרֶנּוּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּי־קָלַלְתָּ אֱלֹהִים
תָּלוּי וְלֹא תִטְמֵא אֶת־אֲדָמָתְךָ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה: {ס}

²² “If a man guilty of a capital offence is put to death and you hang him on a tree, ²³ his body must not remain on the tree overnight. You must bury him the same day, for anyone hanged on a tree is accursed of God, and you must not defile the land that Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance.

²² Hanging (impaling) a criminal on a tree after execution was regarded as the greatest disgrace (Jos 8:29, 10:26–27, 2S 4:12). Only criminals who were regarded as accursed were subjected to this ignominy.

²³ The idea behind the phrase ‘*accursed of God*’ seems to be not that the person was hanged because he was cursed but that to leave him exposed there was to invite the curse of God upon the whole land. Why this would be so is not clear, though the rabbinic idea that even a criminal is created in the image of God may give some clue. Paul cites this text (see Ga 3:13) to make the point that Christ, suspended from a cross, thereby took upon himself the curse associated with such a display of divine wrath and judgment.

DEUTERONOMY 22

דברים פרק כב

א לֹא-תִרְאֶה אֶת-שׁוֹר אָחִיךָ אוֹ אֶת-שֵׂיזִי נִדְחִים וְהִתְעַלְמָתָּ מֵהֶם הֲשֵׁב תְּשִׁיבֵם לְאָחִיךָ: ^ב וְאִם-לֹא קָרוֹב אָחִיךָ אֵלֶיךָ וְלֹא יָדַעְתָּ וְאִסַּפְתָּ אֶל-תּוֹךְ בֵּיתְךָ וְהָיָה עִמָּךְ עַד דָּרַשׁ אָחִיךָ אֹתוֹ וְהִשְׁבֹּתוּ לוֹ: ^ג וְכֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה לַחֲמֹרוֹ וְכֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה לְשִׁמְלָתוֹ וְכֵן תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכָל-אֲבֵדֹת אָחִיךָ אֲשֶׁר-תִּאֲבֹד מִמֶּנּוּ וּמִצָּאָתָהּ לֹא תוֹכֵל לְהִתְעַלֵּם: {ס}

ד לֹא-תִרְאֶה אֶת-חֲמֹר אָחִיךָ אוֹ שׁוֹרוֹ נִפְלִים בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְהִתְעַלְמָתָּ מֵהֶם הֲקֵם תִּקֶּים עִמּוֹ: {ס}

ה לֹא-יִהְיֶה כְּלִי-גִבּוֹר עַל-אִשָּׁה וְלֹא-יִלְבַּשׁ גִּבּוֹר שִׁמְלַת אִשָּׁה כִּי תוֹעֵבֶת יִהְיֶה אֵלֶיךָ כָּל-עֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים: {פ}

ו כִּי יִקְרָא קוֹנֵצֶפֶר לִפְנֵיךְ בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּכָל-עֵץ אוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲפֻרָּחִים אוֹ בִּיצִים וְהָאֵם רֹבֶצֶת עַל-הָאֲפֻרָּחִים אוֹ עַל-הַבִּיצִים לֹא-תִקַּח הָאֵם עַל-

¹ “If you see your brother’s ox or one of his sheep straying there must be no evasion: you must take them back to your brother. ² If your brother is not nearby or you do not know who he is, you must take them home with you and keep them by you until he comes for them; you will then return them to him. ³ You are to do the same with his donkey, the same with his cloak, the same with anything your brother loses and that you find; you must not hide yourself.

⁴ “If you see your brother’s donkey or ox fall on the road, you must not disregard it but must help your brother get it on its feet again.

⁵ “A woman must not wear a man’s clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman’s clothes; anyone who does this is detestable to Yahweh your God.

⁶ “If, when out walking, you come across a bird’s nest, in a tree or on the ground, with chicks or eggs and the mother bird is sitting on the chicks or the eggs, you must not take the mother who is brooding the chicks.

DEUTERONOMY 22

¹ What Ex 23:4–5 prescribes for ‘enemies’ (in context, opponents in a lawsuit), Deuteronomy extends to all Israelites (the ‘brothers’).

² In place of ‘your brother’, here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘the owner’ (as also in vv. 1 & 3).

³ The NJB ends this verse, here following the MT, with, “there must be no evasion,” and the NRSV has “you must not withhold your help.”

⁴ For ‘must help’, the MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis.

⁵ The Hebrew term, תוֹעֵבֶת (‘detestable’), speaks of anything that runs counter to ritual or moral order, especially (in the OT) to divine standards. Cross-dressing in this covenant context may suggest homosexuality, fertility cult ritual, or some other forbidden practice.

⁶ People should exercise a reverent concern for God’s creatures (compare 20:19–20), taking only what is needed for livelihood.

הַבָּנִים: ^זשֶׁלַח תִּשְׁלַח אֶת־הָאִם וְאֶת־הַבָּנִים
 תִּקַּח־לָךְ לְמַעַן יִיטֵב לָךְ וְהָאֲרֶכֶת יָמִים: {ס}
^חכִּי תִבְנֶה בַּיִת חָדָשׁ וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה לְגִגֶּךָ וְלֹא־
 תֵּשֶׂים דָּמַיִם בְּבֵיתְךָ כִּי־יִפֹּל הַנֶּפֶל מִמֶּנּוּ: ^טלֹא־
 תִזְרַע בְּרִמָּךְ כְּלָאִים פֶּן־תִּקְדָּשׁ הַמְּלָאָה הַזֶּרַע
 אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע וּתְבוֹאֶת הַכֶּרֶם: {ס}
^ילֹא־תַחְרֹשׁ בְּשׁוֹר־וּבַחֲמֹר יַחְדּוֹ: ^{יא}לֹא תִלְבַּשׁ
 שֵׁעִטָּנוֹ צֹמֵר וּפְשָׁתַיִם יַחְדּוֹ: {ס}
^{יב}גְּדָלִים תַּעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ עַל־אַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת כִּסּוֹתְךָ
 אֲשֶׁר תִּכְסֶּה־בָּהּ: {ס}
^{יג}כִּי־יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה וַבָּא אֵלֶיהָ וּשְׁנָאָהּ: ^{יד}וְשָׁם
 לָהּ עָלִילַת דְּבָרִים וְהוֹצֵא עָלֶיהָ שֵׁם רָע וְאָמַר אֶת־
 הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת לָקַחְתִּי וְאָקְרַב אֵלֶיהָ וְלֹא־מִצָּאתִי

⁷ You must be sure to let the mother go; the young you may take for yourself, so that you shall prosper and have a long life.

⁸ “When you build a new house, you are to give your roof a parapet; then your house will not incur blood-vengeance if anyone falls from it.

⁹ You must not sow other seeds in your vineyard lest its harvest becomes consecrated, together with the produce of your vineyard.

¹⁰ “You must not plough with ox and donkey together. ¹¹ You must not wear clothing made of wool and linen woven together.

¹² “You are to make tassels for the four corners of the cloak in which you wrap yourself.

¹³ “If a man marries a wife, sleeps with her and rejects her, ¹⁴ charges her with misconduct and defames her, saying, “I married this woman and when I slept with her, I found she was not a virgin,” ¹⁵ the girl’s father

⁷ For the opening verb, the MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation seeks to reflect with ‘be sure’.

⁸ This safety law was designed for ancient flat-roofed houses.

⁹ The Qal verb פֶּן־תִּקְדָּשׁ (‘becomes consecrated’) has the idea of being holy or being treated with special care; some take the meaning as ‘be off-limits’, or ‘forfeited’, i.e., the total produce of the vineyard, both crops and grapes, have to be forfeited to the sanctuary (cf. Ex 29:37, 30:29, Lv 6:18, 27, Nb 16:37–38, Hg 2:12).

¹⁰ The prohibitions of vv. 10–11 reflect primitive taboos: the mixing of kinds was thought to violate the differences God has ordained (Lv 19:19).

¹¹ The term שֵׁעִטָּנוֹ (‘woven together’) occurs only here and in Lv 19:19; the general meaning is clear even if the etymology is not.

¹² The literal translation of ‘tassels’ (גְּדָלִים – the WEBBE has ‘fringes’) is ‘twisted threads’; the term seems to be synonymous with צִיצִית in Nb 15:38, a passage instructing Israel to remember the Covenant; perhaps that is the purpose of the tassels here as well.

¹³ The literal translation of ‘sleeps with her’ is ‘goes (in)to her’, a Hebrew euphemistic idiom for sexual relations.

¹⁴ The literal translation of ‘defames her’ is ‘brings against her a bad name’.

¹⁵ In light of v. 17, this ‘evidence’ would evidently be blood-stained sheets indicative of the first instance of intercourse.

לָהּ בְּתוּלִים: ^{טו} וְלָקַח אָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה וְאִמָּהּ וְהוֹצִיאוּ
 אֶת־בְּתוּלֵי הַנַּעֲרָה אֶל־זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַשְּׁעָרָה: ^{טז} וְאָמַר
 אָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה אֶל־הַזִּקְנִים אֶת־בְּתִי נָתַתִּי לְאִישׁ הַזֶּה
 לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּשְׁנָאָהּ: ^{יז} וְהִנֵּה־הוּא שָׁם עָלִילַת דְּבָרִים
 לֵאמֹר לֹא־מָצָאתִי לְבַתָּךְ בְּתוּלִים וְאֵלֶּה בְּתוּלֵי
 בְּתִי וּפָרְשׁוּ הַשְּׂמָלָה לִפְנֵי זִקְנֵי הָעִיר: ^{יח} וְלָקְחוּ
 זִקְנֵי הָעִיר־הַהוּא אֶת־הָאִישׁ וַיִּסְרוּ אֹתוֹ: ^{יט} וְעָנְשׁוּ
 אֹתוֹ מָאָה כֶּסֶף וְנָתְנוּ לְאָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה כִּי הוֹצִיָא שָׁם
 רָע עַל בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא־תִהְיֶה לְאִשָּׁה לְאִיּוֹכֵל
 לְשִׁלְחָה כָּל־יָמָיו: {ס}

^כ וְאִם־אָמַת הִיָּה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה לֹא־נִמְצְאוּ בְּתוּלִים
 לַנַּעֲרָה: ^{כא} וְהוֹצִיאוּ אֶת־הַנַּעֲרָה אֶל־פֶּתַח בֵּית־אָבִיהָ
 וּסְקָלוּהָ אָנָשִׁי עִירָהּ בָּאֲבָנִים וּמָתָה כִּי־עָשְׂתָה
 נְבִלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְזָנוֹת בֵּית אָבִיהָ וּבִעֲרַת הָרַע
 מִקִּרְבָּךְ: {ס}

^{כב} כִּי־יִמָּצָא אִישׁ שֹׁכֵב עִם־אִשָּׁה בְּעִלְת־בְּעַל
 וּמָתוּ גַם־שְׁנֵיהֶם הָאִישׁ הַשֹּׁכֵב עִם־הָאִשָּׁה
 וְהָאִשָּׁה וּבִעֲרַת הָרַע מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

and mother must then take her and produce evidence of her virginity before the elders of the town at the gate. ¹⁶ The girl's father shall then declare to the elders, "I gave this man my daughter for a wife and he has rejected her, ¹⁷ and now he charges her with misconduct: I found your daughter was not a virgin, he says; but the evidence of my daughter's virginity is here;" and they shall spread the cloth out before the elders of the town. ¹⁸ Then the elders of the town shall take the man and punish him ¹⁹ and fine him one hundred silver shekels for defaming a virgin of Israel and give this money to the girl's father. She shall be his wife; he may never divorce her as long as he lives.

²⁰ "But if the accusation that the girl cannot show the evidence of her virginity is substantiated, ²¹ they shall take her to the door of her father's house and her fellow citizens shall stone her to death for having committed an infamy in Israel by disgracing her father's House. You must banish this evil from your midst.

²² "If a man is caught sleeping with another man's wife, both must die, the man who has slept with her and the woman herself. You must banish this evil from Israel.

¹⁶ The literal translation of 'rejected' is 'hated'.

¹⁷ The literal translation of 'cloth' is 'garment'.

¹⁸ In place of 'punish', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'flog'.

¹⁹ For the last sentence, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "She shall be his wife and, all his life, he may not repudiate her."

²⁰ For this verse, here with the NJB, the NRSV reads, "If, however, this charge is true, that evidence of the young woman's virginity was not found."

²¹ The term נְבִלָה ('infamy') refers to a moral lapse so serious as to jeopardize the whole community (cf. Gn 34:7, Jg 19:23, 20:6, 10, Jr 29:23).

²² Adultery, a violation of the 7th Commandment, was punishable by death (Lv 18:20, 20:10).

כג כי יהיה נער בתולה מארשה לאיש ומצאה
איש בעיר ושכב עמה: כד והוצאתם את-שניהם
אל-שער העיר ההוא וסקלתם אתם באבנים
ומתו את-הנער על-דבר אשר לא-צעקה בעיר
ואת-האיש על-דבר אשר-ענה את-אשת רעהו
ובערת הרע מקרבך: {ס}

כה ואם-בשדה ימצא האיש את-הנער המארשה
והחזיק-בה האיש ושכב עמה ומת האיש אשר-
שכב עמה לבדו: כו ולנער לא-תעשה דבר אין
לנער חטא מות כי כאשר יקום איש על-רעהו
ורצחו נפש בן הדבר הזה: כז כי בשדה מצאה
צעקה הנער המארשה ואין מושיע לה: {ס}

כח כי-ימצא איש נער בתולה אשר לא-ארשה
ותפשה ושכב עמה ונמצאו: כט ונתן האיש
השכב עמה לאבי הנער חמשים כסף ולו-תהיה
לאשה תחת אשר ענה לא-יוכל שלחה כל-
ימיו: {ס}

23 “If there is a virgin who is engaged to a man, and another man encounters her in the town and sleeps with her, 24 you shall take them both out to the gate of the town and stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry for help, being in the town; and the man, because he has violated the wife of his neighbour. You must banish this evil from your midst.

25 “But if the man has met the betrothed girl in the open country and has taken her by force and lain with her, only the man who lay with her shall die; 26 you must do nothing to the girl, for hers is no capital offence. The case is like that of a man who attacks his neighbour and murders him; 27 for he came across her in the open country and the betrothed girl could have cried out without anyone coming to her rescue.

28 “If a man comes across a virgin who is not betrothed, grabs her and lies with her and they are caught in the act, 29 the man who has lain with her must give the girl’s father fifty silver shekels; she shall be his wife since he has violated her and, as long as he lives, he may not repudiate her.

23 Intercourse with a betrothed virgin is considered as adultery because the woman is already, in effect, another man’s wife.

24 The literal translation of ‘violated’ is ‘humbled’.

25 After ‘the man who lay with her’, the MT adds the somewhat repetitive ‘only him’.

26 In place of ‘neighbour’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘fellow’.

27 For this verse, the NRSV reads, “Since he found her in the open country, the engaged woman may have cried for help, but there was no one to rescue her.”

28 In place of ‘they are’, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has ‘he is’.

29 The money payment to be given to the father is the marriage present (Ex 22:16–17). A ‘shekel’ is about 10g.

DEUTERONOMY 23

דברים פרק כג

- א לֹא־יִקַּח אִישׁ אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אָבִיו וְלֹא יִגְלֶה כְּנָף אָבִיו: {ס}
- ב לֹא־יָבֹא פְּצוּע־דָּבָא וּכְרוּת שִׁפְכָה בְּקֶהֱל יְהוָה: {ס}
- ג לֹא־יָבֹא מִמְזֹר בְּקֶהֱל יְהוָה גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי לֹא־יָבֹא לוֹ בְּקֶהֱל יְהוָה: {ס}
- ד לֹא־יָבֹא עַמּוֹנִי וּמוֹאָבִי בְּקֶהֱל יְהוָה גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי לֹא־יָבֹא לָהֶם בְּקֶהֱל יְהוָה עַד־עוֹלָם: ה עַל־דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־קִדְּמוּ אֶתְכֶם בִּלְחֶם וּבַמַּיִם בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֲשֶׁר שָׂכַר עָלֶיךָ אֶת־בַּלְעָם בֶּן־בְּעֹזֹר מִפְּתוֹר אֲרָם נְהָרִים לְקַלְלֶךָ: ו וְלֹא־אָבָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְעַת אֶל־בַּלְעָם וַיַּהֲפֹךְ יְהוָה אֶת־הָאָלְהִיָּךְ
- 1 "A man must not take his father's wife and must not uncover his father's skirt.
- 2 "A man whose testicles are crushed or whose penis is cut off shall not enter the assembly of Yahweh.
- 3 No bastard may enter the assembly of Yahweh; even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may enter the assembly of Yahweh.
- 4 No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of Yahweh; not even their descendants to the tenth generation may ever enter the assembly of Yahweh. 5 For, they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your journey out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram of the Two Rivers to curse you. 6 But Yahweh your God did not listen to Balaam, and Yahweh your God turned the curse into a

DEUTERONOMY 23

- 1 In the NRSV, this verse is 22:30. Therein, the verse numbers of this chapter are accordingly decremented. To 'spread the fold' (of a cloak) over a woman signifies marriage (Rt 3:9, Ezk 16:8); thus, to 'uncover the skirt' here expresses the violation of a husband's rights.
- 2 Deuteronomy preserves and comments on certain old rules for deciding doubtful cases as regards participation in the assembly of the Israelite community: the term translated 'assembly' (קֶהֱל) does not refer here to the nation as such but to the formal services of the tabernacle or temple. Eunuchs are excluded (compare Lv 21:17–23), who in ancient pagan religions were temple priests, and perhaps also children of incestuous union (Lv 18:6–18).
- 3 The only other occurrence of the Hebrew word מִמְזֹר ('bastard') is in Zc 9:6 and its exact meaning is unknown. Jewish exegesis usually takes it to mean the descendants of marriages between Israelites and foreigners, and refers to Ne 13:23 (where, however, the word does not appear).
- 4 In contrast to 2:9 & 19, which are exceptional, the traditional hostility towards Moab and Ammon reappears here.
- 5 The explanatory reasons given here are both concerned with Moab (see #2:1 & #Nb 22:2) and are later in date.
- 6 NETB omits the 2nd occurrence of 'Yahweh your God' in this verse, considering the phrase redundant in contemporary English.

לְךָ אֶת־הַקְּלָלָה לְבִרְכָּהּ כִּי אֶהְבֶּךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
 ז' לֹא־תִדְרֹשׁ שְׁלָמָם וְטִבְתָּם כָּל־יְמֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם: {ס}
 ח' לֹא־תִתְעַב אֲדָמִי כִּי אַחִיךָ הוּא לֹא־תִתְעַב מִצְרִי
 כִּי־גֵר הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶצוֹ: ט' בָּנִים אֲשֶׁר־יוֹלְדוּ לָהֶם דּוֹר
 שְׁלִישִׁי יָבֹא לָהֶם בְּקֹהֶל יְהוָה: {ס}
 י' כִּי־תֵצֵא מַחֲנֶה עַל־אֹיְבֶיךָ וְנִשְׁמַרְתָּ מִכָּל דְּבַר
 רָע: י"א כִּי־יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִהְיֶה טָהוֹר
 מִקְרַה־לַּיְלָה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה לֹא יָבֹא אֶל־
 תוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֶה: י"ב וְהָיָה לַפְּנוֹת־עֶרֶב יִרְחֹץ בַּמַּיִם
 וּכְבָּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יָבֹא אֶל־תוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֶה: י"ג וַיֵּד תִּהְיֶה
 לְךָ מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֵּצֵאת שָׁמָּה חוּץ: י"ד וַיִּתֵּד תִּהְיֶה
 לְךָ עַל־אֲזָנֶיךָ וְהָיָה בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ חוּץ וְחִפְרָתָה בָּהּ
 וְשָׁבַת וְכִסִּית אֶת־צִאֲתֶךָ: טו' כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 מֵתֵהֵלְךָ בְּקֶרֶב מַחֲנֶיךָ לְהַצִּילְךָ וּלְתֵת אֹיְבֶיךָ

blessing for you, because Yahweh your God loved you.⁷ As long as you live, you shall not seek their welfare or their prosperity.

⁸ “You are not to detest the Edomite, for he is your brother; nor the Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land.⁹ The third generation of children born to these may enter the assembly of Yahweh.

¹⁰ “When you are in camp, at war with your enemies, you must keep clear of all evil.¹¹ If any man among you is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, he must go out of the camp and not come into it again;¹² towards evening, he must wash himself, and he may return to the camp at sunset.¹³ You must have a latrine outside the camp and go out to this;¹⁴ and you must have a spade among your equipment, and with this spade, when you go outside to ease yourself, you must dig a hole and cover your excrement.¹⁵ For Yahweh your God goes about within your camp to guard you and to deliver your enemies to you.

⁷ In place of ‘as long as you live’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘for all ages to come’.

⁸ The NRSV has ‘kin’ in place of ‘brother’ (here following the MT & NJB), and NETB has ‘relative’.

⁹ This friendly attitude towards Edomites and Egyptians is surprising. The mention of Edomites as ‘brothers’ links the passage to others in which Edom and Israel are so called (Nb 20:14, Am 1:11, Ob vv. 10 & 12), even though Edom is blamed for having behaved badly.

¹⁰ The context makes clear that ‘evil’ refers to a matter of ritual impurity, not moral impurity, so it is *evil* in the sense that it disbars one from certain religious activity.

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘nocturnal emission’ is ‘nocturnal happening’; the phrase here is euphemistic for some kind of bodily emission such as excrement or semen – see Lv 15:16–18, 22:4).

¹² In place of ‘at sunset’, here following the NJB & NETB, the NRSV has ‘when the sun has set’.

¹³ The literal translation of ‘latrine’ is ‘so that one may go outside there’; the expression is euphemistic.

¹⁴ The NRSV has ‘trowel’ in place of ‘spade’ (here following NETB) and the NJB has ‘mattock’.

¹⁵ The expression עֲרֹת דָּכָר (‘anything improper’) refers specifically to sexual organs and, by extension, to any function associated with them.

