

**GOD'S MESSAGES  
BIBLE  
COMMENTARY  
SERIES**

**VOLUME 4**

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,  
and caused them to understand the reading.  
(Nehemiah 8:8).

**COMMENTARY  
ON  
THE BOOK  
OF  
DEUTERONOMY**

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# Introduction To Deuteronomy

## **Name of the Book.**

The name of the book of Deuteronomy comes from two Greek words. They are deuterio meaning “second” and nomon meaning “law.” Therefore this is a book revealing the second presentation of the law.

It contains a repetition of much that was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. However, it adds some details and furnishes some new regulations which are appropriate as Israel prepares to move into the land which God had promised.

## **Author and Date of the Book.**

The first sentence of Deuteronomy states that “These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel—,” This does not mean Moses was the author of these words. As was true on Mount Sinai, Moses was only God’s spokesman. It should be noted also that Moses made an oral presentation. He spake these words. It was commanded later that the law be engraved on plastered stones after Israel had crossed the Jordan and entered into the land.

A great debate has raged between those who hold to the inerrancy of the Bible, and those who believe the present book of Deuteronomy is a result of human attempts to piece together various documents

which may be copies of copies of the original writings of the prophet. Some have even gone so far as to deny that there was any writing as far back as 1500 B.C., the time most accept as Moses existence. We now know that Hammurabi wrote even before the time of Moses.

The writer of this present commentary is quite satisfied that the content of our present day Bibles has been protected by divine providence to the extent that we have what Jehovah intended for us to have. There is no necessity for us to review all of the source criticism which has occupied the time of many intellectuals. The claims of the book itself insist that it's contents are inspired. The vast majority of the book of Deuteronomy was written by Moses sometime around 1500 B.C.

Moses clearly did not write the account of his own death and the events immediately follow it. Joshua had been appointed at that time to succeed Moses as the leader of Israel. It is highly likely that Joshua either wrote the last material in Deuteronomy, or supervised that writing.

## **The Occasion for Writing.**

Why was there a need for a second presentation of the law? Was the original revelation on Sinai flawed in some way? Not at all! It had been forty years since the law was first given. Except for Joshua and Caleb, the generation ready to enter Canaan was not present when Moses first received God's instructions for the people. Certainly the new generation had been taught concerning those things which had gone before, but there was a need to



make the truth as real to them as it was to those who first received it.

Secondly, God has a way of bringing His instructions up to date. Jesus, for example, said, “Ye have heard it said—But I say unto you.” The new life in Canaan was going to present situations different that had been the case while wandering in the Sinai peninsula. Israel needed a restatement of God’s will which would match the needs of opportunities, responsibilities and challenges which lay ahead in the land of promise.

### **The Nature of the Book.**

The book of Deuteronomy was presented to a people who had broken the hold of the Egyptian Pharaoh. This man was considered by his people to be a god. He was worshipped, along with other gods. Israel had changed from a tribal people to a nation. The law presented Jehovah as God. He had overcome Pharaoh. He had led Israel through the wilderness.

This love which God had shown for His chosen nation was to be returned. The greatest commandment of all was to “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.” When we put this truth with the statement that “If ye love me ye will keep my commandments.” we see the heart of Deuteronomy. God loves you. You are to love Him and keep His commandments.

Deuteronomy begins in the first four chapters



with a review of what God had done His people as they were released from slavery in Egypt and were brought to the plains of Moab where they received this reiteration and elaboration of the law.

This is followed by a discussion of the ten commandments and an emphasis upon the greatest commandment, along with warnings to abstain from idolatry and devote themselves to Jehovah in a spirit of love.

New statutes were given which would regulate their behavior after entry into Canaan. Blessings were to be announced upon the obedient. Cursings were to be pronounced upon the disobedient. If the people as a whole reached the point where God found it necessary He would punish them as a nation.

The last days of Moses are described, including:

1. Moses song.
2. Some of Moses last words.
3. Blessings pronounced upon the tribes.
4. Moses Death and burial.

### **Importance of the Book to Our Latter Days.**

The New Testament writers have appealed to the book of Deuteronomy as often as they have to any other book of the Old Testament. Jesus Christ himself drew from it's truths when facing the temptations of Satan. (See Matt. 4:4, 7, 10.)

Mat 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word





that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Mat 4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Mat 4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Just as the New Testament writers looked back to the book of Deuteronomy, that book points forward to the coming of the Son of God. F.C. Cook, writing in Barnes Notes, states that there are some eighty references to this great book found in the whole of the New Testament.

There are several lessons which need to be absorbed from the study of Deuteronomy. God spoke to Moses of a prophet to come who would be “like unto thee.” (See Deut. 18:15-19).

Deu 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

Deu 18:16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

Deu 18:17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

Deu 18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put

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my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

Deu 18:19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

God is able to deliver us. When men are obedient they will find themselves conquering every foe. When they are disobedient, they suffer the consequences of their own stubborn will.

God has a plan for every age. He arranges it such that every generation is equipped to meet His expectations for that generation. The patriarchal age had family authorities. The Mosaic age had law delivered through Moses to the nation of Israel. The Christian age has replace the Mosaic age and now God speaks to all nations through the gospel of His Son and our Saviour.





**The Book Of  
DEUTERONOMY**



## *Chapter 1*

The first four chapters of Deuteronomy are a review of what God had done for Israel since the time of the departure from Egypt. This new generation which had grown up in the wilderness were too young to have a clear recollection of the events which took place either before they were born or while they were still less than twenty years of age.

Moses, probably at the charge of the Lord, realized the need to explain the law and apply it to the new life they were to experience once they were settled in Canaan.

**DEU 1:1 These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.**

These words were spoken before they were written. They were actually the words of Jehovah, transmitted through the lips of Moses as His intermediary.

The congregation had taken the land east of the Jordan. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh had already received their portion. This side of Jordan is speaking of the east side of the river. The people are waiting in the plains of Moab until they are instructed to cross the river. If

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they had not demonstrated such a lack of faith some thirty-eight years earlier, they would have entered from the south of Canaan. Now, after wandering for all those years they had moved around the southern end and were to enter from the east.

**DEU 1:2 (There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.)**

Eleven days journey would have been about one hundred miles at that time using the methods they had available. They had moved from Horeb (Mount Sinai) around Mount Seir which lay in the territory of Edom and had arrived at Kadesh-Barnea.

**DEU 1:3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them;**

This is the only date presented in the book of Deuteronomy. It is precise. It was on the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after having left Egypt. They had spent a little over a year from the time they left Egypt until they departed from Sinai after the giving of the law.

God had commanded that Moses bring the people up to date and apply the law to their present and future situation.



**DEU 1:4 After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei:**

The Amorites, under king Sihon, and the people of Bashan, under king Og, had been defeated. This is the time God chose for Moses to address Israel.

**DEU 1:5 On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,**

**DEU 1:6 The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:**

Moses began his remarks by going all the way back to the time when the law was first given at Mount Sinai. God had decided the congregation had spent enough time at the foot of the mount. They had received the law. They had built the tabernacle and established the priesthood. They were ready to move toward Canaan.

**DEU 1:7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.**

Here we have a description of the borders of the land which God had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This was a much larger territory than what is known as Israel today. Some claim that Israel never did hold control of all the land spoken of in this verse. Joshua said not one thing the Lord had promised had failed. (See Joshua 23:14.)

Jos 23:14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

It is certainly true that during the reign of David, much of this land was taken.

**DEU 1:8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.**

God was saying to Israel, I promised it to you. Now take action. Claim the promise and possess the land. It was intended to be a possession for many generations to come if they would follow the will of Jehovah.

**DEU 1:9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone:~~~~~**



**DEU 1:10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.**

Moses realized full well that he would need help in the decision making. There was no way that he could settle all of the disputes which would most certainly arise among some two million people. Seventy souls had gone down into Egypt. Two million had come out. They had been multiplied as the countless stars.

**DEU 1:11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)**

There was reason to believe God would continue to bless His people. A thousand times two million would be two billion.. Moses was only saying, “Be true to God and He will go on blessing you.”

**DEU 1:12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?**

**DEU 1:13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.**

Moses reminded them that he had instructed them to pick out capable leaders from each of the tribes and present them to him. He would then



appoint these men as his assistants in ruling the people.

**DEU 1:14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do.**

**DEU 1:15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.**

The people had agreed to Moses plan and said it would be acceptable and effective. Thus such men were chosen and appointed. The situation reminds us of the military structure of present day armies. The actual number of persons under each of these classes of leaders is not as important as the fact that each could pass the more difficult cases on to the next higher ruler, until Moses himself would not be burdened beyond his limits.

**DEU 1:16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him.**

**DEU 1:17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the**



**cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.**

There was to be no partiality in the decision making. There had been little time for some persons to accumulate great personal wealth when compared with others. But to whatever degree that had begun, the judges were to ignore the financial status or the amount of influence the persons had when the decisions were made. The rich and powerful were to be treated in the same manner as the poor and powerless.

Even those who had cast their lot with the people of Israel were to be treated fairly. If they were willing to worship Jehovah and live according to His law, they were to be protected from persecution.

**DEU 1:18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.**

What a simple statement of the giving of the law! Moses had received the law from the Lord. He had delivered it to the people. They were ready to march.

**DEU 1:19 And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadeshbarnea.**

**DEU 1:20 And I said unto you, Ye are come**

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**unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us.**

**DEU 1:21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.**

They had traveled that eleven days journey from Horeb (Mount Sinai), the had arrived at Kadesh-Barnea. They had passed through the hill country inhabited by the Amorites and had arrived at the gate to the land of Canaan. There was no reason to fear. God had brought Israel to the point of entry. If He had overcome the strength of Pharaoh, He could most certainly give them victory over the foes ahead of them.

**Deu 1:22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come.**

In the book of Numbers we are not told of the people making this suggestion to Moses. It appears there that Moses sent them out without any consultation. This present verse sheds more light on the issue. The people did not have sufficient faith in the Lord. If God said "Fear Not!" they had no reason to send spies in to evaluate their chances. They really did not truly express their cowardice here in that they did not indicate they were wanting to see

if they had the power to drive out the foe. They only said they wished to find out which way they should go. There was more to it than that.

**DEU 1:23 And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe:**

**DEU 1:24 And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out.**

Moses had agreed with their request. We do not know whether he would have agreed if he had known they wished to assess their chances of success in taking the land. He did select one man from each of the twelve tribes and sent them into the land.

**DEU 1:25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the LORD our God doth give us.**

**DEU 1:26 Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God:**

Numbers tells us the spies brought back large clusters of grapes from the valley of Eshcol. Surely the Lord was right when He said it was a good land.

But why then did they rebel against the commandment of Jehovah to go in and possess

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that good land? It was because their hearts had melted when they saw the enemy. They did not have enough confidence in Jehovah to commit their lives to obeying His commands.

How many of us these many centuries later make the same mistake. The foes of the Lord are too strong. They will never listen to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need not try to win them for the Son of God. Yes, many may refuse. But, ultimately God will have His family with Him in the heavenly places. We must offer Him whatever skill and energy we have.

**DEU 1:27 And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.**

**DEU 1:28 Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.**

The people went so far as to accuse the Lord of hating them. This is about as wrong as it is possible to be. God had proven repeatedly that He loved His people. He had not brought them to this point in order that they might be destroyed.

The people gave two reasons for their faint hearts. The people of the land were gigantic. The

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Anakim were a large race. How could they possibly overcome such a foe? How could they have forgotten the rolling back of the waters of the Sea for their passage and then the return of those waters to drown the pursuing Egyptians. It was the people of the land who should have had faint hearts when they heard of the power available to Israel.

The second reason for their fear was the existence of walled cities whose walls reached up to the sky. Ancient descriptions tell us there were not even any gates to some of these enclosures. Those who entered were lifted in buckets with ropes and pulleys. Israel wondered how they could conquer a city that well protected. Later, we are told how such a city could be conquered when Jericho was taken.

**DEU 1:29 Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them.**

**DEU 1:30 The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes;**

**DEU 1:31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.**

If the Lord be for us who can be against us? Ten thousand angels can be called to the side of God's people. One angel was responsible for the death of 185,000 Assyrians. What could ten thousand accomplish. God could do the same to the Canaanites

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that He did to the Egyptians.

Had they not seen what God could do? He had given manna, quail and water. He had kept their shoes from wearing out. He had carried them along like a father might carry his infant child in his arms. They must trust Him!

**DEU 1:32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God,**

**DEU 1:33 Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.**

God had provided a way for them to know where they should pitch their tents at night and a way for them to know which direction to travel during the day. The fiery pillar hovered over the night site and the cloudy pillar led them by day.

In spite of all God had done for them, they failed to trust Him when He told them to take the land. Did they expect that God would fight for them in the future when they ignored what He had done for them in the past?

**DEU 1:34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying,**

**DEU 1:35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers.**





If they did think their mistrust had been overlooked, they were greatly mistaken. If they did not wish to enter into the land, God would arrange it where they would not do so. He had sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their descendants would inherit the land, but it would not be this generation who would receive it.

**DEU 1:36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.**

Caleb had tried to convince the people that the Lord would keep His promise and see that they were able to enter and take Canaan. Because his actions showed his desire to follow God with all his heart, he would be allowed to enter.

**DEU 1:37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither.**

The fact that Moses interjected this statement between the records of Caleb and Joshua shows his clear memory of what had taken place at Meribah where he lost patience with the people and asked if we must get you water. (See Numbers 20:7-12.)

Num 20:7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num 20:8 Take the rod, and gather thou the



assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

Num 20:9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

Num 20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

Num 20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

Num 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

In his impatience with the people, Moses had failed to sanctify God and give Him the glory. As a result he was to be denied the opportunity to lead the people into Canaan. At this point Moses remembered all too well just how unhappy God was with him and how this had come about because of the murmuring of the people concerning God's provision for them. He did not deny his ill words and rash behavior. He did grieve over that which he had lost.

**DEU 1:38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither:**

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**encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.**

Joshua would replace Moses as leader. Moses was not bitter toward Joshua. He was ready to appoint him as his own replacement.

**DEU 1:39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.**

Joshua had replaced Moses. The children of those rebellious people would replace them. They had not been born, or they were still too young to be completely responsible for the decision which was made not to enter the land. They would take the land.

**DEU 1:40 But as for you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.**

Moses relayed God's displeasure with His people by telling them it was God's decision to send them into the wilderness rather than allow them to enter Canaan.

**DEU 1:41 Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye**



**had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill.**

Then, when it was too late, the people decided they had brought calamity upon themselves. They would move into the land and fight just as they had been commanded to do. They had their weapons ready and willing!

**DEU 1:42 And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them. Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies.**

Now God told Moses to warn them not to go up and meet the enemy. If they did, He would not be with them. They would be defeated.

**DEU 1:43 So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill.**

As they had refused to hear the word of the Lord before when He told them to go up and take the land and they would not, they now refused to hear Him again and decided to enter the land when He commanded them not to. It is strange that men and women will act in a manner opposite to what God has instructed them. The “forbidden fruit syndrome” seems to be very real. Men wish to do that which they are commanded not to do. They wish to leave



undone that which God has commanded them to do.

Presumptuous sin is a dangerous way of life. Dear reader, do not deliberately defy the Word of the Almighty God! The results are costly.

**DEU 1:44 And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah.**

When the people went to meet the enemy without God's aid, they were forced to flee before them as if a hive of angry bees were swarming around each of them. There was complete and utter defeat.

**DEU 1:45 And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you.**

When reality struck home the people shed bitter tears. Since they had refused to hear Jehovah, he refused to hear them. Life becomes extremely lonely when one separates himself from his Creator.

**DEU 1:46 So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there.**

Israel had spent many days at Kadesh-Barnea at the time the spies were sent into the land. Now they had returned under much the same conditions as before. Would they act as their fathers had acted before them, or would they hear and obey the voice



of the Lord. They had sufficient information and sufficient time to make the proper decision. This time they must listen!



## *Chapter 2*

One can not properly understand these first four chapters of Deuteronomy until he comes to a realization that most of the material refers to God's earlier dealings with His people, but that scattered in through the text there are things addressed to the conditions then present. In view of what had taken place in the past, they were to avoid repeating the tragic mistakes of yesterday.

**DEU 2:1 Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days.**

Mount Seir was south of Canaan in the area of Edom. Israel had spent years paying the penalty of lack of faith in God's promises. They had come back from the Sinai peninsula where they had wandered so long and were ready to make a second effort to move into the land. Moses was replaying their experiences and bringing them up to date concerning the past events.

**DEU 2:2 And the LORD spake unto me, saying,**

**DEU 2:3 Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.**

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God was setting the timetable. They had spent enough time near the land of Edom contemplating what the future held. They were to move to the north where the Edomites dwelt.

**DEU 2:4 And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore:**

This verse seems to indicate that the divine order was to follow the coast of the eastern coast of the Dead Sea as they traveled.

The Edomites would have had good reason to be fearful. Word had been received about the wonders which had taken place when Israel broke the bands of Egypt. The plagues and the passing through the Red Sea made dramatic conversation pieces. A view of this massive congregation of humans and livestock must have struck fear into the hearts of the people of Edom.

**DEU 2:5 Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.**

Israel was to pass through the land, but even though the Edomites would fear them, they were not to harm them or attempt to take possession of their property. The Edomites were the descendants





of Esau. Jehovah had given the land in which they lived to them. It had not been promised to Israel.

**DEU 2:6 Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.**

There was no need to plunder the Edomites. Israel had money to buy both food and drink. They were to pay for that which they consumed. Although it is not mentioned, we are led to believe they were also to make remuneration for that which the cattle ate.

**DEU 2:7 For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.**

Israel had complained bitterly at times because of a fancied lack of food and drink while passing through the wilderness. Nevertheless, Jehovah had provided for their basic needs. It would be unjustified to take advantage of the Edomites just for the sake of selfishness.

**DEU 2:8 And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Eziongaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab.**

There is debate as to whether Israel went around Edom and then northward, or went along the coast



of the Dead Sea along the west side of that land. Whichever was the case, they ultimately bypassed Edom and came to the land of Moab, north of Edom.

**DEU 2:9 And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.**

God had then commanded that they were to treat the Moabites in the same fashion as the Edomites. The land in which the Moabites dwelt was also forbidden to Israel. God had given that land to the descendants of Lot. There was to be no fighting with Moab.

**DEU 2:10 The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims;**

**DEU 2:11 Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims.**

These two verses remind us of the information the spies brought back when they examined the land of Canaan before the years of wandering. They reported that there were giants in the land. Israel would find out first hand that there were many of these large people. The word “Anakims” seems to be applied in a general way to people who were known by other labels in various regions. The Moabites called them “Emims.”

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**DEU 2:12 The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the LORD gave unto them.**

Here is one of those passages which can be easily misunderstood. Moses was informing Israel that God had been with the Edomites as they moved into the land which He had given to them. They had been able to drive out the people who lived there and take possession of that land.

It is the latter part of this verse which needs further explanation. Moses is talking to Israel after they have moved through the territory where Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh were settling. God had enabled the Edomites to take the land He had promised them. He had made it possible for Israel to take the land east of the Jordan where the two and one half tribes had settled. If He had made such victories possible, He could certainly give Israel any land which He had determined to give to them!

**DEU 2:13 Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered. And we went over the brook Zered.**

Now that the years of wandering were over, and Israel was on the verge of entering combat with those people who dwelt in the land which God had promised to His people, He would assure them of

His support. They were to move northward and cross the brook called Zered.

**DEU 2:14 And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD sware unto them.**

**DEU 2:15 For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed.**

**DEU 2:16 So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people,**

It had been thirty-eight years since they had been sent out to wander after their lack of faith in Jehovah after the report of giants in the land came. This punishment had lasted until all but Moses, Joshua and Caleb had died. Take note that verse fifteen tells us “the hand of the Lord was against them.” Some of those who died would have been only fifty-eight years of age by the time the congregation reached the brook Zered. Life spans at that time were still longer than that among God’s children. Does this not tell us their lives were brought to a quicker end because of God’s displeasure toward them?

**DEU 2:17 That the LORD spake unto me, saying,**

**DEU 2:18 Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day:**



**DEU 2:19 And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession.**

Israel was still traveling northward and had reached the northern boundary of Moab, which was also the southern boundary of the Ammonites.

The same instructions were given to them with respect to their conduct toward the Ammonites. They were not to harm them in any way, nor to attempt taking possession of their territory. The Ammonites were the descendants of Lot, just as were the Moabites. In a sense they were brethren.

**DEU 2:20 (That also was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims;**

**DEU 2:21 A people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead:**

The reputation of the Ammonites was that it was inhabited by a large and fearsome people. The Ammonites called them Zamzummims. In spite of the fact that these giants lived in the land, the Ammonites were able to defeat them and take that land.

**DEU 2:22 As he did to the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horims from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day:**

God had been with the Edomites. He had been with the Moabites. He had been with the Ammonites. All three of these had succeeded in taking the land which God intended for them to possess.

**DEU 2:23 And the Avims which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah, the Caphtorims, which came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)**

The reason for adding that the Caphtorims had succeeded in vanquishing the Avims is not clear. It was obviously related to the other victories by Edom, Moab and Ammon in some way which was known to Israel.

**DEU 2:24 Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle.**

The Arnon separated the land of the Ammonites from that of the Amorites. Do not confuse these two names. The Amorites dwelt in land which the two and one half tribes would occupy. In order to take possession of that land, two strong kings had to



be defeated. Sihon ruled over a fairly large region whose capitol was Heshbon.

Now the instructions were different. Israel was to enter into combat with the forces of Sihon. They were to defeat this king and possess his domain.

**DEU 2:25 This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.**

Israel did not need to fear any nation. The history of Israel was such that respect had been earned on all sides. Sihon would have heard of them and would be apprehensive.

**DEU 2:26 And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying,**

The “I” here is Moses who was acting under the directions of Jehovah. Messenger were to be sent to him informing him that Israel wished to enter his territory in peace. They only wished to pass through Sihon’s land and did not wish to thrust him out.

**DEU 2:27 Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the high way, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left.**

**DEU 2:28 Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money,**

**that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet;**

Now we have some explaining to do. God had told Israel to contend with Sihon in battle and begin to take possession of his land. Now Moses sent messengers to Sihon with words of peace, telling Sihon that they only wished to pass through the land and would pay for any food and water.

How can verse twenty-four above and these two verses be harmonized?

May I suggest the following. God knows the end from the beginning. He knew what Sihon's reaction would be when asked for the right to pass through his territory. When he denied passage, Israel would find it necessary to fight. Then they would be permitted to possess his land.

**DEU 2:29 (As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me;) until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the LORD our God giveth us.**

The request at the moment was that Sihon would allow passage under the same conditions which were agreed to in the case of Edom and Moab. What Israel really wished to do was cross the Jordan and enter into their promised possession in Canaan.

**DEU 2:30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart**





**obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.**

God did not take away Sihon's freedom of choice. God does not do that to any man. What God did do was to present Sihon with a choice. He knew what choice Sihon would make even before it was made. But that did not mean God forced the choice Sihon made.

The situation here is precisely the same as it was with Pharaoh during the time of the plagues. Part of the time it is said that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh. Other times it is said Pharaoh hardened his own heart. What God did was to present choices to Pharaoh which resulted in Pharaoh's stubborn resistance to freedom for God's people. God did not force Pharaoh's defiance to His will.

**DEU 2:31 And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land.**

Here we have verification of the position presented above. God had offered peace. When peace was rejected, Israel was to take Sihon's land as their own.

**DEU 2:32 Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz.**

**DEU 2:33 And the LORD our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people.**~~~~~

Sihon did exactly as Jehovah knew he would. He sent out his army to meet Israel. It was a poor decision. He would have been far better off to have accepted the conditions and allowed Israel to pass across Jordan and into Canaan.

**DEU 2:34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain:**

What a gory scene we have here. Not only were Sihon's forces defeated; his men were destroyed. Even the women and small children were killed. Our hearts may bleed over the treatment of innocent women and children. Atheists and critics of the Bible may trumpet their accusations about an unmerciful God.

A closer look is in order. God explained in the ninth chapter of this same book of Deuteronomy why He allowed Israel to destroy or drive out the people who resisted Israel's taking possession of their inheritance. (See Deuteronomy 9:1-7).

Deu 9:1 Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven,

Deu 9:2 A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children

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of Anak!

Deu 9:3 Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

Deu 9:4 Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.

Deu 9:5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deu 9:6 Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

Deu 9:7 Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.

God warned Israel that if any were left in the land there would be temptation to intermarry with

these wicked people and follow their idolatrous practices. That would be disastrous to the spiritual welfare of His own people. As cruel as it may seem, it was preferable to put the women to death rather than continue their sex saturated worship sessions in praise of false gods. It would be preferable for those small children to lose their lives before they followed their parents wicked ways and suffered in an eternal hell.

Frail men are entirely to quick to pass judgment on a perfect and loving God. It is only when men have become so wicked that their situation is hopeless that God acts as He did in the time of Noah and in the case of these wicked Amorites.

**DEU 2:35 Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took.**

If the Amorites had not resisted, their lives would have been spared. Their cattle and their possessions would have remained in their own hands.

**DEU 2:36 From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us:**

Moses had brought the people up to date. God had kept His promise to be with them up to that very moment. Some had allowed them to pass through. Others had fought against them. The



results had been the same. They had been able to pass through!

**DEU 2:37 Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, nor unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbad us.**

Israel had respected the commands of the Lord not to take possession of the land of the Ammonites, nor of any other land which was denied to them. As long as they cooperated with the divine will all had gone well. This was in stark contrast to what had occurred when the spies brought back a report which had melted their hearts and brought about those long years of wandering.



## *Chapter 3*

Chapter three continues Moses' review of God's treatment of His people from the time they escaped from Egyptian bondage until they were encamped at the east side of the Jordan River and about to cross into Canaan. He deals with the defeat of Og, the king of Bashan. Then he turns to the allotment of land east of the River to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and part of Manasseh.

These tribes are reminded that they had made a promise to fight side by side with the other tribes who had still not received their inheritance. Moses made it urgent that they keep that promise.

The remainder of the chapter speaks of the transition of leadership responsibilities from Moses to Joshua.

**DEU 3:1 Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.**

Sihon and his forces had been soundly defeated. Og was the king of Bashan which lay north of where Israel was presently camped. Og had no intention of allowing Israel to take his land without a struggle. He assembled his fighting men and challenged the

oncoming army of Israel. This was a serious mistake. He was not fighting against Israel alone. He had set himself up against the will of God.

**DEU 3:2 And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.**

**DEU 3:3 So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining.**

Jehovah bolstered the confidence of Moses and his people by assuring Moses there was nothing to fear. They had seen what took place when Sihon rose up against them. Og and his forces would find themselves facing the same fate.

The reader should pay attention to the order in which Moses placed God and Israel in the victory over Sihon. God first delivered the enemy to them. Then Israel smote them. God is in control. He will do His part. He will expect man to do his part. If God had not delivered Sihon, Israel could not have conquered him. If God's servants had not smitten the enemy, there would have been no victory.

**DEU 3:4 And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.**

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Israel had then moved into the territory of Bashan, taking city after city and town after town. Sixty cities were taken in all. Many smaller towns fell before them. The cities were distinguished from the towns by being fortified for defense.

We do not know just where Argob was located, other than that it was a part of the kingdom of Og.

**DEU 3:5 All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many.**

The sixty cities were surrounded by high walls with sturdy gates and bars to reinforce the gates. When the spies made their report after having examined the land before the wilderness wandering, they had mentioned not only the giants but the difficulty of conquering cities with walls. Now it had been proven that walled cities could be taken along with the unfortified towns.

**DEU 3:6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city.**

The same remarks hold true here as were made with respect to the slaughter of women and children in the kingdom of Sihon. The moral state and the religious attitudes of these populations had reached such a state that the women were being used as



prostitutes in the temples of false gods. The babies would be raised in a society where they had little or no chance of developing godliness.

In addition, Israel would have intermarried with these idolatrous and immoral people and their own standards would have been corrupted.

**DEU 3:7 But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves.**

Livestock and personal property are not capable of having the same kind of influence on their owners that wicked neighbors have. There was no reason to destroy the livestock and other property.

**DEU 3:8 And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon;**

Again the reader needs to distinguish between the Ammonites, who were the descendants of Lot, and the Amorites who had no close relationship to Israel. The land of the two Amorite kings came into the hands of the two and one half tribes. Mount Hermon was in the far north of the conquered area. The Arnon River was well to the south and flowed into the east side of the Dead Sea.

**DEU 3:9 (Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;)**



Mount Hermon was identified by more than one name. Each of the names seemingly referred to the snow cap which glistened for most of the year.

**DEU 3:10 All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.**

**DEU 3:11 For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.**

Here is more evidence of the reason the spies had reported that they were as grasshoppers in the sight of the inhabitants of Canaan. Og was a very large person. His bedstead needed to be made of iron. It was nine cubits, or about thirteen and one half feet long. It was four cubits, or about six feet in width. If we take off one cubit at each end to determine Og's actual height, we would still have a man ten and one half feet in height.

There is disagreement as to the translation of the word which the King James Version renders as bedstead. Some believe it should be translated as "sarcophagi." This would refer to the crypt in which he was buried rather than the bed in which he slept. In that case the numbers would be meaningless. For example, it was possible to the women to enter into the place where the body of Jesus lay. It was obviously much larger than his body.



On the other side of the argument, Goliath was also a giant. The book of Genesis tells us there were giants in early days. We do know that present day races vary from the pygmies to the seven foot basketball players. It would be wise not to dismiss the above information as a fairy tale.

**DEU 3:12 And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.**

The southern part of the land east of the Jordan was allotted to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. This would have been the territory ruled by Sihon.

**DEU 3:13 And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.**

The half tribe of Manasseh received the land previously ruled by Og.

**DEU 3:14 Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day.**

The land received by the half tribe of Manasseh



was then divided into two portions. The larger portion was given to Jair, a son of Manasseh.

**DEU 3:15 And I gave Gilead unto Machir.**

The smaller part which included some of the land of Gilead was given to Machir.

**DEU 3:16 And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon;**

The Reubenites and Gadites were not to infringe on the land of the Ammonites. God had previously commanded that their property not be disturbed since they were descendants of Lot.

**DEU 3:17 The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast thereof, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, under Ashdothpisgah eastward.**

**DEU 3:18 And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all that are meet for the war.**

God had allowed Moses to place this land east of the Jordan in the hands of the two and one half tribes. However, they were not to forget their promise. They must not remain at home while their

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brethren of the other nine and one half tribes set out to take the land of Canaan, west of the Jordan.

It is fairly certain that they did not keep their promise completely. The census at the time records those two and one half tribes as having over one hundred thousand fighting men. The book of Joshua informs us that less than half that many crossed the Jordan. (See Joshua 4:13.)

Jos 4:12 And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them:

Jos 4:13 About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

**DEU 3:19 But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, (for I know that ye have much cattle,) shall abide in your cities which I have given you;**

There was no need for the women and children to cross over with the men. This would only have hindered the progress of the men.

They had taken cattle from those whom they had defeated. The women and children could care for the livestock.

**DEU 3:20 Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and until they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond**



**Jordan: and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.**

A key word in this verse is “rest.” The people of the Lord are a unit. Each and every true servant of God is interested in the welfare of all the others. Some day those who remain faithful unto the end will enjoy an eternal rest in the company of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the true saints of all the ages. We must fight the battle together.

**DEU 3:21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest.**

**DEU 3:22 Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.**

Moses is still speaking to the leaders of the people. He indicates that he had already charged Joshua to continue the possession of the land. Joshua had seen what God had done for his people in the past. He should have perfect confidence that the same care would be given to them in the future. The Lord would be on their side. He would fight for them.

As pointed out before, that did not mean they had nothing to do. It did mean that when they did as expected, He would deliver the kingdoms of Canaan into their hand.

Dear reader. God has promised an ultimate



victory for the soldiers of the cross today. The time will come when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess Jesus Christ as victor over the beast, the false prophet and the Prince of Darkness. But, we are expected to do our part.

**DEU 3:23 And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,**

**DEU 3:24 O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?**

Moses praised Jehovah for His greatness. He is the only True and Living God. All others to whom men and angels have dedicated themselves are only figments of imagination. The wonders which had been seen through the previous forty years could only be brought about by the supernatural power of the Creator of heaven and earth.

**DEU 3:25 I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.**

When Moses realized the time was approaching when the people would cross the river and take the land, he wished with all his heart that he could go along with them. He was quite willing for someone else to assume the leadership role which





he had played through those times of suffering and affliction. He only pleaded with the Lord to allow him to go over and see the land.

**DEU 3:26 But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.**

Moses had interceded on behalf of others on several occasions. Perhaps God would be kind hearted enough to let him at least step on the land.

It was not to be so. The Lord had been angry with Moses on account of his impetuosity in getting water from the rock. The people had murmured and Moses became so irritated that he cried out, "Ye rebels, Must we get you water!" (See Psa. 106:32-33.)

Psa 106:32 They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

Psa 106:33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

It was primarily the fact that Moses failed to give God the glory that he was not to set foot in the land of Canaan at that time.

We do need to point out that Moses did set foot in the land at the time of the transfiguration. Moses, Elijah and Christ all appeared together to Peter, James and John on a high mountain in Canaan.

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**DEU 3:27 Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.**

God did go as far as possible without breaking his word. He allowed Moses to see the land from the Pisgah mountain range. From that vantage point he could see most of the land. Nevertheless, he would not be allowed to cross over into it.

**DEU 3:28 But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.**

Joshua would take Moses' place as leader of God's people. This would be very difficult for Moses to accept. Elderly men who have given their lives to a good work, as Moses did, often have to turn over the reins to those who are younger. Sometimes such transitions are made without bitterness. Sometimes they are not. In the case of Moses, we do not hear a single word of jealousy. He was quite willing to accept Joshua as his successor, but he did wish he could go along and see the end of that which he had begun with the help of Jehovah.

**DEU 3:29 So we abode in the valley over against Bethpeor.**

Bethpeor was on the east side of the Jordan nearly opposite to the city of Jericho. Moses had reviewed the history of the people through many years. They were then getting closer and closer to the entry into the true land of promise.

Moses death is not recorded here. It will be discussed at the end of the book of Deuteronomy.



## *Chapter 4*

At this point Moses has reviewed a large number of experiences Israel had from the time the plagues were visited upon the Egyptians to the time at which he was speaking. Remember, these words were first spoken, then later written.

In view of everything God has revealed about His concern for His people, His ability to bless when His will is followed, and His ability to punish when His will is opposed, Israel should be eager to hear His statutes and judgments. Any other course of action would be certain disaster. As Solomon said, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man..” (See Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.)

Ecc 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Ecc 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

**DEU 4:1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.**



The word “therefore” in verse one is a key to this entire chapter. The lessons learned in the past should lead to respect and obedience in the future. If Israel expected to survive and prosper in Canaan the One who had offered them the land must be honored. Otherwise, they could be separated from the land just as easily as they had been led to it.

**DEU 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.**

To add to the words which God had commanded was an insult. It implied that God’s wisdom was insufficient. To remove any part of that which had been presented by Jehovah was equally insulting. The implication was that God had included that which was unnecessary. God does modify His own commands and judgments through the ages. But that which He has spoken at any time in history is perfectly adapted to the conditions at that time.

The reader should compare Prov. 30:6 and Rev. 22:18-19 with this present passage.

Pro 30:6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Rev 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto



him the plagues that are written in this book:

Rev 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

It might be added that the Jews took such admonitions very seriously. The Scribes and Pharisees were so much concerned about the jots and tittles of the law that they neglected heart felt obedience and became whited sepulchres, pretty on the outside and dead on the inside.

Luke began his record of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ with the following words.

Act 1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

It was just as important that Jesus followed the will of the Father in heaven as it was that he taught that will.

**DEU 4:3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.**

Baal was a false god who was worshipped by many of the people in the area of Canaan. Names



of locations were often chosen by placing the word Baal before the village or city. Baalpeor referred to the place called peor where Baal was worshipped.

The women of Baalpeor seduced the men of Israel into committing fornication with them as a part of the sexual orgies which were a part of the worship of Baal. Some twenty-four thousand men of Israel lost their lives because of this wickedness. (See Numbers 25.)

**DEU 4:4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day.**

Disobedience and disrespect for God led to death. Obedience and respect led to life.

**DEU 4:5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.**

Statutes and judgments are not identical. Statutes are the statements of expected behavior. Judgments are the penalties administered when the statutes are broken. Moses had presented these statutes and judgments. God was their author.

**DEU 4:6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear**

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**all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.**

When a people hear and obey the Word of the Lord, their well being becomes evident to other people who observe them. In those nations where the majority of the citizens fear God and keep His commandments the living standards are noticeably higher than in those where the commandments are either unknown or disobeyed.

**DEU 4:7 For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?**

**DEU 4:8 And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?**

Israel had been chosen by Jehovah as a special people. This had been true from the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. No other nation had actually heard the voice of the Lord as Israel had heard it as God's voice thundered while they were gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai. No other nation had won a war with another nation as Israel had won over Egypt. God had delivered them. No other nation had been fed, clothed and led through a wilderness as Israel had. It was God who had fed, led and clothed them.

God had loved them so much that He gave them the law which Moses was about to review and apply



to their present situation. No other people had ever received such a host of blessings.

**DEU 4:9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;**

Spiritual strength and knowledge can only be kept up by making practical use of it. The professional baseball player who is not put into the lineup for a week will find himself rusty. The man of God who fails to constantly apply himself to learning and doing the will of his Lord will lose that which he has previously gained.

Not only must the individual attend to such matters. He must be careful that his skills and knowledge be transmitted to his children and grandchildren, lest a generation arise that knows not God. That is precisely what Moses was trying to do in the book of Deuteronomy.

**DEU 4:10 Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.**

This was especially true regarding that which God had presented from the top of Mount Sinai.

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**DEU 4:11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.**

Some of these people to whom Moses was presently speaking had been alive when the law was given. They had been under twenty years of age, but they were old enough to recall the sights and sounds experienced at that time.

There had been thick clouds which screened out the light of the sun, moon and stars. In the midst of that awesome blackness the top of the mountain appeared to burn with fire. One is caused to think of the fierce lightning bolts which appear during storms on a particularly dark night. Would not the reader have been impressed with such a demonstration of the power of God.

**DEU 4:12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.**

Israel had heard the words spoken by Jehovah, but they had not seen any form or shape. This is important. God is Spirit. Spirit is not visible to human eyes. When a man passes from life to death the spirit of the person is not seen leaving the body.



**DEU 4:13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.**

There is a very interesting point which needs attention here. Over and over we see pictures of two stone tablets with the ten commandments carved into the stone. Five commandments are usually shown on one stone and five upon the other. This may not have been the case. Covenants at that time were normally made out in duplicate. One copy was held in the possession of one of the parties of the covenant. The other copy was kept by the other partner. It is quite possible that each of the two tablets of stone had all ten of the commandments carved upon it's face.

It is not likely that anything more than the ten commandments was included. These tablets could be carried by Moses as he descended from the mountain. All of the details of the law would have required far more stone surface than Moses was capable of carrying.

**DEU 4:14 And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.**

The commandments which God gave to Moses, and thus to Israel as a whole, came from the same source as all the wonders experienced from that time



until they arrived in the plains of Moab, just across the Jordan from the land of promise.

**DEU 4:15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:**

If Jehovah had desired that they worship any part of the creation, he would have indicated such to be the case. Instead, He had made it particularly clear that He is spiritual and not material.

They were about to enter into a land where the inhabitants worshipped almost everything which could be seen. Such idolatry was abominable in the sight of the God who created all things in heaven and on earth.

**DEU 4:16 Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female,**

Any visible image carved out by humans was not an object worthy of worship. The person who bowed down before such an image had corrupted his soul.

The people of that day carved out marble statues of men or women and called these objects gods. One of the most repulsive sights which this present commentator has ever seen was observed in the site of the old city of Ephesus. Perhaps the reason no description of the object has been seen in any of



the commentaries is that one might be thought of as being obscene. There were actually models of the human male sex organ in an erect condition. These were on sale to those who were touring the sites of the seven churches. These models were worshipped in the time of the apostles.

Needless to say, this writer was astonished that any visitors on tour would purchase the objects, and even more astonished that men and women at one time bowed before them.

**DEU 4:17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air,**

**DEU 4:18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth:**

Nothing above the earth, on the earth or under the earth was to be considered a god. No bird of the air, no beast living upon the land, no fish of the waters, was worthy of worship.

**DEU 4:19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.**

The sun, moon and stars were particularly tempting. They outlasted the existence of men. They were dependable in their passings through

the heavens. They shone with glory. Mars, Venus, Jupiter and the sun were adored and were very often worshipped in the most licentious and immoral ceremonies.

How foolish! It was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who had created all of the bodies in the heavens. It is He who established the laws of nature under which they move and can be seen by every nation on earth.

**DEU 4:20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.**

The iron furnace was so hot it was capable of melting iron ore and separating the iron from the dross. The conditions in Egypt were somewhat the same. God did not leave the descendants of Abraham in that Egyptian furnace. They had been purified by the ordeal and were to be led to a land flowing with milk and honey where they could be His children, and thus receive His inheritance in that land and later in heaven itself.

The word inheritance is used in more than one sense with respect to God and His children. A father looks forward to passing on an inheritance to His children. He also sees those children as his own inheritance. God sees his children as His inheritors, or His inheritance. He also looks forward to the time when those children receive the inheritance He has laid up for them.

**DEU 4:21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance:**

Moses had allowed himself to be caught up in the murmuring of the people over lack of water. He responded to their call for water by doing what was necessary to bring forth the water from the rock, but then failed to give Jehovah the glory and acted as if he was equal in importance with his Maker.

As a result he was to be denied the privilege of entering Canaan. He had accepted the punishment but, as we can understand, he felt the disappointment of leading the people for those long years in the wilderness and then not being able to join them as they marched in.

**DEU 4:22 But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land.**

**DEU 4:23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.**

Moses did take satisfaction in the fact that the people whom he had led would be allowed to move in. He urged them not to undo their success by





turning to idolatry after coming into possession of the land of their inheritance.

**DEU 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.**

**DEU 4:25 When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger:**

God could be a comforter, a loving provider and a perfect guide. But He could also consume those with whom He became angry. Israel must not only be careful to keep themselves from offending the Lord. They must teach their descendants to honor His will. There would be extremely serious consequences at whatever time their faith failed. After they had possessed the land for a number of years, there would be greater danger that their children's children would make God jealous by turning to the worship of those which are no gods.

**DEU 4:26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.**

Israel's right to remain in possession of Canaan



was dependent upon the degree of their trust and obedience to the Lord. God had given them the land. He could just as easily remove them from it.

Both heaven and earth declare the glory of God. When it is observed that men have turned from God to worship them, their testimony will be that sin has been committed.

**DEU 4:27 And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.**

**DEU 4:28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.**

Those of us who have lived centuries later know that Israel did just what Moses was warned that they might do. They angered Jehovah by praying to that which could not hear, and bowing before that which could not see.

The result was that they were taken into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity where idolatry was rampant. Other people were allowed to overrun Canaan and take their land for their own use.

**DEU 4:29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.**

**DEU 4:30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in**



**the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;**

Although His people would be punished, they would be given the right to turn back to their Maker. Before that could take place they must be penitent. Those corrupt hearts would have to be rid of their love for idols. They would only be invited to come back when they proved their heart, soul, mind and strength were devoted to the True and Living God. They would have to love Him and obey Him.

This verse brings to our attention the mercy and grace of God which was to be offered in the latter days. There are many who believe these latter days came when the Word became flesh and dwelt among men. The Jews, who had been scattered to many nations were offered the invitation through the gospel to receive forgiveness for their sins. The Gentiles would join them in the church of the Master of heaven and earth.

**DEU 4:31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.**

God would have every right to forget His people forever. He would not do that. If they would turn back to Him He would welcome them with open arms. They might break their part of the covenant. But if they demonstrated true penitence, He would remember His promise to Abraham.



**DEU 4:32 For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?**

**DEU 4:33 Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?**

Israel could ask history if God had failed His people. The entire creation would cry out that He had not. What God had done was to come down upon Mount Sinai and tell His people what was necessary for them to receive His support and His protection and guidance. No other people in all of the historical records had ever been favored with such blessings.

**DEU 4:34 Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?**

No nation of people was ever able to overcome such trials as Israel had in Egypt through Divine help. There had been signs of God's presence. There had been wondrous miracles. God had gathered them within his protecting arm and had visited terror



upon their Egyptian slavemasters. None could deny that the Lord had chosen Israel for some reason greater than they were able to comprehend.

**DEU 4:35 Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.**

**DEU 4:36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.**

All these things were done because God wished to develop a relationship with Israel which would allow Him to someday reach out to all men. The fire on the mountain and the thunderous words of His voice were only a part of the evidences He had demonstrated to their eyes and ears that He was to be feared, loved, trusted and obeyed.

**DEU 4:37 And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;**

**DEU 4:38 To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day.**

If it had not been for the affection God had for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Israel of Moses day



would not have received the special consideration which had been given to them all these long years later.

The spies had been correct in saying that the people of the land of Canaan were impossible to overcome through their own human power. But with God's help they should have seen by now that it was just the opposite. Those enemies were finding it impossible to defend themselves against the chosen people of the Lord. God had given Israel the land formerly held by both Sihon and Og.

**DEU 4:39 Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.**

No logical person could deny that their God was unique. There is none other like Him. As long as Israel walked with Him they would be blessed.

**DEU 4:40 Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.**

We now come to that same word which we found in the first verse of this chapter. That word is "therefore." All the words which God had spoken



through the lips of Moses were to the end that Israel might recognize the nature of Jehovah, the possible blessings they could enjoy when in fellowship with Him, and the disastrous curses which would come upon them if they ignored Him.

Verses forty-one through forty-nine are better understood if they are considered with the information given in chapter five. The Bible was not divided into chapters and verses by the Lord Himself. Those who translated the original languages into the present day versions used their own judgment in setting up these divisions. In this case, most Bible students agree that these next few verses are more closely related to chapter five than to chapter four.

**DEU 4:41 Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan toward the sunrising;**

The word “severed” simply means these three cities were chosen for a special purpose. They were all three on the east side of the Jordan river. There would be three more chosen later on the west side of the river.

**DEU 4:42 That the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live:**

On occasion one person might accidentally take the life of another. Feelings would no doubt run high at the time and the one who had caused the death



of his neighbor could well be in danger of having his own life taken in revenge, even though he had not deliberately killed the individual. By fleeing to one of these three cities, the slayer could have a trial and would be protected until that trial took place.

**DEU 4:43 Namely, Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites.**

The three cities were located in the northern, the central and the southern part of the land given to the two and one half tribes. They were in such a position that one of them could be reached within a reasonable time from any part of the territory.

**DEU 4:44 And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel:**

**DEU 4:45 These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt.**

Moses was ready at this point to begin reviewing the law which had been given thirty-eight years earlier at Sinai. There would be some changes, but overall these changes would be minor.

Three descriptive words are used this time. As mentioned before, statutes are statements of the behavior God expected on the part of Israel. Judgments are the punishments specified in case the

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statutes are broken. Testimonies are reasons why the law should be respected. Many of the testimonies had been presented by this time. The statutes and judgments were now to be emphasized.

**DEU 4:46 On this side Jordan, in the valley over against Bethpeor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt:**

This second presentation of the law was completed in preparation for the crossing of the Jordan into Canaan proper.

**DEU 4:47 And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which were on this side Jordan toward the sunrising;**

**DEU 4:48 From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon,**

**DEU 4:49 And all the plain on this side Jordan eastward, even unto the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pisgah.**

From the Arnon River which was in the southern part of the land which they had just taken, to Mount Hermon which was in the far north of that land, Israel had defeated all opposition and were lodged in the plains of Moab, ready to cross over the Jordan.





## *Chapter 5*

Chapter five is largely devoted to a review and application of the law which was given through Moses on Mount Sinai. The ten commandments are reconsidered. There is some variation in the wording and some details are added which particularly apply to the present congregation.

Moses tries to drive home the urgency of hearing and doing the will of Jehovah as the people enter the land of Canaan and claim the inheritance which the Lord had promised through their fathers.

Since extensive comments were made when the ten commandments were presented in the book of Exodus, we will not need to go into as much detail this time. Still, because of the minor alterations in the wording and the need to compare the experiences and expectations of the present congregation with those who first received the law, we will give limited attention to each of the ten commandments as they are given in this chapter.

**DEU 5:1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.**

Moses words were intended for the ears of all Israel. It is not likely that some two million persons could have gathered around close enough to clearly

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hear his voice. They could, however, realize Moses was giving instructions from Jehovah which were to be respected and obeyed by all.

He began with four key words. Those words are hear, learn, keep and do. This general theme runs throughout the entire book of Deuteronomy. It is not sufficient to hear, or even memorize God's commands. They must be cherished and lived out in one's walk in this world.

**DEU 5:2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.**

**DEU 5:3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.**

A covenant is an agreement between two or more partners. In this case God was one partner and Israel was the other. If Israel would hear and obey, God would bless and keep. If Israel turned away, God would curse and destroy.

God had not limited that covenant to the generation then living. It was intended to extend through the generations. Those who were hearing Moses words thirty-eight years later were party to that covenant just as their fathers were when the thunder rolled and the voice of God was heard on the mountain.

**DEU 5:4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,**



**DEU 5:5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,**

The people had been so terrified by the fire and the sound of God's voice that they did not go up the mountain. Moses did do so. He acted as mediator between Jehovah and the people. Only Moses was brave enough to receive the word directly from the Lord.

What then did God say to His people at that time.?

**DEU 5:6 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.**

**DEU 5:7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.**

Since they had only shortly before been rescued from Egyptian slavery by the supernatural power of God, they were to keep themselves from all other so-called gods. The words "before me" could have two related meanings. They could mean that Jehovah did not expect His people to set up false gods in front of Him where He could see them. They could also mean that He would not tolerate false gods being considered more important than Himself. He is to be the one and only true God.

**DEU 5:8 Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing**



**that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:**

Idolatry is spiritual adultery. God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Idolatry places material objects in the place which God should occupy. Even if those objects are meant to turn the mind in Jehovah's direction, they actually defeat that purpose by lowering Him to the level of the creation rather than acknowledging Him as the Creator.