לִפְנֵיךָ וְהָיָה מִחֲנִיֶּךָ קֹדֶשׁ וְלֹא־יִרְאֶה בְּךָ עֲרוֹת
דְּבַר וְשָׁב מֵאַחֲרֶיךָ: {ס}

טז לֹא־תִסְגִּיר עֶבֶד אֶל־אֲדֹנָיו אֲשֶׁר־יִנָּצֵל אֵלֶיךָ
מֵעַם אֲדֹנָיו: יז עִמָּךְ יֵשֵׁב בְּקִרְבְּךָ בְּמִקּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־
יִבְחַר בְּאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ בְּטוֹב לוֹ לֹא תוֹנְנוּ: {ס}

יח לֹא־תִהְיֶה קְדִשָּׁה מִבָּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה
קֹדֶשׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: יט לֹא־תָבִיא אֶתְנֶן זֹנָה וּמַחֲרִיר
כָּלֵב בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְכָל־גִּידָר כִּי תוֹעֲבַת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ גַּם־שְׁנֵיהֶם: {ס}

כ לֹא־תִשְׁיֶךָ לְאָחִיךָ גֶּשֶׁךְ בָּסָף גֶּשֶׁךְ אֹכֵל גֶּשֶׁךְ כָּל־
דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׁךְ: כא לֹנְכָרִי תִשְׁיֶךָ וְלֹאֲחִיךָ לֹא
תִשְׁיֶךָ לְמַעַן יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל מַשְׁלַח יָדְךָ
עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: {ס}

כב כִּי־תִדָּר גִּידָר לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תֵאָחֵר לְשִׁלְמוֹ
כִּי־דָרַשׁ יִדְרָשְׁנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מֵעַמָּךְ וְהָיָה בְּךָ

Your camp must therefore be a holy place; Yahweh must not see anything improper among you or he would turn away from you.

16 “You must not return an escaped slave to his master when he has run away to you. 17 He shall live with you, among you, wherever he pleases in any one of your towns he chooses; you are not to molest him.

18 “There must be no sacred prostitute among the women of Israel, and none among the men of Israel. 19 You must not bring to the house of Yahweh your God the pay of a harlot or the wage of a dog, whatever vow you may have made, for both are detestable to Yahweh your God.

20 “You must not lend on interest to your brother, on money, food, or whatever may earn interest. 21 You may lend with interest to a foreigner but you must not lend with interest to your brother, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all you do, in the land you go in to possess.

22 “If you make a vow to Yahweh your God, do not be lazy in keeping it; be sure that Yahweh your God requires it: it would be sinful. 23 But,

16 At the end of this verse, the MT adds ‘from his master’ but this is redundant in contemporary English.

17 The literal translation of ‘towns’ is ‘gates’.

18 The term translated ‘sacred prostitute’ (קְדִשָּׁה) refers to the fertility cults that employed female and male prostitutes in rituals designed to evoke agricultural and even human fecundity (cf. Gn 38:21–22, 1K 14:24, 15:12, 22:47, 2K 23:7, Ho 4:14); the male cultic prostitute was called קְדִשׁ.

19 The term ‘dog’ is an opprobrious term for a male prostitute; the NRSV uses the literal phrase.

20 In place of ‘brother’, here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV & NETB have ‘fellow Israelite’, as also in the following verse.

21 NETB has ‘if you keep this command’ in place of ‘so that’, here following the NJB & NRSV.

22 In the 2nd part of this verse, the MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which is reflected in the translation by ‘be sure’.

23 The NRSV has ‘incur guilt’ in place of ‘be sinful’, here following NETB (as also in the previous verse).

חטא: כג וְכִי תִחְדָּל לִנְדֹּר לֹא־יִהְיֶה בָּךְ חֲטָא:
 כד מוֹצֵא שְׂפָתֶיךָ תִּשְׁמֹר וְעָשִׂיתָ כַּאֲשֶׁר נִדְרָתָ
 לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נִדְבָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ בְּפִיךָ: {ס}
 כה כִּי תִבֹּא בְּכֶרֶם רֵעֶךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ עֲנָבִים כְּנֹפֶשֶׁךָ
 שְׂבַעְךָ וְאַל־כִּלִּיךָ לֹא תִתֵּן: {ס}
 כו כִּי תִבֹּא בְּקֹמֶת רֵעֶךָ וְקִטְפַּת מְלִילָת בִּידֶךָ
 וְחֶרֶם לֹא תִנִּיף עַל קֹמֶת רֵעֶךָ: {ס}

if you refrain from making a vow, it will not be sinful. ²⁴ Whatever
 passes your lips you must keep to, and you must fulfil the vow that you
 have freely made with your own mouth to Yahweh your God.

²⁵ “If you go into your neighbour’s vineyard, you may eat your fill of
 grapes, as many as you wish, but you must not put any in your basket.

²⁶ “If you go into your neighbour’s ripe corn, you may pick the ears with
 your hand but you must not use a sickle on your neighbour’s corn.

²⁴ NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “such as what you have vowed to the Lord your God as a freewill offering.”

²⁵ Neighbours’ goodwill should not be presumed upon to the point of stealing from their harvest.

²⁶ In place of ‘ripe’ (twice in this verse), here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have ‘standing’.

DEUTERONOMY 24

דברים פרק כד

^א כִּי־יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה וּבִעְלָהּ וְהָיָה אִם־לֹא תִמְצָא חֵן בְּעֵינָיו כִּי־מָצָא בָּהּ עֲרוֹת דָּבָר וְכָתַב לָהּ סֵפֶר כְּרִיתָת וְנָתַן בְּיָדָהּ וְשָׁלַחָהּ מִבֵּיתוֹ: ^ב וַיֵּצֵאָה מִבֵּיתוֹ וְהָלַכָה וְהָיְתָה לְאִישׁ־אַחֵר: ^ג וְשָׁנְאָהּ הָאִישׁ הָאֲחֵרוֹן וְכָתַב לָהּ סֵפֶר כְּרִיתָת וְנָתַן בְּיָדָהּ וְשָׁלַחָהּ מִבֵּיתוֹ אוֹ כִּי יָמוּת הָאִישׁ הָאֲחֵרוֹן אֲשֶׁר־לָקַחָהּ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה: ^ד לֹא־יֻכַּל בְּעַלָּהּ הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַחָהּ לָשׁוּב לְקַחְתָּהּ לְהִיזֹת לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה אַחֲרֵי אֲשֶׁר הִטְמָאָה כִּי־תוֹעֵבָה הוּא לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא תַחֲטִיֵּא אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה: {ס}

^ה כִּי־יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה חֲדָשָׁה לֹא יֵצֵא בַּצִּבָּא וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר עָלָיו לְכָל־דָּבָר נָקִי יְהִיָּה לְבֵיתוֹ שָׁנָה אַחַת וְשָׂמַח אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח: ^ו לֹא־יִחָבֵל רַחִים וּרְכָב כִּי־נַפֵּשׁ הוּא חֵבֶל: {ס}

¹ When a man takes a wife and marries her, but she has not pleased him and he has found some indecent in her, so he has made out a writ of divorce for her and handed it to her and then dismissed her from his house, ² and she leaves his home and goes to become another man's wife, ³ then suppose this second husband dislikes her, makes out a writ of divorce for her, hands it to her and dismisses her from his house, or if this other husband dies, ⁴ her first husband, who has repudiated her, may not take her back as his wife now that she has been defiled. For, that is detestable in Yahweh's eyes, and you must not bring guilt on the country that Yahweh your God is giving you as your heritage.

⁵ "If a man is newly married, he shall not join the army nor shall he be pestered at home; he shall be left at home free of all obligations for one year to bring joy to the wife he has taken. ⁶ No man may take a mill or a millstone in a pledge; that would be to take life itself in a pledge.

DEUTERONOMY 24

¹ The phrase עֲרוֹת דָּבָר ('indecent thing') refers here to some gross sexual impropriety (see #23:14); though the term usually has to do only with indecent exposure of the genitals, it can also include such behaviour as adultery (cf. Lv 18:6–18, 20:11,17,20–21, Ezk 22:10, 23:29, Ho 2:10). Jesus, citing this text (Mt 5:31–32, 19:7–9), clearly had adultery in view, as the narrative uses the Greek term *πορνεία* to identify the only justification for divorce. Vv. 1–4 reflect an old case law dealing with remarriage after divorce.

² The NRSV includes the words 'and she leaves his home' as part of v. 1; the LXX lacks the phrase.

³ The literal translation of 'dislikes' (here following the NRSV) is 'hates' (the NJB has 'takes a dislike to').

⁴ The issue here is not divorce and its grounds *per se* but prohibition of remarriage to a mate whom one has previously divorced.

⁵ In place of 'bring joy to' (שָׂמַח), here following the MT (and NJB), the Peshitta (and others) read 'enjoy'; the NRSV has 'be happy with'.

⁶ Since daily life depends upon bread, the mill cannot be taken as security for a loan (vv. 10–13).

ז כִּי־יִמָּצָא אִישׁ גִּנֵּב נֶפֶשׁ מֵאֶחָיו מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְהִתְעַמְרָבוּ וּמָכְרוּ וּמָת הַגִּנֵּב הַהוּא וּבִעֲרָתָהּ הָרַע
מִקֶּרְבְּךָ: {ס}

ח הַשֹּׁמֵר בְּנֹגַע־הַצֹּרֶעֶת לְשֹׁמֵר מְאֹד וְלַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל
אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְרוּ אֲתָכֶם הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתֶם
תִּשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: ט זְכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמִרְיָם בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם: {ס}

י כִּי־תִשָּׂה בִרְעֶךָ מִשְׁאֵת מְאוֹמָה לֹא־תִבָּא אֶל־
בֵּיתוֹ לַעֲבֹט עִבְטוֹ: יא בַּחוּץ תַּעֲמֹד וְהָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
אֶתָּה נִשֶּׂה בּוֹ יוֹצִיא אֵלֶיךָ אֶת־הָעִבּוֹט הַחוּצָה:
יב וְאִם־אִישׁ עָנִי הוּא לֹא תִשָּׁב בַּעֲבֹטוֹ: יג הֲשִׁב
תִּשָּׁב לוֹ אֶת־הָעִבּוֹט כְּבוֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְשָׁכַב
בְּשִׁלְמָתוֹ וּבִרְכָּךְ וְלֵךְ תִּהְיֶה צְדָקָה לְפָנַי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ: {ס}

7 “If anyone is caught, having kidnapped one of his brother Israelites, whether he makes him his slave or sells him, that thief must die. You must banish this evil from your midst.

8 “In a case of a virulent skin disease, watch carefully and do all that the Levitical priests direct you to do. You are to keep and observe all that I have commanded them. 9 Remember what Yahweh your God did to Miriam when you were on your way out of Egypt.

10 “If you are making your fellow a loan on pledge of any kind, you are not to go into his house and seize the pledge. 11 You must stay outside, and the man to whom you are making the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. 12 If the man is poor, you are not sleep in the garment given to you as his pledge; 13 you must return it to him at sunset so that he can sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it will be a good action on your part in the sight of Yahweh your God.

7 The literal translation of ‘brother Israelites’ is ‘his brothers, the sons of Israel’; the terms ‘brothers’ and ‘sons of Israel’ are in apposition: the second defines the first more specifically. The literal translation of ‘banish’ is ‘burn’ (see #19:19).

8 In place of ‘watch carefully and do’, here following the MT, the NJB has ‘take care that you faithfully observe and follow’.

9 The reference is to Miriam having contracted leprosy because of her intemperate challenge to Moses’ leadership (Nb 12:1–15); the purpose for the allusion here appears to be the assertion of the theocratic leadership of the priests who, like Moses, should not be despised.

10 In place of ‘of any kind’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘whatever it may be’ (and moves the phrase to the end of the verse).

11 The ‘pledge’ refers to something offered as security for the debt.

12 The NJB lacks, “the garment given you as,” here from the NRSV. The literal translation of the verse is, “you are not to go to bed in his pledge,” since originally the pledge was the borrower’s cloak (Ex 22:25ff). What is in view is the use of clothing as guarantee for the repayment of loans, a matter already addressed elsewhere (23:19–20, 24:6; cf. Ex 22:25–26, Lv 25:35–37).

13 For ‘must return’, the MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis.

י^ד לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂק שִׁכִּיר עֲנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן מֵאַחִיד אוֹ מִגֵּרָךְ
אֲשֶׁר בְּאַרְצֶךָ בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ: טו^ו בְּיוֹמוֹ תִּתֵּן שְׂכָרוֹ וְלֹא־
תָּבוֹא עָלָיו הַשֹּׁמֵשׁ כִּי עֲנִי הוּא וְאֵלָיו הוּא נָשָׂא
אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ וְלֹא־יִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ אֶל־יְהוָה וְהָיָה בָּךְ
חַטָּא: {ס}

טז^ז לֹא־יּוֹמְתוּ אָבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וּבָנִים לֹא־יּוֹמְתוּ עַל־
אָבוֹת אִישׁ בְּחַטָּאוֹ יוֹמְתוֹ: {ס}

יז^ח לֹא תִטֶּה מִשְׁפַּט גֵּר יְתוֹם וְלֹא תִחַבֵּל בְּגֶד
אִלְמָנָה: יח^ט וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיִּפְדֶּךָ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁם עַל־כֵּן אֲנֹכִי מְצֻוֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־
הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה: {ס}

יט^י כִּי תִקְצֹר קְצִירְךָ בְּשָׂדֶךָ וְשִׁכַּחְתָּ עֹמֶר בְּשָׂדֶה לֹא
תָּשׁוּב לִקְחָתוֹ לַגֵּר לִיתוֹם וְלִאִלְמָנָה יְהִיָּה לְמַעַן
יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ: {ס}

כ^י כִּי תַחַבֵּט זֵיתֶךָ לֹא תִפְאַר אַחֲרֶיךָ לַגֵּר לִיתוֹם
וְלִאִלְמָנָה יְהִיָּה: כא^{יב} כִּי תִבְצֹר כֶּרֶמְךָ לֹא תַעֲזוֹלֵל

14 "You must not exploit the hired servant who is poor and destitute, whether he your brother or a stranger who lives in your towns. 15 You must pay him his wage each day, before sunset, for he is poor and is anxious for it, or he may appeal to Yahweh against you, and it would be a sin for you.

16 "Fathers may not be put to death for their sons, nor sons for fathers. Each must be put to death for his own crime.

17 "You must not pervert justice in dealing with a stranger or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge. 18 Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that Yahweh your God redeemed you from there. That is why I lay this charge on you.

19 "When reaping the harvest in your field, if you have forgotten a sheaf in the field, do not go back to it. It is for the stranger, the orphan and the widow, so that Yahweh your God may bless you in all your labours.

20 "When you beat your olive trees you must not strip what is left; anything left is for the stranger, the orphan and the widow. 21 When you

14 The literal translation of 'towns' is 'gates'.

15 The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "... and you would incur guilt."

16 This verse is of great importance for the doctrine of individual responsibility. The pinnacle is an innovation (see 5:9, Ex 34:7, Jos 7:24). It is applied in 2K 14:6, affirmed in Jr 31:29-30 and developed in Ezk 14:12-20 & 18:10-20.

17 For the first part of this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice."

18 For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Therefore I command you to do this."

19 This law was later applied in the story of Ruth who, as a poor widow, was allowed by generous Boaz to glean in his fields (Rt 2:1-13).

20 In place of 'strip what is left', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'go over the branches twice'; the literal translation is 'knock down after you'.

21 The literal translation of 'glean what is left' (here following the NRSV) is 'glean after you'.

אֲחֲרֶיךָ לִגְר לִיתוֹם וְלֹאֲלֻמָּנָה יִהְיֶה: ^{כב} וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי־
עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־כֵּן אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה: {ס} harvest your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it is for the stranger, the
orphan and the widow. ²² Remember you were a slave in the land of
Egypt; that is why I lay this charge on you.

²² For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “therefore I am commanding you to do this.”

DEUTERONOMY 25

דברים פרק כה

^א כִּי־יִהְיֶה רִיב בֵּין אָנָשִׁים וְנָגְשׁוּ אֶל־הַמִּשְׁפָּט וּשְׁפָטוּם וְהַצְדִּיקוּ אֶת־הַצְדִּיק וְהִרְשִׁיעוּ אֶת־הָרָשָׁע: ^ב וְהָיָה אִם־בֶּן הַכּוֹת הָרָשָׁע וְהַפִּילוּ הַשֹּׁפֵט וְהִכּוּהוּ לִפְנֵי כָדִי רִשְׁעוֹתָיו בְּמִסְפָּר: ^ג אַרְבָּעִים יִכּוּ לֹא יִסִּיף פְּנִי־יָסִיף לְהַכּוֹתוֹ עַל־אַלֶּה מִכָּה רַבָּה וְנִקְלָה אַחֲדָה לְעֵינֶיךָ:

^ד לֹא־תַחֲסֹם שׁוֹר בְּדִישׁוֹ: {ס}

^ה כִּי־יֵשְׁבוּ אֲחִים יַחְדָּו וּמֵת אֶחָד מֵהֶם וּבֶן אֵין־לּוֹ לֹא־תִהְיֶה אִשְׁת־הַמֵּת הַחוּצָה לְאִישׁ זָר יִבְמָה יָבֵא עָלֶיהָ וּלְקַחְהָ לָּהּ לְאִשָּׁה וּיִבְמָה: ^ו וְהָיָה הַבְּכוֹר אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד יִקָּוֶם עַל־שֵׁם אָחִיו הַמֵּת וְלֹא־יִמָּחָה שְׁמוֹ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: ^ז וְאִם־לֹא יִחְפֹּץ הָאִישׁ לְקַחַת אֶת־יִבְמָתוֹ וְעָלְתָה יִבְמָתוֹ הַשְּׂעִרָה אֶל־הַזִּקְנִים

¹ "If men have a dispute, they must go to court for the judges to judge them; they must justify the innocent and condemn the guilty. ² If the guilty man deserves a flogging, the judge shall make him lie down and have him flogged before him, by number according to his offence. ³ He may impose forty strokes but no more; if the flogging is too severe, your brother may be degraded before you.

⁴ "You must not muzzle an ox when he treads out the corn.

⁵ "If brothers live together and one of them dies childless, the dead man's wife must not marry a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother must come to her and, exercising his levirate, marry her, ⁶ and the first son she bears shall take the dead brother's name, so his name will not be obliterated from Israel. ⁷ But, if the man declines to take his brother's wife, she must go to the elders at the gate and say, "My

DEUTERONOMY 25

¹ Vv. 1-3 form an old case law that imposes judicial restrictions on corporal punishment.

² Literally translated, this verse opens, "if the evil one is a son of a smiting."

³ The NJB adds 'seriously injured and' before 'degraded'.

⁴ This verse is a law in the humane spirit of 22:6-7.

⁵ Vv. 5-10 detail the 'levirate' law. A widow who has no son is taken to wife by her brother-in-law (Latin *levir* translated from the Hebrew **יָבֵם**); the eldest son of this marriage is reckoned the dead husband's, whose heir he becomes. This law allowed the perpetuation of the family name and the stability of the family property. The story of Tamar (Gn 38) emphasises the first, the story of Ruth the second; in Rt 4, the privileges and duties of the brother-in-law are extended to the 'avenger' (see #Nb. 35:19).

⁶ Since a man's name was, according to ancient thought, the bearer of his person, a father lived on in his son (Gn 48:15-16).

⁷ As in the case of Tamar (Gn 38), the wife had the obligation to see that the duty of a husband's brother (or *levir*) was performed.

וַאֲמַרְהָ מֵאֵן יִבְמִי לְהִקִּים לְאָחִיו שֵׁם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא
 אָבָה יִבְמִי: ^ח וְקִרְאוּ-לוֹ זִקְנֵי-עִירוֹ וְדִבְרוּ אֵלָיו
 וְעָמַד וְאָמַר לֹא חָפַצְתִּי לְקַחְתָּהּ: ^ט וְנִגְשָׁה יִבְמֹתָ
 אֵלָיו לְעֵינָי הַזִּקְנִים וְחָלְצָה נַעַלָּהּ מֵעַל רַגְלָהּ וְיָרְקָה
 בְּפָנָיו וְעָנְתָה וְאָמְרָה כֹּכָה יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-
 יִבְנֶה אֶת-בֵּית אָחִיו: ^י וְנִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל בֵּית
 חִלּוץ הַנֶּעֱל: {ס}

^{יא} כִּי-יִנָּצוּ אֲנָשִׁים יַחְדּוֹ אִישׁ וְאָחִיו וְקָרְבָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ
 הָאֶחָד לְהַצִּיל אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ מִיַּד מַכְּהוֹ וּשְׁלַחַה יָדָהּ
 וְהַחֲזִיקָהּ בְּמַבְשָׁיו: ^{יב} וְקָצַתָּה אֶת-כַּפָּהּ לֹא תַחוֹס
 עֵינֶיהָ: {ס}

^{יג} לֹא-יִהְיֶה לָּךְ בְּכִיסֶּךָ אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה וְקֹטָנָה:
^{יד} לֹא-יִהְיֶה לָּךְ בְּבֵיתְךָ אֵיפָה וְאֵיפָה גְּדוֹלָה
 וְקֹטָנָה: ^{טו} אֶבֶן שְׁלֵמָה וְצֶדֶק יִהְיֶה-לָּךְ אֵיפָה

brother-in-law refuses to continue the name of his brother in Israel; he declines to exercise his levirate for me.” ⁸ The elders of the town shall summon the man and talk to him. If he persists, saying, “I refuse to take her,” ⁹ then his brother’s wife shall go up to him in view of the elders, take the sandal off his foot, spit in his face, and declare, “This is what we do to the man who does not restore his brother’s house,” ¹⁰ and the man shall be surnamed in Israel, House of the Unshod.

¹¹ “When two men are fighting together, if the wife of one intervenes to protect her husband from the other’s blows by putting her hand out and seizing the other by his genitals, ¹² you shall cut her hand off; show no pity.

¹³ “You are not to keep two different weights in your bag, one heavy, one light. ¹⁴ You are not to keep two different measures in your house, one large, one small. ¹⁵ You must keep one weight, full and accurate, so

⁸ The NJB has ‘appears before them’ in place of ‘persists’, here following the NRSV.

⁹ The removal of the sandal showed relinquishment of any claim to his dead brother’s estate (cf. Rt 4:7–8); spitting in the face was a sign of utmost disgust or disdain, an emotion the rejected widow would feel toward her uncooperative brother-in-law (cf. Nb 12:14, Lv 15:8).

¹⁰ It is not very clear what legal consequences of renunciation were: probably, the widow retained possession of her husband’s property. The ritual does not have the same sense in Rt 4:8.

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘genitals’ is ‘shameful parts’; the level of specificity given this term in modern translations varies: ‘private parts’ (NJB, NAB, NIV); ‘genitals’ (NRSV, NETB, NASB); ‘testicles’ (NLT).

¹² This is another law (compare the preceding one) intended to make it possible for a man to produce offspring, in this case by protecting his genitals, the spring of fertility.

¹³ The literal translation of ‘one heavy, one light’ is ‘a large and a small’ but the issue here is the weight.

¹⁴ The ‘measure’ referred to here is the ‘ephah’ (אֵיפָה), a unit of dry measure just under 20L.

¹⁵ The literal translation of ‘accurate’ (as NJB) is ‘righteous’; the NRSV has ‘honest’.

שְׁלֹמָה וצֶדֶק יִהְיֶה-לָּךְ לְמַעַן יֵאָרִיכוּ יָמֶיךָ עַל
הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ: ^{טז} כִּי תוֹעֲבֹת
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל-עֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה כָּל עֲשֵׂה עוֹל: {פ}

^{יז} זְכוֹר אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לָּךְ עַמְלֶק בְּדַרְךָ בְּצֹאתְכֶם
מִמִּצְרַיִם: ^{יח} אֲשֶׁר קָרָךְ בְּדַרְךָ וַיִּזְנֹב בְּךָ כָּל-
הַנֶּחֱשָׁלִים אַחֲרֶיךָ וְאַתָּה עֵיף וַיִּגַּע וְלֹא יָרָא
אֱלֹהִים: ^{יט} וְהָיָה בְּהִנִּיחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לָּךְ מְכַל-
אֵיבֶיךָ מִסָּבִיב בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָּךְ
נַחֲלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ תִּמְחֶה אֶת-זִכְרֵ עַמְלֶק מִתַּחַת
הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח: {פ}

that you may have a long life in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you. ¹⁶ For anyone who does things of this kind and acts dishonestly is abhorrent to Yahweh your God.

¹⁷ “Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey out of Egypt.

¹⁸ He met you on your way and, after you had gone by, he fell on you from the rear and cut off the stragglers; when you were faint and weary, he had no fear of God. ¹⁹ When Yahweh your God has granted you peace from all the enemies surrounding you in the land Yahweh your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you are to blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget.

¹⁶ The term translated here ‘abhorrent’ (תוֹעֲבֹת) speaks of attitudes and/or behaviours so vile as to be reprehensible to a holy God.

¹⁷ Here, the individual ancestor, ‘Amalek’ (עַמְלֶק), the namesake of the tribe, is cited as representative of the entire tribe at the time Israel was entering Canaan.

¹⁸ See Ex 17:8–16.

¹⁹ The command, ‘do not forget’, is fulfilled in 1S 15:1–33.

DEUTERONOMY 26

דברים פרק כו

א וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבוֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ נַחֲלָה וִירִשְׁתָּהּ וְיָשַׁבְתָּ בָּהּ: ב וְלָקַחְתָּ מֵרֵאשִׁית | כָּל־פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תָּבִיא מֵאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ וּשְׂמַתָּ בַטֶּנָא וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם: ג וּבֹאֲתָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הִגַּדְתִּי הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי־בֹאֲתִי אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לֵאבֹתֵינוּ לָתֵת לָנוּ:

ד וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטֶּנָא מִיָּדְךָ וְהִנִּיחוֹ לִפְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ה וְעָנִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרָמִי אֲבָד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם וַיִּגֵּר שָׁם בְּמַתִּי מֵעַט וַיְהִי־שָׁם לִגְוִי גָדוֹל עַצוֹם וָרֹב: ו וַיִּרְעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה קָשָׁה: ז וְנִצַּעְקָ

1 “When you have entered the country that Yahweh your God is giving you as heritage, when you have taken possession of it and are living in it, 2 you must set aside the first fruits of all the produce of the soil raised by you in the land Yahweh is giving you. You must put them in a basket and go to the place where Yahweh your God chooses to give his name a home. 3 You must go to the priest then in office and say to him, “Today I declare to Yahweh your God that I have come to the land Yahweh swore to our fathers he would give us.”

4 “When the priest takes the basket from your hand and lays it before the altar of Yahweh your God, 5 you must say before Yahweh your God: “My father was a wandering Aramaean; he went down into Egypt to find refuge there, few in numbers; but there he became a nation, great, mighty and strong. 6 The Egyptians ill-treated us; they gave us no peace

DEUTERONOMY 26

- ¹ The firstborn of man and beast belong to God (see #Ex 13:11); similarly, the first fruits of the soil are consecrated to him (Ex 22:28, 23:19, 34:26, Lv 2:12, 14, 23:10–17, Dt 18:4). According to Nb 18:12, they revert to the priests (see Ezk 44:30).
- ² ‘Where he chooses to give his name a home’ is a circumlocution for the sanctuary, first the Tabernacle and later the Jerusalem Temple.
- ³ In place of ‘Yahweh your God’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB, following some LXX MSS (κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ μου) has ‘Yahweh my God’ and, after the 2nd occurrence of the Divine Name in this verse, the Peshitta adds ‘your God’, to complete the usual formula.
- ⁴ In place of ‘from your hand’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has simply ‘from you’.
- ⁵ The phrase, ‘wandering Aramaean’, is a reference to Jacob’s semi-nomadic lifestyle. Though the term אֲבָד generally means ‘to perish’ or the like, a meaning ‘to go astray’ or ‘to be lost’ is also attested; the ambivalence in the MT is reflected in the versions, where Codex Vaticanus of the LXX reads ἀπέβαλεν (‘lost’) for a possibly metathesised reading found in other MSS, ἀπέλαβεν (‘received’).
- ⁶ The confession of faith in vv. 6–10 gives an outline of salvation history centred on the deliverance from Egypt.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת־קִלְנוּ
וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עֲנִינוּ וְאֶת־עֲמָלָנוּ וְאֶת־לַחְצָנוּ: ^ח וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ
יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה וּבִמְרָא
גָּדֹל וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבִמְפֹתִים: ^ט וַיְבָאֵנוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
וַיִּתֵּן־לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶרֶץ זָבֶת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ:
י וַעֲתָה הִנֵּה הֵבֵאתִי אֶת־רֵאשִׁית פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה
אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתָּה לִּי יְהוָה וְהִנַּחְתָּ לִּפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ^{יא} וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ בְּכָל־
הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבֵיתְךָ אֹתָהּ
וְהַלּוֹי וְהַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ: {ס}

^{יב} כִּי תִכְלֶה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂי תְבוּאָתְךָ בַּשָּׁנָה
הַשְּׁלִישִׁת שָׁנַת הַמַּעֲשֵׂר וְנָתַתָּה לַלּוֹי לֶגֶר לִיתוֹם
וּלְאֻלְמָנָה וְאָכְלוּ בְשַׁעְרֶיךָ וּשְׂבָעוּ: ^{יג} וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּעֶרְתִּי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִן־הַבַּיִת וְגַם נָתַתִּי
לַלּוֹי וּלְגֵר לִיתוֹם וּלְאֻלְמָנָה כְּכָל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־
צִוִּיתָנִי לֹא־עֲבַרְתִּי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי: ^{יד} לֹא־

and inflicted hard labour on us, ⁷ so we cried to Yahweh the God of our fathers. Yahweh heard our voice and saw our misery, our toil and our oppression. ⁸ Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. ⁹ He brought us here and gave us this land, a land where milk and honey flow. ¹⁰ So now I bring the first of the fruit of the soil that you, Yahweh, have given me." You must then lay them before Yahweh your God and bow down before Yahweh your God. ¹¹ Then you are to feast on all the good things Yahweh has given you, you and your household, and with you the Levite and the stranger who lives among you.

¹² "In the third year, the tithing year, when you have finished paying the tithe of your produce and have given it to the Levite, the alien, the orphan and the widow, so they may eat their fill in your towns, ¹³ you shall say before Yahweh your God: "I have cleared my house of all that was consecrated; I have given it to the Levite, the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all the commandments you gave me, not

⁷ In place of 'misery', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'affliction' and NETB has 'humiliation'.

⁸ The references here are anthropomorphisms designed to convey God's tremendously great power in rescuing Israel from their Egyptian bondage.

⁹ The NRSV & NETB end this verse with the more traditional 'a land flowing with milk and honey'; here, we follow the NJB.

¹⁰ In place of 'bow down', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'worship'.

¹¹ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house."

¹² The terms 'Levite', 'aliens', 'orphan', and 'widow' are collective singulars.

¹³ In place of 'violating', here following NETB, the NRSV has 'transgressing' and the NJB has 'going beyond'.

אֲכַלְתִּי בְּאֲנִי מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא־בְעֵרְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ בְּטָמֵא וְלֹא־
נָתַתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ לְמַת שְׁמַעְתִּי בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי עֲשִׂיתִי
כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתַנִּי: ^{טו} הִשְׁקִיפָה מִמַּעֲוֹן קֹדֶשְׁךָ מִן־
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבִרְךָ אֶת־עַמְּךָ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת הָאֲדָמָה
אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לָּנוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לַאֲבֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ
זֶבֶת חֶלֶב וְדִבְשׁ: {ס}

^{טז} הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְצִוֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־
הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וְשִׁמְרָתָם וְעֲשִׂיתָ
אוֹתָם בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: ^{יז} אֶת־יְהוָה
הָאֱמֻנָה הַיּוֹם לֵהֱיוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים וּלְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו
וּלְשָׁמֵר חֻקָּיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּלְשַׁמֵּעַ בְּקוֹלוֹ:
^{יח} וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם הָאֱמִירָה הַיּוֹם לֵהֱיוֹת לוֹ לְעַם סִגְלָה
כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לְךָ וּלְשָׁמֵר כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו: ^{יט} וְלִתְתֶּנְךָ
עֲלִיּוֹן עַל כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְתַהֲלֵה וּלְשֵׁם
וּלְתִפְאָרֶת וּלְהִיתֶנְךָ עִם־קֹדֶשׁ לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר: {פ}

violating or forgetting your commandments. ¹⁴ When in mourning, I have not eaten any of it; when unclean, I have taken none of it away; I have given none of it to the dead. I have obeyed Yahweh my God, doing all you commanded me. ¹⁵ Look down from your holy dwelling place, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the soil you have given us as you swore to our fathers, a land where milk and honey flow.”

¹⁶ “Yahweh your God today commands you to observe these laws and customs; you must keep and observe them with all your heart and all your soul. ¹⁷ You have today made this declaration about Yahweh; that he will be your God, but only if you follow his ways, keep his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and listen to his voice. ¹⁸ And Yahweh has today made this declaration about you: that you will be his very own people as he promised you, but only if you keep all his commandments. ¹⁹ Then, for praise, renown and honour, he will set you high above all the other nations he has made, and you will be a people consecrated to Yahweh, as he promised.”

¹⁴ The yield of the tithe, being consecrated to Yahweh, had to be kept free of all profanation: mourning rites (Ho 9:4) or impurity (Hg 2:13).

¹⁵ The NRSV has ‘habitation’ in place of ‘dwelling place’, here following the NJB.

¹⁶ The 2nd discourse of Moses (see #4:44) is resumed at this point and goes on until 28:68.

¹⁷ The foregoing Deuteronomic Code is the document of the Covenant, set out as a contract: Yahweh will be the God of Israel, and Israel will be his people, on condition that the latter keeps the commandments. Blessings and curses (Ch. 28) are the sanctions for observance of the contract.

¹⁸ In place of ‘very own’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘treasured’ and NETB has ‘special’.

¹⁹ Vv. 18–19 are one sentence in the MT, but the translation divides it into two sentences for stylistic reasons; the 1st clause in v. 19 gives a result of the preceding clause: when Israel keeps God’s law, God will bless them with fame and honour.

DEUTERONOMY 27

דברים פרק כז

א וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה וְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הָעָם לֵאמֹר שָׁמַר
אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵצִוֶּה אֹתְכֶם הַיּוֹם:
ב וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲבֹרוּ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן אֶל־הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ נָתַן לָךְ וַהֲקַמְתָּ לָּךְ אֲבָנִים
גְּדֹלוֹת וְשָׂדַת אֹתָם בַּשִּׂיד: ^ג וְכָתַבְתָּ עֲלֵיהֶן אֶת־
כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת בְּעֵבֶרֶךָ לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר תִּבְאֶה
אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ נָתַן לָךְ אֶרֶץ זָבַת
חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־אֲבֹתֶיךָ לָּךְ:
ד וְהָיָה בְּעֵבְרְכֶם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּקְיְמוּ אֶת־הָאֲבָנִים
הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵצִוֶּה אֹתְכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּהָר עֵיבָל
וְשָׂדַת אוֹתָם בַּשִּׂיד: ^ה וּבְנִיתָ שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִזְבֵּחַ אֲבָנִים לֹא־תִנִּיף עֲלֵיהֶם בְּרֹזָל:
ו אֲבָנִים שְׁלֵמוֹת תִּבְנֶה אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
וְהַעֲלִיתָ עָלָיו עֹלֹת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ^ו וְזִבַּחְתָּ

1 Then, Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, as follows: "Keep the entire commandment that I am commanding you today. ² On the day you have crossed over the Jordan into the land that Yahweh your God is giving you, you shall set up tall stones and cover them with plaster; ³ and you shall inscribe on them all the words of this Law, the moment you cross over, so that you may enter the land Yahweh your God is giving you, a land where milk and honey flow, as Yahweh the God of your fathers promised you.

⁴ "And when you have crossed over the Jordan, you are to set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as today I command you, and you are to coat them with plaster. ⁵ There you must build Yahweh your God an altar of stones, which no iron tool has worked. ⁶ You must build the altar to Yahweh your God of rough stones, and on this altar, you will offer burnt offerings to Yahweh your God, ⁷ and immolate communion sacrifices

DEUTERONOMY 27

- ¹ This chapter consists of three dissimilar elements: vv. 1-8, 9-10 and 11-26. Vv. 9-10 are the continuation of 26:19; the other two elements are insertions: the original author of Deuteronomy would never have ordered the construction of an altar on Mount Ebal (or Mount Gerizim, v. 4ff), and the Law written on the stones (v. 8) must have been shorter than Deuteronomy.
- ² In place of 'plaster', here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'lime'.
- ³ The NJB has 'write' in place of 'inscribe', here following the NRSV.
- ⁴ For 'Mount Ebal', the Samaritan Pentateuch has 'Mount Gerizim', which is, perhaps, the original reading, altered later during the polemics against the Samaritans, whose place of worship was on Gerizim and may have conserved the old tradition. See also vv. 12-13.
- ⁵ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "an altar of stones on which you have not used an iron tool."
- ⁶ In place of 'rough stones' (following the NJB), the NRSV (and NETB) uses, 'unhewn (whole) stones'.
- ⁷ For 'communion sacrifices', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'sacrifices of well-being' and NETB has 'fellowship offerings'.

שְׁלָמִים וְאָכַלְתָּ שָׁם וְשִׂמַּחְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
וְכָתַבְתָּ עַל־הָאֲבָנִים אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה
הַזֹּאת בְּאֵר הֵטֵב: {ס}

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם אֶל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
לֵאמֹר הַסֵּכֶת | וְשָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נְהִייתָ
לְעַם לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: 'וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת־מִצְוֹתָיו וְאֶת־חֻקָּיו אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה
הַיּוֹם: {ס}

וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
יְעֲמִדוּ לְבָרֶךְ אֶת־הָעָם עַל־הַר גְּרִזִּים בְּעֵבְרָתָם
אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן שְׁמֵעוֹן וְלֵוִי וַיהוּדָה וְיִשָּׁשְׁכָר וְיוֹסֵף
וּבִנְיָמִן: יְיָ וְאֵלֵהוּ יְעֲמִדוּ עַל־הַקֶּלְלָה בְּהַר עִיבָל
רְאוּבֵן גָּד וְאַשֶׁר וְזִבְלוֹן דָּן וְנַפְתָּלִי: יְיָ וְעָנוּ הַלְוִיִּם
וְאָמְרוּ אֶל־כָּל־אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל קוֹל רָם: {ס}

and eat them there, rejoicing in the sight of Yahweh your God. ⁸ On these stones you must inscribe all the words of this Law; cut them very clearly."

⁹ Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying: "Be silent and listen, Israel. Today you have become a people for Yahweh your God. ¹⁰ You must, therefore, listen to the voice of Yahweh your God and observe his commandments and statutes, which I am commanding you today."

¹¹ And the same day Moses gave the people this order: ¹² "When you have crossed the Jordan, the following tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon and Levi, Judah and Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. ¹³ And these shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad and Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali. ¹⁴ The Levites shall then speak, and proclaim loudly to all the Israelites:

⁸ The NJB has 'carefully' in place of 'very clearly', here following the NRSV & NETB.

⁹ The NJB subtly alters the word order in this verse, reading, 'be silent, Israel, and listen'.

¹⁰ In place of 'commanding you', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'enjoin on you'.

¹¹ Vv. 11-26 combine two ceremonies:

1 (Vv. 12-13): the tribes, divided into two groups, exchange blessings and curses. The original text has been cut short to make way for a different ceremony.

2 (Vv. 14-26): the Levites proclaim 12 curses, to which the entire people reply 'Amen'. The first and last of these are manifestly Deuteronomic; the other 10 embody prohibitions that have their parallels in the Code of the Covenant, and in the material of Lv. 18.

¹² See #4 on the names of the two mountains.

¹³ In place of 'and these', here following the NRSV, the NJB repeats 'the following' from v. 12.

¹⁴ The literal translation of 'all the Israelites' is 'every Israelite man'.

טו	אָרֹר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה פֶסֶל וּמַסֵּכָה תּוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי חֲרָשׁ וְשֵׁם בִּסְתֵר וְעָנּוּ כָל־הָעָם וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: {ס}	15	"Cursed is he who carves or casts an idol, a thing abhorrent to Yahweh, the work of a craftsman's hands, and sets it up in secret. And all the people shall answer, saying, "Amen!"
טז	אָרֹר מַקְלֵה אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	16	"Cursed is he who dishonours his father or mother. And all the people shall say, "Amen!"
יז	אָרֹר מַסִּיג גְּבוּל רֵעֵהוּ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	17	"Cursed is he who removes his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, "Amen!"
יח	אָרֹר מְשַׁגֶּה עוֹר בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	18	"Cursed is he who leads a blind man astray on the road. And all the people shall say, "Amen!"
יט	אָרֹר מְטֵה מִשְׁפָּט גֵּר־יְתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן:	19	"Cursed is he who keeps justice from stranger, orphan and widow. And all the people shall say, "Amen!"
כ	אָרֹר שֹׁכֵב עִם־אִשְׁתּוֹ אָבִיו בִּי גִלָּה כְּנָף אָבִיו וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	20	"Cursed is he who lies with his father's wife; for, he dishonours his father. And all the people shall say, "Amen!"
כא	אָרֹר שֹׁכֵב עִם־כָּל־בְּהֵמָה וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	21	"Cursed is he who lies with any kind of animal. All the people shall say, "Amen!"
כב	אָרֹר שֹׁכֵב עִם־אָחִתּוֹ	22	"Cursed is he who sleeps with his sister,

15 The term translated here 'abhorrent' (תּוֹעֵבַת) speaks of attitudes and/or behaviours so vile as to be reprehensible to a holy God.

16 The term קִלָּה means to treat with disdain or lack of due respect, here violating the 5th commandment (5:16, cf. Ex 21:17).

17 Throughout this pericope, the Levites pronounce the curse and the people respond with 'Amen'.

18 'Amen' (אָמֵן) means 'so be it'; the term is an affirmation expressing agreement with the words of the Levites.

19 In place of 'deprives ... of justice', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'tampers with the rights of'.

20 The literal translation of 'dishonours his father' is 'uncovers his father's skirt'.

21 'To lie with' is a euphemism for having sexual relations with someone (or in this case, some animal).

22 Before 'the daughter', the NRSV adds 'whether'.

בַּת־אָבִיו אוֹ בַת־אִמּוֹ	the daughter of his father or of his mother."
וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	All the people shall say, "Amen!"
כִּגְ אֲרוֹר שֹׁכֵב עִם־חֲתָנָתוֹ	23 "Cursed is he who sleeps with his mother-in-law."
וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	All the people shall say, "Amen!"
כִּדְ אֲרוֹר מַכֵּה רֵעֵהוּ בִּסְתֵר	24 "Cursed is he who strikes down a neighbour in secret."
וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	All the people shall say, "Amen!"
כִּהְ אֲרוֹר לֹקֵחַ שֹׁחַד לְהַכּוֹת נַפֶּשׁ דָּם נָקִי	25 "Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to shed innocent blood."
וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {ס}	All the people shall say, "Amen!"
כּוְ אֲרוֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְיָם אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם	26 "Cursed is he who does not maintain the words of the Law by observing them."
וְאָמַר כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן: {פ}	All the people shall say, "Amen!"

²³ Although not, strictly speaking, incest, sexual intercourse with such a close relative is forbidden.

²⁴ The NJB has 'his neighbour' in place of 'a neighbour', here following the NRSV.

²⁵ In place of 'shed innocent blood', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'take an innocent life'.

²⁶ This last verse essentially reiterates all the others.