All too often these objects replace the True God in the minds of those who worship.

**DEU 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,**

**DEU 5:10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.**

The Lord will not ignore this alienation of affection. His displeasure will make itself known to those who worship false gods, and the consequences of these sins will be felt as far down in time as their great-grandchildren.

In contrast, those who honor God and serve Him with all their heart will find Him to be kind and merciful, forgiving and blessing them.



**DEU 5:11 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.**

God's name is precious to Him. It is not to be used in a trifling manner. Humans do not like to have their name and reputation dragged down into the mire. The finer the character of the person whose name is being degraded, the more hideous is the sin of belittling it. God is perfect. There is no sin in Him. When one stands in a courtroom and places his hand upon a Bible and swears by the name of God that he will tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, that person must not defame God's character by lying.

The individual who loses his or her temper and utters such words as "By God, I will beat you to a pulp.", has used the name of God in vain. That person is guilty of a most serious sin. Telling jokes that use God's name in a light manner will also incur His wrath. There is nothing of greater importance than the character and name of Jehovah. To take that name in vain is to empty it of its value.

**DEU 5:12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.**

**DEU 5:13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work:**

All of the ten commandments except this one are repeated in some form in the Christian age. This

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one is not.

When God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, He finished the creation on the first six days and rested on the seventh. When Israel was delivered from the burdens of slavery in Egypt, they had rest from those labors. God then established the sabbath day as a reminder to them of the debt they owed to Him.

**DEU 5:14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.**

Note the list given in this verse.

- Son
- Daughter
- Male Servant
- Female Servant
- Ox
- Ass
- Cattle
- The Stranger in their midst

This pretty well covers everything. No work was to be done on that seventh day.

One disgruntled housewife remarked that there was one thing missing. That was the Wife and Mother. She still had to cook the meals and change





the diapers.

It must be pointed out that the observation of the sabbath day saw it's fulfillment with the coming of the Church of Christ. The disciples met on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper. The rest which will be enjoyed by Christians will be experienced when God transfers the faithful from earth to heaven and invites them to enter into the joys of the Lord.

**DEU 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.**

God's power and mercy had broken the bonds of slavery and set Israel on the road to the land of rest. They were not to forget that fact.

**DEU 5:16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.**

The commandments up to this point dealt primarily with men's relationship with God. From this point on, the emphasis is placed upon the relationship with fellowman.

There was to be a two way responsibility. Parents were to teach their children the way of the Lord.

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Children were to respect and obey their parents. If both of these actions took place, Israel would prosper in the land they were about to occupy. If either of these actions was disregarded, their prosperity and stay in the land would be cancelled.

**DEU 5:17 Thou shalt not kill.**

No man was to take the life of another. Man is made in the image of God. God is the giver of life and God is the only one with the right to take life away. The deliberate murderer is to pay with his own life for the life of the one he has slain. The society that ignores this principle will reap the consequences. Crime will increase. The worship of Jehovah will lose its effectiveness. Men will find themselves surrounded by such wickedness as is listed in the first chapter of the book of Romans. (See Romans 1:28-32.)

Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Rom 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

Rom 1:30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

Rom 1:31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: ~~~~~

Rom 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

**DEU 5:18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.**

In the beginning God made one woman for one man. Unfaithfulness to one's mate is an invitation to disaster. It is a sin against the husband or wife. It is a sin against any children in the family. It is a sin against the society in which one lives. Above all it is a sin against God.

When Jesus was asked about polygamy in the days of Moses, he replied that "It was not so from the beginning. The appetites of men and women were given to them for honorable purposes. Gluttony and adultery are both abuses of the drives that were instilled in man to make his survival and reproduction possible.

**DEU 5:19 Neither shalt thou steal.**

Stealing is taking that which belongs to another. It can be out and out robbery, although we usually think of stealing as being done less obviously. We may steal a person's property, his reputation, his wife and children, or even his soul. Satan makes the latter a main objective.

**DEU 5:20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.**



To witness concerning another is to tell something about that person. The witness may be true, or it may be false. There are some things which ought not to be told, even if they are true. Choice pieces of gossip may be true, but they can be vicious and hurtful.

The thrust of this present verse is to condemn telling lies about another. We do not relish the thought that someone else might tell lies about us. It stands to reason that God does not condone lying about anything or anyone. Jesus Christ said, "I am the Way, the Life and the Truth." God is not a liar, and He considers that sin to be an abomination.

**DEU 5:21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.**

It is sinful to look upon that which belongs to someone else with covetous thought in mind. It is wrong to steal that which belongs to another, but this goes a step farther and condemns the desire to obtain that which belongs to others.

Every one of the ten commandments directs attention away from self and toward either God or fellowman. The greatest commandment is to love God and fellowman. Love seeks the welfare of that which is loved. Selfishness seeks to obtain for one's self that which serves the well being of a neighbor.



Jesus' teaching was in complete agreement with this tenth commandment. Hate is the first step toward murder. Covetousness is the first step toward stealing or robbery. It is best to nip such sins before they bloom. (See Matthew 5:27-28).

Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

**DEU 5:22 These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.**

The "words" of this verse are not single words. They refer to the ten commandments given on Sinai. When they were given, the surrounding effects were most awesome. Both the eyes and the ears of the observers were pushed to the limit.

God then concluded the communication with all Israel and caused the ten commandments to be written on tables of stone. One record says Moses wrote them. The other says God wrote them and gave them to Moses. This is no major problem. God was the author. Moses assisted in delivering them to the people. The result was that the people came into possession of God's ten basic principles of life for Israel.



**DEU 5:23** And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders;

The leaders of the people had come to Moses with a solemn request. Something needed to be done. They found the experience unbearable.

**DEU 5:24** And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

**DEU 5:25** Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.

**DEU 5:26** For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?

The people were fearful for their very lives. If they were to be exposed further to what they had already experienced, death might very well be the result.

**DEU 5:27** Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak



**unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.**

The people had a plea to make. Would Moses please go up the mountain and receive any further directives Jehovah might have for them. If he would agree to do that, the people would be happy to hear what God had said to Moses and to obey that which God commanded.

**DEU 5:28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.**

God was aware of the request the people had made. He stated that their plea was in order. He was ready to honor their desire. Moses could meet with God. Then Moses would return from the mount and relay the words of God to Israel.

**DEU 5:29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!**

God could look ahead and see what was to take place in the years to come. O how He wished they would keep their promise; that they would hear and obey His will. If so both they and their children



could look forward to prosperity in the land. Alas, it would not be so!

**DEU 5:30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again.**

The congregation was to leave the mountain and avoid the exposure to the near presence of Jehovah. This was their wish, and God would fulfil it.

**DEU 5:31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it.**

In contrast, Moses had been told to remain and receive that which God had to deliver to the people. God would speak to Moses and Moses would in turn present the messages to the congregation. That information must be taught, and then it must be put into action if the people were to continue in the land of promise.

**DEU 5:32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.**

There is a straight and narrow way that leads to life. God stands at the end of that way with the account book in His hand. The way had been laid  
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out at Sinai. It was still to be attended to these thirty-eight years later.

**DEU 5:33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.**

If God's directives were followed Israel could look forward to an extended and prosperous existence in Canaan. If those directives were not followed, their way would become difficult and their days in the land would be cut short.





## *Chapter 6*

We come now to a chapter which concentrates on perpetuating respect for the commandments, statutes and judgments which have been presented at Sinai and in the Word of God which has been given in the first few chapters of Deuteronomy. It takes very little time for the memories of men and women to dim when spiritual principles are not kept constantly in mind.

**DEU 6:1 Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it:**

Moses clearly labored under the same difficulties that those who preach the gospel experience in every generation. There is a tendency on the part of the preacher to inject his own philosophy along with the divine message. Before he realizes the danger, he may have poisoned the listeners without either he or the hearers recognizing it has happened.

In addition, the ones who listen may fail to give the Lord the glory and transfer what should belong to God to the one preaching the Word.

Moses attempted to make this distinction unmistakable. The source of these commandments



was God. Moses was only the spokesman. Have I made that statement before? Perhaps it is because Moses made it before!!

**DEU 6:2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.**

There are two kinds of fear associated with Almighty God. There is the respect which leads one to avoid breaking His commands. Then there is the fear which results from having broken them. Every day of one's life that person should be fortifying the former kind. Every day of his life he should be aware of the fact that he will one day stand before God and must answer for the way he has reacted to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**DEU 6:3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.**

**DEU 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:**

Godliness is more than absorbing sound waves or memorizing words. The hearing spoken of here must be followed by doing. When Israel heard and



obeyed, God promised great blessings and well being in the land to which He had led them. One of those blessings was an increase in their numbers.

The use of the terms “milk and honey” are used several times in this book. They were also well known to those outside the people of God at that time. Palestine was truly a land where goats and cattle could graze and produce milk. The rainfall east of the Mediterranean promoted the growth of such plants as would offer nectar to the bees and honey for the table. Milk was a staple. Honey was a luxury. Israel would have both.

Verse six is highly respected among both Jews and Christians. Jews repeat these words in every worship service. Christians understand the truth which is stated.

Israel had been delivered from the land of Egypt, where polytheism was accepted. Pharaoh was worshipped. Various animals were worshipped. The One God, Jehovah, had proven those false gods were impotent. The Lord was the only True God. All others were lies.

The fourth verse of this chapter has theological importance. We are told, “The Lord our God is One Lord.” This statement must be placed side by side with I John 5:7.

1Jo 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Are there three Gods, or one God? How can there

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be three and still only one? The usual answer to this question has been that there is one Godhead, but that the one Godhead consists of three persons. It is added that the three persons are one in purpose.

The reader may wish to take issue with me on what is about to be presented. The Bible is correct. If the reader finds my explanation incorrect when compared with Bible statements, I am more than pleased to accept those statements.

I recall from Genesis 1:26-27 that:

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Gen 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

To whom was God speaking when He said, “Let **us** make man in **our** own image.”? Gen 1:2 stated,

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the **Spirit of God** moved upon the face of the waters.

The very beginning of the gospel according to John has the following.



Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

The One God then consists of

- (1) A source of thought (Father).
- (2) A means of expression (Word)
- (3) An energizing power (Holy Spirit)

In comparison, man has

- (1) A mind or (source of thought.)
- (2) A body or (means of expression.)
- (3) A spirit or (energizing power.)

The One God would then originate thought through the Father, express thought through the Word, and energize that thought through the power of the Holy Spirit. In this case we would have but one person being manifested in three different levels. Just as a man is not complete without soul, body and spirit. Neither is God complete without the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Dear Reader, it may just be that the threefold nature of God and also the threefold nature of man are not completely comprehensible to the minds of men. If I have caused you to glorify Jehovah by the above I am pleased. If not, please disregard it.

**DEU 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,**

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**and with all thy might.**

In verse two, Israel was commanded to “fear God.” Now, three verses later, they are told to love Him with all their heart, soul and might. Jesus, in his day added the word “mind.” Is it possible to fear God and love Him at the same time? Absolutely!

This present commentator loved his earthly father and mother very deeply. When they passed from this earthly existence they were sorely missed. That did not prevent the kind of fear which caused obedience to their instructions. A mouth washed out with soap was not an experience one wished to have repeated. A few licks with a razor strap might bring a momentary wish that I could get hold of the strap myself, and return the licks. But, love and fear were admirably mixed to produce good behavior.

God expected His people to fear Him and keep His commandments. He also commanded that they love Him with all their being. When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment, he replied that the first and greatest was to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. The second was to love ones neighbor as himself.

(See Matthew 22:36-40.)

Mat 22:36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Mat 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Mat 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.





Mat 22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Mat 22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

It is claimed by some that it is impossible to legislate morality. That is incorrect. We make laws against murder. We make law against stealing. Both of these are moral offenses. We see a small child pull a puppy or a kitten's tail and tell the child not to do it again. It is wrong! The child is to love the pet.

It is true that no one made a human law that I am to love my wife. I love her because she is worthy of my love. I do know that she wants me to love her because she very often asks me, "Honey, do you love me?" She expects a yes answer. That puts pressure on me to love her, but I make the choice to love her for a variety of reasons.

**DEU 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:**

The Lord now tells how this fear and love can be perpetuated in the hearts of His people. Here is the way it is done.

**DEU 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.**

Each new generation must be taught God's will. Not only must they be taught. They must be taught diligently. There is a difference. The child must be made to realize just how important parents believe spiritual truth to be.

When the family is gathered around the dinner table, one of the topics of conversation should be God's commandments and God's love. Even when company is a part of the gathering, no one must be ashamed to bring up spiritual matters. There are times when visitors may not be followers of God. That should not be a hindrance to spiritual discussion.

When out in the workaday world, Acquaintances should know they are expected to use clean language around the child of God. On occasion one will hear a person use the name of God in vain, and then apologize to a godly hearer. The apology is in order.

When one lies down in the bed at night, one of the last things done should be the offering of a prayer. One of the first things done when one arises to face a new day is to ask God to guide his paths.

**DEU 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.**

If you thought of a Bible truth as often as you look at the watch on your wrist, you would be much more apt to hold them in your heart and mind. If you kept a Bible open and cast your eyes upon it several times a day, you would be unlikely to forget the importance of God's Word.

The Pharisees took these verses literally. Jesus scolded them. It was not that actually wearing Bible verses on the wrists and fastened to the forehead was sinful. It was the fact that each was trying to make his phylacteries more noticeable than others. Self righteousness and hypocrisy were just as wrong as forgetting the Word.

**DEU 6:9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.**

The orthodox Jews would write scripture on the entrance to their house. Then, when inside the house, they would place their hand on Bible verses each time they passed through a door from one room to another. The verses were fastened to the framework of the doors.

It was possible for such actions to take place and only be a matter of ritual, without real commitment. But, I think we can all agree that the one who constantly exposes himself to the will and the Word of Jehovah will be in far less danger of being overcome by Satan and his angels.

**DEU 6:10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,**

**DEU 6:11 And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive**

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**trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;**

**DEU 6:12 Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.**

God was concerned about a very real danger. Long before this time He had made a solemn promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their seed would inherit a land filled with good things. Israel was now ready to enter into that land. It was just such a land as He had promised.

There were cities with the benefits arising when men live in permanent dwellings. They had spent many years living in tents during their stay in the wilderness. They would find quite a contrast when they came into possession of entire cities with large numbers of comfortable houses. They had not built those houses, but they would take possession of them.

Water had been scarce for those years in the Sinai peninsula. Now they would find an abundance of water from wells which others had dug. They would not even have to dig them. There would be olive trees and grape vineyards with fruit already ripe.

How would Israel react when they came into such material riches? Would they give glory to God, or would they revel in these possessions and forget the Lord who had made them possible?

Sometimes those who have the most are the least spiritual, and those who are in adversity cry out to



God for His guidance. God could look ahead and see great danger ahead.

**DEU 6:13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.**

The first thing we must do in discussing verse thirteen is to compare it with a companion verse in Matthew 5:34-36.

Mat 5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Mat 5:35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Mat 5:36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

Just what did Moses mean when he reported God's command to serve Him and swear by His name. The key word in the verse is "His." The point is that Israel might well forget that no other power could have broken the bonds of slavery and led them through that bleak wilderness, bringing them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

They must recognize that unique power and authority. All that they had done or could do was dependent upon Jehovah, the One True God.

Jesus was making a quite different point. Heaven is the place from which God rules. Earth is but a region where God commands are to be obeyed. Jerusalem was only an earthly headquarters for

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God's earthly operations among His people.

No man has the power to live, speak or act without receiving that power from the Almighty. Careless statements about what one will or will not do through personal abilities is both meaningless and sinful.

With God as one's helper it is possible to do all things which are in accord with His will. Without Him one can do nothing.

**DEU 6:14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you;**

**DEU 6:15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.**

There would be many false gods in Canaan. Israel must never give her attention to them. A man whose wife invites the attention of other men will normally become extremely angry with her. She may even be cut off from his own affections.

Jehovah should not, and would not, condone Israel dividing their loyalties between Him and any rival which they might go after. They faced the possibility that they could be eliminated as a nation.

**DEU 6:16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.**

This verse was one of three Christ quoted to  
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Satan at the time of temptation immediately after He was baptized. Satan had invited Him to jump off the pinnacle of the temple and prove that the Father would prevent Him from dying when he struck the ground. Jesus reply is found in Matthew 4:7.

Mat 4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Jesus pointed out that this was just what had happened when Israel murmured about the lack of water in the wilderness. At that time the people had decided God was not with them or He would have provided water.

God was with Christ. He did not need to jump off the pinnacle of the temple to find out. To do that was to admit doubt that God would guide and protect His Son. Israel was not to doubt the power and goodness of Jehovah by going after that which was neither powerful nor good.

**DEU 6:17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.**

**DEU 6:18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers.**

God had already given the law at Sinai. He had repeated the ten commandments as Israel was

about to enter the land. He was going to go into more detail in the rest of this book of Deuteronomy. They must hear and obey if they were to take the promised land.

**DEU 6:19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.**

As long as Israel was true to the Lord, He would be with them and their enemies would be unable to stand before them. If they were unfaithful, the opposite would be true.

**DEU 6:20 And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?**

Children are inquisitive. Think about what goes through the mind of a small child when the Lord's Supper is passed. If someone is going to eat something why do they not have meat, vegetables and dessert? The children are not bashful about asking such questions. The children would no doubt ask why their parents were doing some of the things they did in observance of God's instructions.

**DEU 6:21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand:**





Because of the passing on of these memories from parents to children, we now have them for our present consideration. Though millions of non-Jews now read and learn from the truths in question as they see the foundation for Christianity laid in the law and the prophets, this has only been possible by explanations such as these which were to be given by Israel to the oncoming generations.

**DEU 6:22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:**

Parents were to relate the marvelous things which took place during the plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea. The children must be made to realize that these were not just stories. They were the basis for the actions in which their parents were worshipping and serving the Lord.

**DEU 6:23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers.**

They were to tell their children of God's providence in bringing them from Egypt to the land of Canaan into which they were about to enter. They were to tell of God's promise to the patriarchs, and how He had kept that promise.

**DEU 6:24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God,**

**for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.**

Since God had done so many wonderful things for His people, the children should follow their parents lead in thanking Jehovah for His goodness. Everything which had taken place was for their good, whether they had realized it or not.

**DEU 6:25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.**

Righteousness is a way of life which trusts and obeys the statutes, commandments and judgments of God. It is also the condition in which God views His faithful servants. No man is righteous within himself. When he strives diligently to love God and keep His commandments, God will assign righteousness to him.



## *Chapter 7*

Chapters six and seven of Deuteronomy are closely related. Both were meant to prepare Israel for the experiences which God knew were about to take place after they entered Canaan.

It is difficult for a Christian to write commentary on some of the instructions God gave to His people at that time. They involve gruesome actions which do not fit with our present understanding of spiritual warfare. It becomes necessary for us to remember the vast difference in the way life was lived in 1500 B.C. and 3500 years later. God's instructions are always fit for the time, purpose and circumstances in which they are given.

Christians must be just as ruthless in the use of the Sword of the Spirit today, as Israel was commanded to be in the use of steel swords in the conquest of the Canaanites of that time.

**DEU 7:1 When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;**



There are seven nations listed here which must be overcome. Different numbers of nations are given in other lists. Sometimes the list includes only four. If all of the lists are put together there are as many as ten enemies. Seven may be a way of emphasizing the power of the enemies which had to be faced. The main point being made is that without the help of the Lord, these opponents could never be defeated. With God's help it was possible.

Some maps attempt to locate the enemy nations in the land. These efforts are subject to question. Some of them moved from one area to another. The boundaries are not easily followed.

**DEU 7:2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:**

Provided Israel worked with God, these nations would be delivered into their hands. What was to be their plan of action when that took place?

They were commanded to have no mercy. The foe was to be utterly destroyed. No alliances were to be entered into.

We might add that Christians today are to never be satisfied as long as the ungodly fight against the Kingdom of God. We are to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and destroy the sons of Satan, turning them into new men in Christ.



**DEU 7:3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.**

One very clear regulation was that no marriages were to be made between Israel and those who followed false gods. Their daughters were not to marry Canaanite men. Their sons were not to marry Canaanite women. This was not to be done!

**DEU 7:4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.**

God does not always explain why He has given a command. This time He saw fit to do so. Intermarriage would cause some of His own people to cease following Him and set out to follow false gods. That would bring on the wrath of the Lord and many would come to destruction.

God was right. This was what led Solomon to worship false gods. In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah the same problem reared it's head.

It is a strange thing that women have more spiritual influence upon men than men have upon women. A non-Christian woman is more apt to turn her husband from Christ, than a non-Christian man is to turn his wife away. But, in neither case is it wise for marriages to be created between faithful Christians and non-believers.



**DEU 7:5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.**

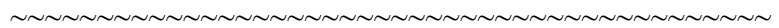
Israel was not to leave any trace of the worship paid to Baal and other rivals for God's attention. The altars were usually built up with stone. Images of birds, fish, serpents, humans, etc were carved out and placed near the altars. The worship often took place near or within a grove of trees. All of these were to be completely erased from existence.

If any remnant of these objects of worship was left, it might cause some Israelite to experiment by paying worship to it and suffering God's wrath.

**DEU 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.**

The word translated as "holy" in this verse means "set apart." Since Israel was holy unto the Lord, they had been set apart to serve Him, not false gods.

God had set out to develop such a people as far back as the time of Abraham, perhaps even from the foundation of the world. He knew beforehand what the outcome of His decision would be. This nation of Israel would serve His purpose more fully than any other group. Therefore, He began to work with them and separate them from all other



people. Through Israel, the Saviour would be born and would set up His spiritual Kingdom. Through that spiritual Kingdom every ally of Satan would finally be vanquished.

**DEU 7:7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:**

If Israel had the idea in mind that the numbers and the size of the warriors in Canaan were impossible to overcome, they need to recall their previous history. That would prove God is more powerful than any combination of foes.

**DEU 7:8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.**

When Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt there were but seventy souls. When they came out there were two or three million. Even then the armies of Pharaoh were larger in number. That did not prevent the Lord from overcoming the Egyptians and freeing His people. If God could defeat the Egyptian armies, He could also bring about the defeat of those found in the land of Canaan.

**DEU 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;**

Israel need not fear that God would abandon His people in the midst of the coming confrontation. He had never done so since the time of Abraham. He would not do so in the land of Canaan. When His people are faithful to Him, He is faithful to them.

According to the Bible records, there have not been one thousand generations from Adam to the present. This number is merely a means of stating that as long as Israel keeps their part of the covenant, God will keep His part.

**DEU 7:10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.**

Just as surely as God keeps His promises to aid those who are faithful, He will oppose those who make themselves His enemies. Remember that:

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Promises of reward to the faithful will be kept. Promises of punishment will also be kept. It is far





better to be a friend of God.

**DEU 7:11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.**

**DEU 7:12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers:**

There was every reason to trust and obey the Lord. Keeping His commandments, statutes and judgments would insure His blessings.

**DEU 7:13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.**

His people would find themselves productive of good things in every aspect of life. They would increase in numbers and their children would be healthy. The land would be fertile and food would be plentiful

**DEU 7:14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.**~~~~~

Not only would the women bear many healthy children, the livestock would provide young which would put an abundance of food on the table.

**DEU 7:15 And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.**

Israel would become recognized as a nation of healthy people. This promise did not mean individual cases of disease would never occur. It meant the people in general would not be plagued with disease as was the case in Egypt. Egypt had been known as a nation with many disease problems, even before the time of the ten plagues.

While Israel would be relatively healthy, those nations who opposed her would find many evil diseases in their midst.

Observant persons can see the principle above in action today. Sexual promiscuity is the primary reason for the aids epidemic which is sweeping over the world. God's commandments, if followed will avoid much of this type of anguish.

**DEU 7:16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.**



There comes a point when a man who turns his face away from God has scarred his conscience to the point where he will not turn back from sin to righteous conduct. It appears that this is also true with respect to entire nations. The Canaanites seem to have reached such a condition. They were so godless and immoral that the best thing which could be done was to drive them out of the land of Canaan and replace them with God's own.

**DEU 7:17 If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them?**

**DEU 7:18 Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt;**

Israel would no doubt be tempted to say, as the spies did at Ramoth-Gilead, These people are too many and too strong for us to drive them out. If God gave the victory at the Red Sea, He could do the same now. These Canaanites were no stronger than was Egypt.

**DEU 7:19 The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.**



The Lord had been with them during shortages of water and food. He had led them as a shepherd would lead his sheep. Now God would use His great power to give them victory over what might seem to be insurmountable foes. Fear was out of place.

**DEU 7:20 Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed.**

Were the hornets mentioned here real hornets, or were they symbols by which God could talk about discomforts which He would pour out upon the Canaanites? Some suggest that hornets were pictured on the armor of some of the Egyptians troops. Perhaps God was speaking about such troops weakening the Canaanites.

If God could send plagues of flies and gnats against the Egyptians when Israel was being released from that land, there is no reason to doubt that he could send real hornets into the midst of the Canaanites.