DEUTERONOMY 28

דברים פרק כח

א וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה
הַיּוֹם וּנְתַנָּהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עָלֶיךָ עַל כָּל-גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ:
ב וּבָאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל-הַבְּרָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהִשִּׁיגְךָ כִּי
תִשְׁמָע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

ג בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּעִיר וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בַּשָּׂדֶה: ד בְּרוּךְ
פְּרִי-בִטְנְךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ וּפְרִי בְהֶמְתְּךָ שֹׁגֵר
אֲלֶפֶיךָ וְעֹשֶׂתְרוֹת צֹאנֶיךָ: ה בְּרוּךְ טִנְיֶיךָ
וּמִשְׁאֲרֹתֶיךָ: ו בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבֹאֶךָ וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה
בְּצֵאתְךָ: ז יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת-אִיְבֹיֶיךָ הַקָּמִים עָלֶיךָ
נִגְפִים לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶחָד יֵצְאוּ אֵלֶיךָ וּבִשְׁבָעָה
דְּרָכִים יִנוֹסוּ לְפָנֶיךָ: ח יֵצֵא יְהוָה אֶתְךָ אֶת-הַבְּרָכָה
בְּאֶסְמֶיךָ וּבְכָל מְשָׁלַח יָדְךָ וּבְרִכְיָךָ בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ:

1 “Indeed, if you obey the voice of Yahweh your God faithfully, keeping and observing all those commandments of his that I command you today, Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 All the blessings that follow shall come up with you and overtake you if only you obey the voice of Yahweh your God.

3 “You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the field. 4 Blessed will be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil, the issue of your livestock, the increase of your cattle, the young of your flock. 5 Blessed will be your basket and your kneading bowl. 6 Blessed will you be coming in, and blessed going out. 7 Yahweh will conquer the enemies that rise against you, for your sake; they will come at you by one way and flee before you by seven ways. 8 Yahweh will summon a blessing for you in your barns and in all your undertakings and will bless you in the land that Yahweh is giving you.

DEUTERONOMY 28

¹ The Hebrew text opens with an infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation (following NETB) indicates with ‘indeed’.

² In place of ‘and overtake you’, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘in abundance’.

³ The six blessings of vv. 3–6, formulated in short, emphatic style, were perhaps part of the old covenant ceremony preserved in fragmentary form in 27:11–26.

⁴ The NJB has ‘body’ in place of ‘womb’, here following the NRSV.

⁵ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Blessed will be your pannier and your bread bin.”

⁶ The ‘coming in’ and ‘going out’ is a figure of speech (merism) indicating all of life and its activities.

⁷ The NJB lacks the word ‘ways’ at the end of this verse, here following the MT & NRSV.

⁸ In place of ‘all your undertakings’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘all that you undertake’ and NETB has ‘everything you do’.

ט יְקִימֶךָ יְהוָה לְוֹ לְעַם קָדוֹשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע־לָךְ כִּי
תִשְׁמֹר אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכָיו:
י וְרָאוּ כָּל־עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה נִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ
וְיִרְאוּ מִמֶּךָ: יא וְהוֹתֵרָךְ יְהוָה לְטוֹבָה בְּפָרִי בִטְנְךָ
וּבְפָרִי בְהִמְתֶּךָ וּבְפָרִי אֲדָמְתְךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לֵאבֹתֶיךָ לָתֵת לָךְ: יב יִפְתַּח יְהוָה לְךָ
אֶת־אוֹצְרוֹ הַטּוֹב אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם לָתֵת מִטֶּר־אֶרְצְךָ
בְּעֵתוֹ וּלְבָרֶךְ אֶת כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ וְהָלִוִית גּוֹיִם
רַבִּים וְאַתָּה לֹא תִלְוֶה: יג וְנִתְּנָךְ יְהוָה לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא
לְזָנָב וְהָיִיתָ רֶק לְמַעַלָּה וְלֹא תִהְיֶה לְמַטָּה כִּי־
תִשְׁמָע אֶל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּךָ
הַיּוֹם לִשְׁמֹר וּלְעֲשׂוֹת: יד וְלֹא תִסּוֹר מִכָּל־הַדְּבָרִים
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם יָמִין וּשְׂמָאוֹל לָלֶכֶת
אֲחֵרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְעַבְדָם: {פ}

טו וְהָיָה אִם־לֹא תִשְׁמָע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִשְׁמֹר
לְעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי וְחֻקֹּתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּךָ
הַיּוֹם וּבָאוּ עָלֶיךָ כָּל־הַקְּלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהִשְׁיִגּוּךָ:

9 “Yahweh will establish you as his holy people as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and walk in his ways. ¹⁰ All the peoples of the earth shall see that you bear Yahweh’s name and shall fear you. ¹¹ Yahweh will give you great prosperity, in the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your soil, in the land he swore to your fathers he would give you. ¹² Yahweh will open the heavens to you, his rich storehouse, to give you seasonable rain for your land and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but borrow from none. ¹³ Yahweh will put you at the head, not at the tail. You will always be on top and never underneath, if you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God that I command you today, keeping and observing them, ¹⁴ and if you do not swerve to the right or to the left from any of the words I am commanding you today, by following any other gods and serving them.

¹⁵ “But if you do not obey the voice of Yahweh your God by observing all his commandments and his statutes that command you today, then all these curses shall come up with you and overtake you. ¹⁶ You will be

⁹ The idiom, ‘walk in his ways’ means ‘obey him’.

¹⁰ The phrase, ‘you bear Yahweh’s name’, literally ‘that Yahweh’s name is pronounced over you’, signifies ownership (2S 12:28, Is 4:1).

¹¹ In place of ‘give you great store of good things’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘make you abound in prosperity’.

¹² For the last sentence, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “You will make many nations your subjects, yet you will be subject to none.”

¹³ In place of ‘will put you at the head, not at the tail’, here following the NJB, the NRSV & NETB read, ‘will make you the head and not the tail’.

¹⁴ The literal translation of ‘and serving them’ is ‘in order to serve them’.

¹⁵ In place of ‘do not obey the voice of’, here following the NJB & NRSV (the literal translation of ‘obey’ is ‘hear’), NETB simply has ‘ignore’.

¹⁶ The six curses of vv. 16–19, parallel to the six blessings (vv. 3–6), likewise echo the old Shechem ceremony.

טז אָרֹר אֶתָּה בְּעִיר וְאָרֹר אֶתָּה בַּשָּׂדֶה: יז אָרֹר
טנאָךְ וּמִשְׁאֲרֵתָּךְ: יח אָרֹר פְּרִי־בִטְנְךָ וּפְרִי
אֲדָמָתְךָ שֹׁגֵר אֶלְפִיךָ וְעִשְׂתֶּרֶת צֹאנֶךָ: יט אָרֹר
אֶתָּה בְּבֹאֲךָ וְאָרֹר אֶתָּה בְּצֵאתְךָ:

כ יִשְׁלַח יְהוָה | בָּךְ אֶת־הַמָּאֲרָה אֶת־הַמְּהוּמָה
וְאֶת־הַמִּגְעָרָה בְּכָל־מַשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה עַד
הַשְׂמִדָּךְ וְעַד־אֲבִדְךָ מִהָרַם מִפְּנֵי רָע מַעַלְלֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר
עֲזַבְתָּנִי: כא יִדְבֹק יְהוָה בָּךְ אֶת־הַדָּבָר עַד כָּלְתּוֹ
אֶתְךָ מֵעַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־אֶתָּה בֶּאֱשֻׁמָּה
לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: כב יִכְכֶּה יְהוָה בַּשַּׁחֲפָת וּבִקְדַחַת
וּבִדְלָקָה וּבַחֲרָר וּבַחֲרָב וּבַשִּׁדְפוֹן וּבִירְקוֹן
וּרְדִפוֹךָ עַד אֲבִדְךָ: כג וְהָיוּ שָׁמַיִךְ אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ
נְחֹשֶׁת וְהָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־תַּחְתֶּיךָ בְּרָזָל: כד יִתֵּן יְהוָה
אֶת־מִטֶּר אֶרְצְךָ אֲבָק וְעָפָר מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם יֵרֵד עָלֶיךָ
עַד הַשְׂמִדְךָ: כה יִתְּנֶךָ יְהוָה | נִגְף לִפְנֵי אִיְבֶיךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ

cursed in the city and cursed in the field. ¹⁷ Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. ¹⁸ Cursed will be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil, the increase of your cattle, the young of your flock. ¹⁹ Cursed will you be coming in, and cursed your going out.

²⁰ “Yahweh will send on you curses, panic and frustration, in everything you attempt to do, until you are destroyed and speedily perish on account of the evil of your deeds, and for deserting me. ²¹ Yahweh will infect you with the plague until it has consumed you on the land that you are entering to make your own. ²² Yahweh will strike you down with consumption, fever, inflammation, burning fever, and with drought, blight, and mildew, and these will pursue you to your ruin. ²³ The heavens above you will be bronze, the earth beneath you iron. ²⁴ Yahweh will turn the rain on your land to dust and sand; it will fall on you from the heavens until you perish. ²⁵ Yahweh will have you defeated in front of your enemies; you will come at them by one way

¹⁷ For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Cursed will be your pannier and your bread bin.”

¹⁸ The NJB has ‘body’ in place of ‘womb’, here following the NRSV.

¹⁹ The ‘coming in’ and ‘going out’ is a figure of speech (merism) indicating all of life and its activities.

²⁰ In place of ‘in everything you attempt to do’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘in return for all your offerings’.

²¹ The literal translation of ‘infect you with the plague’ is ‘cause pestilence to cling to you’.

²² The term translated ‘consumption’ is from a verbal root that indicates a weakening of one’s physical strength.

²³ For ‘the heavens above you’, the MT reads ‘your heavens’ and the LXX has ‘heaven will be to you’ (ἔσται σοι ὁ οὐρανός).

²⁴ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “The LORD will change the rain of your land into powder, and only dust shall come down upon you from the sky until you are destroyed.”

²⁵ The meaningless MT reading זַעֲזָה is clearly a transposition of the more commonly attested noun זועה, ‘horror’.

אֶחָד תֵּצֵא אֵלָיו וּבִשְׂבַע דְּרָכִים תָּנוּס לִפְנָיו
וְהָיִיתָ לְזַעֲזָה לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ: כו וְהָיִיתָ
נִבְלָתָךְ לַמֶּאֱכָל לְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבִהֶמַת הָאָרֶץ
וְאִין מַחְרִיד:

כז יִכָּה יְהוָה בְּשָׁחִין מִצָּרִים וּבַעֲפָלִים וּבִטְחָרִים
וּבִגְרָב וּבַחֲרָס אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תוּכַל לְהִרְפָּא: כח יִכָּה
יְהוָה בְּשַׁעֲזוֹן וּבְעוֹרוֹן וּבְתַמְהוֹן לִבָּב: כט וְהָיִיתָ
מִמֶּשֶׁשׁ בַּצָּהָרִים כְּאֲשֶׁר יִמְשֵׁשׁ הָעוֹר בְּאַפְלָה וְלֹא
תִצְלִיחַ אֶת־דְּרָכֶיךָ וְהָיִיתָ אֶךְ עָשׂוֹק וְגָזוּל כָּל־
הַיָּמִים וְאִין מוֹשִׁיעַ:

ל אִשָּׁה תֹאדָשׁ וְאִישׁ אַחֵר יִשְׁכַּבְנָה בֵּית
תְּבִנָּה וְלֹא־תֵשֵׁב בּוֹ כָּרֶם תִּטָּע וְלֹא תַחֲלִלְנוּ:
לא שׁוֹרֶךְ טְבוּחַ לְעֵינֶיךָ וְלֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ חֲמֹרֶךָ
גָּזוּל מִלִּפְנֶיךָ וְלֹא יֵשׁוּב לָךְ צֹאנְךָ נִתְּנוֹת לְאִיבֶיךָ
וְאִין לָךְ מוֹשִׁיעַ: לב בְּנֶיךָ וּבָנֹתֶיךָ נִתְּנִים לְעַם אַחֵר
וְעֵינֶיךָ רֹאזוֹת וְכָלוֹת אֲלֵיהֶם כָּל־הַיּוֹם וְאִין לְאֵל
יִדָּךְ: לג פָּרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ וְכָל־יִגְיַעֲךָ יֹאכַל עַם אֲשֶׁר

and flee before them by seven; and you will become a thing of horror
for all the kingdoms of the earth. ²⁶ Your corpses will be carrion for all
the birds of heaven and all the beasts of the earth, with no one to scare
them away.

²⁷ “Yahweh will afflict you with Egyptian boils, ulcers, scurvy and the
itch, for which you will find no cure. ²⁸ Yahweh will afflict you with
madness, blindness, and confusion of mind, ²⁹ until you grope your way
at noon like a blind man groping in the dark, and your steps will lead
you nowhere. You will be nothing but exploited and plundered
continually, and no one will save you.

³⁰ “Marry a wife, another man will have her; build a house, you will not
live in it; plant a vineyard and not enjoy its fruit. ³¹ Your ox will be killed
before your eyes but you will not eat of it; your donkey will be carried
off before you and not be returned to you; your sheep will be given to
your enemies and no one will help you. ³² Your sons and daughters will
be given to another people and you will strain your eyes looking for
them all day, while your hand is powerless. ³³ A nation you do not know

²⁶ In place of ‘corpses’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has the singular noun, ‘carcase’.

²⁷ This verse is a reference to the Egyptian plagues. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁸ The literal translation of ‘mind’ is ‘heart’.

²⁹ For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, “and you shall be continually abused and robbed, without anyone to help.”

³⁰ In place of יִשְׁכַּבְנָה (‘ravish’, ‘violate’), here following the *Kethib*, the *Qere* has יִשְׁכַּבְנָה (‘lie with’).

³¹ The NJB & NETB have ‘save’ in place of ‘help’, here following the NRSV.

³² The NRSV adds ‘while you look on’ after ‘people’, but this actually repeats the phrase ‘strain your eyes’.

³³ In place of ‘abused’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘exploited’.

לֹא־יִדְעַתָּ וְהָיִיתָ רַק עָשׂוּק וְרָצוּן כָּל־הַיָּמִים:
לֹד וְהָיִיתָ מְשֻׁגַּע מִמַּרְאֵה עֵינֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה:
לֹה יִכְבֶּה יְהוָה בְּשָׁחִין רָע עַל־הַבְּרָכִים וְעַל־הַשְּׁקָמִים
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תוּכַל לְהִרְפּוֹא מִכָּף רִגְלֶךָ וְעַד קִדְקֹדֶךָ:
לֹו יוֹלֶךְ יְהוָה אִתָּךְ וְאֶת־מִלְכְּךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּקִּים עָלֶיךָ
אֶל־גֹּוִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעַתָּ אֹתָהּ וְאֶבְדְתָּ וְעַבַדְתָּ שָׁם
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עֵץ וָאֶבֶן: לֹו וְהָיִיתָ לְשִׁמָּה לְמַשָּׁל
וְלִשְׁנִינָה בְּכָל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר־יִנְהַגְךָ יְהוָה שָׁמָּה:
לֹח זֶרַע רַב תּוֹצִיא הַשָּׂדֶה וּמַעֲט תֹאסֹף כִּי יַחְסְלֶנּוּ
הָאֲרָבָה: לֹט כְּרָמִים תִּטֵּעַ וְעַבַדְתָּ וַיֵּין לֹא־תִשְׁתֶּה
וְלֹא תִאָּגֵר כִּי תֹאכְלֶנּוּ הַתְּלַעֲתִים: מ זִיתִּים יִהְיוּ לָךְ
בְּכָל־גְּבוּלְךָ וְשִׁמֶן לֹא תִסּוֹדֶךָ כִּי יִשָּׁל זִיתְךָ: מֹא בָנִים
וּבָנוֹת תוֹלִיד וְלֹא־יִהְיוּ לָךְ כִּי יִלְכוּ בַשָּׂבִי: מֵב כָּל־
עֵצְךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ יִירֶשׁ הַצִּלְצָל:

will eat the fruit of your soil and your labour; you will be abused and crushed always, ³⁴ and driven mad by what your eyes see. ³⁵ Yahweh will strike you down with foul boils on your knee and leg, which cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

³⁶ “Yahweh will send you and the king you set over you to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known, where you will serve other gods, of wood and stone. ³⁷ You will become a thing of horror, a proverb, and a byword to all the peoples where Yahweh takes you.

³⁸ “You will cast much seed on the fields but harvest little, for the locust will consume it. ³⁹ You will plant and till your vineyards but not drink wine or gather grapes, for the worm will eat them. ⁴⁰ You will grow olive trees throughout your territory but not anoint yourself with oil; for, your olives will drop off. ⁴¹ You will have sons and daughters but not keep them, for they will go into captivity. ⁴² All your trees and all the produce of your soil will become the prey of insects.

³⁴ For this verse, here following the NJB/NRSV, NETB reads, “You will go insane from seeing all this.”

³⁵ In place of ‘which cannot be healed’, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads ‘for which you will find no cure’.

³⁶ Conquest by a strange nation happened in 721 BCE, when the Assyrians destroyed the Northern Kingdom and deported its population (v. 41).

³⁷ NETB has ‘object of ridicule’ in place of ‘byword’, here following the NJB & NRSV.

³⁸ The NJB has ‘devour’ in place of ‘consume’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

³⁹ The NRSV & NETB have ‘worm’ in place of ‘grub’, here following the NJB.

⁴⁰ After ‘drop off’, NETB adds ‘the trees while still unripe’.

⁴¹ The literal translation of ‘not keep them’ (here following NETB) is ‘they will not be yours’.

⁴² The term here translated ‘insects’ denotes some sort of buzzing or whirring insect; some have understood this to be a type of locust but other insects have also been suggested: ‘the cicada’ (NRSV) and ‘whirring locusts’ (NETB).

מג הַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ יַעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ מֵעַלָּה מֵעַלָּה
וְאַתָּה תִרְדַּד מִטָּה מִטָּה: ^{מד} הוּא יִלְוֶךָ וְאַתָּה לֹא
תִלְוֶנּוּ הוּא יִהְיֶה לְרֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תִּהְיֶה לְזָנָב:

מה וּבָאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל־הַקְּלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וּרְדִפוּךָ
וְהִשְׁיִגוּךָ עַד הַשְׁמִדָּךְ כִּי־לֹא שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו אֲשֶׁר צִוָּךָ: ^{מו} וְהָיוּ
בָּךְ לְאוֹת וּלְמוֹפֶת וּבִזְרָעְךָ עַד־עוֹלָם:

מז תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב מְרֹב כָּל: ^{מח} וְעֲבַדְתָּ אֶת־
אִיבֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלַחְנוּ יְהוָה בְּךָ בָּרָעַב וּבְצָמָא
וּבְעִירָם וּבְחָסֶר כָּל וְנָתַן עָלַי בְּרִזָּל עַל־צְוֹאֲרֶךָ עַד
הַשְׁמִידוֹ אֶתְּךָ:

מט יֵשָׂא יְהוָה עֲלֶיךָ גּוֹי מְרָחֵק מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ כַּאֲשֶׁר
יֵדְאָה הַנָּשָׂר גּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִשְׁמַע לְשׁוֹנוֹ: ^נ גּוֹי עֶז
פָּנִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִשָּׂא פָנִים לְזָקֵן וְנֶעַר לֹא יֶחֱן:
נא וְאָכַל פְּרִי בְהֶמְתֶּךָ וּפְרִי־אֲדָמָתְךָ עַד הַשְׁמִדָּךְ:

⁴³ “The stranger among you will rise higher and higher above you, and you shall sink lower and lower. ⁴⁴ They will lend to you, you will not lend to them; they will be at the head, and you at the tail.

⁴⁵ “All these curses will come up with you, pursuing and overtaking you until you perish for not obeying the voice of Yahweh your God by keeping the commandments and laws that he commanded you. ⁴⁶ They will be a sign and a wonder over you and your descendants forever.

⁴⁷ “For failing to serve Yahweh your God in the joy and happiness that come from an abundance of all things, ⁴⁸ you will submit to the enemies that Yahweh will send against you, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in utter destitution. They will put an iron yoke on your neck until they destroy you.

⁴⁹ “Yahweh will raise against you a far-off nation from the ends of the earth, as the eagle flies; a nation whose language you do not understand, ⁵⁰ a grim-faced nation, with neither respect for the old nor pity for the young. ⁵¹ They will eat the fruit of your cattle and the fruit of your soil

⁴³ In place of ‘above you’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘at your expense’.

⁴⁴ The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “He will make you his chattel, you will not make him yours.”

⁴⁵ In place of ‘laws’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘decrees’ and NETB has ‘statutes’.

⁴⁶ The literal translation of ‘descendants’ is ‘seed’.

⁴⁷ In place of ‘in the joy and happiness’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘joyfully and with gladness of heart’.

⁴⁸ For ‘they’ in the last sentence (twice), the MT has ‘he’: the pronoun is a collective singular referring to the enemies.

⁴⁹ Some translations (e.g. NETB) understand the phrase here translated as ‘like an eagle taking wing’ as a reference to the distance (‘as an eagle flies’).

⁵⁰ The NRSV has ‘favour’ in place of ‘pity’, here following the NJB & NETB.

⁵¹ For ‘they’ (several times in vv. 51–52), the MT has ‘he’ – a collective singular referring to the invading nation.

אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִשְׁאִיר לָךְ דָּגָן תִּירוֹשׁ וַיִּצְהָר שָׁגֶר
 אֶלְפִידָּךְ וַעֲשִׂתָּרְתָּ צֹאנֶךָ עַד הָאֲבִידוֹ אֲתָךְ: ^{נב} וְהִצָּר
 לָךְ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ עַד רֹדֶת חֲמַתֶּיךָ הַגְּבֹהֶת
 וְהַבְּצֻרוֹת אֲשֶׁר אֲתָה בִטָּח בָּהֶן בְּכָל־אֶרֶץךָ וְהִצָּר
 לָךְ בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ לָךְ: ^{נג} וְאָכַלְתָּ פְרִי־בִטְנֶךָ בָּשָׂר בְּנֶיךָ
 וּבָנֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּמִצּוֹר וּבְמִצּוֹק
 אֲשֶׁר־יֵצִיק לָךְ אִיבָבָה: ^{נד} הָאִישׁ הָרֹדֶף בָּךְ וְהַעֲנֹג
 מֵאֲד תִרְעַע עֵינָיו בְּאַחִיו וּבְאִשְׁתּוֹ חִיקוֹ וּבִיתָר בְּנֵיו
 אֲשֶׁר יוֹתִיר: ^{נה} מִתַּת לֶאֱתֹד מֵהֶם מִבָּשָׂר בְּנֵיו
 אֲשֶׁר יֹאכַל מִבְּלֵי הַשְּׂאִיר־לוֹ כֹּל בְּמִצּוֹר וּבְמִצּוֹק
 אֲשֶׁר יֵצִיק לָךְ אִיבָבָה בְּכָל־שְׁעָרֶיךָ: ^{נו} הָרֹפֶה בָּךְ
 וְהַעֲנֹגָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נִסְתָּה כַּף־רַגְלָהּ הֹצֵג עַל־הָאָרֶץ
 מִהַתְּעַנֵּג וּמִרֹד תִרְעַע עֵינָהּ בְּאִישׁ חִיקָהּ וּבְבָנָהּ
 וּבְבָתָּהּ: ^{נז} וּבִשְׁלִיתָהּ הַיּוֹצֵאת מִבֵּין רַגְלֶיהָ וּבְבָנֶיהָ
 אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד כִּי־תֹאכְלֶם בַּחֲסֶר־כֹּל בְּסֶתֶר בְּמִצּוֹר
 וּבְמִצּוֹק אֲשֶׁר יֵצִיק לָךְ אִיבָבָה בְּשְׁעָרֶיךָ:

until you perish, leaving you neither corn nor wine nor oil nor increase
 of your cattle nor young of your flock, until they make an end of you.
⁵² They will besiege you in all your towns until the high, fortified walls
 that you trusted come down throughout your land; they will besiege
 you in all the towns that Yahweh gives you. ⁵³ In the dire straits that the
 enemy siege brings you, you will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh
 of your own sons and daughters whom Yahweh has given you. ⁵⁴ The
 gentlest and most tender of your men will scowl at his brother, at the
 wife he embraces, and at his remaining children, ⁵⁵ grudging them a
 share in the flesh of those children of his that he is eating; for, there will
 be nothing left to him in the dire straits that the enemy siege brings you
 in all your towns. ⁵⁶ The refined and most gentle of your women, so
 refined, so gentle that she would never venture to set the sole of her foot
 to the ground, will scowl at the husband she embraces, and at her son
 and her daughter, ⁵⁷ and at the afterbirth between her feet, and at the
 child who she shall bear, since she has nothing else in the dire straits
 that the enemy siege will bring you in your towns.

⁵² The literal translation of 'towns' is 'gates', as also in vv. 55 & 57.

⁵³ The NJB opens this verse, here (loosely) following the NRSV, with, "During the siege and in the distress to which your enemies will reduce you;" and NETB has "You will then eat your own offspring, the flesh of the sons and daughters the Lord your God has given you, because of the severity of the siege by which your enemies will constrict you."

⁵⁴ In place of 'scowl at', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'begrudge food to' and NETB has 'turn against'.

⁵⁵ The literal translation of 'brings' is 'besiege', but this is redundant with the noun 'siege'.

⁵⁶ Next to 'gentle', the LXX adds 'very' (σφόδρα) to bring the description into line with v. 54.

⁵⁷ In place of 'between her feet' the NJB has 'when it leaves her womb'.

נח אִם-לֹא תִשְׁמָר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה
הַזֹּאת הַכְּתוּבִים בַּסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה לִירְאָה אֶת-ה'שֵׁם
הַנִּכְבֵּד וְהַנּוֹרָא הַזֶּה אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: נט וְהִפְלֹא
יְהוָה אֶת-מִכְתָּךְ וְאֶת מִכּוֹת זֶרַעְךָ מִכּוֹת גְּדֻלַּת
וְנֹאמָנוֹת וְחִלִּים רָעִים וְנֹאמָנִים: ס וְהָשִׁיב בְּךָ אֶת
כָּל-מִדּוֹה מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יָגֵרְתָּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם וּדְבָקוּ בְךָ:
סא גַּם כָּל-חֲלִי וְכָל-מִכָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא כָתוּב בַּסֵּפֶר
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת יַעֲלֶם יְהוָה עֲלֶיךָ עַד הַשְׁמָדְךָ:
סב וְנִשְׁאַרְתָּם בְּמִתִּי מִעֵט תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר הֵייתֶם
כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לָרֹב כִּי-לֹא שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ: סג וְהָיָה כְּאֲשֶׁר-שָׂשׂ יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם לְהִיטִיב
אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַרְבּוֹת אֶתְכֶם בֶּן יֵשִׁישׁ יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם
לְהַאבִּיד אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם וּנְסַחֲתֶם מֵעַל
הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בָּא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:־

סד וְהִפִּיצָךְ יְהוָה בְּכָל-הָעַמִּים מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ וְעַד-
קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ וְעַבַּדְתָּ שָׁם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא-
יָדַעְתָּ אֶתָּה וְאֲבֹתֶיךָ עֵץ וָאֶבֶן: סה וּבְגוֹיִם הֵם לֹא

58 “If you do not keep and observe all the words of this Law that are written in this book, in the fear of this Name of glory and awe: Yahweh your God, 59 Yahweh will strike you down with monstrous plagues, you and your descendants: with plagues grievous and lasting, and with pernicious and enduring diseases. 60 Once more, he will bring on you the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will infect you.

61 Furthermore, Yahweh will bring on you every sickness, every plague, which is not mentioned in the Book of this Law, until you are destroyed.

62 There will only be a small number of you remaining – you who were once as numerous as the stars of heaven. For not obeying the voice of Yahweh your God, 63 just as Yahweh took delight in giving you prosperity and increase, so now he will take delight in bringing you ruin and destruction. You will be torn from the land that you are entering to make your own.

64 “Yahweh will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; there you will serve other gods of wood and stone that neither you nor your fathers have known. 65 Among these nations, you

58 A more literal opening for this verse is, “If you are not careful to do all the words...”

59 In place of ‘pernicious and enduring diseases’, here following the NJB the NRSV has ‘grievous and lasting maladies’.

60 Though they did not fall on the Israelites, the plagues God sent to Egypt prior to the Exodus must have caused great terror (cf. Ex 15:26).

61 The term תּוֹרָה (‘Book of the Law’) can refer to: the whole Torah, the Book of Deuteronomy, or even just to this curse section of the covenant.

62 The literal translation of ‘obeying’ is ‘listening to’.

63 In place of ‘bringing you ruin and destruction’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘destroying and decimating you’.

64 Once more, we have a clear prophecy of the Babylonian Exile and the Diaspora.

65 In place of ‘halting breath’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘a languishing spirit’ and NETB has ‘a spirit of despair’.

תִּרְגָּעַ וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מְנוּחַ לְכַף־רַגְלְךָ וְנָתַן יְהוָה לְךָ
שֵׁם לֵב רָגֹז וְכִלְיוֹן עֵינַיִם וְדֹאבוֹן נֶפֶשׁ: ^{סו} וְהָיוּ חַיִּיךָ
תָּלָאִים לְךָ מִנֶּגֶד וּפְחַדָּה לַיְלָה וַיּוֹמֶם וְלֹא תֵאֱמִין
בְּחַיִּיךָ: ^{סז} בְּבֹקֶר תֹּאמַר מִי־יִתֵּן עָרֵב וּבְעָרֵב
תֹּאמַר מִי־יִתֵּן בֹּקֶר מִפֶּחַד לְבָבְךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּפְחֹד
וּמִמְרָאָה עֵינֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה: ^{סח} וְהִשִּׁיבְךָ יְהוָה |
מִצִּרִּים בְּאֲנִיּוֹת בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אִמְרָתִי לְךָ לֹא־תִסִּיף
עוֹד לִרְאֹתָהּ וְהִתְמַכְּרְתָם שָׁם לְאִיבֵיךָ לְעִבָדִים
וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת וְאִין קֹנָה: {ס}

^{סט} אֵלֶּה דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה
לְכַתֹּב אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב מִלְּבַד הַבְּרִית
אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַת אִתָּם בְּחֹרֵב: {פ}

will find no ease, no rest for the sole of your foot; Yahweh will give you a quaking heart, weary eyes, halting breath. ⁶⁶ Your life will hang in doubt before you; night and day, you will go in fear, uncertain of your life. ⁶⁷ In the morning you will say, "How I wish it were evening!" and in the evening, "How I wish it were morning!" Such terror will grip your heart, such sights your eyes will see. ⁶⁸ Yahweh will take you back to Egypt by sea and by land, though I had promised you: You will not see it again. And there you will want to sell yourselves to your enemies as serving men and women, but no one will buy you."

⁶⁹ These are the words of the Covenant that Yahweh ordered Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab, in addition to the Covenant he had made with them at Horeb.

⁶⁶ The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV & NETB, with, "Your life from the outset will be a burden to you."

⁶⁷ For the last sentence, here following the NJB, the NRSV continues the previous sentence, with, "because of the dread that your heart shall feel and the sights that your eyes shall see."

⁶⁸ The threat of disasters and of a second slavery recalls the favours commemorated in the introductory discourse: this balance suggests that the very power that saved may yet destroy.

⁶⁹ In the NRSV and most English translations, this verse is included as 29:1. Here, we follow the numbering scheme of the MT and NJB. The verse serves as a title to the third discourse of Moses, ending at the end of Ch. 30 rather than at 32:47 (as some scholars assert).

DEUTERONOMY 29

דברים פרק כט

א ויקרא משה אל-כל-ישראל ויאמר אלהם אתם ראייתם את כל-אשר עשה יהוה לעיניכם בארץ מצרים לפרעה ולכל-עבדיו ולכל-ארצו: ב המסות הגדלות אשר ראו עיניך האתת והמפתים הגדלים ההם: ג ולא-נתן יהוה לכם לב לדעת ועינים לראות ואזנים לשמע עד היום הזה: ד ואוליך אתכם ארבעים שנה במדבר לא-בלו שלמתיכם מעליכם ונעליך לא-בלתה מעל רגליך: ה לחם לא אכלתם ויין ושכר לא שתיתם למען תדעו כי אני יהוה אלהיכם: ו ותבאו אל-המקום הזה ויצא סיחון מלך-חשבון ועוג מלך-הבשן לקראתנו למלחמה ונבסם: ז ונקח את-ארצם ונתתה לנחלה לראובני ולגדי ולחצי שבט

1 Then Moses called the whole of Israel together and said to them: "You have seen all that Yahweh did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to his whole land, 2 the great ordeals your own eyes witnessed, the signs and those great wonders. 3 However, until today, Yahweh has not given you the mind to understand, the eyes to see, or the ears to hear. 4 I have been leading you for forty years in the desert, yet the clothes you have been wearing have not worn out, nor have the sandals on your feet worn out. 5 You have eaten no bread; neither have you drunk wine or strong drink, that you may learn that I, Yahweh, am your God. 6 When you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon and Og the king of Bashan came out against us to do battle, but we defeated them. 7 We conquered their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to

DEUTERONOMY 29

In Chs 29 & 30, we again find the elements of a treaty formula (see #10:12 & #28:1). The discourse opens with a review of the events of the Exodus (vv. 2–8, see 1:4, 4:46–47, 8:2–5). Next follows the ratification of the treaty on behalf of the people (vv. 10–15) and, after that, a sermon (vv. 16–21), which seems to be resumed at 30:11–14. The blessings and imprecations normally associated with such treaties occur at 30:15–20. The section 29:21–30:10, consisting of miscellaneous elements, seems to be an insertion of the Deuteronomic school.

¹ Verse numbers in this chapter are decremented from those in the NRSV (see #28:69).

² In place of 'ordeals', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'trials' and NETB has 'judgements'.

³ The literal translation of 'mind to understand' (following the NRSV) is 'heart to know'.

⁴ Literally translated, 'you have been wearing' (following the NJB) is simply 'on you'.

⁵ In place of 'I, Yahweh, am your God', the LXX reads 'he is the LORD your God' (οὗτος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν).

⁶ The NRSV and NETB read 'King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan'; here, we follow the MT & NJB.

⁷ In place of 'the half-tribe of the Manassites', NETB has 'half the tribe of Manasseh'.

הַמָּנָשִׁי: ^ח וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם לְמַעַן תִּשְׁכְּלוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
תַּעֲשׂוּן: {פ}

^ט אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם כָּלְכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
רֹאשֵׁיכֶם שְׁבֻטֵיכֶם זְקֵנֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם כָּל אִישׁ
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^י טַפְכֶם נְשִׁיכֶם וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶרֶב מַחֲנֶיךָ
מִחֹטֵב עֵצִיד עַד שֹׂאֵב מִיָּמִיד: ^{יא} לְעִבְרְךָ בְּבְרִית
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּבְאֻלָּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּרַת
עִמָּךְ הַיּוֹם: ^{יב} לְמַעַן הִקִּים־אֹתְךָ הַיּוֹם | לֹא לְעַם
וְהוּא יִהְיֶה־לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ וְכַאֲשֶׁר
נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֲקֹב:

^{יג} וְלֹא אַתֶּם לְבַדְכֶם אֲנֹכִי כָרַת אֶת־הַבְּרִית
הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת: ^{יד} כִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֹו פֹה
עִמָּנוּ עַמִּד הַיּוֹם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר
אֵינָנו פֹּה עִמָּנוּ הַיּוֹם:

the half-tribe of the Manassites. ⁸ Therefore, keep the words of this Covenant and observe them, and you will prosper in everything that you do.

⁹ “All of you stand here today before Yahweh your God: your heads, your tribes, your elders, your scribes – all the men of Israel, ¹⁰ with your children and your wives (and the foreigner too who is in your camp, be he your wood-cutter or your water-carrier) – ¹¹ to enter into the Covenant of Yahweh your God, a Covenant ratified with dire sanctions, which he has made with you today, ¹² and by which, today, he makes a nation of you and he himself becomes a God to you, as he has promised and as he has sworn to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

¹³ “Not only with you who stand here today do I make this Covenant today and pronounce these sanctions, ¹⁴ but with him also who is not here today, as well as with him who stands with us here in the presence of Yahweh our God.

⁸ The NRSV uses ‘succeed’ in place of ‘thrive’; it offers ‘deal wisely’ as an alternative.

⁹ The Peshitta presupposes either ‘heads of your tribes’ or ‘your heads, your judges’, etc. (reading שְׁפֻטֵיכֶם for שְׁבֻטֵיכֶם); its comparative difficulty favours the originality of the MT reading.

¹⁰ The people mentioned in the parenthesis are the lower orders, often of non-Israelite extraction (see Jos 9:27).

¹¹ Literally translated, this verse reads, “for you to pass on into the covenant of Yahweh your God and into his oath, which Yahweh your God is cutting with you today.”

¹² Verses 9–12 are one long sentence in Hebrew; many translations divide this for stylistic reasons.

¹³ The NJB & NETB open this verse with, “Not with you alone do I make this Covenant.”

¹⁴ Here, more than anywhere else, Moses appears as mediator of the Covenant, the central formula of which is given in v. 13 (see footnote to 26:16). Vv. 14–15 extend the agreements to those absent, thus giving the Covenant a permanent validity.

טו כִּי־אַתֶּם יֹדְעֹתֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁבְּנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־עֲבַרְנוּ בְּקֶרֶב הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עָבַרְתֶּם:
טז וְתִרְאוּ אֶת־שְׁקוּצֵיהֶם וְאֵת גִּלְלֵיהֶם עֵץ וָאֶבֶן
כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב אֲשֶׁר עִמָּהֶם:

יז פְּנִי־יִשׁ בְּכֶם אִישׁ אִו־אִשָּׁה אוֹ מִשְׁפָּחָה אוֹ־שִׁבְט
אֲשֶׁר לִבּוֹ פָּנָה הַיּוֹם מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לָלֶכֶת
לְעַבֵּד אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם הָהֵם פְּנִי־יִשׁ בְּכֶם שָׁרֵשׁ
פָּרָה רָאשׁ וְלַעֲנָה: יח וְהָיָה בְּשִׁמְעוֹ אֶת־דְּבַר־י
הָאֵלֹהִים הַזֹּאת וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבּוֹ לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה־
לִי כִּי בִשְׁרָרוֹת לִבִּי אֶלֶךְ לִמְעַן סָפוֹת הָרָוָה אֶת־
הַצִּמָּאָה: יט לֹא־יֵאבֹדָה יְהוָה סִלַּח לוֹ כִּי אִזּוֹ יַעֲשֶׂן
אֶפְי־יְהוָה וְקִנְאָתוֹ בְּאִישׁ הַהוּא וְרִבְצָה בּוֹ כָּל־
הָאֵלֹהִים הַכְּתוּבָה בַּסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה וּמָחָה יְהוָה אֶת־שְׁמוֹ
מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: כ וְהִבְדִּילוּ יְהוָה לְרַעְיָה מִכָּל־

15 “Yes, you know those among whom we lived in Egypt, those through whose lands we journeyed, the nations through whom we have passed.

16 You have seen their abominations and their idols, the wood, the stone, the silver and gold they have in their countries.

17 “Let there be no man or woman among you, no clan or tribe, whose heart turns away from Yahweh your God today, to go and serve the gods of those nations. Let there be no root among you bearing fruit that is poisonous and bitter. 18 If, after hearing this imprecation, anyone, blessing himself, should say in his heart, “I shall do well enough if I follow the dictates of my heart; much water drives away thirst,”

19 Yahweh will be unwilling to pardon him. The wrath and jealousy of Yahweh will blaze against such a man; every curse written in this book will fall on him, and Yahweh will blot out his name from under heaven.

20 Yahweh will single him out from all the tribes of Israel to his

15 The NRSV and NETB open this verse with ‘you know how we lived in Egypt;’ here, we follow the NJB.

16 The term שְׁקוּצִיּוֹת (‘abominations’) refers to anything out of keeping with the nature and character of Yahweh and therefore to be avoided by his people Israel.

17 The Hebrew noun לַעֲנָה literally means ‘wormwood’ but is used figuratively for anything bitter, thus here ‘fruit that is poisonous and bitter’.

18 The translation of the end of this verse is uncertain; the NJB offers, as an alternative, “... in such a way as to remove the irrigated soil with the dry;” presumably a proverb, indicating total ruin. The NRSV reads: “... “We are safe even though we go our own stubborn ways” (thus bringing disaster on moist and dry alike) – ...” The LXX translates it as, “so that the sinner be not destroyed with him who is without sin” (ἵνα μὴ συναπολέσῃ ὁ ἀμαρτωλὸς τὸν ἀναμάρτητον). The community is responsible for rooting out the infectious poison of idolatry, lest the ‘moist’ (fertile and wholesome) people be swept away with the ‘dry’ (Ch. 13).

19 In place of ‘wrath and jealousy’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘anger and passion’ and NETB has ‘intense anger’.

20 In place of ‘to his distinction’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘for calamity’ and NETB has ‘for judgement’.

שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־אֲלוֹת הַבְּרִית הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה:

כ^א וְאָמַר הַדּוֹר הָאַחֲרוֹן בְּנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר יָקוּמוּ
מֵאַחֲרֵיכֶם וְהַנֹּכְרִי אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא מֵאֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה וְרָאָה
אֶת־מַכּוֹת הָאָרֶץ הַהִוא וְאֶת־תַּחֲלָאִיהָ אֲשֶׁר־חָלָה
יְהוָה בָּהּ: כ^ב גִּפְרִית וּמָלַח שְׂרָפָה כָּל־אֶרֶצָהּ לֹא
תִזְרַע וְלֹא תִצְמַח וְלֹא־יִעֲלֶה בָּהּ כָּל־עֵשֶׂב
כַּמְהַפֵּכֶת סֶדֶם וְעַמְרָה אֲדָמָה וְצַבִּיִּים וְצִבּוֹיִם
אֲשֶׁר הִפָּךְ יְהוָה בְּאַפּוֹ וּבְחִמָּתוֹ: כ^ג וְאָמְרוּ כָּל־
הַגּוֹיִם עַל־מָה עָשָׂה יְהוָה כֹּכָה לָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת מָה
חָרִי הָאֵף הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה: כ^ד וְאָמְרוּ עַל אֲשֶׁר עֲזָבוּ
אֶת־בְּרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתָם אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת עִמָּם
בְּהוֹצִיאָם אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: כ^ה וַיִּלְכּוּ וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־
יָדְעוּם וְלֹא חָלַק לָהֶם: כ^ו וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף יְהוָה בָּאָרֶץ
הַהִוא לְהַבִּיאַ עָלֶיהָ אֶת־כָּל־הַקְּלָלָה הַכְּתוּבָה
בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה: כ^ז וַיִּתְּשֵׁם יְהוָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם בְּאֵף

distinction, in accordance with all the curses of the Covenant written in the Book of this Law.

²¹ “The next generation, your children who are to come after you, as also the stranger from a distant country, will see the plagues of that land and the diseases from which Yahweh will make it suffer, and will exclaim, ²² “Sulphur, salt, scorched earth, the whole land through! No one will sow, nothing will grow, no grass will spring ever again. Like this, Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, Admah and Zeboiim, which Yahweh overthrew in his anger and wrath.” ²³ All the nations will exclaim, “Why has Yahweh treated this land like this? Why this great blaze of anger?” ²⁴ And people will say, “Because they deserted the Covenant of Yahweh, the God of their fathers, the Covenant he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt; ²⁵ because they went and served other gods and worshipped them, gods they had not known, gods whom he had not allotted to them, ²⁶ for this the anger of Yahweh has blazed against this land, bringing on it all the curses written in this book. ²⁷ In anger, in fury, in fierce wrath, Yahweh has torn

²¹ The literal translation of ‘will see’ is ‘will say and see’: one expects a quotation to appear, but it seems to be omitted.

²² In place of ‘scorched earth’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘burnt soil’.

²³ For the 2nd question, here following the NJB, then NRSV has, “What caused this great display of anger?”

²⁴ In place of ‘they will say’, here following the NRSV, the NJB & NETB have ‘the people will say’.

²⁵ In place of ‘whom he had not allotted to them’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘that were no part of their heritage from him’ and NETB has ‘that he did not permit them to worship’; a more literal translation would be ‘that he did not assign to them’.