**DEU 7:21 Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible.**

**DEU 7:22 And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.**



Israel would not be able to drive out the Canaanites in one day. This would take place little by little. If the land was left uninhabited for any lengthy period of time, wild animals would become a very real danger.

This may be one of the reasons Israel was told not to intermarry with the nations. They would exist alongside until God saw fit to allow their elimination.

**DEU 7:23 But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.**

**DEU 7:24 And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them.**

We know the names of king Og and king Sihon who had their territory on the east side of the Jordan. But, the names of the kings on the east side in Canaan proper are unknown. Their influence has been erased from history.

**DEU 7:25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God.**



It might be tempting to pick up some of the gold and silver objects the Canaanites worshipped. Rather than collecting these idols to place on the fireplace or melt them down and make them into personal jewelry, they were to burn them in the fire and leave the gold and silver behind.

Achan made the serious mistake of collecting some of these abominable objects later on. He paid with his life.

**DEU 7:26 Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.**

Because of their association with idolatry, no object of pagan worship was to be allowed in the house of an Israelite. If one was brought in the persons living in that house would become just as abominable in the sight of God as was the idol.



## Chapter 8

Each chapter in this commentary normally begins with a short preview of the main topics to be covered. This time God will declare through Moses that His people were in severe trouble in the wilderness. They could in no way have solved their problems through their own abilities.

He then points out that He had allowed this to happen purposely in order that they would learn to trust and obey Him. He had deliberately tested them and disciplined them that they might mature spiritually.

Finally, He called for them to look forward to life in Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. If they would honor His Word many blessings were waiting. If they ignored His Word, they would be driven out of the land and scattered.

Do the above topics sound familiar? Have you read them before? Why did God feel it necessary to repeat Himself so many times? The answer to these questions is obvious. He had told Israel they must keep His commandments, statutes and judgments constantly before them. That is exactly what He has done in these books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy. Is it not just possible that we also need to read them over and over?

**DEU 8:1 All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do,**

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**that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.**

It would not be sufficient to do only those commandments which seemed reasonable and pleasant to His people. All of the commandments were given for a reason and must be heard and put into practice. Only if that was done would they live the good life which had been promised. The promise was a part of a covenant between Jehovah and Israel. God would bless Israel if Israel would obey Him.

**DEU 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.**

They must look back and remember those difficult years of wandering. They were not an accident. They were a means of discipline. They had been sent out into that wilderness because they did not trust God to be with them and overcome the obstacles which the spies reported to be present in Canaan. When Israel looked at the matter from a human standpoint, they decided there was no possibility of taking possession of that land. They failed to recall that there was no possibility of escape from Egypt through their own power. They still needed to be taught that with God all things are possible.

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**DEU 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.**

God knew very well that they would suffer from hunger without His help. He anticipated that they would cry out for help. When that took place, He provided manna. This was a food neither they nor their ancestors had ever eaten. There was no way they could have provided the manna through their own knowledge.

I have little sympathy for the position that attempts to explain the manna through natural means. The purpose of the manna is expressly said to be that they might be humbled and come to know they could and must depend upon God.

The last part of this verse was quoted to Satan by Christ when He was challenged to change stones into bread after He had fasted for forty days. His point was that dependence upon God will insure that every problem facing men will be dealt with in the most effective way. After all, God is the One who created the natural processes through which wheat grows and can be ground and baked into bread. Trust God and He will cause all things to work together for good. It was not necessary to test God.



**DEU 8:4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.**

There are two lines of thought concerning the first part of this verse. The first is that the clothes which the people were wearing when they began the journey never became tattered and useless. They were just as useful when they reached the plains of Moab after the forty years as they were when they left the land of Egypt.

There is an objection to this position. Babies were born and young children grew to full grown adults. Did the clothing grow with them? This seems unlikely to many students of the Bible.

What do these objectors then suggest as the meaning of the verse? They point out that the Israelites had sheep and cattle. These would provide wool and leather from which clothes could be made. These clothes could then be used to replace those which were becoming useless. The people also knew how to use these materials. God expects man to make use of that which is made available to him. He does not perform miracles when they are not needed.

Those who object to this second position reply that the verses does not say the clothes would be replaced when they became old. It says they would not grow old.

A blend of the two positions may be the answer. God would see that the clothing of the mature persons at the time they began the journey did not



grow old and useless. He would expect the people to use wool and leather to make clothing to replace that of the infants and children as they grew. This would allow a miracle and also expect application of human energy and skills.

Perhaps there is another explanation which has not been suggested here. One thing we do know is that God was making certain His people learned the need for His assistance.

The second part of the verse declares that their feet did not swell. They spent much time traveling on foot. Ordinarily this would cause pain and swelling. This might be especially true with the elderly among them. The same thing is true here that was true in the case of the manna and the clothing. Man cannot survive without the help of Jehovah.

**DEU 8:5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.**

**DEU 8:6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.**

God did not enjoy seeing His people suffer. The difficulties they had endured were God's way of preparing them for life in the promised land. They must learn to depend upon His wisdom and power.

A loving father does not punish his children because he relishes showing them he is stronger than they are. He punishes them because he feels



the discomfort of the moment will lead to dependence on truth later on. A short period of punishment is expected to lead to a lengthy period of satisfying life.

Men must learn to both fear and love God at the same time. Then His blessings will come.

**DEU 8:7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;**

The first six verses of this chapter have urged Israel to look back. Now God will urge them to look ahead. Just across the Jordan River was the land which He had promised through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

How wonderful this land was! Unlike that wilderness in which water was scarce and God had caused it to spring forth from the rock, there would be streams of flowing water. It would rise up from springs at the surface of the ground. It would flow out of both the high places and the low places.

**DEU 8:8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;**

Would there be a sufficient supply of food? Oh yes! There would be wheat and barley for the making of bread. There would be fig trees from which the



fruit could be picked in abundance. There would be grape vines and pomegranates for making refreshing drinks. There would be olives and olive oil for eating and lighting of lamps. Finally, there would be honey. Wheat and barley were staples needed by all. Honey is a luxury. All of this would be theirs in the new land.

**DEU 8:9 A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.**

Iron is the most used metal in the world. The wilderness did not make iron available to a wandering people. Now it would be found in the stones of the earth. They would have to mine and process it, but it would be there for the taking.

Copper would also be found in the hills of the land. We do not mine brass. Brass is an alloy made from copper and other additives. But, the copper would be there by which the brass could be made.

**DEU 8:10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.**

**DEU 8:11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:**

Food, clothing, shelter and various kinds of raw materials would all be waiting when they took possession of the land of promise. They needed to

look back. They needed to look forward. When they looked both directions they would realize the Lord loved them far more than they realized. They needed to trust Him.

**DEU 8:12 Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;**

**DEU 8:13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;**

All would not necessarily come up roses for ever and ever. Prosperity can breed pride and greed. These can lead to poverty.

Many who have walked close to God and prayed to Him for help when conditions were unpleasant, have waved good-bye to Him when they became prosperous. The one who lives in a humble cottage may know something about how much he needs divine assistance. The man who lives in a twenty room mansion with a number of servants is far more apt to give credit for his success to his own wisdom and foresight.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon is one of the finest examples of this. This proud man walked in the palace grounds and praised his own wondrous accomplishments.

Dan 4:28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan 4:29 At the end of twelve months he walked



in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

Dan 4:30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

Dan 4:31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

**DEU 8:14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;**

There would be an ever present danger when Israel marveled at all the wonderful surroundings in Canaan that they would do just as Nebuchadnezzar later did when he walked in the palace gardens in Babylon.

**DEU 8:15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;**

**DEU 8:16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;**

It would be so easy to forget the hardships of the past when God was preparing them for the coming

blessings. He had arranged those circumstances so they would learn humility and trust. By testing them as He had, they should never have let their memories of the lessons learned then slip away and leave them proud of heart.

**DEU 8:17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.**

**DEU 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.**

It was not their own power that had released them from Egypt, led them through the wilderness and made the wealth of Canaan available to them. It was the Lord who had arranged all these things. He had promised this land and He had kept His promise. Now they must keep their part of the covenant and honor Him.

**DEU 8:19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.**

Once they had forgotten the True God, there would be alternatives in Canaan. The people who lived there served false gods whom they found attractive. The worship of those false gods included



immoral actions which destroyed men rather than building them up. Jehovah would not tolerate idolatry. His wrath would burn toward Israel if they served Baal and other rivals after He had loved His people and cared for them.

**DEU 8:20 As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.**

The idolatrous nations would be driven out before them as they took the land. However, if they acted as the nations had who were driven out, the same fate would await them.



## Chapter 9

Our chapter this time continues Moses speech to Israel preparing them for entry into Canaan. There were certain attitudes which were to be avoided. These had to do with Israel's lack of ability to take the land without God's help. If they became boastful about their own qualifications, they would be heading directly into troubles similar to those they had recently passed through.

**DEU 9:1 Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven,**

Parents sometimes tell their children, "Listen to me now!" V.E. Howard had a Bible based radio program for many years. He titled the program, "Are You Listening?" The information Moses was about to pass on from God to the people of Israel was vitally important. It might be helpful to the reader to thumb through the five books of the law and see how many times this call to attention was given.

"This day", as used in the present verse does not refer to a twenty-four hour day. It was to be about a month before Israel would actually enter Canaan. The term is used here to refer to the relatively close future.

The task before them was no easier than it was when the spies were sent into Canaan from Kadesh-

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Barnea before the Lord sentenced them to wander for forty years. There were not going up against one nation. They were several nations who were more powerful than they. The cities were protected by walls which were impossible to scale.

**DEU 9:2 A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!**

In addition to the strength of the nations and the high walls around the cities, there were Anakims, or giants in the land. This was not a questionable report from some human spies. This was the statement of the Lord Himself. From the human standpoint, taking possession of Canaan was absolutely impossible.

**DEU 9:3 Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.**

All was not lost. God made it clear that He would go over before Israel and would be to the nations of the land as a fire which would render them powerless before Israel. God's Israel would then be able to overcome them without fear.



In another scripture we are told that the enemy would not be eliminated all at once, lest wild animals and thistles take over the land before Israel had finished the invasion. This is not a contradiction. It would be some time before all of the land was taken. But, when God was ready for Israel to move forward, He would see that victory was quick in that particular confrontation.

**DEU 9:4 Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.**

There were three misconceptions Israel might hold after the victory was won.

- (1) It had been accomplished by their own power.
- (2) It had come about through their own wisdom.
- (3) It was because of their righteous thoughts and deeds.

The trap which the people of Israel had fallen into forty years earlier was because they were thinking in terms of their own wisdom, power and righteousness. They were not to make that same mistake again.

**DEU 9:5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

They would not have been able to boast that either their deeds or their thoughts were so pure that they deserved the victory.

It was not that their own righteousness was so commendable. It was that the wickedness of the Canaanites was so corrupt. If it had been a matter of righteousness only, both the Canaanites and the Israelites would have fallen short of God's approval.

But God had made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that through their seed a Saviour would come who would bless all nations. In reality, Israel was not being rewarded for her purity and sinless spiritual condition.

**DEU 9:6 Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.**

Moses then gave God's picture of Israel's spiritual history. It was not a pleasant picture. The first word used to describe them was stiffnecked. They had resisted the leading of the Lord as a cow might pull



back on a rope tied around her neck to lead her to pasture.

**DEU 9:7 Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.**

They had not defied the Lord just one time. From the time they left Egypt until they had reached the edge of the Jordan where they were at the time Moses was speaking, they had repeatedly angered Jehovah. He would have been perfectly justified if He had abandoned them long before.

**DEU 9:8 Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.**

Deuteronomy uses the name Horeb rather than Sinai. They had already stated that they desired to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt. At Horeb they went much farther. God was angry enough at them then that He was ready to blot them out of memory and begin a new people through Moses. Moses had pleaded with God not to destroy them.

**DEU 9:9 When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with**

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**you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water:**

Moses had climbed up the mountain for the purpose of receiving the Lord's statement of the ten commandments. The prophet had gone without food and drink for forty days as a preparation for this spiritual meeting with God.

**DEU 9:10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.**

It had gone as Moses expected. God had put two tables of stone in his hands. On them was written the backbone of the entire covenant. The darkness which surrounded the mountain top and the thunderous voice of God left no explanation for what was happening other than that God had spoken!

The Holy Spirit was involved in this writing. A pair of parallel passages equate the Holy Spirit with the Finger of God. Compare Luke 11:20 and Matthew 12:28.

Luk 11:20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.





Mat 12:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

**DEU 9:11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant.**

**DEU 9:12 And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.**

After the Lord gave Moses the tables of stone, He commanded Moses to descend the mountain in haste. The people at the foot of the mountain had begun to act like the heathen who were idolators. They had made a molten image.

How amazing it was that Israel had so quickly forgotten what God had done for them before they ever reached Horeb, and had turned to a false god made with human hands.

Some believe this was only an attempt to use the golden calf as a symbol representing Jehovah. If so, it was still abominable to the Lord. The Creator is not a material object. He is the One who brought all matter into existence.

**DEU 9:13 Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and,**

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**behold, it is a stiffnecked people:**

Twice now God had described the people as being stiffnecked. We sometimes use a related word when we accuse someone of being “Bullheaded.” Surely Israel could not boast of being righteous before the Lord when He pictured them as stiffnecked.

**DEU 9:14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.**

God was ready to blot Israel’s name out of history. Unless there was a change in His plans, a new nation would take their place and would be more acceptable in His sight.

**DEU 9:15 So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands.**

**DEU 9:16 And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.**

At God’s command, Moses rapidly descended to where the people were gathered. It was true. They had unbelievably decided upon their own to turn to an idol when the tables of the covenant were being



delivered to Moses. How could anything be more sinful than such an action?

**DEU 9:17 And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.**

This was not simply a fit of anger on the part of Moses. Surely Moses was angry with them, but his action in breaking the tables of stone emphasized their stupidity in looking for a source of guidance and strength in place of the Lord.

**DEU 9:18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.**

Moses had prepared to receive the tables of stone by fasting for forty days and nights. Now he repeated the process in order that he could approach God for aid in finding the right course of action to be taken in his position of leader of Israel.

**DEU 9:19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.**

Once again God was willing to hear what Moses had to say. He postponed the destruction of the

people for the moment.

**DEU 9:20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.**

God not only was angry with the people of Israel in general; He was furious that Aaron the priest had cooperated in the heresy. Moses pleaded that Aaron not be killed.

**DEU 9:21 And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.**

When Moses finished with the golden calf, it was beyond reclaiming. It had been melted into a shapeless mass of metal in the heat of the fire. Then it had been ground into grains as small as the dust of the ground and thrown into the brook which ran down the side of the mountain.

Was Israel righteous? Hardly!

**DEU 9:22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibrothhattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath.**

Israel had added to their sinfulness all along the way. At Taberah the people had complained about



their hardships. God sent fire which consumed some of them. Moses had prayed that the fire might be quenched. God answered Moses' prayer.

Apparently soon after this they grumbled about having nothing to eat but the manna which God sent daily. They looked fondly back toward Egypt where there were cucumbers, fish and melons. (See Numbers 11:1-3.)

Num 11:1 And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

Num 11:2 And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.

Num 11:3 And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

At Massah there had been murmurings about thirst. Moses was told to smite the rock with his rod. He did so and water came forth.

I have heard numerous sermons and read from Commentators about Moses striking the rock rather than speaking to it. There were two occasions on which Moses was instructed to obtain water. This one is the first of the two. It might be wise to remember that Moses had used that rod to part the water when they had passed through on the way out of Egypt. The Holy Scriptures state that Moses sin

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was in speaking inadvisedly with his lips and not giving glory to God. (See Psalm 106:32-33).

Psa 106:32 They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

Psa 106:33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

It may be that it was also sinful for him to have smitten the rock at the later incident, but the Bible does not state that to be the case.

What then happened at Kibrothhattaavah? The people began lusting for flesh and vegetables such as they had eaten back in Egypt. (See Numbers 11:4-6.)

Num 11:4 And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

Num 11:5 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

Num 11:6 But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

**DEU 9:23 Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the**



**LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.**

Moses then closed his list of accusations by reminding them of the lack of trust and confidence in the Lord which they had shown when they heard the report of the spies.

**DEU 9:24 Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.**

Israel had made it extremely difficult for Moses to again approach God in a plea for mercy. From the time he had first taken over leadership of the people until that very day, they had complained and murmured.

**DEU 9:25 Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the LORD had said he would destroy you.**

Time after time Moses had humbled himself through fasting and prayer before his attempts to save Israel from destruction at the hand of Jehovah.

**DEU 9:26 I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which**



**thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand.**

Was it really necessary for Moses to remind the allwise God that Israel had been specially chosen by Him as a peculiar people and that as His children it had been intended that they would receive an inheritance from Him, and that He could look down upon them as those to whom He would give that inheritance?

I think not. God knew, even before the people complained that they would do just that. I do think that Moses intercession for the people was pleasing to the Lord, and that it made a difference in His treatment of them.

**DEU 9:27 Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin:**

Moses asked God to look beyond the wickedness of the people and to the promise which had been made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that they would have a multitude of descendants, and that those descendants would be given a land flowing with milk and honey. Surely Jehovah would wish to keep His promise to the patriarchs, even though the wickedness of their descendants proved them to be undeserving.



**DEU 9:28 Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.**

There was one more point to be considered. What would pass through the minds of those back in Egypt. Would they not accuse Jehovah of being unable to achieve what He had set out to do? They would probably conclude that God despised Israel for their foolishness and caused them to be slain in the wilderness.

This reminds us of the attitude some opposers of Christianity take. When misfortune such as disease or financial disaster strikes Christians, these opponents of God claim there is no difference in the rewards and punishments which come to Christians and those which come to the unbelievers. It cannot be disputed that there are difficult time in the lives of Christians. But, in general, it is true that the life of a Christian is far more satisfying than that of the atheist or infidel.

**DEU 9:29 Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.**

Moses appealed to God that He had done much for Israel in the past. Would it not be best to continue with them and see the promise to the end?



A summary is helpful here. Israel was about to enter into Canaan and see their enemies conquered. They were to settle in that land and enjoy its abundant blessings. They were to be very cautious about the reasons they had been so blessed.

1. They had not accomplished it through their own **might**. They had to have God's help.
2. They had not accomplished it through their own **wisdom**. They had to be led by God.
3. They certainly had not accomplished it by way of their great **righteousness**. They did not deserve the land. God was keeping the promise He had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Thus they were to give God the glory and place their future in His hands.

## *Chapter 10*

This chapter contains some very controversial material. Some see what they believe to be serious fragmentation in the chapter. They attribute this to some editor who took information from more than one source and made an attempt to weld it together.

This is not necessary. The chapter as a whole deals with God's response to Moses intercession for the people. He will renew the covenant which Israel had broken. He would make arrangements for a continuation of the priesthood, etc.

**DEU 10:1 At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood.**

“That time” was when the first tables were broken as Moses descended from the mountain and found Israel worshipping the golden calf. Moses was told to hew out two new tables of stone. The first tables had been given Moses from God. Moses was to carry the two stone tablets up the mountain and he was to have prepared a simple ark into which they could be placed.

**DEU 10:2 And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou**

**brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark.**

God would rewrite the ten commandments on the new tablets of stone. Moses was then to place the tables in the ark which he had made. I take this ark to be a different one than Bezaleel crafted later. (See Exodus 37:1—5.)

Exo 37:1 And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it:

Exo 37:2 And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about.

Exo 37:3 And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it; even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it.

Exo 37:4 And he made staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold.

Exo 37:5 And he put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark.

**DEU 10:3 And I made an ark of shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand.**

Moses obeyed the Lord and took the tables of stone and the ark up the mountain to meet God.

**DEU 10:4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.**

God had been merciful and shown His grace to Israel. Although Israel had broken the covenant God reinstated it.

**DEU 10:5 And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.**

Moses could point to the ark where the new tables of stone rested even at the time he was speaking to the people at the Jordan River.

**DEU 10:6 And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead.**

Jehovah would certainly have been justified in abandoning the people completely and allowing them to starve at the foot of Sinai. He did not. He guided them and nourished them while teaching them the need for trusting and obeying Him.



**DEU 10:7 From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.**

The sequence of encampments here is not exactly the same as was given in the thirty-third chapter of Numbers. Moses was not as much concerned with the itinerary here as he was with pointing out the mercy and grace of the Lord.

**DEU 10:8 At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day.**

God would have had good reason to eliminate access to him. The people had proven they did not care to take advantage of His willingness to present His commandments and statutes to them.

Instead, he set the tribe of Levi apart from the rest of the tribes in order that they might receive sacrifices and bless the people. Again we see His longsuffering with the seed of Abraham.

**DEU 10:9 Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.**

The tribe of Levi was not to be assigned a lump territory in Canaan. They were to live in small cities



scattered throughout the land. The other tribes were to tithe and see that the tribe of Levi had no need to cultivate the land. That which was given to the Lord was to support that one tribe while it was dedicated to maintaining a link between Jehovah and His people.

**DEU 10:10 And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, and the LORD would not destroy thee.**

Just as he had done the first time the ten commandments were given, Moses prepared to meet God by fasting and prayer. God's leaders should take heed. Any man who intends to lead the people of God must first make contact with God and beg for His strength and wisdom.

**DEU 10:11 And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give unto them.**

God was willing to forgive Israel and keep His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that they would multiply, that they would inherit a land of milk and honey and that through their seed all nations would be blessed.



**DEU 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,**

The tone changes. Considering all God's grace and longsuffering, what was Israel's part in the reinstatement of the covenant? One of the most important verses in the Holy Scriptures is found right here. It is vitally related to what Jesus called the Greatest Commandment. God's people are to love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.

God is not satisfied with outward mechanical ritual. A man might be baptized for the remission of sins, and then attend all of the services of the church. If he did not enter into this service with sincere love for God, all would be in vain. The inner man must be born again.

There are four key words mentioned in the verse. They are:

1. Fear
2. Walk
3. Love
4. Serve

The fear is an attitude which recognizes God's greatness and man's weakness.

The fear will cause men to walk in the light and avoid punishment.

The love will come about as recognition that God first loved us.

The serving is the natural result of loving both God and our neighbor. He said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." Compare Micah 6:8.





Mic 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

**DEU 10:13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?**

God does not give His commandments in order that He might take satisfaction in ordering men to move like puppets on a string. Every commandment is given for the good of His people. The most full and complete life is one which seeks out the will of God and follows it with all the heart. Then, when there is a fault or stumbling, the sinner goes to His Father in heaven in penitent prayer.

**DEU 10:14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. That which he created shows His wisdom and power. It also shows His care for those who have been created in His image. He has both the ability and the desire to see men thrive and prosper.

The original Hebrew here uses the word heaven three times. It is the heaven of heavens of heavens. No one knows to this day just how wondrous they are. We have the heaven where the birds fly. We have the heaven where the sun, moon, stars and

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planets are found. We have the heaven where God sits in rulership over all that He has made.

**DEU 10:15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.**

God did not just throw dice to decide the channel through which He would bless the world in Jesus Christ. We may not know why he chose Abraham as the father of the faithful, but He knows!

As He revealed His thoughts through the tongue of Moses there beside the Jordan River, they should have declared within themselves that the only reasonable response to God's selection of them as a special people was to dedicate themselves completely to following His will when they entered into the land of Canaan.

**DEU 10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.**

Every Jewish male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day after it's birth. This was a token of it's membership in that people who were cut off from the world and dedicated to the service of the Lord of Creation.

Nevertheless, that child could undergo the rite of circumcision and never truly commit himself to sincerity and truth. He could be stiffnecked and rebellious, just as Israel had been. If they desired



to be God's people, they must cut off the desires of the flesh and follow Him eagerly and completely.

**DEU 10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:**

Do not think that you can either impress God with your stature among men, or that you can bribe Him with your wealth. Neither of these methods will succeed. As a matter of fact, God hates these practices. The one who sets out to bend God's will to his own will, only makes God his enemy.

**DEU 10:18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.**

**DEU 10:19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.**

When the people became settled in the land, they would find that there were among them those who were less fortunate than they. There would be orphans. There would be widows. There would be those who had entered their midst and decided to follow the Lord and associate with His people. All of these were to be treated with loving kindness.

One reason that Israel should be willing to care for such individuals was that they had been mistreated while they dwelt in the land of Egypt. They should not wish to see others suffer as they



had.

**DEU 10:20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.**

**DEU 10:21 He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.**

We are reminded again that Jesus used language very similar to this in answering the temptations of Satan. (See Matthew 4:10.)

Mat 4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Jehovah is the One and Only True and Living God. He is worthy of all praise, honor and glory. He had demonstrated His concern for Israel in a multitude of superhuman actions. He was to be feared, loved and obeyed.

**DEU 10:22 Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.**

One of the most impressive of all the wonders was that from seventy persons who went down into Egypt with Jacob, over two million exited about four hundred years late. God had promised Abraham a posterity as numerous as the stars of heaven. He had done so!



## *Chapter 11*

This chapter continues in much the same manner as has been presented in previous discussions. The same basic arguments for serving God when in the land of Canaan are presented with some minor variations. The people are reminded of that which God had done for them in the past, both with respect to encouragement and chastisement. Illustrations of each are presented. Comparisons are made between conditions back in Egypt and those to be experienced in Canaan.