²⁶ The literal translation of ‘all the curses’ is ‘the entire curse’.

²⁷ Note that the ל in וַיִּשְׁלַח is presented as an enlarged letter, just as it appears in almost all Hebrew MSS.

וּבַחֲמָהּ וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל וַיִּשְׁלֹכֵם אֶל-אֶרֶץ אַחֶרֶת
 כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה:
 כֹּחַ הַנִּסְתָּרִית לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַנִּגְלֹת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ
 עַד-עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה
 הַזֹּאת: {ס}

them from their country and flung them into another land where they
 are today.”
 28 “Things hidden belong to Yahweh our God but things revealed belong
 to us and our children for all time, so that we may observe all the words
 of this Law.

28 The ‘*things hidden*’ refer to the divine wisdom beyond human understanding; the ‘*things revealed*’ are the teachings set forth in Deuteronomy.

DEUTERONOMY 30

דברים פרק ל

א וְהָיָה כִּי־יָבֹאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הַבְּרָכָה
וְהַקְלָלָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לִפְנֶיךָ וְהִשְׁבַּתְתָּ אֶל־לִבְבְּךָ
בְּכָל־הַגּוֹלִים אֲשֶׁר הִדִּיחָךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה:
ב וְשִׁבַּתְתָּ עַד־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלוֹ כָּכָל
אֲשֶׁר־אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם אֹתָהּ וּבִנִּיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ
וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: ג וְשָׁב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־שִׁבּוֹתֶיךָ
וְרַחֲמֶיךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצֶךָ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפִּיצֶךָ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה: ד אִם־יְהִיֶּה נִדְחָךָ בְּקֶצֶה
הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם יִקְבְּצֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחֶךָ:
ה וְהִבִּיאֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יִרְשׁוּ
אֲבֹתֶיךָ וִירְשָׁתָהּ וְהִיטִבָּהּ וְהִרְבָּהּ מֵאֲבֹתֶיךָ:

ו וְיָמַל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־לִבְבְּךָ וְאֶת־לִבְבֵי זֶרְעֶךָ
לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ
לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ: ז וְנָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲלֹתֹת
הָאֵלֶּה עַל־אֹיְבֶיךָ וְעַל־שֹׂנְאֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר רָדְפוּךָ:

1 “When all these words come true for you, the blessing and the curse I have set before you, if you call them to mind wherever among the nations Yahweh your God has driven you,² and return to Yahweh your God, if you and your children obey his voice with all your heart and soul in everything I enjoin on you today,³ then Yahweh your God will bring back your captives, have pity on you and gather you once again from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you.⁴ Had you wandered to the ends of the heavens, from there Yahweh your God would gather you and reclaim you,⁵ and bring you back to the land your fathers possessed, so that you may make it your own, prospering there and increasing even more than your fathers.

6 “Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, until you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and soul, and so have life.⁷ Yahweh your God will put all these curses on your foes and on your enemies who have persecuted you.⁸ Once again,

DEUTERONOMY 30

¹ Vv. 1–10 presuppose that Israel is already in exile and anticipate the time when Yahweh will restore the people.

² ‘Return to Yahweh’ means to repent – an act that involves turning away from unworthy loyalties and turning the heart to God (v. 10).

³ In place of ‘bring back your captives’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘restore your fortunes’.

⁴ The NRSV opens with: “Even if you are exiled to the ends of the world...”

⁵ NETB ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, “he will do better for you and multiply you more than he did your ancestors.”

⁶ God will work the inner change that makes it possible to fulfil the law of love.

⁷ In place of ‘foes’ and ‘enemies’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, respectively, ‘enemies’ and ‘adversaries’.

⁸ The literal translation of ‘enjoin on’ is ‘command’ but this sounds repetitive in English.

לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִלְכֹּת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשָׁמֵר
מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיִּית וּרְבִית וּבְרָכָךָ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה
לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ¹⁷ וְאִם־יִפְּנֶה לְבָבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע וְנִדְחַתָּ
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְעַבַּדְתָּם: ¹⁸ הִגַּדְתִּי
לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֶבֶד תֵּאבְדוּן לֹא־תֵאָרִיכּוּ יָמִים עַל־
הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לְבוֹא שָׁמָּה
לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ¹⁹ הֵעַדְתִּי בְכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־
הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמָּוֶת נָתַתִּי לִפְנֶיךָ הַבְּרָכָה
וְהַקְּלָלָה וּבִחְרַתְּ בַּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחְיֶה אַתָּה וְזֶרְעֶךָ:
²⁰ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמַע בְּקוֹלוֹ וּלְדַבְּקָה־
בּוֹ כִּי הוּא חַיִּיךָ וְאָרְךְ יָמֶיךָ לְשִׁבְתָּ עַל־הָאֲדָמָה
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק
וּלְיַעֲקֹב לָתֵת לָהֶם: {פ}

to follow his ways, and to you keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his ordinances; then you will live and increase, and Yahweh your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to make your own. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and if you refuse to listen, but you let yourself be drawn into worshipping other gods and serving them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today, you will most certainly perish; you will not live long in the land you are crossing over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I invoke heaven and earth to witness against you today: that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ in the love of Yahweh your God, obeying his voice and clinging to him; for in this your life consists, and on this depends your long stay in the land, which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, he would give them."

¹⁷ The phrase 'your heart' is here a metonym for the person.

¹⁸ The MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with 'most certainly'.

¹⁹ In place of 'invoke', here following NETB, the NJB & NRSV have 'call'.

²⁰ 'Life' is not the mere extension of days; it is loving, obeying and cleaving to Yahweh, instead of pursuing the ways of idolatry.

DEUTERONOMY 31

דברים פרק לא

^א וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־כָּל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם בֶּן־מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה
אַנְכִי הַיּוֹם לֹא־אוּכַל עוֹד לָצֵאת וּלְבוֹא וַיְהִי הָאָמָר
אֵלָיו לֹא תַעֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה: ^ג יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
הוא | עָבַר לִפְנֶיךָ הוּא־יִשְׁמִיד אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה
מִלִּפְנֶיךָ וַיִּרְשָׁתָם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הוּא עָבַר לִפְנֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: ^ד וַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה לָהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְסִיחֹן
וּלְעוֹג מְלֻכֵי הָאֲמֹרִי וּלְאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁמִיד אֹתָם:
^ה וְנָתַנָּם יְהוָה לִפְנֵיכֶם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לָהֶם כְּכֹל־הַמִּצְוָה
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי אֹתְכֶם: ^ו חֲזָקוּ וְאַמְצוּ אֶל־תִּירְאוֹ וְאַל־
תַּעֲרָצוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ עִמָּךְ
לֹא יִרְפֶּךָ וְלֹא יַעֲזֹבֶךָ: {ס}

^ז וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְיְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לְעֵינַי כָּל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲזָק וְאַמֵץ כִּי אַתָּה תָּבוֹא אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה
אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאֲבֹתָם לָתֵת לָהֶם

¹ And Moses went and spoke to all Israel as follows, ² "Today, I am one hundred and twenty years old, and I can no longer get about. Yahweh has said to me, "You shall not cross over this Jordan." ³ Yahweh your God himself will cross over it at your head, and shall destroy these nations facing you, and you shall dispossess them; and Joshua too shall cross over at your head, as Yahweh has said. ⁴ Yahweh will treat them as he treated Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when he destroyed them. ⁵ Yahweh will deliver them over to you, and you will deal with them in exact accordance with all the commandments I have enjoined on you. ⁶ Be strong, stand firm, have no fear of them, and no terror, for it is Yahweh your God who is going with you; he will not fail you or desert you."

⁷ Then Moses summoned Joshua and, in the presence of all Israel, said to him, "Be strong, stand firm, for you are the one going with this people into the land that Yahweh swore to their fathers he would give them;

DEUTERONOMY 31

- ¹ For the MT reading וַיֵּלֶךְ ('he went'), the LXX (συνετέλεσεν) and Qumran MSS have וִיכַל ('he finished') reading, as with the NRSV: "When Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, ² he said to them: ..." The difficult reading of the MT favours its authenticity.
- ² According to Gn 6:3, 120 years is the maximum human lifespan allowed by God after the Flood.
- ³ NETB opens this verse with, "As for the LORD your God, he is about to cross over before you."
- ⁴ In place of 'kings of the Amorites', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'the Amorite kings'.
- ⁵ The NRSV has 'full accord' in place of 'exact accordance', here following the NJB; NETB reads 'according to the whole commandment'.
- ⁶ The NJB omits the emphatic 'it is ...' and '... who', here following the NRSV.
- ⁷ The NJB lacks the emphatic 'the one', here following the NRSV.

וְאַתָּה תִּנְחִילָנָה אוֹתָם: ^ח וַיְהִי הוּא | הַהֵלֶךְ לִפְנֵיךָ
הוּא יִהְיֶה עִמָּךְ לֹא יִרְפֹּךְ וְלֹא יַעֲזֹבְךָ לֹא תִירָא וְלֹא
תַחַת: ^ט וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וַיִּתְּנָהּ
אֶל־הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי לֵוִי הַנְּשָׂאִים אֶת־אֲרוֹן בְּרִית
יְהוָה וְאֶל־כָּל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^י וַיִּצֹּ מֹשֶׁה אוֹתָם
לֵאמֹר מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעֵ שָׁנִים בְּמַעַד שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה
בַּחֹג הַסְּכּוֹת: ^{יא} בְּבֹא כָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לִרְאוֹת אֶת־פָּנֶי
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר תִּקְרָא אֶת־
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת נֶגֶד כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַזְנֵיהֶם: ^{יב} הִקְהֵל
אֶת־הָעָם הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׁים וְהַטָּף וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר
בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ וּלְמַעַן יִלְמְדוּ וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְשָׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: ^{יג} וּבְנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ יִשְׁמְעוּ
וּלְמַדּוּ לִירְאָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כָּל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר
אַתֶּם חַיִּים עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־
הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: {פ}

and you are to give it into their possession. ⁸ Yahweh himself will lead you; he will be with you; he will not fail you or desert you. Have no fear; do not be disheartened or discouraged by anything.” ⁹ Then Moses committed this Law to writing and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh, and to all the elders of Israel. ¹⁰ And Moses gave them this command: “At the end of every seven years, at the time fixed for the year of remission, at the feast of Shelters, ¹¹ when the whole of Israel comes to look on the face of Yahweh your God in the place he chooses, you must proclaim this Law in the hearing of all Israel. ¹² Assemble all the people together, the men and the women, and the children, as well as the stranger who lives within your gates, for them to hear it and learn to fear Yahweh your God and keep and observe all the words of this Law. ¹³ And their children, who as yet do not know this Law, shall hear it and learn to fear Yahweh your God for as long as you live in the land that you are crossing over the Jordan to possess.”

⁸ The NJB lacks ‘or discouraged’, here following NETB.

⁹ Note that the text does not say that Moses wrote down the Law himself – it could mean that he had scribes or associates do this for him.

¹⁰ Deuteronomy fixes this reading to be held on the Feast of Shelters, every Sabbatical year. Later tradition, however, implicit in 2Ch 15:10 and explicit in the ‘Book of Jubilees’ and in some Qumran documents, links the memorial of the Covenant with the Feast of Weeks.

¹¹ Every seventh (or Sabbatical) year (15:1–11), the Deuteronomic Law is to be read at the central sanctuary during the Festival of Booths (16:13–15). On this occasion, a ceremony of covenant renewal is presumably to take place.

¹² The NRSV uses ‘alien’ in place of ‘stranger’, here following the NJB.

¹³ The phrase, ‘this Law’, is not in the MT, but English style requires an object for the verb here; the NJB & NRSV uses the pronoun ‘it’; here, we follow NETB (and the NIV).

^{יד} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הֵן קָרְבוּ יְמֵיךָ לָמוּת קְרֹא אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְהִתִּיצְבוּ בָּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד וְאָצְוֹנוּ וַיִּלְךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיִּתִּיצְבוּ בָּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד: ^{טו} וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה בָּאֵהָל בְּעָמֹד עָנָן וַיַּעֲמֵד עָמֹד הָעָנָן עַל־פֶּתַח הָאֵהָל:

^{טז} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִנֵּךְ שָׁכַב עִם־אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְקָם הָעָם הַזֶּה וַזְּנָה אַחֲרַי אֱלֹהֵי נְכַר־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הוּא בָּא־שָׁמָּה בְּקִרְבּוֹ וַעֲזָבֵנִי וְהִפֹּל אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אִתּוֹ: ^{יז} וְחָרָה אַפִּי בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא וַעֲזָבְתִּים וְהִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי מֵהֶם וְהָיָה לָאֵכֶל וּמִצָּאָהוּ רָעוֹת רַבּוֹת וְצָרוֹת וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא הֲלֹא עָלַי כִּי־אֵין אֱלֹהֵי בְּקִרְבִּי מִצָּאוֹנִי הָרָעוֹת הָאֵלֶּה: ^{יח} וְאֲנֹכִי הִסְתַּר אֶסְתִּיר פָּנַי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עַל כָּל־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה כִּי פָנָה אֶל־אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: ^{יט} וְעַתָּה כְּתֹבוּ לָכֶם אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת וְלַמֶּדָּה אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁימָה בְּפִיהֶם לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה־לִּי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לְעֵד בְּבִנְיַי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^כ כִּי־אֲבִיאֲנֹ

¹⁴ Yahweh said to Moses, “Your time is near to die; summon Joshua and take your stand at the Tent of Meeting, that I may give him his orders.” Moses and Joshua came and took their stand at the Tent of Meeting ¹⁵ and Yahweh appeared at the Tent of Meeting in a pillar of cloud; the pillar of cloud stood at the door of the Tent.

¹⁶ Yahweh said to Moses, “And now you will soon be sleeping with your fathers. This people will start playing the harlot, following the alien gods of the land they are invading. They will desert me and break my Covenant that I have made with them. ¹⁷ On that day, my anger shall blaze against them: I will forsake them and hide my face from them. A host of disasters and misfortunes will overtake them to devour them and, when that day comes, they will say, “If such disasters overtake me, surely Yahweh my God cannot be with me?” ¹⁸ Yes indeed, I shall hide my face that day for all the evil they have done by turning to other gods.

¹⁹ “Now, therefore, write down this song which you must use. Teach it to the Israelites, put it into their mouths that it may be a witness on my behalf against the Israelites. ²⁰ For, when I have brought them into the

¹⁴ Vv. 14–15 are the only mention of the Tent and the theophany in Deuteronomy.

¹⁵ The NJB has ‘showed himself’ in place of ‘appeared’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

¹⁶ The literal translation of ‘they’ is ‘he’; the Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, and Tg read the plural ‘they’.

¹⁷ In place of ‘forsake them and hide my face from them’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘abandon them and reject them’.

¹⁸ See #16 for the use of 3PL in vv. 15–21.

¹⁹ In place of ‘which you must use’, here following the NJB, NETB has ‘for yourselves’.

²⁰ The NJB has ‘despise’ in place of ‘reject’, here following NETB.

אֱלֹהֵי־הָאָדָמָה | אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לַאֲבֹתָיו זֶבֶת חֶלֶב
וּדְבַשׁ וְאָכַל וּשְׂבַע וּדְשַׁן וּפָנָה אֶל־אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וַעֲבָדוּם וְנִאֲצֹנִי וְהִפָּר אֶת־בְּרִיתִי: ^{כא} וְהָיָה כִּי־
תִמָּצֵאנָּה אֹתוֹ רָעוֹת רַבּוֹת וְצָרוֹת וְעָנְתָה הַשִּׁירָה
הַזֹּאת לִפְנֵי לֵעָד כִּי לֹא תִשְׁכַּח מִפִּי זִרְעוֹ כִּי
יִדְעֹתִי אֶת־יִצְרוֹ אֲשֶׁר הוּא עֹשֶׂה הַיּוֹם בְּטָרִם
אֲבִיָּאֲנֹו אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי: ^{כב} וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה
אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַיְלַמְּדָהּ אֶת־בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{כג} וַיִּצֹו אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזַק
וְאַמֵּץ כִּי אֵתָּה תָבִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לָהֶם וְאַנֹכִי אֵהְיָה עִמָּךְ:

^{כד} וַיְהִי כִכְלֹות מֹשֶׁה לִכְתֹּב אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־
הַזֹּאת עַל־סֵפֶר עַד תָּמָם: ^{כה} וַיִּצֹו מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם
נֹשְׂאֵי אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ^{כו} לָקַח אֵת סֵפֶר
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה וְשִׁמַּתֶּם אֹתוֹ מִצַּד אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְהָיָה־שָׁם בְּךָ לְעֵד: ^{כז} כִּי אֲנֹכִי יֹדַעְתִּי

land I swore on oath to their fathers I would give to them, a land where milk and honey flow, and they have eaten their fill and grown fat, they will turn to other gods to serve them; they will reject me and break my Covenant. ²¹ When a host of disasters and misfortunes overtake them, this song shall stand as witness against them, for their descendants must not forget it. Yes, even today, before I have brought them to the land I promised on oath, I know what plans they have in mind.” ²² So, on that same day, Moses wrote out this song and taught it to the Israelites. ²³ He gave Joshua son of Nun this order: “Be strong and stand firm, for you are to bring the Israelites to the land I swore to give them, and I myself will be with you.”

²⁴ When Moses had finished writing down in a book the words of this Law to the very end, ²⁵ Moses commanded the Levites who carried the Ark of Yahweh’s Covenant, saying: ²⁶ “Take this Book of the Law and put it beside the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh your God. Let it remain there as a witness against you. ²⁷ For, I know well how rebellious you

²¹ The literal translation of ‘must not forget it’ is ‘it will not be forgotten from the mouth of his seed’.

²² The ‘song’ (the “Song of Moses”) starts at 32:1.

²³ For the end of this verse, the LXX reads, “as the Lord promised them, and he will be with you.” (ὅτι ὡμοσεν κύριος αὐτοῖς, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μετὰ σοῦ) This relieves the problem of Moses apparently promising to be with Joshua as the MT reads on the surface (‘I will be with you’) but the reading of the LXX is clearly an attempt to clarify an existing obscurity and therefore is unlikely to reflect the original.

²⁴ The Law mediated by Moses (see #4:14) is put beside the Ark containing the Decalogue uttered by God himself.

²⁵ In place of ‘Moses’, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB & NETB open with ‘he’.

²⁶ The ‘Book of the Law’ refers to Deuteronomy.

²⁷ The literal translation of ‘stubborn’ is ‘stiff-necked’.

אֶת־מִרְיָךְ וְאֶת־עֲרֻפְךָ הַקָּשָׁה הֵן בְּעוֹדֵנִי חַי עִמָּכֶם
 הַיּוֹם מִמָּרִים הַיֵּתֶם עִם־יְהוָה וְאִף כִּי־אַחֲרֵי מוֹתִי:
 כח הַקֹּהֵלִו אֵלַי אֶת־כָּל־זִקְנֵי שְׁבִטֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם
 וְאִדְבַּרְהָ בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם אֵת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֶעִידָה
 בָּם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ: כט כִּי יִדְעֹתִי אַחֲרֵי
 מוֹתִי כִי־הִשְׁחַתְתָּ תִּשְׁחַתּוֹן וְסָרְתָם מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר
 צִוִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְקִרְאתֶם אֶתְכֶם הָרָעָה בְּאַחֲרִית
 הַיָּמִים כִּי־תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְהַכְעִיסוֹ
 בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם:
 ל וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה בְּאָזְנוֹ כָּל־קֹהֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־דְּבָרֵי
 הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת עַד תָּמָם:
 {ש}

are and how stubborn. If today, while I am still alive and among you, you defy Yahweh, how much more will you defy him after my death!

28 “Gather round me all the elders of your tribes, and your scribes, so that I may let them hear these words and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29 For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly; and you will turn aside from the way I have marked out for you; and, in the days to come, disaster will fall on you because you will do that which is displeasing in Yahweh’s eyes, provoking him by your behaviour.”

30 Then in the hearing of Israel’s full assembly Moses spoke the words of this song to the very end:

28 ‘These words’ is probably a reference to the following Song of Moses (Ch. 32), not to the Book of the Law.

29 For ‘you will act corruptly’, the MT uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates with the word ‘surely’.

30 In place of ‘to the very end’, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has ‘from start to finish’.

דברים פרק לב

הֶאֱזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֲדַבְּרָה {ס} א
וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אֲמִרֵי־פִי: {ר} ב
יֵעָרֵף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי {ס} ב
תִּזֹּל כַּטֹּל אֲמִרְתִּי {ר} ב
כְּשֹׁעִירִם עַל־דָּשָׁא {ס} ב
וְכִרְבִּיבִים עַל־עֵשֶׂב: {ר} ב
כִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא {ס} ג
הִבּוּ גִדְלָה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ: {ר} ג
הַצּוֹר תָּמִים פָּעֵלוֹ {ס} ד
כִּי כָל־דֶּרֶכָיו מִשְׁפָּט {ר} ד
אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְאִין עֹלָם {ס} ד
צַדִּיק וְיֹשֶׁר הוּא: {ר} ד
שָׁחַת לוֹ לֹא בָנָיו מוֹמִם {ס} ה
דֹּר עֲקֹשׁ וּפְתִלְתָּל: {ר} ה

DEUTERONOMY 32

1 "Listen, heavens, while I speak.
Let the earth hear the words that I am saying.
2 May my teaching fall like the rain,
may my word drop down like the dew,
like the showers on fresh grass
and light rain on the turf.
3 For I proclaim the name of Yahweh.
Oh, tell the greatness of our God!
4 As for the Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are Equity.
A God faithful, without unfairness,
just and upright is he.
5 They have acted perversely, those he fathered,
a deceitful and underhand brood.