The chapter closes with instructions for reviewing the blessings and curses which await, all dependent upon their future choices of obedience or disobedience.

**DEU 11:1 Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always.**

**DEU 11:2 And know ye this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm,**

Moses makes it quite clear that he is directing his remarks primarily to those who had been in the congregation from the time of the escape from Egypt. They will be expected to teach those who were born during the years of wandering and who had only been exposed to a part of God's goodness

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and severity.

We have just finished reviewing some current material concerning the relationship between church and state in the United States of America. As the federal government becomes larger and reaches it's tentacles into every aspect of life, it has been steadily restricting any manifestation of Christianity in the classrooms of the schools. At the same time violence has been multiplying with alarming speed. Any society that fails to arm it's younger generation with the spiritual values presented by the Creator will pay horrible consequences. It is but a matter of how serious and how soon!

**DEU 11:3 And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land;**

**DEU 11:4 And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day;**

First, the wondrous events which took place during the escape from Egyptian bondage are recalled. When Pharaoh and his forces chose to prevent the departure of Israel, the Egyptian army was destroyed and the land was left in ruins from the effects of the various plagues.

After forty years Egypt had made no further

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attempt to prevent the Israelites from moving toward the new land. They had not, even by that time, recovered from their reverses.

**DEU 11:5 And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place;**

**DEU 11:6 And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel:**

An illustration of what Jehovah had done was then given. The case of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, under the influence of Korah, was brought up. These had gathered two hundred fifty men who rose up in rebellion against God's chosen leader, Moses. As a result the earth opened up and swallowed them.

Korah is not mentioned here, but in the sixteenth chapter of Numbers he is pointed out as the instigator of the rebellion. Perhaps the reason why he is not mentioned in this present passage is that his sons had remained faithful and they were present. It would have been very difficult for them to face the sad memories again.

**DEU 11:7 But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD which he did.**

**DEU 11:8 Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess**

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**the land, whither ye go to possess it;**

**DEU 11:9 And that ye may prolong your days in the land, which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.**

Yes, God had promised the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham. But the promise was conditional. If Israel obeyed the Lord, their days would be prolonged in the land. If they were not obedient, they could be driven out just as surely as the present Canaanites were to fall before them.

The Israelites had told Moses at one time that they were sorry they had been removed from Egypt, and that it was a land of milk and honey. Now God promised that the land into which they were headed would be more productive than the fertile Nile delta region.

**DEU 11:10 For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs:**

The basic source of water in Egypt was the Nile River which flowed from south to north and emptied into the Mediterranean Sea. The part of Egypt in which God's people had served as slaves was in the Nile delta in the area of Goshen.

There was almost no rain in the area. Crops were dependent upon irrigation. The water from the Nile was diverted from the river by using pump



arrangements which were often operated by the feet of humans, lifting the water into channels which then were directed into small ditches and on into the rows of crops. In some places only gardens would be watered by such means. In Egypt all crops must be irrigated, no matter what the acreage was.

There are two suggestions as to why the verse speaks of watering the land by their feet. The first is that the water was pumped out of the river by a device energized by human feet. The second is that the husbandman used his feet to make ridges of mud and either cut off flow or allow flow of water into each small ditch.

**DEU 11:11 But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven:**

**DEU 11:12 A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.**

It would be far different in Canaan. Crops would be watered by rain coming down upon the entire area. God would care for the amount of rain which fell. There would be no need for irrigation ditches and human feet wading in mud.

**DEU 11:13 And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,**

**DEU 11:14 That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.**

If Israel remained faithful to Jehovah after entering Canaan, and served the Lord with heart, soul, mind and strength, He would water the land. There would be first rains in the fall, and latter rains in the spring. These would insure a healthy start for the seedlings, and full ears in harvest season. Some commentators lead one to believe almost no rain fell between the first rains and the latter rains. That is not implied. There was no doubt some rain throughout the year, with a greater abundance in the two rainy seasons.

The reader should remember that the seasons are reversed in Israel when compared with those in Europe and North America.

**DEU 11:15 And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.**

The rain would cause healthy growth of the grass, providing fine pasture for the livestock. As the livestock prospered, the people would likewise have plenty of nutrition.

**DEU 11:16 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;**



The people were to be cautious that their prosperity not cause them to forget the true source of their blessings. Baal was regarded by the Canaanites to be a storm god. It would be a bad mistake for Israel to credit their good fortune to Baal or other false gods rather than giving thanksgiving to the Lord of heaven and earth.

**DEU 11:17 And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.**

God has the power to bring the rain or cut off the rain. He can cause the downpour, or shut off every drop. If Israel chose to show ingratitude, He could cause the land to become barren and remove them from the land.

**DEU 11:18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.**

**DEU 11:19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.**

**DEU 11:20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:**

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These instructions were intended to prevent the people from forgetting God's earlier commands in the same vein. Were they to be taken literally, with wristbands, containers fastened on their foreheads and scriptures written on the entrances of their homes and on each door in the house? I would not be willing to say they were not literal. I would add, however, that it is quite possible for a family to post Bible verses in prominent places in their homes and fail to digest them in the heart and mind.

The latter mistake was what Jesus scolded the Pharisees and Scribes for in his day. They desired that everyone see how religious they were when in fact they fell far short of serving the Lord with all diligence.

**DEU 11:21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.**

There is a general connection between length of life and true faith in Jehovah. Certainly not every faithful servant of God is guaranteed eighty or ninety years on this earth. But when men and women neglect the principles of the ten commandments and other precepts of the Heavenly Father, violence and poverty rear their ugly heads. The person who indulges in sexual promiscuity and the use of drugs can actually kill himself and thus shorten his individual life span.



**DEU 11:22 For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;**

**DEU 11:23 Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.**

The nations then inhabiting the land might be more numerous and more powerful than Israel if Israel had been dependent upon their own abilities. That was not to be the case. If Israel would cling to God's ways, He would fight for them. With God's help they were assured the victory.

**DEU 11:24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.**

This was certainly a larger territory than that between the Jordan River on the east and the Mediterranean on the west, with the northern boundary being Dan and the southern boundary Beersheba. In the days of Solomon Israel did dominate much of the land described in this verse, although at no time did they hold all of it.

Israel does not have claim to that territory today. They forfeited any claim by having turned away from Jehovah in the days of the prophets.

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**DEU 11:25 There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.**

In the days of Adolph Hitler, the German army struck fear into the hearts of France, Poland Czechoslovakia and other surrounding countries. This was done in spite of Hitler's persecution of all who were in his way. Imagine what fear would have been felt by Israel's foes when God was marching with them.

**DEU 11:26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;**

Man is a creature of free choice. God does not force obedience to His will. He sets up His statutes and commandments. He spells out the rewards for obedience and the chastisements for disobedience. Men can then choose whether to walk with Him, or fight against Him.

**DEU 11:27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:**

**DEU 11:28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.**



God becomes particularly wrathful when the people abandon Him and give the honor and praise which are due Him to either material objects of His creation, or imaginary spiritual beings. His curses follow His wrath.

**DEU 11:29 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.**

In order to impress as completely as possible just how important obedience was, God made arrangements for a special ceremony very shortly after Israel crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan.

There were two mountains located close together. One was Mount Ebal. The other was Mount Gerizim. The book of Joshua tells more of the details of the geography and the ceremony spoken of briefly here. (See Joshua 8.)

**DEU 11:30 Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh?**

As Moses was speaking to the people, he was still on the east side of the Jordan River. He could point toward the west where the sun disappeared



in the evening and indicate the direction of the two mountains. Moses did not set foot in Canaan proper and it could be that he never actually saw either of the two mountains.

It was in the plains of Moreh that Abraham was told his seed would be given that land. (See Genesis 12:6-7.)

Gen 12:6 And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

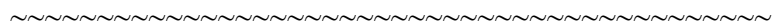
Gen 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

**DEU 11:31 For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein.**

**DEU 11:32 And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.**

There was to be no question about the taking of the land. It would take place. God had given it to them. They would take it and they would dwell in it.

The only question was the length of time they would dwell in it. That would be determined by their love for the Lord and their keeping of His commandments, statutes and judgments.





## *Chapter 12*

Chapter twelve marks a clear division in the book of Deuteronomy. Whereas the first four chapters gave a picture of the greatness and nature of God, and the next eight spelled out the reasons why God should be heard and obeyed, this chapter begins a long section detailing worship, person to person relationships and civic duties.

The present chapter is an expansion on the first commandment which states that men are to worship the one true and living God, and abstain from worshipping all false deities.

**DEU 12:1 These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.**

They were not yet in the territory between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. The instructions given next were to be observed when they came into possession of the land. As long as they lived they were to keep these statutes. As we have seen before, failure to keep them would result in the loss of the land. They would be driven out.

**DEU 12:2 Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high**



**mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree:**

Nothing was to be left of the idolatrous worship offered to the false gods of the Canaanites. No trace of that abominable practice was to be seen. Those people had set up worship sites all over the land. High places were selected on the mountains where they felt they were closer to their gods. Groves of trees were planted which symbolized fertility.

Wherever the pagans felt they had the slightest excuse for setting up immoral and false forms of worship, they proceeded to do so. Those procedures were to be halted.

**DEU 12:3 And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.**

**DEU 12:4 Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.**

The altars were often made from mounds of earth or piles of stone. The pillars were stones set upright and pointing to the heavens. The graven images were carved into either wood or stone to give them something which could be seen. The names of the false gods were placed in the worship locations, but were also written on the minds and hearts of the worshippers. Even the villages and cities were named after the false gods. For example,

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Baal-Peor. All of this was to be removed from sight and memory.

Jehovah was not to be worshipped in hundreds of different locations. If that were to take place the worship would break down into many divisions with each group observing contrasting and conflicting practices.

**DEU 12:5 But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:**

The ark of the covenant was to be the dwelling place of Jehovah. This did not limit the place to Jerusalem. In whatever place the ark was settled, the people could look to that site as the place which God had chosen.

The worship of Jehovah was to be centralized at the site where the ark was located. The people were to bring their sacrifices there. This presents a serious problem. It was over one hundred fifty miles from Dan to Jerusalem. With the methods of transportation available to them, it would have been physically impossible for every person to make the journey each and every time a sacrifice was to be offered.

Attempted answers to this problem vary. Some see this as an ideal situation toward which every Jew was expected to aim . It might not be possible, but should be a goal.



This leaves us with the uncomfortable thought that God did not normally give commands which were impossible to keep. If He said bring all of your sacrifices to the place where I dwell (the ark), then we feel that He fully expected complete obedience.

We must admit, however, that there are such commands as “Be ye therefore perfect, even as you Father in heaven is perfect.”, and “Pray without ceasing.”

Others see this as only applying to the three major feasts of the Jews, at which every male Jew was expected to be present.

**DEU 12:6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:**

The difficulty with the latter suggestion is that the range of sacrifices and offerings listed here includes some which were commanded daily. Note that we have:

1. Burnt offerings.
2. Sacrifices.
3. Tithes.
4. Heave Offerings.
5. Vows.
6. Heave Offerings.
7. Free Will Offerings.
8. Firstlings of the herds and flocks.

**DEU 12:7 And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.**

Since eating is mentioned in this verse, we do have some indication that the three major feasts were the point of emphasis. Attendance at those feast would draw the nation to Jehovah, and away from false gods. It would also draw the people together in unity of worship.

Frankly, even though I have not satisfied myself completely as to the exact meaning of this command, I feel confident that the Jews who were faithful to Jehovah knew precisely what He meant.

**DEU 12:8 Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.**

The form of worship in the wilderness wanderings was not going to be acceptable to the Lord when Israel was in possession of their inheritance. God would specify the time, the offerings and the procedure. Apparently the statement that they were not to do as they were doing at the time Moses spoke to them. They had been ignoring God's commands and setting up their own forms of worship. Such was not to be the case when in the land. Acceptable worship is defined by Almighty God, not by the frail minds of men.

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Num 15:38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

Num 15:39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

**DEU 12:9 For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.**

There was to be a change. Jehovah had brought Israel to the edge of Jordan. Soon they would enter. At that time they were to avoid the worship of the false gods of the nations living there before they entered. They were also to avoid forming new worship after their own wisdom and pleasure. God had blessed them. They were to praise **Him!**

**DEU 12:10 But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety;**

**DEU 12:11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings,**



**and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:**

Whatever God was commanding in the way of worshipping at a centralized location, was extremely important to Him. He repeats His command for emphasis.

**DEU 12:12 And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.**

Worship was not to be bleak and somber at all times. There was to be joy and thanksgiving in their hearts. The apostle Paul said, "Rejoice, and again I say rejoice."

There should be a happy medium between loud and noisy worship and worship as if sorrowing at a funeral. Streams of jokes, and sermons which appeal from the standpoint of entertainment rather than edification, are damaging to true praise, fellowship and thanksgiving. One's children and all who are associated with him should be able to see that worship is a pleasant experience.

**DEU 12:13 Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest:**



This verse clarifies to some extent the purpose of God selecting a place for sacrifices and offerings. If that had not been done, there would be a similar situation to that which existed among the Canaanites before them. Worship would deteriorate in place and form. Then it would go so far as to honor a host of false gods.

**DEU 12:14 But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.**

**DEU 12:15 Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart.**

Insofar as possible Israel was to offer their sacrifices at the place where God's tabernacle rested. It was certainly permissible for them to kill and eat animals within their own village gates. This, of course, was limited to clean animals such as the roebuck and the hart.

Some Jews were unclean, such as those who had come into contact with the dead. They would not be allowed to eat at the central location where the sacrifices were offered by those who could get there. It was permissible for both the unclean and the clean person to eat within his village gates, as long as the animals were classified as clean.





**DEU 12:16 Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.**

There was one stipulation which must be remembered. They were not to eat blood, even in the common meals. The blood was to be drained from the animal before eating it. This was because the life and the blood are vitally connected. "The life is in the blood."

This command did not lose its power with the coming of the Christian age. Jesus Christ poured out His blood at the cross. That made possible spiritual life for those who follow Him. Blood is not to be eaten by Christians. (See Acts 15:27-29.)

Act 15:27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.

Act 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

Act 15:29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

**DEU 12:17 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand:**



**DEU 12:18 But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.**

There were two ways in which that which was devoted to God could be offered. It could be taken by the individual to the central place which God had chosen, or it could be given to the Levites who would see that it was taken there. These devoted things were not to be sacrificed and eaten within the village gates. Although they could eat flesh in the villages and in their homes, the home was not the place where the sacrifices and offerings were to be eaten.

The sacrifices which were eaten at the central place of worship were to be shared by the entire family, as well as the servants in the household. The Levites who lived within the gates of their village were to be included in the sacrificial eating. The eating and feasting at the central place of worship was to be a time of rejoicing. No doubt the three great feasts of the Jews were a part of the picture here.

**DEU 12:19 Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.**

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The Levites held a special place in God's plan.

They had been true to Him in the past when others had not. He rewarded them by allowing them to be His special servants. They received the offerings from the people and then turned them over to the priests.

**DEU 12:20 When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.**

Flesh had not been available in the wilderness. Animals were used for milk and for sacrifices. When they had complained about the manna, God sent enough quail to come out their nostrils. This was to change within the land of Canaan. They would be permitted to eat animal flesh, with the restriction that it fall under the classification as “clean.”

**DEU 12:21 If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.**

As long as it was possible for the people to offer the sacrifices and offerings at the central location they were expected to do so. If it was absolutely impossible to make the trip was a greater distance

than they could travel, they could still eat and rejoice within their village gates. They could kill clean animals from their herds and flocks and could rejoice in thanksgiving and praise.

The last part of this verse does not seem to refer to sacrifices. It appears to refer to common meals. I do not believe that even during the course of common meals God allowed the eating of animals which were unclean. "Whatsoever thy soul lusteth after" would then be restricted to that which was clean.

I find it difficult to believe that God would instruct them that they could eat anything their soul lusted after in this passage and then in chapter fourteen give a list of unclean animals which were forbidden for food. I cannot think, as some do, that God contradicted the clean and unclean distinctions which He would make so clear two chapters later.

There are those who think the verse is a relaxation of the strict command in view of the circumstances. The reader will recall the words of Jesus when he was asked why Moses allowed divorce. He replied that it had not been so from the beginning, but was permitted because of the hardness of their hearts. At the same time, it was God who specified the exceptions, not man. I see this as possible, but not probable in this present case. (See Matthew 19:7-8.)

Mat 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

Mat 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of



the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

**DEU 12:22 Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them: the unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike.**

This is a very difficult verse. The roebuck and the hart were clean animals. Does this verse say unclean animals may be eaten just as acceptably as the clean animals during the common meals? And who are the clean and the unclean who shall eat of them alike? I am afraid that the translation in this verse leaves something to be desired. Certain Jews were unclean for various reasons. Gentiles were also thought of as unclean.

Still, I think the heart of the verse has to do with what may be eaten rather than who is eating it. At the central place of worship the clean and the unclean must be distinguished when eaten as related to the sacrifices. When the person was eating within the gates it was permissible to eat some animals which would have been unclean if eaten at the place of the tabernacle.

**DEU 12:23 Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.**

**DEU 12:24 Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water.**

**DEU 12:25 Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after**

**thee, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD.**

Regardless of what might be eaten at the tabernacle, or within the gates of the village, One item was not to be consumed as food. God is the giver of life. One who sheds the blood of an animal takes the life of that animal. The sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed toward the one great sacrifice of the Son of God. Until the end of time, the blood is to be treated with respect. It is not to be eaten. (Notice Acts 15:28-29.)

Act 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

Act 15:29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

Verse twenty-four does not indicate disrespect. It is God's way of telling us the blood must not be eaten. It could be sprinkled on the altar. It is to be memorialized throughout time as a token of the life given by Jesus for the hope of eternal life in those who love Him and keep His commandments.

**Deu 12:26 Only thy holy things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the LORD shall choose:**

**Deu 12:27 And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of**



**thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh.**

How many times has the Lord repeated this command not to make sacrifices and offerings any other place than the one He has chosen. The lesson for men in the Christian age is that we also must do what God commands when He commands it to be done, and in the way He commands that it be done.

**DEU 12:28 Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God.**

These are not idle words which Moses is placing before the people of Israel. If they are heeded, God's people would thrive. But that which God defined as right and good must be followed.

**DEU 12:29 When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;**

**DEU 12:30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.**

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It would be a colossal insult to Jehovah for Him to give Israel victory over the inhabitants of the land, allow them to possess the land themselves, and then have them turn from Him to the gods of the people He had given them the power to defeat.

Curiosity is one of the main reasons for divergence in present day Christianity. What others are doing must be more satisfying. Let us try it and see what we may be missing. Then, if I like it, I will continue with it. God has not given Christians a central site for worshipping Him today. He should be able to depend upon the Holy Bible as a means of unifying the worship of His faithful. But men have devised their own formulas for worship. If it pleases them, it matters little what God had commanded!

We do not even say, "How do others serve their gods and follow them. We say, "If I like it, God will surely like it also."

**DEU 12:31 Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.**

There was very little the idolators of Moses day had not tried in the name of religion. One of the most serious of the abominations was that of sacrificing their own children by throwing them into the fire. There are those who say the term "passing them through the fire to Molech" only meant allowing





them to run through a blazing area. This verse leaves no room for that position.

**DEU 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.**

The key word in this verse is “I.” When God has spoken, let men listen. Do not add to it. Do not take from it. Do not distort it in any way. (Compare Rev. 21:19.)

Rev 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.



## *Chapter 13*

There would be those among them and those around them who would attempt to turn Jehovah's people away from Him to the worship of false gods. The chapter before us tells how such false teachers were to be identified and treated.

**DEU 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,**

This time the warning deals with one who might arise from the midst of the people themselves. Such persons would be more dangerous because there would be less suspicion of falsehood.

Prophecy and dreams were two avenues by which God made His will known to His people in that day. How would a listener be able to determine whether the message was divine? The person offered a sign or wonder which looked to be supernatural.

Such an event might have more than one cause. It could be that the person was in possession of information which allowed him to predict natural events such as eclipses. This would not require any divine wisdom. The person might be a magician and capable of deceiving people into thinking something had taken place which had not.

Both in that time and in our own, Satan has been able to impart some degree of power to his followers. The signs and wonders could have truly

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taken place by demonic power. (See Gal. 5:19-21 and Thess. 2:7-11.)

Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Gal 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Gal 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

2Th 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

2Th 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

2Th 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

2Th 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2Th 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

**DEU 13:2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying,**

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**Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;**

The person demonstrating the sign or wonder immediately follows the demonstration by trying to persuade the observer to worship some false god rather than the Lord.

That is to be the checkpoint. If the doer of signs and wonders asks the observer to turn from Jehovah and worship vanities, that person may immediately be identified as an enemy of both God and His people.

**DEU 13:3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.**

**DEU 13:4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.**

Why then does God not strike the evil worker dead on the spot, or cause the earth to swallow him up? God has permitted him to live as a means of testing His own worshippers to see if their hearts are fully devoted to Him. This present life is merely a proving ground for all men. Those whom God finds faithful will be invited to the new heaven where they can be with Him eternally. Those who cannot be trusted will not be there.

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**DEU 13:5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.**

What then is to be done with the one who had been proven a liar and false prophet? The cure is drastic. He is to be put to death. If left alive he might well continue his evil ways. The surest way to eliminate that possibility would be to take his life. His crime would lead men to the fires of hell. This is worse than physical murder. The punishment must fit the crime.

**DEU 13:6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;**

This was likely to be a very difficult punishment to carry out. Suppose the evil doer was one's own brother? What if it was a son or a daughter, a husband, a wife or one's dearest friend?

And what if they came to you secretly and no one else heard what they said? Surely the punishment could be avoided in these cases! Not so!

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**DEU 13:7 Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth;**

The gods of the people around Israel were not to be meddled with. They might be those which were worshipped nearby. They might be those who were at great distances. Either way, they must be ignored or eliminated.

**DEU 13:8 Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:**

Even though the false teacher might be brother, son, daughter or best friend, he was to receive no pity. His action was not to be covered up. His sin was to be revealed to the congregation.

**DEU 13:9 But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.**

**DEU 13:10 And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.**

**DEU 13:11 And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.**



When it is absolutely certain that a close friend or dear relative is guilty of turning those friends and relatives from Jehovah, the ones whom he has contacted are to be the first to put him to death. He is to be stoned until he is dead. The entire congregation is to take part in the stoning, but the one who was originally tempted was to cast the first stone.

There is a reason. This is so severe a crime that it must be shown to be just that. If the friend or close relative casts the first stone, the seriousness of the sin is made clear. The offender has sought to undo that which Jehovah had done in removing Israel from bondage in idolatrous Egypt.

A tap on the wrist and a warning never to do this again was not enough medicine for this plague. Everyone must know of the punishment and must be afraid to copy the sin of the lying prophet.

**DEU 13:12 If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying,**

Two different cases are discussed above. First, the one in which some one publicly persuades Israel to turn from Jehovah to the gods of the Canaanites. Second, the one in which a dear friend or close relative has secretly tried to turn one away by taking advantage of affections.

This time we have a case in which evil men have drawn an entire city away from Jehovah to false gods.





**DEU 13:13 Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known;**

This time the attraction is that the false gods are not known. In other words, they offer new experiences which could be exciting. The word “known” is not used here in the sense of simply being aware of such worship. To “know” Jehovah is far more than to have heard of His existence. We know Him through the experience of walking in His paths.

These false teachers were inviting persons to experience the worship of these false gods which Israel had never tried before.

**DEU 13:14 Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you;**

Rash action was not to be taken. A thorough investigation was to be made to determine whether or not the accusations against the city were true. If they did prove to be true, the remedy was to be just as severe as it had been in the other two cases described just before this.

**DEU 13:15 Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the**

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**sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.**

Not only were the ones who had persuaded God's people to turn from Him, but also those who had allowed themselves to be persuaded, were to be annihilated. Even the livestock in such a city were to be killed. This would prevent unfair judging for the purpose of gaining possession of the livestock of others.

**DEU 13:16 And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again.**

That which could have been taken from the punished city was not to be taken by those who administered the punishment. By taking these spoils they would bring themselves into contact with the influence of the false gods who were being worshipped there.

The evil city was to be completely demolished and was never to be rebuilt.

**DEU 13:17 And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon**

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**thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers;**

If Israel expected the Lord to be with them and keep His promises to them, they must not cling to anything that was associated with idolatry and the worship of His rivals.

**DEU 13:18 When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do that which is right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.**

Only when Israel was willing to abhor that which Jehovah abhorred could they rest in His everlasting arm. He would embrace them if they would embrace Him, and Him only.





## *Chapter 14*

We come now to a section on dietary regulations and instructions on tithes. God's people were to be set apart from all other people on earth. The statutes provided in this chapter were intended to attain that purpose.

**DEU 14:1 Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.**

The pagan people around the Israelites did the very things mentioned. This verse describes the sort of thing the pagans did when they mourned over the death of a loved one. By cutting themselves they allowed their own blood to flow in sympathy with the loss of life they had witnessed. By tearing out, or shaving their heads, they made it manifest that their hearts were heavy.

It is also true that some of these actions had to do with the worship of their false god. Jehovah's children were not to follow their example.

**DEU 14:2 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.**

The two words, "holy" and "peculiar" are used in the New Testament in a very similar manner.



The word “peculiar” is sometimes used as a semi insult in that the peculiar person is looked down on. As it is used here, it is an admirable quality. God’s people are special to Him, as well as to one another. No other people are as precious in His sight. In the time of Israel, it was the children of Israel. In the present age it is the Christians. (See I Peter 2:9-10.)

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

1Pe 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

**DEU 14:3 Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.**

By choosing their diet in accordance with the will of the Lord, they could very vividly show their peculiar relationship to Him. He would announce which foods were acceptable to Him and which were abominable to Him.

Three separate reasons for the directions to be given are suggested by students of the Bible.

1. They were related to the religions of the pagan people, particularly their false gods.
2. There were reasons related to health.
3. God said it. Honor His will!

**DEU 14:4 These are the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,**

These first three animals were found in their herds and flocks. It was permissible to eat them. The original words were slightly more general than our present names. The ox, for example, might have included a number of animals related to beef stock.

**DEU 14:5 The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois.**

Positive identification of the various creatures named in this chapter is not possible. Palestine would have been too cold for some of the animals we know by those names. It would have been too cold for others. The translators merely did the best they could to aid our understanding.

**DEU 14:6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat.**

What we do know is that each of the animals listed had both of the characteristics mentioned in this verse. They had hooves which were cloven like those of the dairy cow. They also chewed the cud.

**DEU 14:7 Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel, and the**

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**hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you.**

Some animals, like the camel and the rabbit, chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves. The Israelite was not to eat such animals.

**DEU 14:8 And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.**

Other animals, such as the pig, have cloven hooves, but do not chew the cud. They are also off limits as being unclean for the Jewish diet.

Earlier, we listed health considerations as one of the reasons why some creatures were considered as unclean. The pig can carry the disease called trichinosis.

**DEU 14:9 These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat:**

**DEU 14:10 And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it is unclean unto you.**

Verses nine and ten give the identifying marks of the aquatic animals which are clean. They are the ones that have both fins and scales. If either of these is missing, the animal was unclean.

We use catfish today and find it to be very fine food. Regardless of the taste, the people of Israel





were not to consume it. Other possible aquatic animals could have been the lobster and the eel.

**DEU 14:11 Of all clean birds ye shall eat.**

We turn now to the classification of the birds. Quail could be eaten. Ducks and Geese would have been permitted.

**DEU 14:12 But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray,**

In general, the birds which were unclean were those that fed on dead and rotting flesh. This, again, might have been related to transmission of disease.,

**DEU 14:13 And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind,**

**DEU 14:14 And every raven after his kind,**

**DEU 14:15 And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind,**

**DEU 14:16 The little owl, and the great owl, and the swan,**

**DEU 14:17 And the pelican, and the gier eagle, and the cormorant,**

**DEU 14:18 And the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.**

**DEU 14:19 And every creeping thing that**

**flieth is unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten.**

The bat was a creeping thing which flew. It was forbidden.

**DEU 14:20 But of all clean fowls ye may eat.**

The general characteristics of the clean animals are not specified this time. Again we are to be reminded that the names provided above may not have been the same animals we presently know by those names. That is no real problem. The Israelites knew what creatures God had forbidden. If they wished to honor Him, they knew what to eat and what not to eat.

It is important that we include a couple of statements from the New Testament which state that God has quite different expectations today.

Act 10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

Act 10:15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

1Co 8:8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

**DEU 14:21 Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the**

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**stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk.**

An animal which had died without being butchered would not have been properly drained of its blood. Since the life was in the blood, the Israelite was not to eat blood.

He could sell it to someone who was not an Israelite, but was not to eat it himself. We are not talking about meat which was beginning to spoil. That kind of meat could not be sold because it would not be purchased. The carcass here was not to be eaten because the Israelite was God's child and was to follow His directions.

It seems that cooking a kid in its mother's milk was done by some of the pagans as a religious rite which provided a broth which, when sprinkled upon the fields, was a sacrifice to their fertility gods.

**DEU 14:22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.**

A tithe is one tenth. When the Israelite harvested his crop, he was to devote one tenth of the harvest to the Lord.

**DEU 14:23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of**



**thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.**

If the place where the tabernacle was located was near enough, he was to take his tithe to that place. He was to offer sacrifice to God and eat a meal which caused him to give thanks and praise to the One who made his harvest possible. This meal was to be one of rejoicing and not of begrudging the tenth which he had brought to Jehovah.

**DEU 14:24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:**

**DEU 14:25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:**

If the distance to the location of the tabernacle was too far to transport his tithe, he could sell the tithe in his own village and take the money to the tabernacle area.

**DEU 14:26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth:**



**and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,**

When he arrived at the place where God had placed His name, the man could use the money to buy whichever materials he wished to sacrifice. He could then offer his sacrifice and eat the meal of thanksgiving and praise. His entire household was to enjoy the sacrificial meal together.

**DEU 14:27 And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.**

Since the Levite who lived in the same village as he did had no land on which to produce crops or animals, the Levite was to share in that which had been harvested.

**DEU 14:28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:**

Every third year, the Levite was to receive a tithe of that which remained after the annual tithe was taken to the tabernacle area for sacrifice.

**DEU 14:29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the**



**stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.**

In addition to the Levite, the alien who had decided to cast his lot with the Israelites and serve Jehovah would receive support. Those who were not able to support themselves were to be aided. Widows and orphans were to be cared for.

The Levite was in somewhat the same position then as gospel preachers are now. The only source of income was the offering of the congregation. If present day preachers were to receive the same proportion of the harvest as the Levites did. There would be no need to worry about financial sufficiency. God has always intended that those who devote their time and energy in supporting His goals should be provided material support by those who have other financial means.

## *Chapter 15*

Here we have regulations concerning the release of debts and slaves after a given period of time. The presentation of the firstlings of the flocks, herds and crops is also discussed.

**DEU 15:1 At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release.**

Every seventh year was a sabbatical year. Every fiftieth years was a Jubilee year. These years were used to remind Israel of the release from Egypt through the power of Jehovah.

**DEU 15:2 And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD'S release.**

A debt which was owed because the one who owed it found it impossible to pay it was to be forgiven after a period of six years. This regulation applied specifically to fellow Israelites. The lender was not to take legal action against the one owing the debt. This release from obligation was known as the Lord's release because it was intended to keep Israel reminded of the release God had provided when they could not escape from Pharaoh under their own power.

**DEU 15:3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release;**

If the borrower was not an Israelite, it was permissible to force payment as payment was due. But this was not true with respect to another member of the Israelite nation.

There is a controversy as to whether this release from debt was merely a postponement of repayment during the sabbatical year, or whether it was a complete remission of the debt with no expectation that it was ever to be paid. Those who believe in either side of this issue are firmly convinced they are correct. Your present commentator understands the release to be absolute, with no further obligation on the part of the borrower.

This was intended as a relief for the poor. If at some later time, the borrower became financially able to pay, and desired to do so, he could willingly reimburse the lender, but he was not obligated.

**DEU 15:4 Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it:**

This verse and verse eleven are not contradictory. In addition, this verse does not contradict the words of Christ in Matthew 26:11.



Mat 26:11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

As long as men do not keep the commandments of God to perfection, there will always be poor among them. The number of poor who would have need of such release would decrease as the willingness of the people to follow God's directions increased. He would bless them with prosperity if they passed His blessings on to those who were in need.

**DEU 15:5 Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day.**

The word "if" in this verse makes the seemingly absolute statement of verse four conditional. If they were generous and warm hearted toward the deserving poor, God would follow the same path with them.

However, the "if" was not limited to this one situation; it applied to all of the commandments God had laid down.

**DEU 15:6 For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.**



The financial condition of the nation would thrive if God's words were heeded. By demonstrating their responsibility in dealing with borrowing and lending among their own citizens, they would qualify for international financial leadership. They would not have to borrow from other nations, but other nations would come to them for assistance.

It may not be a matter of mere coincidence that the Jews have been found in the higher ranks of businessmen, and in positions of financial responsibility in the more prosperous nations of the world through the centuries.

**DEU 15:7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:**

When a poor fellow Israelite approached one for financial help, that help was to be offered. A hard heart results in a closed hand. When the poor brother has a genuine need through no fault of his own, that need is to be tended to.

Surely we can eliminate the professional beggar from this picture. You may ask any sizable congregation located in a city environment if they receive any unjustified requests for assistance. The reply will be a very quick "Yes." The same persons will come week after week for help. They will promise to come to the worship services and tell



how they wish to get their children involved in the church. This never takes place.

In the first place, the above is meant to be a matter within the brotherhood. Those outside Israel were to be treated differently than those within the family. Secondly, the poor brother is not pictured as a loafer.

Nevertheless, when that poor brother had genuine need, the hand of those more prosperous was to be open to him.

**DEU 15:8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.**

The word “lend” is used here. Since the release of debts in the sabbatical year was in effect, the lender might very often be making a gift rather than loan.

**DEU 15:9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.**

It would very likely enter into the heart of the one who was able to lend to a poor brother that if the debt was to be forgiven in the seventh year, it might not be wise to make a loan in the sixth year.

That would be a sin. If the poor brother who



was turned away without aid cried out to God that he needed help and could not get it, God would remember this in His own dealings with the one who would not help his fellow man.

**DEU 15:10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.**

Nor should the one doing the lending do it with a grudging attitude. God loveth a cheerful giver, whether the giving is done through the contribution basket or through personal help to a brother in need.

**DEU 15:11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.**

There are many reasons why men become poor. Many of these have nothing to do with their own lack of responsibility. Natural disasters such as floods and windstorms can cause poverty. Health problems can do the same. It is not wise to look with disdain upon those who need help. No man would have the ability to help others if the Lord had not made it possible.



**DEU 15:12 And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.**

Now the subject changes slightly. We turn from debts owed by poor brethren, to the consideration of a slave who has been sold into the possession of a master. Again, we are concerned with a brother Hebrew rather than an outsider. The slave might be either male or female.

After six years of service, the slave was to be released. Any debt of service owed was considered paid by the years of service.

**DEU 15:13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty:**

The slave was not to be sent away in a state of complete poverty. He was to be sent out with blessings from the possessions of the master.

**DEU 15:14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.**

The one who was freed was to be given every chance to make a new life for himself or herself. Livestock was to be given to him. Grain and food



supplies were to be donated. Since the slave had assisted the master in gathering good things, the master was to share them with him at his departure. A fellow human was to be respected regardless of his or her social level.

**DEU 15:15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.**

When Israel was released from Egyptian bondage, they were instructed to borrow much goods from the Egyptians. The Egyptians were most happy to give what was asked in order to avoid more plagues. The case of the Hebrew slave in the land of Canaan was not quite the same. The motive for giving goods to the departing slave was not to be forced. It was to be a response to faithful service.

**DEU 15:16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;**

It might be that after the six years of service, the servant would feel more comfortable continuing the master-servant relationship. If he expressed himself as wishing to remain because he loved the master, he could be permitted to remain.

**DEU 15:17 Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and**

**he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.**

If the servant did request that he be allowed to remain, a sharp instrument was to be used to pierce through his ear and pin it to the door of the master's house. He was to hear his master's voice, and serve his master's household for the rest of his life.

The male servant might have been given a wife and produced children during his service. He would not wish to leave them behind. The female slave might have been given a husband. She would find it difficult to support herself in that day and time.

**DEU 15:18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.**

Some hired servants made agreements to serve for three years, after which they were free to leave. They were not owned by the one who had hired them. If the servant who was being released had served for six years, he or she had equalled the service of two of these hired servants. It was only right that he be given enough supplies to begin an independent life.

**DEU 15:19 All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify**



**unto the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep.**

A third topic is now introduced briefly. When Israel left Egypt, their firstborn were saved from the angel of death if the blood of a lamb was placed on the doorpost of the house in which they dwelt. As a result, Jehovah claimed the firstborn of both man and beast among the Israelites. A manchild could be redeemed. A firstborn from the herds and flocks could not. It was to be devoted to the Lord.

Even before it was sacrificed to God, it belonged to Him. If it produced something of value such as wool, that wool was not to be used by the owner. If it was capable of working in the field, it was not to be used that way. It belonged to God.

**DEU 15:20 Thou shalt eat it before the LORD thy God year by year in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household.**

Since the phrase “year by year” is used here, the meaning is likely related to the three great feasts taking place each year, at which all male Israelites were expected to be present. At these feasts sacrifices were made to God, and then a portion of the meat was eaten by the worshipper and his household as a communion with God.

**DEU 15:21 And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any**



**ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.**

When one eats with important company, the best is placed upon the table. There is no more important company than the God of heaven and earth. He expects the table to be set with the best that can be found. There are to be no sacrifices which are seconds. We are to give of the best to the Master.

**DEU 15:22 Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean person shall eat it alike, as the roebuck, and as the hart.**

It was alright to eat the blemished animals in the meals eaten in their homes and villages. As long as the meat met the qualifications for being clean, God approved. The persons who ate of it might be unclean from such as contact with the dead. They could also eat within the gates of the homes or villages.

**DEU 15:23 Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.**

The restriction still held that the blood of the animal was not to be eaten. It was to be poured out upon the ground. This is clearly a type of the blood of Jesus Christ which was poured out on the ground at the foot of the cross. This command has held through the ages.





## *Chapter 16*

In this chapter we find discussion of the three major feasts at which all male Jews were expected to be present. These are Passover, Pentacost and Tabernacles. The chapter closes with directions for the appointment of judges and officers and also a warning to avoid planting groves in the vicinity of God's sanctuary.

**DEU 16:1 Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.**

The month called Abib here is in some other instances called Nisan. The Jews had two different calendars, one for the civil year, the other for the religious year. The civil year began at a time corresponding to our September/October. Passover was held on the fourteenth day of the first month of the religious year, which corresponded to our own March/April. The week following the Passover was known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Passover memorialized the passing of the angel of death over the homes of the Israelites at the time when the firstborn of the Egyptians died. The Feast of Unleavened Bread pointed back to the haste in leaving Egypt which did not give the bread time to rise.

**DEU 16:2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there.**

It was a lamb that was sacrificed to obtain the blood which was smeared on the lintels and the doorposts of the Israelite homes to protect their firstborn from the death plague. This verse includes the herd as well as the flock. This may be due to the fact that the Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately followed the Passover and the larger animals such as beeves could be used in that feast. The Passover lamb was a type of the Lamb of God who died upon the cross for those who will take advantage of His redeeming blood.

The Passover was not to be celebrated in just any location. It was to be at the site where the Lord had placed His name. That was first the tabernacle and later the temple.

**DEU 16:3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.**

The unleavened bread mentioned here is called bread of affliction because it was to remind them of the affliction which they escaped when they were

delivered from slavery in Egypt. Until the coming of the Saviour they were to remember the Passover. After the death of Jesus upon the cross, He became the Passover lamb of the Christian. When the man believes in Christ as the Son of God, Repents of his sins, makes a public confession of his belief in Christ and allows himself to be baptized for the remission of sins, the blood of Christ washes away those sins and continues to do so as long as the person walks in the light as Christ walked in the light.

Death has no more dominion over that person.

**DEU 16:4 And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning.**

Certainly leavened bread is more palatable than that which is unleavened. But Israel was to deliberately cast out every loaf and every slice. Also the meat which was left over from the sacrifice of the first day was not to be allowed to remain until the morning. The hot climate of Palestine would induce spoiling. God's sacrifices must not be impure.

**DEU 16:5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee:**

The gates are those of their homes or home villages. The Passover could not be sacrificed nearby

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their homes as a matter of convenience. Those homes and villages had been provided by the Lord and He had commanded that they come to the place where He dwelt.

**DEU 16:6 But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.**

The time of day for the presentation of the sacrifice was in the evening, just as the sun set. It was at that time when the people began exiting the land of bondage. (See Exodus 12:6.)

Exo 12:6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

**DEU 16:7 And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents.**

The word “roast” in this verse is translated as cook in other places. It appears to be a more general term than in our English language.

Going to their tents did not mean making the journey back to their homes. It referred to the places they were staying at the time of the Passover. The Passover was eaten in the evening and the night.



In the morning the participants were to scatter to their places of abode near the sanctuary.

**DEU 16:8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work therein.**

This verse refers to the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed immediately after the day of Passover. It does not indicate that they were to cease the eating of the unleavened bread on the seventh day. It only adds that on that seventh day there was to be a special gathering as a solemn devotional to Jehovah. It was to be a sabbath.

**DEU 16:9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn.**

This is a procedure for dating the Feast of Pentacost. It is called the Feast of Weeks in the next verse because it was to fall seven weeks after the Passover. Some of the first crops were ready for harvest at this time. The word “corn” is applied to other grain crops as well as to the corn we know.

Lev 23:15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:



Lev 23:16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

The first sheaf of the harvest was waved before the Lord as an expression of gratitude for the entire harvest. From the day after the sabbath until the day after the seventh sabbath would be fifty days. Thus we have the reason for applying the name Pentacost, which means “fifty.”

**DEU 16:10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:**

A freewill offering is a voluntary offering for which the quantity is not spelled out. The one who offers does so as he feels he should. It is again a thanksgiving offering for the blessings God has given to the one doing the offering.

The Christian is urged to follow the same guidelines in giving. He or she is to give as is purposed in the heart.

2Co 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

2Co 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.





**DEU 16:11 And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there.**

This was to be a time of rejoicing for everyone. The entire household of the father was to share in the happiness. God did not intend for times such as this to be periods of mourning, sorrow and gloom.

It is of interest that this verse speaks of this rejoicing by the entire household as being done in the location of the tabernacle or the temple. Other times only the male Jews are listed as attending personally. Perhaps the attendance of the rest of the household was permitted, but not required.

**DEU 16:12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.**

The older members of the people would have been able to remember the days of Egyptian slavery. They could pass the memories down to their descendants, enabling them to envision the contrast between what had been and the freedom which existed in Canaan. They were now obligated to a master who loved them deeply and provided for their needs even before they asked. This was far different from the tyranny under Pharaoh.

**DEU 16:13 Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine:**

After all of the harvest had been taken, there was to be another seven day feast called the Feast of Tabernacles, or the Feast of Booths. It was to be a reminder of the days when they dwelt in tents as they moved from Egypt to the land of promise.

**DEU 16:14 And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates.**

We have a repetition of the fact that God intended these feasts to be quite different than the fasting and praying which took place under vastly different conditions.

**DEU 16:15 Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.**

We have two words in this verse which we presently use in direct contrast with each other. A solemn face does not ordinarily indicate a rejoicing



heart. Surely the use of the term “solemn” does not mean a long face with a frown. We believe the two words used in combination are intended to forbid riotous and hilarious actions, while at the same time encouraging controlled joy.

The feasts of the pagans would have included obscenity, etc. God’s feasts were not to be drunken parties.

During the seven days of this feast of tabernacles there was to be a recognition of the covenant. God would care for His people. His people were to be both obedient and grateful to Him.

**DEU 16:16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:**

**DEU 16:17 Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.**

These two verses give us a summary of what has just been presented. Only the males are mentioned here, whereas the entire households were listed above. The household could accompany the father and head if they were able and desired to do so. They were not obliged to attend. It would be expected, however, that even if they did not actually attend



the feast, they could still share in the solemnity and rejoicing.

**DEU 16:18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.**

Up to this time Moses had appointed men to judge the lighter cases of conflict. Moses would soon be taken from the scene. The people would also be spread out over the entire land of promise. This would mean a need for a new system of handling these problems.

This was to be taken care of by appointing judges and officers in the villages of the land, where cases could be dealt with at the gates of the village or city. The judges were to make judicial decisions. The officers were to see that the decisions were carried out.

**DEU 16:19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.**

A society can soon disintegrate if the judges and the police departments are subject to bribery and partiality. All must be treated honestly and fairly. Neither the social position nor the wealth of a person can be allowed to sway the decision of the

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court or the dedication of those who execute those judgments.

**DEU 16:20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.**

The prophets who came later in the history of the nation made scalding accusations against just such dishonesty. Amos, in particular, pointed out the kind of misbehavior which can cause a people to lose control of the land in which they live. When the situation became serious enough, Israel went into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. (See Zeph. 3:3.)

Zep 3:3 Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.

**DEU 16:21 Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee.**

Groves within themselves were certainly not sinful. The problem was that the idolatrous nations in the land of Canaan had planted groves of trees near their places of worship, then used those groves as places of immoral behavior. The place where Jehovah's name had been placed was not to be defiled. The planting of groves would tend to identify it with the attitudes of the idolators.



**DEU 16:22 Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God hateth.**

These images were often graven pillars which represented both male and female false gods. The so-called worship which was paid to them had nothing to do with the God of Heaven. In fact, he hated everything connected with it.

## *Chapter 17*

The topics covered in this chapter include the necessity of offering God the very best that we have, the identification and punishment of persons who practice idolatry, the establishment of a high court with judges and priests, and the character and responsibilities of a king.

**DEU 17:1 Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evilfavouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God.**

Quality in animals is a matter of degree. Perfection is an ideal. The blemishes and faults mentioned here were such as would be obvious to an inspector. God does not want seconds. He wants the highest quality of sacrifices we can offer. This is true whether it be of our possessions or of our physical and mental abilities. The sacrifices of animals under the Mosaic age were types of the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God upon the cross. He was without blemish. That which pointed toward Him was also to be unblemished. The lame, the blind and the diseased were not qualified. They would have been an insult to Jehovah.

**DEU 17:2 If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath**

wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant,

**DEU 17:3 And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;**

The wickedness here was not incidental sin. It was the serving of false gods. Previous warnings had been directed toward those who taught other Israelites to worship false gods. This time the statute is aimed at those who have been proven to participate in such idolatry.

The object of this worship could be Sun, Moon or other heavenly bodies. Although they are not mentioned here, graven images and other earthly objects were just as abominable in the sight of the Lord.

**DEU 17:4 And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel:**

Gossip is a dangerous thing. Revelation of criminal or sinful conduct is a righteous action. To make false accusations against another person as a result of slander can result in the destruction of the life of the accused. Lack of reporting proven cases of treason against the civil government or against God is just as serious. The Israelite who heard of another Israelite worshipping false gods was bound by the command of the Lord to take action.

The rumor was to be investigated as carefully as

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possible in order that the guilt or innocence of the accused might be determined.

**DEU 17:5 Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.**

If careful investigation did establish the sin of idolatry, the person who was guilty was to be taken to the gates of the city and stoned to death. Along with witchcraft and murder, idolatry was one of the sins which was to be punished by capital punishment; in this case stoning to death. The sex of the offender was not to be considered. Women faced the same death penalty as men.

**DEU 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.**

One witness was not sufficient to prove the information true. One witness might well have malice in his or her heart and make a false accusation. At least two witnesses must agree.

**DEU 17:7 The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.**

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The execution could be extremely painful to the one reporting the guilty person. The idolator might just be a friend or loved one. Even so, the witnesses themselves were to be the ones who cast the first stone.

We might add that the disfellowshipping of false teachers in the church today can also be very painful. Congregations have been divided because a person from a large family has been withdrawn from.

**DEU 17:8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose;**

We turn now to crimes of varying seriousness. Some of these could be handled easily by the judges in the local village gates. If so, that was to be the end of the matter. If the decision was too difficult for the local judges, the case was to be taken to the high court at the central sanctuary. These might be cases where manslaughter had to be distinguished from deliberate murder. They might have to do with complicated property rights, or even physical abuse.

**DEU 17:9 And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that**  
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**shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment:**

This was an impressive array of officials. The priests and the Levites dealt constantly with the law. The judge was someone such as Gideon or Deborah. This was not an appeal to a former judgment. This was a higher level trial before better trained lawyers. A sentence was not possible at the lower court because of the complexity of the case. This time a sentence would be assigned if the accused was found guilty, or a judgment would be given when it was found who had the truthful claim.

**DEU 17:10 And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee:**

The decision of the high court was not to be ignored. The jury was not divine, but it was guided by the Lord. Refusal to submit to the decision was a sin within itself.

**DEU 17:11 According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left.**



The court was expected to show by the law why they had come to the decision which had been made. They were to pass the judgment on to the ones responsible for carrying out the sentence of judgment. It was not to be modified in any way.

**DEU 17:12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.**

**DEU 17:13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.**

Defiance of the decision made by the court was a sin worthy of death. In this way, the entire nation would come to understand the seriousness of idolatry and other major crimes against God and man.

Any society that fails to judge justly, or to administer punishment in accordance with its laws will become increasingly corrupt. Israel was no different.

**DEU 17:14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;**

Up to this point in time, God had been Israel's King and Moses had been His spokesman. God knew very well what kind of temptation would arise when

Israel saw the prestige of the kings of those nations around them. They would wish to set up a king like those of the nations.

The reader should note that God did not command them to appoint a king. What He did do was tell them that when the time came that they wished to copy the surrounding nations, He would permit it.

**DEU 17:15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.**

Even though God would consent for them to select a king to govern them, there were certain qualifications which were to be met. The king was to be from among Israel. He was not to be a foreigner. God's people were to be set apart from all other people. Selection of a king from among the nations would compromise that separation and could well introduce idolatry or other sins.