DEUTERONOMY 32

- ¹ The great Song of Moses celebrates the unique power of the God of Israel, the one true God. After an introduction in the wisdom style (vv. 1–2), it proclaims the perfection of the works of God (vv. 3–7), his providence for Israel (vv. 8–14), to which it contrasts the people's rebelliousness (vv. 15–19) and the consequent judgement (vv. 19–25); Go swill not, however, abandon Israel to his enemies (vv. 26–35) and will intervene on behalf of his people (vv. 36–42); v. 43 is a doxology.
- ² The term translated 'dew' can also mean 'mist' or 'light drizzle'; in some contexts, the term appears to refer to light rain, rather than dew.
- ³ The Samaritan Pentateuch & Tg have 'in the name' rather than 'the name', here following the MT.
- ⁴ The LXX reads 'God' (θεός) for the MT's 'Rock'; the Hebrew term depicts God as a rocky summit where one may find safety and protection.
- ⁵ The NRSV has, "Yet his degenerate children have dealt falsely with him," for the 1st line; the MT is corrupt; the text here follows the LXX (ἡμάρτοσαν οὐκ αὐτῷ τέκνα μωμητά) and Samaritan Pentateuch. Israel is of noble birth (born of Yahweh); his degeneration is his own doing.

ו	הָ לִיהוָה תִּגְמְלוּ־זֹאת {ס}	6	Is this how you repay Yahweh, O brainless and unwise people?
	עִם נָבִל וְלֹא חָכָם {ר}		
	הֲלוֹא־הוּא אָבִיךָ קִנְךָ {ס}		Is this not your father, who gave you being, who made you, by whom you subsist?
	הוּא עָשָׂךְ וַיְכַנְנֶךָ: {ר}		
ז	זְכֹר יָמֹת עוֹלָם	7	Remember the days of old; think over the years, down the ages.
	בִּינוּ שָׁנוֹת דֶּרֶז־דָּר {ס}		
	שְׁאַל אָבִיךָ וַיְגַדֶּךָ		Ask of your father, let him teach you; of your elders, let them enlighten you.
	זְקִנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָךְ: {ר}		
ח	בַּהֲנַחֵל עָלִיזִין גּוֹיִם {ס}	8	When the Most High gave the nations each their heritage, when he partitioned out the human race,
	בַּהֲפָרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם {ר}		he assigned the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the sons of God.
	יַצַּב גְּבֻלַּת עַמִּים {ס}		
	לְמִסְפָּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ר}		
ט	כִּי חָלַק יְהוָה עַמּוֹ {ס}	9	Yahweh's portion was his people, Jacob his share of inheritance.
	יַעֲקֹב חֶבֶל נַחֲלָתוֹ: {ר}		
י	יִמְצָאֵהוּ בְּאַרְץ מִדְבָּר {ס}	10	In the desert he finds him, in the howling expanse of the wastelands.
	וּבִתְהוֹ יִלֵּל יִשְׁמֹן {ר}		

⁶ Note that the opening ה is presented as an enlarged letter, just as it appears in almost all *Hebrew MSS*.

⁷ The *Peshitta*, *Tg*, and *Vg (cogita)* read 2MS in the 2nd line, whereas the *MT* has 2MP; the former is preferred, the latter perhaps being a misreading (בינו for בינה): both the preceding ('remember') and following ('ask') imperatives are singular forms in the *MT*.

⁸ 'Sons of God' follows the *LXX* (ἄγγελοι θεοῦ – 'angels of God') and *NJB*, where the *MT* has 'Israelites' (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – 'sons of Israel'); the *NRSV*, following the *Qumran MSS*, has 'gods'. The 'sons of God' are the angels (Job 1:6ff), members of the heavenly court (v. 43 & Ps 29:1, 82:1, 89:6, and #Tb 5:4); here, the guardian angels of the nations (see #Dn 10:13).

⁹ At the end of this verse, the *LXX* and *Samaritan Pentateuch* add 'Israel', suggesting: "The LORD's allotment is Jacob; the portion of his inheritance is Israel." While providing good parallelism, this destroys a fine chiasmic structure: 'portion' (a), 'his people' (b), 'Jacob' (b'), and 'inheritance' (a').

¹⁰ The literal translation of 'pupil of his eye' (אֵישׁוֹן) is 'little man': when one looks into another's eyes, he sees himself reflected there in miniature.

יִסְבְּלֶנְהוּ יְבוֹנְנֶהוּ {ס}
 יִצְרְנֶהוּ כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינָיו: {ר}
 כְּנֶשֶׁר יַעֲיִר קִנּוֹ יא
 עַל־גּוֹזְלָיו יִרְחֹף {ס}
 יִפְרֹשׁ כְּנָפָיו יִקְחֶהוּ
 יִשְׁאֲהוּ עַל־אַבְרָתּוֹ: {ר}
 יְהוָה בִּדְדוֹ יִנְחֶנּוּ {ס} יב
 וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכַח: {ר}
 יִרְכְּבֶהוּ עַל־בִּמְתִּי בְמוֹתֵי אֶרֶץ {ס} יג
 וַיֹּאכַל תְּנוּבַת שָׂדֵי {ר}
 וַיִּנְקֶהוּ דָּבֶשׁ מִסֶּלַע {ס}
 וְשֶׁמֶן מִחֲלֹמִישׁ צוּר: {ר}
 חֲמֹאת בָּקָר וְחֵלֶב צֹאן {ס} יד
 עֶסֶם־חֵלֶב כְּרִים וְאֵילִים {ר}
 בְּגִי־בָשָׁן וְעֵתוּדִים {ס}
 עֶסֶם־חֵלֶב כְּלִיֹּת חֲטָה {ר}
 וְדֶם־עֵגֶב תִּשְׁתֶּה־חֲמֶר: {ס}
 וַיִּשְׁמֵן יִשְׂרוּן וַיִּבְעֹט {ר} טו
 שִׁמְנָת עֲבִית כְּשִׂית {ס}

He protects him, rears him and guards him
as the pupil of his eye.

- 11 Like an eagle watching its nest,
hovering over its young,
he spreads out his wings to hold him;
he supports him on his pinions.
- 12 Yahweh alone is guiding him;
with him is no alien god.
- 13 He gives him the heights of the land to ride,
he feeds him on the yield of the mountains,
he gives him honey from the rock to taste,
and oil from the flinty rock;
- 14 curds from the herd and milk from the flock,
with the fat of lambs and rams,
Bashan's bulls and goats,
rich food of the wheat's ear,
and blood of the fermenting grape for drink.
- 15 Jeshurun grew fat, turned restive.
(You grew fat, gross, bloated.)

11 The suffix on the verb forms for 'hold' and 'supports' indicates preterites, not imperfects; as such, they simply state the action factually.

12 The suffix on the verb 'guiding' indicates that this is an imperfect, not a preterite: it draws attention to God's guidance during the period.

13 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

14 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "with rich food of the pastures."

15 The LXX (καὶ ἔφαγεν Ιακωβ καὶ ἐνεπλήσθη), Samaritan Pentateuch, and Qumran MSS add, as the 1st line, "Jacob ate and had his fill."

וַיִּטֹּשׁ אֱלֹהִים עֹשֵׂהוּ {ר}		He disowned the God who made him,
וַיִּנְבֹּל צוּר יִשְׁעָתוֹ: {ס}		dishonoured the Rock, his salvation.
יִקְנְאוּהוּ בְּזָרִים {ר}	טז	16 They roused him to jealousy with alien gods,
בְּתוֹעֵבֹת יִכְעִסְהוּ: {ס}		with things detestable they angered him.
יִזְבְּחוּ לִשְׂדִים לֹא אֱלֹהִים {ר}	יז	17 They sacrificed to demons, not God,
אֱלֹהִים לֹא יָדְעוּם {ס}		to gods they did not know,
חֲדָשִׁים מִקֶּרֶב בָּאוּ {ר}		newcomers of yesterday
לֹא שָׁעְרוּם אֲבֹתֵיהֶם: {ס}		whom their fathers had never feared.
צוּר יִלְדָּךְ תִּשְׁכַּח {ר}	יח	18 (You forget the Rock who begot you,
וְתִשְׁכַּח אֵל מְחַלְלֶךָ: {ס}		unmindful now of the God who fathered you.)
וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה וַיִּגְאֹץ {ר}	יט	19 Yahweh has seen this and, in his anger,
מִכַּעַס בָּנָיו וּבָנֹתָיו: {ס}		cast off his sons and his daughters.
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶסְתִּירָה פָנַי מֵהֶם {ר}	כ	20 "I shall hide my face from them," he says,
אֲרֹאֶה מָה אַחֲרֵיהֶם {ס}		"and see what becomes of them.
כִּי דֹר תִּהְיֶה הָמָּה {ר}		For they are a deceitful brood:
בָּנִים לֹא־אֱמֵן בָּם: {ס}		sons with no loyalty in them.
הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְּלֹא־אֵל {ר}	כא	21 They have roused me to jealousy with what is no god,
כַּעֲסוּנִי בְּהַבְלֵיהֶם {ס}		they have angered me with their beings of nothing;

16 The word 'gods' is not in the MT (but is implied and supplied by the Vg – *diis alienis*).

17 'Demons' is a reference to the gods of Canaan (Ps 106:37–38), who are actually 'not God'.

18 The MT for the 1st line is corrupt; the NRSV reads: "You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you." The *yod* in תִּשְׁכַּח is presented as a small letter.

19 The NRSV uses 'jealousy' for 'anger', here following the NJB.

20 The NJB has 'children' in place of 'sons' (בָּנִים).

21 Yahweh has not chosen a new people but, to punish Israel, makes use of a nation on which he has not bestowed the privilege of wisdom.

וְאֲנִי אֶקְנִיאֶם בְּלֹא-עָם {ר}
בְּגוֹי נָבֵל אֲכַעִיסָם: {ס}
כב כִּי-אֵשׁ קִדְחָהּ בְּאִפִּי {ר}
וְתִיקַד עַד-שְׂאוֹל תַּחְתִּית {ס}
וְתֹאכַל אֶרֶץ וִיבִלָּהּ {ר}
וְתִלְהֹט מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים: {ס}
כג אֶסְפָּה עֲלֵימוֹ רָעוֹת {ר}
חֲצִי אֶכְלֶה-בָּם: {ס}
כד מִזֵּי רָעַב וּלְחָמִי רָשָׁף {ר}
וְקָטַב מְרִירִי {ס}
וְשֶׁן-בְּהֵמַת אֶשְׁלַח-בָּם {ר}
עַם-חֲמַת זֹחֲלֵי עָפָר: {ס}
כה מִחוּץ תִּשְׁפֹּל-חֶרֶב וּמִחֲדָרֵם
אֵימָה גָם-בָּחוּר {ר}
גָם-בְּתוּלָה
יוֹנֵק עִם-אִישׁ שִׁיבָה: {ס}
כו אִמְרָתִי אֶפְאַיֶּהֶם {ר}
אֲשַׁבִּיתָהּ מֵאֲנוּשׁ זָכָרָם: {ס}

I, then, will rouse them to jealousy with a non-people,
I will anger them with an empty-headed nation.

²² Yes, a fire has blazed from my anger,
it will burn to the depths of Sheol;
it will devour the earth and all its produce,
it will set fire to the foundations of the mountains.

²³ I will hurl disasters on them,
and on them, I will spend all my arrows.

²⁴ They shall be starved by famine,
eaten by plague and bitterly stung.
I will send the sharp teeth of the wild beast,
and the venom of creeping things against them.

²⁵ Outside, the sword shall carry off their children,
and terror shall reign within.
Young man and girl alike shall perish;
suckling and greybeard both together.

²⁶ I should crush them to dust, I said,
I should wipe out their memory among men.

²² 'Sheol' (שְׂאוֹל) refers here not to hell or the abode of the dead (a much later concept) but to the innermost parts of the earth, as low down as one could get; the parallel with 'the foundations of the mountains' makes this clear (cf. Ps 9:17, 16:10, 139:8, Is 14:9, 15, Am 9:2).

²³ The literal translation of 'hurl' is 'increase'.

²⁴ The term קָטַב ('stung') is probably metaphorical here for the sting of a disease.

²⁵ A verb is omitted from the 2nd half in the MT; for purposes of English style, 'shall perish' (as NJB) is supplied.

²⁶ The NRSV, following the LXX (εἶπα Διασπερῶ αὐτούς), has 'I thought to scatter them' as the 1st line; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

כו לֹלִי בַעַס אוֹיֵב אֲגֹר {ר}
 פִּן־יִנְכְּרוּ צָרִימוּ {ס}
 פִּן־יֹאמְרוּ יָדְנוּ רָמָה {ר}
 וְלֹא יִהְיֶה פָעַל כָּל־זֹאת: {ס}
 כח כִּי־גֹי אֲבָד עֲצוֹת הַמָּה {ר}
 וְאִין בָּהֶם תְּבוּנָה: {ס}
 כט לוֹ חֲכָמוֹ יִשְׁכִּילוּ זֹאת {ר}
 יִבִּינוּ לֵאחֲרֵיתָם: {ס}
 ל אֵיכָה יִרְדֹּף אֶחָד אֶלֶף {ר}
 וּשְׁנַיִם יִנִּיסוּ רַבָּבָה {ס}
 אִם־לֹא כִי־צוּרָם מְכָרָם {ר}
 וַיִּהְיֶה הַסְּגִירָם: {ס}
 לא כִּי לֹא כְצוּרָנוּ צוּרָם {ר}
 וְאִיבִינוּ פְּלִילִים: {ס}
 לב כִּי־מִגְפֵּן סֶדֶם גִּפְנִים {ר}
 וּמִשְׁדָּמֶת עֲמֹרָה {ס}
 עֲנִבְמוּ עֲנִב־רוֹשׁ {ר}
 אֲשַׁכֵּלֶת מִרְּתָת לָמוֹ: {ס}

27 Did I not fear the boasting of the enemy?
 But, let not their foes be mistaken!
 Let them not say: Our hand is triumphant;
 Yahweh plays no part in this.
 28 What a nation devoid of sense it is;
 in them, there is no understanding.
 29 Were they wise, they would succeed,
 they would be able to read their destiny.
 30 How else could one man rout a thousand,
 how could two put ten thousand to flight,
 were it not that their Rock has sold them,
 that Yahweh has delivered them up?
 31 "But their rock is not like our Rock;
 as even our enemies concede.
 32 For their stock springs from the vine stock of Sodom
 and from the groves of Gomorrah:
 their grapes are poisonous grapes,
 their clusters are envenomed.

27 For the end of the 3rd line, here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has, "Our own power wins the victory."

28 In place of 'devoid of sense', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'of short sight'.

29 For the 2nd line, the LXX reads: "they will appreciate these things in the future." (ταῦτα καταδεξάσθωσαν εἰς τὸν ἐπιόντα χρόνον)

30 The word 'man' (1st line) is not in the MT but is supplied in the translation for clarity.

31 The NRSV has, "our enemies are fools," as the 2nd line and the NJB has "our enemies are no intercessors;" the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

32 The 'vine' is a reference to the pagan deities which, the passage says, find their ultimate source in Sodom and Gomorrah.

לג	חַמַּת תַּנִּינִים יֵינֶם {ר}	33	Their wine is the poison of serpents, the cruel venom of vipers.
לד	וְרֹאשׁ פִּתְנִים אֲכֹזֵר: {ס}	34	But he – is he not safe with me, sealed inside my treasury?
לה	הֲלֹא־הוּא בְּמִסַּע עֲמָדִי {ר}	35	Vengeance is mine, and requital, for the time when they make a false step.
	חֲתוּם בְּאוֹצְרוֹתַי: {ס}		For it is close, the day of their ruin: their doom comes at speed.
לו	לִי נֶקֶם וְשָׁלֵם {ר}	36	(For Yahweh will see his people righted, he will have compassion on his servants.)
	לְעֵת תִּמְוֹט רַגְלָם {ס}		For he will see to it that their power fails, that, serf or freeman, there is not one remaining.
	כִּי קְרוֹב יוֹם אִידָם {ר}	37	“Where are their gods?” he will ask then, the rock where they thought to take refuge,
	וְחָשׁ עֲתִידָת לָמוֹ: {ס}	38	who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their libations?
לז	כִּי־יִדְּן יְהוָה עִמּוֹ {ר}		Let them rise up and help you, let them be your protection!
	וְעַל־עַבְדָּיו יִתְנַחֵם {ס}		
לח	כִּי יִרְאֶה כִּי־אַזָּלָת יָד {ר}		
	וְאַפֶּס עֲצוֹר וְעֲזוּב: {ס}		
	לֹא וְאָמַר אֵי אֱלֹהֵימוֹ {ר}		
	צוּר חֲסִיו בּוֹ: {ס}		
	אֲשֶׁר חָלַב זִבְחֵימוֹ יֹאכְלוּ {ר}		
	יִשְׁתּוּ יַיִן נְסִיכָם {ס}		
	יִקְוּמוּ וַיַּעֲזְרֵכֶם {ר}		
	יְהִי עֲלֵיכֶם סִתְרָה: {ס}		

³³ In place of ‘vipers’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘asps’ and NETB has ‘cobras’.

³⁴ ‘He’ refers to Israel, whom God still reserves for himself.

³⁵ ‘Vengeance’ means both judgement upon the oppressor and vindication of the oppressed (v. 36).

³⁶ Another option for the verb here translated as ‘will have compassion on’ is ‘will be grieved/relent’.

³⁷ In vv. 37–39, words with which the prophets admonished Israel are turned against Israel’s foes (see Is 10:3, Jr 18:17).

³⁸ For the last 2 lines, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, “Let these arise and help you, let these be the shelter above you!”

לט רֹאֲוּ | עֵתָהּ כִּי אֲנִי הֵוא {ר}
 וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי {ס}
 אֲנִי אֶמֶת וְאֶחֱיָה {ר}
 מַחְצֵתִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְפָּא {ס}
 וְאֵין מִיָּדִי מַצִּיל: {ר}
 מ כִּי־אֶשָּׂא אֶל־שָׁמַיִם יָדִי {ס}
 וְאֶמְרָתִי כִי אֲנֹכִי לְעֹלָם: {ר}
 מא אֶס־שְׁנוֹתַי בְּרֶקַח חֲרָבִי {ס}
 וְתֹאחֶז בְּמִשְׁפָּט יָדִי {ר}
 אֶשִׁיב נֶקֶם לְצָרִי {ס}
 וְלִמְשֹׁנָאֵי אֲשֵׁלֵם: {ר}
 מב אֶשְׁכִּיר חֲצִי מִדָּם {ס}
 וְחֲרָבִי תֹאכַל בָּשָׂר {ר}
 מִדָּם חָלָל וְשִׁבְיָהּ {ס}
 מִרָּאשׁ פְּרָעוֹת אוֹיֵב: {ר}
 מג הִרְגִּינוּ גֹוִים עַמּוֹ {ס}
 כִּי דָם־עַבְדָּיו יִקְוֶם {ר}

39 See now that I, I am He,
 and beside me there is no other god.
 It is I who deal death and life;
 when I have struck, it is I who heal
 (and none can deliver from my hand).
 40 Yes, I lift up my hand to heaven,
 and I say: As surely as I live forever,
 41 when I have whetted my flashing sword
 I will take up the cause of Right,
 I will give my foes as good again;
 I will repay those who hate me.
 42 I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
 and my sword shall feed on flesh;
 the blood of wounded and captives,
 the skulls of the enemy leaders."
 43 Nations, acclaim his people,
 since he avenges the blood of his servants;

39 Vv. 39–42 appear to be a quotation of Yahweh.

40 For the 2nd line, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "and swear: As I live forever."

41 The Hebrew term שָׂנֵא ('hate') in this covenant context speaks of those who reject God's covenant overtures.

42 For the last line, here following the NJB, NETB has 'the chief of the enemy's leaders' and the NRSV has 'from the long-haired enemy'.

43 For this verse, here following the MT, the NJB, following the LXX, reads as follows:

Heavens, rejoice with him, let the sons of God pay him homage! Nations, rejoice with his people, let God's envoys tell of his power!

For, he will avenge the blood of his servants and give his foes as good again, he will repay those who hate him and purify the land of his people.

וְנָקַם יְשִׁיב לְצָרָיו {ס}
וְכִפֵּר אֶדְמָתוֹ עָמוֹ: {ר}
{ש}

he makes vengeance recoil on his enemies,
and his people will purify his country.”

מִד וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה־הַזֹּאת
בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם הוּא וְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון: מַה וַיְכַל מֹשֶׁה
לְדַבֵּר אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:
מִו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים שִׁימוּ לְבַבְכֶּם לְכָל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר
אֲנִי מַעֲדִיד בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תֵּצְאוּ אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם
לְשֹׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: מִז כִּי
לֹא־דָבָר רֶק הוּא מִכֶּם כִּי־הוּא חַיִּיכֶם וּבִדְבַר הַזֶּה
תִּאָּרִיכוּ יָמִים עַל־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־
הַיַּרְדֵּן שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: {פ}

מח וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר:
מט עֲלֵה אֶל־הַר הָעֵבְרִים הַזֶּה הֲרִנְבוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ
מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי יַרְחוֹ וּרְאֵה אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן

⁴⁴ And Moses came and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people, he and Joshua the son of Nun. ⁴⁵ And, when Moses had finished reciting all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶ he said to them, “Take to heart all the words that I am giving in witness against you today; give them as a command to your children, so that they may diligently observe all the words of this law. ⁴⁷ It is no idle thing you will be doing, because the Law is your life; and, through its means, you will prolong your days in the land into which you are crossing over the Jordan to possess it.”

⁴⁸ And Yahweh spoke to Moses that same day and said to him, ⁴⁹ “Climb Mount Nebo, that mountain of the Abarim range, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am

The NRSV, following the Qumran MSS, is similar but opens with: “Praise, O heavens, his people, worship him, all you gods!”

⁴⁴ Some Hebrew MSS use ‘Hoshea’, an alternative form of the name, ‘Joshua’. Before this verse, the LXX inserts 31:22 and, for ‘song’, reads ‘Law’.

⁴⁵ This verse continues 31:27. The ‘words’ are the words of the Law (end of v. 46), not of the canticle.

⁴⁶ For Moses’ command, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Take all these words to heart; I call them to witness against you today. You must order your children to keep and observe all the words of this Law.”

⁴⁷ The NRSV has ‘trifling matter’ in place of ‘idle thing’, here following the NJB.