**DEU 17:16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.**

The kings of earth all too many times place their confidence in military might rather than the power



of God. Israel should have learned that trust in God is more powerful than the military might of horses and chariots. Egypt and Israel had both observed that truth.

If a king of Israel began to depend upon the number of horses and chariots available, that king would be returning to the ways of the Egyptians. We might add that trading with nations that could sell them horses would tend toward bonding with those nations. Solomon made just that mistake. He multiplied horses and chariots and married an Egyptian princess. Neither of these actions was among the wisest of the wise man's decisions.

**DEU 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.**

Earthly kings also sometimes use their power and glory to attract a multiplicity of women. Solomon also made that mistake. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines.

A recent president of the United States of America found himself threatened with impeachment as a result of imprudence with a woman other than his wife. He escaped impeachment, but the entire incident was extremely distasteful to the entire nation.

Neither was Israel's king to use his monarchy to enrich himself. It seems that Solomon did all three things which God cautioned any king of Israel not to do.

1. He multiplied horses and chariots.
2. He multiplied wives.
3. He amassed silver and gold.

**DEU 17:18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:**

The king of Israel was not to make the laws by which Israel was governed. He was only to seek out the laws which Jehovah made. When he came to the throne the king was to write a copy of the law by his own hand. Let me assure the reader that this would have given the king a much greater understanding of that law. The writing of this set of commentaries has forced this present writer to consider more closely a number of things which had been passed over much too lightly in the past.

It would not destroy the prestige of the king in the eyes of the people to let them know he was reading and writing a copy of the law of the Lord. In fact, it would have led to greater respect.

**DEU 17:19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:**

The obligation did not cease once the king had written out a copy of the law. He was then to read

from his copy for the rest of his life. He was to know and to keep the commandments of the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

**DEU 17:20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.**

The king was not to become arrogant and consider himself more highly than he ought to think. He was a man among men. He was subject to the Lord just as others of his own brethren.

If he loved the Lord and kept the commandments, he would find a longer and happier reign. His rulership might well pass on down to his children and grandchildren.



## Chapter 18

Now we come to a chapter dealing with the relationship between God's people and those who act as intermediaries between Himself and His people. The priests offer the sacrifices which tell Jehovah of his peoples dedication to Him. The prophets are those who present the will of God to the people. It is very important that the people understand what they can expect from both the priests and the prophets, as well as how the people are to treat them.

**DEU 18:1 The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance.**

**DEU 18:2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.**

The priests and the Levites were not identical. Any member of the tribe of Levi was a Levite. Only those of the family of Aaron qualified as priests. Verse one of this chapter makes it clear that not just the priests, but the entire tribe of Levi was to eat from that which was produced on the land of the other eleven tribes.

The tribe of Levi did not have any territory in Canaan assigned to them as a tribal area. We have areas assigned to Reuben, Gad, Simeon, etc, but the only claim the Levites had was permission to dwell

in the Levite cities which were scattered over the entire nation.

The Levites were to be supported by the portions of the sacrifices and offerings which were presented to the Lord. The Lord was their only inheritance.

**DEU 18:3 And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw.**

Some of that which was due to the priests and the rest of the Levites sounds like top quality. The shoulder would be considered choice meat. On the other hand, the head and the stomach (the maw) do not sound quite as appetizing.

The parts assigned to the Levites in this verse are at variance with what is listed in Leviticus.

Lev 7:30 His own hands shall bring the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved for a wave offering before the LORD.

Lev 7:31 And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'.

Lev 7:32 And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings.

Lev 7:33 He among the sons of Aaron, that offereth the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat,



shall have the right shoulder for his part.

Lev 7:34 For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons by a statute for ever from among the children of Israel.

We must remember that as time passed, God sometimes altered His requirements to fit the circumstances. One possible explanation of the change from Leviticus to Deuteronomy is that the idolatrous nations around Israel were offering the right shoulder and this change would avoid confusion. Archeologists have discovered deposits of right shoulders of animals in the locations of some of the pagan worship centers.

**DEU 18:4 The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.**

It is a mark of wisdom to offer back to God the very choicest of what He has made possible for ourselves. "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." Even the first and choicest of the wool from the sheep was to God, and thus to His Levite servants.

Just this past week, your present writer preached as a fill in for a regular preacher who had gone on vacation. After the services were closed in the evening, one of the men of the congregation presented a check to me. I told him to please keep it since I

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did not need it. He replied, "We are told to support those who preach the Word." I took the check and it will be used to help finance the publication of this commentary set.

**DEU 18:5 For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.**

The tribe of Levi had proven to be more loyal to God than any other tribe. He therefore felt that He could depend upon them to receive the sacrifices and offerings of the people. They were also charged with the teaching of the law. When they discharged these duties, they were to be supported by those whom they served.

**DEU 18:6 And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose;**

A question arose. What was to be done if a Levite came from one of the Levite cities in the land and wished to serve in the central sanctuary at the tabernacle or the temple? Did this man have the right to minister there, or should he be denied that privilege?

**DEU 18:7 Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the LORD.**

The answer God gave was that such a Levite was to be accepted and welcomed. He was to take the place he desired along side his fellow Levites.

We are not told at this point whether he was there on a visit, or on a permanent basis. The next verse perhaps gives a clue.

**DEU 18:8 They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.**

The Levites did not receive any major territory in Canaan, but they could own property which they had inherited or been able to purchase. A patrimony would have been that which the Levite had inherited from his fathers. If he sold his land in the village from which he had come, the proceeds were not to subtract from the portion he received for serving in the central sanctuary.

**DEU 18:9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.**

Is the reader tired of hearing this same warning repeated? Please avoid the temptation. How many times has God warned Christians about adopting the vocabulary and the immoral actions of the infidels around them? It seems that God has found repeated warnings against apostasy to be absolutely necessary.



**DEU 18:10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.**

The list which begins here is not one of the more delightful lists in the Holy Scriptures. Nevertheless it is a necessary one. See the words of Matthew Henry in his comments on this chapter. **Shall the land spue out the abominations of the Canaanites, and shall Israel lick up the vomit?** Peter provides us a like statement in 2 Peter 2:22.

2Pe 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

It is fairly easy to see that the Lord abhors the one who finds satisfaction in the companionship of those who feed upon lies, deception and worldly lust.

There is disagreement about what took place when a parent cause his child to pass through the fire to Molech. Did it consume the child in the flames, or did the child only have to run through it?

**DEU 18:11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.**

We will do our best to identify each of the evil workers listed in verses 10 and 11.

1. Divination- Using cups of water, etc. to find the will of the gods.
2. Observer of times- Reads clouds or movements of the heavenly bodies.
3. Enchanter- Uses drugs for magical effects.
4. Witch- Cast spells upon enemies by potions.
5. Charmer- One who uses magic spells by tying knots.
6. Consulter with familiar spirits- Claims to contact one or more special spirits.
7. Wizard-One who practices magic or enchantment.
8. Necromancer- One who inquires of the dead.

In each of the classes above, the person using the technique was attempting to use supernatural power or obtain superhuman knowledge. These are not the methods Jehovah uses to convey information to humanity. He despises not only the techniques, but also the ones who make use of them.

**DEU 18:12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.**

Was God justified in driving the Canaanites out of the land and replacing them with Israel? When



one examines this list he is less apt to accuse the Lord of cruelty and lack of mercy.

**DEU 18:13 Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.**

God's children were to aim for perfection. It might be true that "All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God." but the Lord does not communicate His will through the wiles of Satan. This was vomit. Israel was not to feast upon it.

**DEU 18:14 For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.**

It was true that the nations who preceded Israel in Canaan tried to discern the will of their false gods by these abominations. It was not true that Jehovah would allow Israel to follow in their footsteps.

**DEU 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;**

God has His own way of delivering truth to those who seek it. Moses was one of the greatest men who ever walked upon this earth, perhaps second only to the Saviour. Moses was a very special prophet of God. He communed with the Lord face to face.

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There was no need for hocus pocus like divination and witchcraft. God was going to raise up another Prophet with many of the same qualities Moses possessed.

Note well that the verse speaks of “a” prophet, singular not plural. The Prophet in view here is not of the same class as Jeremiah or Isaiah. This Prophet is “like unto me (Moses).” He will be on a far more familiar basis with the Lord than even those we know as the major prophets.

**DEU 18:16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.**

When Jehovah manifested Himself in a somewhat direct form on Mount Sinai, or Horeb, the people were terrified. The glory and the sound they saw and heard were unbearable. They had pleaded with God not to expose them to such an experience in the future. Could He not use some other procedure in delivering His will?

**DEU 18:17 And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.**

The Lord had agreed that the request of the people was in order. He would attend to their request.



**DEU 18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.**

God explained to Moses that a Prophet would be raised up from among the people of Israel. God would communicate with Him in a direct manner and He would then transmit the Word of God to the people.

It may be going slightly overboard to list fifteen or twenty individual likenesses between Moses and this Prophet which was to arise. The main point is that He would commune directly with Jehovah as did Moses. There would be no need to use enchantment or sorcery for this Prophet to know His will.

**DEU 18:19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.**

When that Prophet arose the people would be obligated to hear Him and obey Him. Any who did not would be held responsible for their rebellion.

**DEU 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.**



Any person who made a claim to be speaking the Word of the Lord would be held responsible for his or her message. If God had not given that person the message, or if he claimed to speak the will of any false god, that lying prophet was to die.

**DEU 18:21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?**

God anticipated a question on the part of the people. How would they be able to ascertain whether the one speaking was actually speaking the words God had delivered to him, or was only claiming to do so?

This was a very valid question. Any man or woman could make the claim that they; were speaking that which they had received from the only True and Living God.

**DEU 18:22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.**

God explained the correct method. If any person claimed to be prophesying by the authority of Jehovah, the things which he foretold would always be true. Not just half the time, or ninety percent of the time. They would come to pass one hundred

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percent of the time. If that was not true, the person was not sent by the Lord.

It is obvious that this test must be applied to short range predictions. The people listening to the so-called prophet would not be able to check the accuracy of predictions which would take place after the lives had come to an end. If, however, a person prophesied that a woman would bear triplets on a certain date, and that did not take place, that person was not a prophet sent from God.

We have one more very important issue which must be dealt with before leaving the chapter. Was the Prophet who was to be raised up from among the people, and was to be like unto Moses, a series of prophets, such as the Jews claim, or was the reference to Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Or, for that matter, could it refer to the major and minor prophets of the Bible, and also in a very special way predict the coming of the Saviour of the world?

If one believes in the inspiration of the New Testament, there is absolutely no argument that the prophet who would be raised up was Jesus. We can prove this from more than one statement spoken by the New Testament writers, and by Jesus Himself. See the following passages.

First, from Peter.

Act 3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Act 3:23 And it shall come to pass, that every



soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Then from the mouth of Philip.

Joh 1:45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And third, from the lips of the Christ in person.

Joh 5:46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.

Since the Jewish Rabbis do not accept the authority of the New Testament, they desire to see the words “a prophet” as being a series of prophets and will not view the passage as talking about one person. They point out that a test was given to determine whether the one who claimed to be a prophet of God was lying. This then would involve more than one prophet.

It seems to this present writer that the great emphasis in the passage is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus fits all of the checkpoints by which the Prophet spoken of was to be like unto Moses. Certainly the one who places confidence in the truth of the New Testament would agree that The Son of God is That Prophet. He claimed to be capable of working miracles, and he backed up His claim in many



demonstrations of that power.

But I am not willing to completely dismiss the possibility that the prophets of the Old Testament, and those who would have claimed to have divine power and truth were outside the horizon of the passage. The people needed to know in their own time whether one who claimed divine inspiration was true or false. That prophet who claimed to speak for the Lord but whose words failed to come to pass was a false prophet.

I do not believe the chapter is fragmented. I believe it flows logically from verse nine to the end of the chapter.



## *Chapter 19*

Whereas the earlier chapters of Deuteronomy dealt more with the relationships of Israel and her God, this chapter discusses interpersonal relationships. Cities of refuge are to be set up as a precaution against impulsive punishment of those guilty of manslaughter. This is followed by warnings against removing long standing landmarks. The need for more than one witness in determining the truth of an accusation is established. The chapter closes with the principle of *lex talionis*, or an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

**DEU 19:1 When the LORD thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses;**

It was not to be a matter of “if” Israel would take possession of the land. The word is “when.” But it is made clear that it would be accomplished only through the power of God.

Certain actions were to be taken after the conquest was finalized.

**DEU 19:2 Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.**

The command had already been given that three cities be set aside on the east side of the Jordan River as cities of refuge for the manslayer. When the land on the west of the Jordan was occupied there would be a need for three more cities of the same type on that side.

**DEU 19:3 Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither.**

Roads were to be built that would allow one to move relatively easily from outlying areas to the city closest to him. Each city was to be located in a place which would make one of the three cities accessible from all points in the land.

The cities which had already been selected on the east side of the Jordan were:

1. Bezer
2. Ramoth-Gilead
3. Golan

The cities which would be selected on the west side later were:

4. Hebron
5. Shechem
6. Kedesh

God had provided a somewhat similar arrangement previous to this. (See Exodus 21:12-14.)

Exo 21:12 He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.

Exo 21:13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God





deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.

Exo 21:14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

**DEU 19:4 And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past;**

There are several motives for killing another person. First, one may deliberately, and with malice aforehand, lie in wait and murder the person. Second, The civil authorities have the power to apply capital punishment in the case of extremely serious crimes. Third, one might accidentally and unintentionally become involved in the death of another person.

The cities of refuge were designated to serve as places where one who had committed manslaughter could flee to let the civil authorities determine if murder or manslaughter was the case. God does not want those who have accidentally killed another person to be punished for murder.

**DEU 19:5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live:**

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Here is a perfect example of how manslaughter might take place. Two men go to the woods to cut wood. As one of them is swinging his ax, the head of the ax slips off the handle and strikes his companion, perhaps in the head, resulting in his death. The death was not deliberate. There was no malice involved. It was not murder. It was manslaughter. In that case the one who had swung the ax could flee to the closest city of refuge and would be safe there until the situation had been carefully investigated.

Let me give you a recent example from the present day. A man was walking on a city street. A truck was using a claw to pick up trash which had been placed at the side of the street. The truck was loaded to the top and heaped up with limbs and logs of various sizes. As the man walked by the truck, a log about six feet long and nearly a foot thick fell off the truck and landed within a few inches of his feet on the pavement. Suppose the log had fallen on the man's head and caused his death. That would not have been murder. It would have been manslaughter. In the early days of Israel's occupation of the land of Canaan, the one responsible for the accidental death would have been allowed to flee to a city of refuge.

**DEU 19:6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.**



The avenger of blood was one who was of close kin to the person who had died. Without complete knowledge of the reason for the death, this man's heart could have been filled with a desire for revenge. The existence of the city of refuge would protect the one guilty of manslaughter, and would also prevent the avenger of blood from doing that for which he would have been sorry after learning the details of the accidental death.

**DEU 19:7 Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee.**

**DEU 19:8 And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers;**

**DEU 19:9 If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three:**

God had promised the land from the Euphrates to the River of Egypt to Israel if they kept His commandments. They did not do so. As a result, they never did take possession of all that territory.

Some contend that verse nine above instructed them to select a total of nine cities if they did finally possess all of the land between the two above landmarks. This depends upon what is meant by the last three words in verse nine. Were the three those

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three which had been chosen on the east side of the Jordan, or were they the three which God was now commanding them to select when they moved into the west of the river? The reader is encouraged to ponder the true meaning.

**DEU 19:10 That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee.**

**DEU 19:11 But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities:**

Now this is a different scene. Here is a man who maliciously determined to kill another human. Suppose then that this murderer decides to take advantage of the closest city of refuge. Can he elude punishment for his sin by reaching that city? Not by any means! God presented a system by which this could not be done.

**DEU 19:12 Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.**

When the elders of his own city examined the details of what had taken place and discovered a murder had been committed, they were to go to the city of refuge and remove the murderer. He would



then be placed in the hands of the avenger of blood who would see that he died for his crime.

**DEU 19:13 Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.**

There are those today who deplore the use of capital punishment. It matters not whether it be the electric chair or injection with a lethal drug, they see it as inhumane. Such lack of discipline has allowed violence to multiply. Serious crime such as robbery, rape and physical attacks with guns and knives have increased very sharply. The criminal is no longer deterred by fear of adequate punishment.

**DEU 19:14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.**

The subject changes here. We now consider encroachment upon the property of others. What are the landmarks which are not to be removed? We are told they were set in Israel's inheritance by those of old time. Were these landmarks some type of boundary marked out by the Canaanites before Israel ever entered the land? Or does this refer to the generations who are to come who must not move the landmarks set by the ones who first entered the land? It seems that we cannot be certain. One thing



is sure. Whoever moves a landmark in an effort to increase the area of his own land while decreasing that of his neighbor is a thief in the eyes of the Lord.

**DEU 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.**

It was not sufficient for one witness to establish the guilt of a person. One witness might very well lie in an effort to damage a man whom he disliked. There must be at least two witnesses who agreed in their testimony before guilt could be determined.

**DEU 19:16 If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong;**

Even if there were a sufficient number of witnesses, it was possible that one or more of them were giving false testimony against the accused.

**DEU 19:17 Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days;**

**DEU 19:18 And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness**



**be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother;**

When the testimony of the accused and the testimony of one of those who had accused him conflicted, the accused and the accusers were to be brought before a court of priests and judges. They were to be cross examined by these authorities and a decision of innocence or guilt was to be made.

**DEU 19:19 Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.**

If the trial proved a witness had presented false testimony, that false witness was to be punished with the same punishment that would have been administered to the one he had accused if the accused had been found guilty.

**DEU 19:20 And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.**

As a result of the backlash upon the accuser for his false witness, others would hear of it and decide against doing the same thing in the future. If the accused was found guilty, he was to be punished. If it was found false testimony had been given, the false witness was punished. Both criminals and false witnesses would be more careful in days to come.



**DEU 19:21 And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.**

Suitable punishment was not to be withheld when it was due. If a person had murdered another person, the murderer was to pay with his life. If one person had put out another's eye, his own eye was to be put out. The punishment was determined by the nature of the crime.

Jesus made reference to this method of justice. He said in Matthew 5:38-42.

Mat 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

Mat 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Mat 5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

Mat 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Mat 5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Jesus words are not to be taken as a rejection of punishment after a valid court decision. The Christ was talking about retaliation in the case of personal offenses. The Christian is to follow the example of





the Lamb of God, who when He was reviled, reviled not again, etc. We are to do good to those who despitefully use us.





## *Chapter 20*

When Israel had faced a similar situation thirty-eight years before, they had lost confidence in Jehovah and decided they were not strong enough to enter battle with the giants in Canaan. The walled cities were too well fortified for them to invade.

The lesson should now have been learned that, with the help of the Lord, a victory over what seemed insurmountable strength was quite possible. The instructions given in this chapter were intended to eliminate the possibility of a similar catastrophe here.

They are told not to be fearful in that God will fight on their side. They may even be so confident as to allow certain men of the army to be excused for various reasons. They are to treat the cities in the land of Canaan differently from those farther away.

**DEU 20:1 When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.**

Israel had no horses and chariots in their army at this time. Later, when Solomon multiplied horses and chariots, the nation was less successful than



it was when it depended upon the Lord for the victory.

The people had been enabled to see what happens when horses and chariots attempt to overwhelm God's people. The army of Pharaoh was demolished in the Red Sea, along with all his chariots.

**DEU 20:2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,**

How strange it seems to read that the priest was to urge the Israelite forces to fight and use physical force to gain the victory of God's enemies. In the Christian age, we read of spiritual armor and victory through the teaching and examples found in the Bible, but the steel sword and the battering ram seem foreign to the philosophy of the Lamb of God.

**DEU 20:3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;**

What would an Old Testament priest say to God's army as they prepared to enter into battle? Strangely, he said something almost identical to certain words found in the New Testament.

Joh 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto

you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

**DEU 20:4 For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.**

There will be an ultimate victory for those who choose the side of righteousness. There may be minor setbacks along the way. But in the end there shall be victory in Jesus. There was no need for the men of Israel to suffer from any lack of confidence.

**DEU 20:5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.**

Even though the opposing armies were stronger and more numerous, Israel could leave some of the men at home.

First, if a man had just finished building a new house and had not had the opportunity to have a house warming, that man was to be sent back to his new house. It was not right that he die in the war and someone else break in that house which he had just completed.

**DEU 20:6 And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house,**

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**lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.**

Second, if a man had planted a vineyard, but had not yet eaten of the grapes, He was to return and enjoy the beginning of the grape harvest.

There were a few years that one was not to eat the grapes from a new vineyard. The man would be allowed to stay at home until that time had passed by and he could partake of his grapes.

**DEU 20:7 And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.**

Thirdly, if a man was engaged to be married, but his wife was still in the home of her parents, that man was to be allowed the chance to marry her and live happily with her rather than going off to war and losing his life, with another man claiming his intended bride.

**DEU 20:8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.**

Last, any man who might be fearful enough that when the conflict became heated, he might turn and run from the enemy, was to return to his house. A faint heart is a very poor quality to have in the

midst of battle. It can lead to a serious infection which spreads to many others. It would be better not to have such a timid soul in the conflict than to see his fear cause other hearts to melt along with his own.

Gideon once gave his men who were fearful the chance to avoid fighting. It turned out that he lost about one third of his men. The remaining men were no doubt better off. Confidence is vital in any conflict, from an athletic field to a battlefield.

Jdg 7:3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

Take note of the difference between plain cowardice and conscientious objection. The coward runs because he is afraid. The conscientious objector refuses to fight because he believes it to be the wrong way to solve differences.

**DEU 20:9 And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.**

After those who met the conditions listed above were sent home, the officers who labored under the judge were to appoint captains over the forces. There is a strong parallel between appointing captains in a physical army and appointing elders

in a congregations of God's spiritual army. Both are more efficient when the right amount of organization is implemented.

**DEU 20:10 When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.**

**DEU 20:11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.**

This instruction applies to those of the cities outside the land of Canaan. A peace treaty was offered to these cities if they would accept certain conditions. If the city was willing to surrender and open it's gates to Israel, and if it was willing to accept Jehovah and serve Jehovah's people, that city could be spared destruction.

**DEU 20:12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:**

If, when the city was offered the chance to surrender, it refused and rose up to fight, it was to be attacked.

**DEU 20:13 And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:**





God would see that any such city was defeated. When the battle was ended, every man in the city was to be killed.

**DEU 20:14 But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.**

After the men were killed, Israel was to capture every thing in the city, even the women and children. Everything which was in the city was to belong to them.

**DEU 20:15 Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.**

The nations mentioned here were those who dwelt within the borders of the land of Canaan. These were close by and lay between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. The cities discussed just above were not in that area. They were farther away and would have been taken when Israel tried to expand her borders to the Euphrates and to the River of Egypt.

**DEU 20:16 But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for**

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**an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:**

Apparently the cities which were afar off had not yet reached the condition where God gave them up. It was not so with the nations which dwelt just west of the Jordan. Their immorality and idolatry had ripened to the point that they were beyond the point of return.

**DEU 20:17 But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:**

This time even the women and children were to be killed. No mercy was to be shown. The last traces of idolatry were to be erased from the land.

Seven nations are sometimes mentioned. For some reason the Girgashites are not included in this list. If Israel had done just what God commanded, they would have avoided at least some of the idolatry which they later adopted, causing the Lord to punish them severely.

**DEU 20:18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.**

Dead persons do not teach anyone. Any lesson  
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these idolators were able to teach would be the lesson not to fall into the worship of false gods and end up in graves.

**DEU 20:19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege:**

Sometimes there would be strong resistance by the Canaanite cities. In that case wood would be needed for battering rams. This wood was not to be cut haphazardly. The trees were important in supporting men's lives.

**DEU 20:20 Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.**

It was permissible to cut trees which did not provide food for human consumption. Fruit trees were to be left alone. The damage from war is long lasting.



## *Chapter 21*

We are now involved with a host of regulations concerning interpersonal relationships. This chapter handles pollution of the land by an unidentified murdered, marriage with a woman taken captive during war, privileges of the first male child, discipline of a rebellious child, and removal of criminals dead bodies from a tree.

**DEU 21:1 If one be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him:**

It would be difficult to determine whether the killing was manslaughter or murder. The land had been polluted by the dead body and proper measures needed to be taken to remove the pollution. Since the one who had done the killing was unknown, the entire community must take action.

This guilt of the entire community for a sin which was committed by only an individual, or a small group is a bit difficult for us to understand. Am I guilty when I have not personally perpetrated the crime? Today we would probably say "No." That may not be absolutely correct. Population centers that do not adequately punish criminal behavior can expect to see an increase in such behavior. In that case the

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entire community shares in the guilt. The idea of corporate guilt is not completely misguided.

**DEU 21:2 Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain:**

The nearest city to the slain corpse is to be the one following the procedure for removing the guilt. Since, at this point, it is not known which city is the nearest to the crime, the elders and judges must be a combination of those over the possible nearest cities. They are to measure the distances, and the elders and judges of the nearest city were appointed to take the action for removal of the pollution.

**DEU 21:3 And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke;**

The heifer selected is not to have made any previous contribution to human welfare. She certainly had nothing to do with the killing. She is selected as a demonstration of the seriousness of the crime.