⁴⁸ This paragraph (following v. 44), the inserted Blessings of Moses notwithstanding, is continued in 34:1, and is the work of the Priestly editor who gave the Pentateuch its final form by adding Deuteronomy to it; he repeats here what the same Priestly source had said in Nb 27:12–14.

⁴⁹ The ‘Abarim’ (עֵבְרִים) refers to the high plateau region of the Transjordan, the highest elevation of which is Mount Pisgah – or ‘Nebo’ (נִבּוֹ), cf. 34:1; see also the note on the name ‘Pisgah’, #3:17.

אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֻחֻזָּה: ^נוּמָת בְּהָרֹ
אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹלֶה שָׁמָּה וְהֶאֱסַף אֶל-עַמִּיךָ בְּאֶשְׁר־
מֵת אֶהְרֹן אַחִיךָ בְּהָר הָהָר וַיֵּאֱסֹף אֶל-עַמּוּיוֹ: ^{נא}עַל־
אֲשֶׁר מָעַלְתֶּם בִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִי-מְרִיבַת
קֹדֶשׁ מִדְּבַר-צֹן עַל אֲשֶׁר לֹא-קִדַּשְׁתֶּם אוֹתִי בְּתוֹךְ
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ^{נב}כִּי מִנְּגִד תִּרְאֶה אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְשָׁמָּה
לֹא תָבוֹא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

giving to the Israelites as their domain. ⁵⁰ You shall die there, on the mountain you have climbed, and be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. ⁵¹ Because, with the other Israelites, you broke faith with me at the Waters of Meribah-Kadesh in the desert of Zin, because you did not make my holiness clear to the Israelites, ⁵² you may view the country from a distance, but you shall not enter it – this country that I am giving to the Israelites.”

⁵⁰ In the MT, the forms translated ‘you shall die’ and ‘be gathered’ are imperatives but the actions in view cannot really be commanded; the imperative is used here in a rhetorical, emphatic manner to indicate the certainty of Moses’ death on the mountain.

⁵¹ The use of the 2PL (‘you’) in the MT suggests that Moses and Aaron are both in view here, since both had rebelled at some time or other, if not at Meribah-Kadesh then elsewhere (cf. Nb 20:24, 27:14).

⁵² The NJB opens this verse, here following the NRSV, with, “you may only see the country from outside; you cannot enter it.”

דברים פרק לג

א וְזֹאת הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרַךְ מֹשֶׁה אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים
ב אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי מוֹתוֹ: ב וַיֹּאמֶר

יְהוָה מִסִּינַי בָּא
וַזְּרַח מִשְׁעִיר לָמוֹ
הוֹפִיעַ מִהַר פָּאֵרָן
וְאִתּוֹ מֵרַבְּבַת קֹדֶשׁ
מִימֵינוֹ אֲשֶׁדֶת [אֵשׁ דָּת] לָמוֹ:
ג אֵף חֶבֶב עַמִּים
כָּל־קֹדְשָׁיו בִּידֶךָ
וְהֵם תָּכּוּ לְרַגְלֶךָ
יֵשׁוּא מִדְּבַרְתֶּיךָ:
ד תּוֹרָה צִוְּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה
מִזְרָשָׁה קֶהֱלֵת יַעֲקֹב:
ה וַיְהִי בִישֻׁרוֹן מֶלֶךְ
בְּהַתְאָסֵף רָאשֵׁי עָם
יַחַד שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

DEUTERONOMY 33

¹ This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, pronounced over the Israelites before his death. ² He said:

“Yahweh came from Sinai.
For them, after Seir, he rose on the horizon,
after Mount Paran he shone forth.
With him were myriads of holy ones;
at his right, a host of his own.
³ You who have such love for the forefathers,
in your hand are all the holy ones.
At your feet they fell,
under your guidance went swiftly on.
⁴ Moses enjoined a law on us.
The assembly of Jacob comes into its inheritance.
⁵ There was a king in Jeshurun
when the heads of the people foregathered
and the tribes of Israel were all assembled.

DEUTERONOMY 33

- ¹ In place of ‘his death’, here following the WEBBE, NETB & JPS, the NJB has ‘he died’.
- ² This is a difficult verse with an archaic vocabulary; the mis-pointed term, אֵשׁ דָּת, (‘a host of his own’), following the Qere, where the Ketiv has אֲשֶׁדֶת (‘a fiery law’), following the Samaritan Pentateuch.
- ³ The NRSV opens this verse with: “Indeed, O favourite among peoples...” The text of the verse is uncertain. The ‘ancestors’ are the Patriarchs (the same archaic term is here used as in the expression ‘gathered to one’s people’ in vv. like Gn 25:8). The ‘holy ones’ are Israel.
- ⁴ The Hebrew term, תּוֹרָה (‘law’), here should be understood more broadly as instruction.
- ⁵ On ‘Jeshurun’, see #32:15. The context suggests the enthronement of Yahweh in an assembly of the united tribes of Israel (Jos 24:1, Jg 20:2).

יְחִי רְאוּבֵן וְאַל־יָמָת
וְיִהְיֶה מִתֵּיו מְסָפָר:
{ס}

וְנֹאֵת לַיהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר^ז 7 Of Judah, he said this:

שְׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל יְהוּדָה
וְאַל־עֲמֹז תְּבִיאֵנוּ
יְדֵיו רַב לֹו
וְעֶזֶר מִצָּרָיו תִּהְיֶה:
{פ}

וּלְלֵוִי אָמַר^ח 8 Of Levi he said:

תִּמְיָד וְאוּרִיָד לְאִישׁ חֲסִידְךָ
אֲשֶׁר נָסִיתוֹ בְּמַסָּה
תְּרִיבָהוּ עַל־מֵי מְרִיבָה:
הָאָמַר לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ^ט
לֹא רָאִיתִיו
וְאֶת־אָחִיו לֹא הֵכִיר
וְאֶת־בָּנָיו לֹא יָדַע
כִּי שָׁמְרוּ אִמְרֹתֶיךָ
וּבְרִיתֶךָ יִנָּצְרוּ:

⁶ “May Reuben survive and not die out,
survive though his men be few!”

“Listen, Yahweh, to the voice of Judah
and bring him back to his people.
That his hands may defend his rights,
come to his help against his foes.”

“Give to Levi your Thummim, your Urim to your loyal one
after you had tested him at Massah
and striven with him at the waters of Meribah.

⁹ He says of his father and mother,
“I have not seen them.”
His brothers he does not know,
nor does he know his children.
Yes, they have kept your word,
they hold firmly to your Covenant.

⁶ The heading of Reuben’s blessing has dropped from the text; this tribe soon lost its importance. ‘Survive’ is a correction; the Hebrew could be rendered, “despite the small number of his warriors.”

⁷ The NRSV closes with: “...strengthen his hands for him and be a help against his adversaries.”

⁸ ‘Give to Levi’ is from the LXX (Δότε Λευι); it is omitted in the MT.

⁹ The first 2 lines no doubt allude to the Levites’ destruction of their own fellow tribesmen following the golden calf incident (Ex 32:25–29).

י' יִזְרוּ מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לִיעֲקֹב וְתוֹרָתְךָ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁיִמוּ קְטֹרֶה בְּאַפֶּךָ וְכָלִיל עַל־מִזְבְּחֶךָ: י"א בָּרַךְ יְהוָה חֵילוֹ וּפְעַל יָדָיו תִּרְצֶה מִחֵץ מִתְנַיִם קִמּוּ וּמִשְׁנָאִיו מִן־יִקְוּמוּן: {ס}	10 They teach your customs to Jacob, your Law to Israel. They place incense before you; place the holocaust on your altar. 11 Bless, O Yahweh, his worthiness, and accept the work of his hands. Crush the loins of his enemies and of his foes, until they rise no more."
יב לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר יָדִיד יְהוָה יִשְׁכֵּן לְבֶטֶח עָלָיו חֹפֶף עָלָיו כָּל־הַיּוֹם וּבֵין כְּתָפָיו שָׁכֵן: {ס}	12 Of Benjamin he said: "Beloved of Yahweh, he rests trustfully near him. The Most High protects him day after day and dwells between his hillsides."
יג וְלִיוֹסֵף אָמַר מְבֹרָכַת יְהוָה אֶרֶצוֹ מִמֶּגֶד שָׁמַיִם מִטָּל וּמִתְהוֹם רַבָּצֶת תַּחַת:	13 Of Joseph he said: "His land is blessed by Yahweh, with the choice gifts of heaven above, and of the deep that lies below,

¹⁰ For the 3rd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "They send incense rising to your nostrils."

¹¹ A more literal translation of 'loins' is 'sinews'; this part of the body was thought to be centre of strength (cf. Job 40:16, Ps 69:24, Pr 31:17, Na 2:2, 11).

¹² 'The Most High' is a conjectural translation; the NRSV has 'The High God'; the MT repeats 'near him'.

¹³ For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, "For him the best of heaven's dew;" the referent appears to be good crops produced by the rain that falls from the sky.

יד וּמִמֶּגֶד תְּבוֹאֶת שֶׁמֶשׁ
 וּמִמֶּגֶד גֶּרֶשׁ יֶרֶחִים:
 טו וּמִרֹאשׁ הַרְרֵי־קֶדֶם
 וּמִמֶּגֶד גְּבְעוֹת עוֹלָם:
 טז וּמִמֶּגֶד אֶרֶץ וּמְלָאָה
 וּרְצוֹן שֹׁכֵנֵי סִנֵּה
 תְּבוֹאֶתָהּ לְרֹאשׁ יוֹסֵף
 וּלְקֶדֶד נְזִיר אֲחִיו:
 ז בְּכוֹר שׁוֹר הַדֶּר לוֹ
 וְקַרְנֵי רֹאם קֶרְנָיו
 בָּהֶם עַמִּים יִנְגַּח יַחֲדוֹ
 אֶפְסֵי־אֶרֶץ
 וְהֵם רַבְבוֹת אֶפְרַיִם
 וְהֵם אֲלָפֵי מְנַשֶּׁה:
 {ס}

יח וּלְזִבְלוֹן אָמַר

שֶׁמַּח זְבוּלוֹן בְּצֹאתָךְ
 וְיִשָּׁשָׁר בְּאֹהֶלֶיךָ:

14 the best of what the sun makes grow,
 of what springs with every month,
 15 the finest fruits of the ancient mountains,
 the best from the hills of old,
 16 the best of the land and all it holds,
 the favour of him who dwells in the Bush.
 May the hair grow thick on the head of Joseph,
 of the consecrated one among his brothers!
 17 Firstborn of the Bull, his is the glory.
 His horns are the wild ox's horns;
 with them, he tosses the peoples
 to the very ends of the earth.
 Such are the myriads of Ephraim;
 such are the thousands of Manasseh."

18 Of Zebulun he said:

"Prosper, Zebulun, in your voyages abroad,
 and you, Issachar, in your tents!

¹⁴ For the 2nd line, NETB has 'and [of the yield] of the night'; literally, the MT reads 'and by the moon'.

¹⁵ The literal translation of 'finest' is 'head' or 'top'.

¹⁶ See Gn 49:26: Joseph is 'dedicated' there and 'consecrated' here; both words translate נְזִיר (see #Nb 6:1). The expression, 'him who dwells in the bush', is frequently understood as a reference to the appearance of Yahweh to Moses at Sinai from a burning bush (cf. Ex 2:2–6, 3:2, 4).

¹⁷ The NRSV opens with: "A (or His) firstborn bull..." Other texts also seem to give Joseph the rank of firstborn (1Ch 5:1–2, Gn 46:4, 47:29–31).

¹⁸ A single saying covers the two tribes of Zebulun and Issachar, which were neighbours and had a common origin.

ט עַמִּים הָרִיקָאוּ
שֵׁם יִזְבְּחוּ זִבְחֵי־צֶדֶק
כִּי שֹׁפֵעַ יַמִּים יִזְקוּ
וּשְׁפָנֵי טִמּוֹנֵי חוֹל:
{ס}

19 On the mountain where the people come to pray
they offer the right sacrifices,
for they taste the riches of the seas,
and the treasures hidden in the sands."

כ וּלְגַד אָמַר 20 Of Gad he said:

בְּרוּךְ מִרְחֵיב גֵּד
כְּלָבִיא שָׁכֵן
וְטֶרֶף זֶרֹעַ אֶף־קֶדְקֵד:
כא וַיֵּרָא רֹאשִׁית לוֹ
כִּי־שֵׁם חֶלְקֵת מַחֲקֵק סָפוֹן
וַיֵּתֵא רֹאשִׁי עָם
צִדְקַת יְהוָה עָשָׂה
וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל:
{ס}

"Blessed be he who gives Gad space enough!
He lies there like a lioness;
he has savaged arm, face and head.

21 Then he took the first portion for himself;
he saw that there was stored up for him a leader's share.
He came as leader of the people,
having executed the justice of Yahweh
and his sentences on Israel."

כב וּלְדָן אָמַר 22 Of Dan he said:

דָּן גִּיּוֹר אַרְיֵה
יִזְנֹק מִן־הַבָּשָׁן:

"Dan is a lion cub
leaping from Bashan."

¹⁹ In place of 'the right sacrifices', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'sacrifices for success'. The term 'sands' here is a reference to the coastlands (cf. 'seas' in the preceding line).

²⁰ Gad, originally settling with Reuben in Transjordan (see Nb. 32), expanded at the expense of the latter (see the saying on Reuben in v. 6).

²¹ The term מַחֲקֵק ('leader', Poel participle of 'to inscribe') shows that the recorder of allotments can set aside for himself the largest and best.

²² Dan, having migrated from its territory situated to the west of Benjamin (see footnote to Jos 19:40), settled in the northern part of Israel at Laish (which means 'lion'), at the foot of Mount Hermon on the frontiers of Bashan (see 34:1).

בג וּלְנַפְתָּלִי אָמַר 23 Of Naphtali he said:
 נַפְתָּלִי שָׂבַע רֶצוֹן
 וּמָלָא בְרַכַּת יְהוָה
 יַם וְדָרוֹם יִרְשָׁה:
 {ס}

כד וּלְאַשֵּׁר אָמַר 24 Of Asher he said:
 בָּרוּךְ מִבְּנֵי אֲשֵׁר
 יְהִי רְצוּי אֶחָיו
 וְטָבַל בַּשֶּׁמֶן רַגְלָיו:
 כה בְּרִזָּל וּנְחָשֶׁת מְנַעֲלָיו 25
 וּכְיָמֶיךָ דְּבִאָדָה
 כו אֵין כָּאֵל יִשְׁרוּן 26
 לִכְבֹּשׁ שָׁמַיִם בְּעֶזְרֶךָ
 וּבַגָּאוֹתָיו שְׁחָקִים:
 כז מְעַנֶּה אֱלֹהֵי קֹדֶם 27
 וּמִתַּחַת זְרַעְתָּ עוֹלָם

23 This verse apparently alludes to an extension of Naphtali's territory, although this is not confirmed by history.

24 The last line is a metaphor for prosperity, one especially apt in light of the abundance of olive groves in the area settled by Asher.

25 Asher's territory lay near the sea; its soil and climate suited the olive. The translation is uncertain.

26 This verse depicts Israel's God as sovereign over the elements of the storm (cf. Ps 68:33); the use of the phrase here may be polemical: Moses may be asserting that Israel's God, not Baal (called the 'rider of the clouds' in the Ugaritic myths), is the true divine king (cf. v. 5) who controls the elements of the storm, grants agricultural prosperity, and delivers his people from their enemies. 'Jeshurun' is a term of affection referring to Israel (see #32:15).

27 The words 'you' and 'his' are supplied in the translation (here following NETB) for clarification. Some have perceived this line to be problematic and have offered alternative translations that differ significantly from the present translation: "Here below he is the age-old arm" (NJB), "He

וַיִּגְרֹשׁ מִפְּנֵיךָ אוֹיֵב
 וַיֹּאמֶר הַשֹּׁמֵד:
 כח וַיִּשְׁכֵּן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח
 בְּדָד עֵין יַעֲקֹב
 אֶל-אֶרֶץ דָּגָן וְתִירוֹשׁ
 אֶף-שָׁמַיִם יֵעֲרֹפוּ טֹל:
 כט אֲשֶׁרֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִי כְמוֹךָ
 עַם נוֹשֵׁעַ בִּיהוָה
 מִגֵּן עֶזְרֶךָ
 וְאֲשֶׁר-חָרַב גְּאוֹתֶיךָ
 וַיִּכְחָשׁוּ אִיְבֹיֶיךָ לָךְ
 וְאַתָּה עַל-בְּמוֹתֵימֹךָ תִּדְרֹךְ:
 {ס}

driving the enemy before you;

it is he who cries, "Destroy!"

²⁸ Israel rests in safety.

The fountain of Jacob is quite secure

for a land of corn and wine.

There heaven itself rains down dew.

²⁹ Happy are you, O Israel!

Who is like you, O victorious people?

Yahweh is the shield that protects you

and the sword that leads you to triumph.

Your enemies will try to corrupt you,

but you yourself shall trample on their backs."

subdues the ancient gods, shatters the forces of old" (NRSV) and *"He spread out the primeval tent; he extended the ancient canopy"* (NAB); these are based on alternate meanings or conjectural emendations rather than textual variants in the MSS and versions.

²⁸ The NRSV uses 'abode' in place of 'fountain' (or 'well spring', as it is in the NJB); the idea is that such vital resources as water will one day no longer need protection because God will provide security.

²⁹ For the 5th line, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "Your enemies shall come fawning to you," and NETB reads, "May your enemies cringe before you."

דברים פרק לד

א וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה מֵעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב אֶל-הַר נֹבֹו רֹאשׁ הַפִּסְגָּה אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי יְרִיחוֹ וַיִּרְאֵהוּ יְהוָה אֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַגִּלְעָד עַד-דָּן: ב וְאֶת כָּל-נַפְתָּלִי וְאֶת-אֶרֶץ אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה עַד הַיָּם הָאֲחֵרוֹן: ג וְאֶת-הַנֶּגֶב וְאֶת-הַכְּפָר בִּקְעַת יְרִיחוֹ עִיר הַתְּמָרִים עַד-צֹעַר: ד וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָיו זֹאת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר לְזֶרְעֶךָ אֶתְנַנָּה הָרְאִיתִיךָ בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְשָׁמָּה לֹא תַעֲבֹר: ה וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עַבְד־יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב עַל-פִּי יְהוָה: ו וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּגִל בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב מִן הַיָּם הַזֶּה: ז וְלֹא-יָדַע אִישׁ אֶת-קְבֻרָתוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

ז וּמֹשֶׁה בֶּן-מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בָּמָתוֹ לֹא-כָהָתָה עֵינָיו וְלֹא-נָס לַחָה: ח וַיִּבְכּוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-מֹשֶׁה

DEUTERONOMY 34

1 Then, leaving the Plains of Moab, Moses went up Mount Nebo, the peak of Pisgah that is opposite Jericho, and Yahweh showed him the whole land: from Gilead as far as Dan, 2 all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, 3 the Negeb, and the Plain – that is, the Valley of Jericho, city of palm trees – as far as Zoar. 4 Yahweh said to him, “This is the land I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, saying: I will give it to your descendants.” I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross over into it.” 5 There in the land of Moab, Moses the servant of Yahweh died as Yahweh decreed; 6 he buried him in the valley, in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor; but to this day, no one has ever found his grave.

7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eyes undimmed, his vigour unimpaired. 8 The Israelites wept for Moses on

DEUTERONOMY 34

¹ Two traditions about the place of Moses' death are given: Mt Nebo is in Transjordan, east of Jericho; Mt Pisgah is a peak further west.

² The 'Western Sea' is the Mediterranean.

³ 'Zoar' lies to the south of the Dead Sea (see Gn 19:20ff), and Jericho to the north. For 'the Negeb', the WEBBE reads 'the south'.

⁴ NETB omits the 'with your own eyes' (considering the phrase redundant); here, we follow the MT, NJB & NRSV.

⁵ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with 'at the LORD's command'.

⁶ The opening pronoun, 'he', refers to Yahweh but the Samaritan Pentateuch and some versions of the LXX read 'they buried him' (καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτόν). The MT may mean that Yahweh secretly buried Moses, showing the marvellous disappearance of God's prophet (cf. 2K 2:11-12).

⁷ The literal translation of 'vigour' is 'sap': he was still in possession of his faculties or liveliness.

⁸ In place of 'days of weeping', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'period of mourning'.

בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם וַיִּתְּמוּ יְמֵי בְכִי אֲבֵל
מֹשֶׁה: ^ט וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נּוּן מָלֵא רוּחַ חֲכָמָה כִּי-סָמַךְ
מֹשֶׁה אֶת-יָדָיו עָלָיו וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה:

י וְלֹא-קָם נָבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יָדָעוּ
יְהוָה פָּנִים אֶל-פָּנִים: ^{יא} לְכָל-הָאֲתֹת וְהַמוֹפְתִים
אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְפָרְעֹה
וּלְכָל-עַבְדָּיו וּלְכָל-אֶרֶץ: ^{יב} וְלִכְלֹ הַיָּד הַחֲזָקָה
וּלְכָל הַמֹּרָא הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה לְעֵינֵי כָל-
יִשְׂרָאֵל:
{ש}

the Plains of Moab for thirty days; then the days of weeping, for the mourning rites of Moses, ended. ⁹ Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. The Israelites obeyed him, carrying out the order that Yahweh had given to Moses.

¹⁰ Since then, never has there arisen such a prophet in Israel as Moses, the man whom Yahweh knew face to face. ¹¹ He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders Yahweh caused him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh and all his servants and his whole land! ¹² How mighty the hand and great the fear that Moses wielded in the sight of all Israel!

⁹ On Moses' laying of hands on Joshua, see Nb 27:18.

¹⁰ For God knowing Moses 'face to face', see Nb 12:8, Dt 18:15-18.

¹¹ For the judgement that Moses was the greatest of Israel's prophets, see 18:15-22, Nb 12:6-8; compare 11:24-30, Ho 12:13.

¹² For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads, "and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel," and NETB has, "and he displayed great power and awesome might in view of all Israel;" literally translated, the verse is, "with respect to all the strong hand and with respect to all the awesome greatness which Moses did before the eyes of all Israel."