**DEU 21:4 And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall**

**strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley:**

Rough valleys are common in Palestine. The chosen valley must, like the heifer, be innocent of the slaying. Nothing is being said about the heifer being vicious.

The animal is to have its neck broken and its head cut off. It was not a sacrifice. Its blood is not mentioned as having been smeared upon the altar. It is a type of the innocent being slain in place of the guilty.

**DEU 21:5 And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried:**

The elders and judges are not to make the final decision in such cases. The priests are charged with seeing that the right procedures are taken with respect to the law.

**DEU 21:6 And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley:**

The washing of hands was a means of indication denial of guilt. Guilt was admitted, but the heifer



was to have borne the guilt of the slaying. The elders of the city proclaimed the rest of the city no longer guilty. Pilate washed his hands to proclaim his innocence of the death of Jesus Christ.

**DEU 21:7 And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.**

The elders were the representatives of the entire population of the city. The washing of their hands declared the whole city as innocent. They had neither committed the slaying nor had they even been witnesses.

**DEU 21:8 Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them.**

**DEU 21:9 So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD.**

A prayer was to be offered by the elders on behalf of the population of the city. God is asked not to place the guilt of the crime upon those who had not participated directly in the crime.

After all of these procedures had been carefully followed, the population of the city was to be declared "Not Guilty." This, however, does not mean later identification of the person committing the crime





would be excused from his or her sin.

**DEU 21:10** When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive,

**DEU 21:11** And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife;

It is clear that Israel had not won the battle through their own wisdom and might. God would have delivered the foe into their hands.

If a man of Israel saw a beautiful woman among the captives whom he wished to take for a wife, this could be done. It must be that this was one of the distant cities and not one of those in which God had commanded that all the inhabitants be slain.

There are a number of assumptions made concerning that which is permitted here.

(1) It is assumed by some that the man already had a wife.

(2) It is assumed that his choice of the woman was solely due to her physical beauty.

(3) It is assumed that the woman also may have been married.

(4) It is assumed that the woman was taken against her will.

None of these assumptions are necessarily demanded. Both the woman and the Israelites who desired her could have been single persons. The man might have been acquainted with her long enough to know she had good character. The woman could



have fallen in love with her Israelite captor.

We must be carefully about jumping to unjustified conclusions.

**DEU 21:12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails;**

If she was beautiful, the shaving of her head and the cutting of her fingernails would have reduced the physical charm. If that was the sole reason for selecting her, this would help to place things in proper perspective.

**DEU 21:13 And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.**

The “raiment of her captivity” could have two different explanations. It could refer to the clothing which she had worn while in her native land where she was taken captive. This would fit with the paring of the nails and the shaving of her head. Any attractive dresses, etc. which she had worn could have been discarded.

The second possibility is that the “raiments of her captivity” could mean special clothing provided for the captives in place of that which they had worn previously. Prisoners often are given uniform



clothing which identifies them as such.

For one entire month the woman is to adjust to her new situation. There may be indication here that she was not completely willing to leave her home and become the wife of the Israelite. She bewails her father and mother. The man and his intended wife must remain celibate until the month is passed. Then they may have sexual relations and be known as man and wife.

**DEU 21:14 And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.**

This verse seems crude. It is as if the man could try out the woman for a short while and then if he decides they are incompatible, he may divorce her and find another. It may be possible that there are other facts involved here that are not revealed to the reader.

If the woman is “let go” she must not be treated as a slave from that point on. She cannot be sold, nor can she be traded for merchandise. She has lost value as a wife through what has taken place. To return her to the position of a captive would be humiliating.

**DEU 21:15 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the**

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**hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated:**

The fact that this situation immediately follows the one just before it does not prove that the male Israelite of verse ten already had a wife. This is a different case.

More than one wife was tolerated by the Lord, but in the beginning God created one man and one woman for that one man. It was intended that monogamy should reign throughout all of human history. A multiplicity of wives regularly led to jealousy and partiality. This was true with Rachel and Leah. Solomon ran into much trouble as a result of his many women.

The situation which caused a need for judgment in verse fifteen had to do with a man who had married two women. We do not know which of the women bore his first son. It could have been the first one he married, or it could have been the second. He might have loved the first one less, or it might have been the second.

What was to be done if the wife whom he loved less was the one who bore his first son. The first son was the one, according to the law, that was to be given a double portion of the inheritance. It might be that the man wished to give the double portion to the first son born to the wife he loved less. If so, he was still bound to assign the double portion of the inheritance to his first born son, even though he had not arrived through his favorite wife.



**DEU 21:16 Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn:**

**DEU 21:17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.**

The firstborn is awarded a special position in the family of the Israelites. God has His reasons for setting up this regulation. He can see the future when humans can not. He has types which He uses to prove His Divine abilities. This may be one of those types.

**DEU 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:**

Even God has rebellious children. Men and women very often must deal with them. Children are told to obey their parents. Parents are told to bring their children up in the admonition of the Lord. Either the parents or the children may be delinquent in these responsibilities. At times both may be at fault.

What was to be done if the parents had taught and disciplined their child and the child still

remained willful and stubborn? We are assuming that all which could have been done had been done. Nothing worked!

**DEU 21:19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place;**

**DEU 21:20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.**

What a terrible thing for a mother and father of a child to find necessary! It would be an admission on their part that they were incapable of training their own son. It would also be the same as sentencing that son to death. Children who could not be corrected were to be eliminated from the community.

The son was to be identified by his own parents as one whose appetites were impossible to curtail. He ate and drank uncontrollably. This was most likely only a sample of the son's offensive behavior. He acted as he pleased, whenever he pleased.

**DEU 21:21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.**

Let us hope the mother and father of this vile son did not have to cast the first stone in the execution process. They were the ones who were to make



the accusation. Earlier we noted that the one who made the accusation was expected to cast the first stone. However, that may not have held in these instances.

**DEU 21:22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree:**

Not only the uncontrollable son described above, but all who committed sins worthy of a death sentence, were to have their bodies suspended upon a post, or perhaps a cross, where all could see what the end of such sinfulness was.

We cannot help but remember that Jesus was nailed to the cross at the time of his death. The situation in verse twenty-two is not necessarily that of crucifixion. In this case the criminal had already been stoned to death and the dead body was hung on the tree to declare the seriousness of the sin. It was not so with Christ. He was still alive when He was nailed to that cross.

**DEU 21:23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.**

The purpose of the criminal being hanged upon a tree was served by leaving him there throughout the day. He was not to be left there overnight. That



would only lead to the rotting of the flesh and the pollution or defiling of the land. Enough of that had been done by the sinfulness of his actions which brought about his execution.





## *Chapter 22*

The following topics are covered in this chapter.

1. Caring for a brother's lost or distressed animals.
2. Returning lost possessions.
3. Wearing that which is common to the opposite sex.
4. Destroying mother birds along with their offspring.
5. Safety precautions in the building of a house.
6. Mixing of various sorts.
7. Claims of dissatisfaction concerning a new bride's non-virginity.
8. Punishment for adultery, seduction and rape.
9. Sexual relations of a man with his father's wife.

**DEU 22:1 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother.**

The term "finders-keepers" is not valid. The one who finds an animal belonging to another is to be returned to the one from whom it strayed away. It

is not even proper to ignore the animal and let it go its way.

**DEU 22:2 And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again.**

If the owner lives too far away, or if the owner is unknown, the one who finds the animal is to take it to his own home and care for it until it can be restored.

Nothing is said about payment for the care of the animal until it is returned to the owner. We would assume that the owner is obligated to reward the one who cared for it.

**DEU 22:3 In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself.**

The principle applies not only to lost animals, but to possessions of all sorts. It is wrong to pretend one has not seen that which has been lost in hope that he can claim it for himself.

**DEU 22:4 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.**

We have all seen pictures of donkeys loaded heavily and traveling on the roads of Palestine. At times the beast can be overcome and fall under the weight of the burden. It would be very difficult for the owner to lift the animal back up by himself. In such a situation, the one who saw the problem was to offer assistance in lifting the beast back to its feet.

Jesus referred to such instructions in Luke 10:29-37.

Luk 10:29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

Luk 10:30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

Luk 10:31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

Luk 10:32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

Luk 10:33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

Luk 10:34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

Luk 10:35 And on the morrow when he departed,

he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Luk 10:36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

It is very easy to excuse ourselves from assisting our fellow man today on the basis of the difference in social condition. Today we travel on eight lane superhighways with eighteen wheeler transport trucks whizzing by on each side of us. It would be difficult to stop and help a person in distress.

We could also claim that more danger is involved. Let us say that an attractive woman is beckoning from the side of the road that her car has broken down and she needs help. It is not impossible that a burly man is lying down in the back seat and will rob the good samaritan and leave him lying in the ditch.

There are ways, however, of obtaining help for those in need. A stop at the next telephone could bring a police car to the scene in a very short time.

As far as the amount of danger involved, there were robbers lying in wait at that time too. We must not overlook the point of this passage. We are to give help to others when they have a real need, and we can supply that need.



**DEU 22:5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.**

In our day this is called “transvestism.” God made man and woman different. He expects them to stay that way. A man who dresses in a dress and adorns himself with jewelry is very often a homosexual, looking for another man who will play the part of a female. A woman who deliberately tries to dress in masculine clothing indicates that she is unhappy in her role as a female.

We do not believe this verse condemns the wearing of a pair of slacks by a woman. There is clearly a difference between a man's pair of trousers and the feminine slacks worn by women. God's condemnation is pointed at those of either sex who try to break down the difference which He expects to exist between men and women.

**DEU 22:6 If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young:**

We have a sudden change in topics. Or do we? Women and mothers should be treated with respect for the role in which God set them. The woman should take pride in being a woman. The mother bird should be respected for the role she plays. It is not a mark of consideration to steal the young or the

eggs of a mother bird, and then kill and eat her.

The meaning may be quite different. If both the young and the mother are killed at the same time, the species is reduced in the ability to reproduce itself. There is biological danger in the elimination of species. Thus it would be wise to allow the mother bird to live and produce another brood.

**DEU 22:7 But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.**

The person who harbors tenderness in his heart does not live under the stress of the one who is hard hearted. Also, the care for both animals and men can lead to a better and longer life for all.

**DEU 22:8 When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.**

The houses in that day and time, and in that area of the world, were usually built with flat roofs. These roofs provided another story of living quarters. In the evening and night hours it was possible to sit in the fresh breezes, or even sleep on the roof.

If one built a house with a flat roof and did not construct a barrier around the edges, those who made use of the roof were in danger of falling off and injuring themselves severely. Just as one might



be liable for injuries to a visitor if some dangerous condition existed in his yard today, these households were held liable for a lack of safety precautions.

**DEU 22:9 Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.**

This is a tough verse on which to make comments. What is meant by the term “be defiled?” Does this mean God created a certain number of kinds and is displeased when those kinds are blurred by mixing? If this is true, just how different are the kinds which must not be allowed to cross?

We have found today that certain kinds of beef cattle can be crossed with other kinds to produce a mixed breed which is superior to either of the two. Should horses be crossed with donkeys? Should the negro be crossed with the oriental, or the caucasian be crossed with the hispanic?

It strikes us that God is saying the various kinds have a reason for existence, and that by eliminating a kind by mixing it with another takes away the reason for the existence of the kind in the first place. We sometimes try to define kinds on the basis of ability or non ability to cross. In that case the admonition in the present verse would not be needed in that the two kinds could not cross.

Dear reader, I do not know all of the answers. Pride whispers in one’s ear, “Go ahead and tell the answers. Just act confident that you have the truth



and no one will know the difference.” The problem with that approach is that God knows! Furthermore, He does not like false pride.

**DEU 22:10 Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.**

The yoking of an ox and an ass would be unfair to both animals. They would likely be of different size. They would have different strides. They would not feel the camaraderie that would be felt with one of their own kind.

Supervisors of work forces watch very carefully to see if those who work alongside others are compatible with one another. Far more efficiency will be had if a harmony of abilities and attitudes exists.

The lesson is particularly applicable to young couples who are thinking about marriage. Those who have different religious convictions will have more difficulty raising their children than will those who believe the same. Aims and goals may be so different that work hours can bring contention.

**DEU 22:11 Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together.**

One thing which might be a factor is that wool will shrink and linen will not shrink. The results of washing a garment with a mixture of the two could be a loss of shape. The purpose of the entire garment would be damaged.



**DEU 22:12 Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.**

The fringes on the garments of the Israelite set him apart from other people. All could tell he was different. Being one of the chosen ones of God was a reason for pride. When it became a matter of competing with others to show one's own importance, it became wrong. The width of a fringe was not to be a measure of the importance of the wearer. Jesus tended to that error in Matt. 23:1-6.

Mat 23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

Mat 23:2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

Mat 23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

Mat 23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Mat 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

Mat 23:6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

**DEU 22:13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,**

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Several verses are given to this problem. It has been a very distressing consideration in many beginning marriages of all times. Men of Moses day, and those of every other era, have heard of the defloration of the new bride on the wedding night.

There are three senses of apprehension in the mind of a young man. Will there may be excruciating pain involved for either his bride or himself? Will his new bride's hymen present difficulties which would prevent successful conclusion of the sexual act? Or what if there is no hymen present? Would this be positive proof that she had experienced previous intercourse?

The "hate" in this verse is claimed to be the result of evidence that his bride had cheated on him with another man before the wedding night. This claim might, or might not be his real reason for despising her.

**DEU 22:14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid:**

Whether it be the real reason or not, he proceeds to spread the word around that she was not a virgin when he married her. Such conversation has a way of spreading rapidly. He could thus cause her to be classed as a woman of evil character.

**DEU 22:15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth**



**the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate:**

If the woman was a virgin, her mother and father would wish to clear her name in the community. A way is suggested by which she might do that. The tokens or signs of her virginity could be presented to the elders of the city as proof of her character.

This would be a very unpleasant experience for the woman's parents, as well as for herself. But she was in danger of losing her means of support for an entire lifetime. Perhaps neither her new husband, nor any other man, would wish to live with her.

**DEU 22:16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her;**

Engaged women normally lived in the home of their parents from the time of their engagement to the time of their marriage. The father of the woman would feel the sting of guilt upon himself if she had played the harlot while under his supervision. He would resent very much any accusation that she was morally lacking.

**DEU 22:17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.**

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As a proof of his daughter's character, the father was to spread a cloth before the elders of the city to prove the maiden's virgin condition at the time of the marriage.

What was this cloth, and what is meant by "the tokens of her virginity?" This evidence seems to have been definite proof of her innocence of the charge against her. Writers are uncertain as to the meaning. Most conclude that the cloth involved was a sheet which was stained with blood on the bed which the couple shared when the woman lost her virgin condition. The supposition is that the sheet was given to her parents at the time of the wedding and that they preserved it for just such a time as this.

It is hard to conclude that the presentation of a sheet stained with blood could be positive proof of their daughter's virgin condition. One could stain a sheet with blood from an animal, or even with human blood, and claim it was the result of the defloration of their daughter. The daughter would know. The husband would know. But the elders would have had an impossible decision to make.

Others see the blood stained cloth as a demonstration of menstrual flow produced within nine months of the marriage. This also would be very difficult to prove. This may be one of those matters for which we are not familiar enough with the customs of that time to comprehend without further information than that which is revealed.

**DEU 22:18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him;**

**DEU 22:19** And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days.

If it was determined by the elders that the man had made a false accusation, he was to pay a sizable fine which was to be given to the parents of the woman. Whether he liked her or not he was bound to support her as long as they both lived.

**DEU 22:20** But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel:

**DEU 22:21** Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.

If she had pretended to be pure and it was found that she had lied, she was to be stoned to death at the very door of her father's house. She had brought a bad reputation upon the entire community. Her husband had a right to hate her. She had brought shame upon everyone involved.

One more consideration arises. Would the husband of the woman who had played the whore before her marriage be guilty himself if he forgave his intended bride and decided to keep the disappointment under

wraps and live with the woman as if all was well?

After all, there are some women who either do not have a hymen at all, or whose hymen would not produce a blood flow at the time of the first sexual union. If the new husband was convinced that his loved one would be faithful until death, it seems that the best solution would be to trust her. She would have many occasions on which she might wonder about his thoughts and actions after the marriage.

**DEU 22:22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.**

Here is yet another moral problem. A man is found in the very act of adultery with another man's wife. Both of them were to be stoned to death.

**DEU 22:23 If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;**

**DEU 22:24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.**

A reference to this passage is found when the Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus and bring an end to His teaching. (See John 8:3-11.)

Joh 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

Joh 8:4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

Joh 8:5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

Joh 8:6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

Joh 8:7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

Joh 8:8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

Joh 8:9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

Joh 8:10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

Joh 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Jesus surprised the accusers of this woman who had several witnesses that she had committed

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adultery. They had found her in the act. Jesus knew two things. He knew the woman was sorry. He also knew that the ones who had accused her were as guilty as she was. He exhibited mercy where the law of Moses prescribed death.

**DEU 22:25 But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die.**

**DEU 22:26 But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:**

**DEU 22:27 For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.**

The basic principle here is the resistance which was or was not shown. If the woman had the power to protect herself and did not, she was guilty by her silence. In this instance silence gives consent! If she did all that was possible to prevent the attack, she was innocent.

**DEU 22:28 If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found;**

This time we are not concerned with a woman that is married or who is engaged. This woman is  
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a virgin who is not promised to a husband. The situation appears to be a seduction rather than a rape. The two of them are found to have had sexual intercourse by common consent. What is to be done?

**DEU 22:29 Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.**

The man who was involved was to be fined. The money was to be paid to the woman's father because his daughter's life had been taken without his approval. The man was to support this young woman for the rest of his life.

We are informed that fifty shekels of silver was the equivalent of several years wages. If such be true, the cost of a few moments with a plaything had turned into a monumental cost.

**DEU 22:30 A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.**

There is almost unanimous agreement among the commentators that this does not have reference to the man's mother, but to a stepmother whom the man's father married as a younger woman. After all, it is difficult to imagine a man taking his own mother. Leviticus 18:7-8 seem to cover both a mother and a stepmother.



Lev 18:7 The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.

Lev 18:8 The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness.

We do have examples of such corrupt behavior in the Biblical record.

1Co 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

Eze 22:10 In thee have they discovered their fathers' nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution.

Eze 22:11 And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter.

We can certainly conclude that drunken and gluttonous sons were not the only undisciplined characters of Biblical times, or of our own.

This commentator has found the present chapter one of the most distasteful of all the nearly six hundred which have been discussed up to this point. Yet God included it and we must digest the lessons which it teaches!



## Chapter 23

For the most part this chapter specifies who can and who cannot become a part of the worshipping assembly of the nation of Israel. Jehovah was in the process of developing a people who would take the lead in preparing for the coming of the Son of God and His kingdom. This would require that certain types of persons be excluded from the group. God's people were to be separated and clean.

**DEU 23:1 He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.**

The man who had suffered damage to his male sex organs was not to be allowed as a participant in the worship services. He was seriously blemished and thus not qualified for such participation. This could have been partly because the pagan religions used castration as a religious rite. Israel was not to damage the body as a religious ceremony.

This denial of communion with God's people did not extend to the Christian age. Isaiah longed for the time when the eunuch would be important in the family of the Lord. (See Isaiah 56:3-5.)

Isa 56:3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his

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people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.

Isa 56:4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant;

Isa 56:5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

**DEU 23:2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.**

Moderns consider a bastard to be a child whose father is not known. Israel also thought of bastards as those who were the offspring of an Israelite with one of another nation. Again, such a person was not to be allowed full communion with the Lord's people.

This prohibition was effective to the tenth generation after the bastard appeared. Some explain this as being the length of time required for the polluted blood to be diluted to insignificance. The next verse extends it farther than that.

**DEU 23:3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even**



**to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:**

It may well be that the previous verse is aimed specifically at those who were offspring of an Israelite and either a Moabite or an Ammonite. This time the tenth generation is defined as forever.

The Ammonites and the Moabites were considered to be the descendants of Lot through the incestuous relationship with his two daughters. Lot had demonstrated his worldly attitude when he chose the well watered plains of the Jordan and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

**DEU 23:4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.**

In addition to their questionable ancestry, both the Moabites and the Ammonites had proven their hatred for Israel by refusing food and water when Israel was trying to buy it as they passed through toward Canaan, and when they hired Balaam to curse the nation. They had demonstrated that they wanted no part of God's people. He took them at their word and commanded His people to have no part with them.

**DEU 23:5 Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD**

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**thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee.**

Jehovah did not allow the curse of Balaam to fall upon Israel. He caused Balaam to pronounce blessings rather than cursings. But the fact that the desired curses were prevented did not wash away the guilt of their desire to interfere with the will of the Lord.

**DEU 23:6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.**

As the Ammonites and the Moabites attempted to destroy the peace and prosperity of Israel, God now commanded Israel to do nothing to promote the peace and prosperity of those enemies. This animosity was to continue to the tenth generation, or forever.

**DEU 23:7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.**

**DEU 23:8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.**

The disdain for the Moabites and the Ammonites was not to be felt to the same degree toward the Edomites, nor the Egyptians. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau who was the brother of Jacob.

The Edomites were therefore closely related.

The Egyptians had enslaved the Israelites over a long period of time. Yet during that time the seventy souls who entered the land were allowed to multiply into a nation of around two million. They were strangers in the land of Egypt and they had been tolerated. In view of that, Israel could invite the Egyptians to become members of the assembly of the Lord after several generations had passed.

**DEU 23:9 When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.**

The military are not noted for clean language or clean bodies. When the army of Israel went out to war they were to maintain a cleanliness which showed their relationship to a pure and holy God.

**DEU 23:10 If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp:**

Discharge of semen during the night, or perhaps even the urgent need for urination which could not be held back until he left the area of the camp rendered a man unclean. When such uncleanness occurred, the man was to separate himself from the rest of the camp.

**DEU 23:11 But it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall wash himself with water: and when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp again.**

At the end of the following day, he was to take a bath. After cleansing himself, he could rejoin the rest of the camp.

**DEU 23:12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad:**

When a site for the camp was selected, a place outside the camp was to be designated where those who needed to ease themselves in bowel movements could leave to avoid polluting the camp.

**DEU 23:13 And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee:**

Some type of digging instrument was to be fastened to the equipment of the soldier. It was to be used to cover the excrement after the bowel movement. A hole was to be dug and the feces was to be put out of sight.

**DEU 23:14 For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and**  
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**to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.**

The ark of the Lord was within the camp. Jehovah was present with His army. It would be a mark of disrespect to leave filth scattered over the ground. The entire grounds was to be kept clean. Without doubt this applied to the hearts of these men just as it did to their bodies and the ground upon which they walked.

**DEU 23:15 Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee:**

These servants who had run away from their masters must have been from other nations. The Israelite was expected to return a runaway slave to his Israelite master. These servants described here were those who had been mistreated by their foreign masters. When they desired to enter into the Israelite camp, they were to be given the opportunity.

**DEU 23:16 He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.**

The runaway servant was not to be enslaved. He was to choose a place in which he wished to live. He



would perhaps become a proselyte and a servant of the God of heaven.

**DEU 23:17 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.**

**DEU 23:18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.**

The moral condition of the nations surrounding the land of Canaan, as well as that of the people who lived in the land before Israel entered, was horrible. Prostitutes of both sexes peddled their bodies as servants of their gods and goddesses. Fertility rites included sex orgies. The money paid for these prostitutes services was then contributed to the treasury of the false religions.

The men and women of Israel were to abhor such activities. The Lord desired that His people use sex as He intended. It was not a means of building up the holy treasury. The whore was the female prostitute. The dog was the male prostitute. The price of a dog was the money paid to the male prostitute by his customers in sodomy. By no means was money to be collected in the true religion by the sale of sexual favors. Jehovah hated the practice.

**DEU 23:19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:**

Usury was interest collected for the use of money in loans. The Israelite was not allowed to collect interest from a fellow Israelite. If his friend was in need and he had the finances to aid him, he could either give him the money, or lend it to him without interest. We are told that it was not unusual for the pagans to loan money at interest rates of as much as fifty percent. A one thousand dollar loan would require fifteen hundred dollars to pay it off at the end of one year.

**DEU 23:20** **Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.**

If a person from another nation wished to borrow money for a commercial project, the Israelite could loan it to him for interest. He was forbidden to do this to a fellow Israelite. Israel would be far better off to avoid mistreating their brethren. God would see that they were blessed if they cared for the needs of their brethren without taking advantage of him.

**DEU 23:21** **When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.**

This is speaking of the freewill offerings. There were contributions which God commanded His people to make. These vows were above and beyond the tithes and offerings which were laid upon them. If an Israelite promised God a contribution, or an action, the man was to pay the money or complete the action. If he did not keep his vow, God would consider it sin. The man had promised it. He was to pay it.

**DEU 23:22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.**

**DEU 23:23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.**

These vows were voluntary. But once they were made, the words of their lips were binding upon them until the vow was kept.

**DEU 23:24 When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel.**

Without modern methods of transportation, the paths from place to place often passed through the fields of neighboring persons. If while passing through a vineyard, a traveler became hungry, he was not to be condemned if he ate some of the grapes



to satisfy his hunger.

He was not to fill any container he might have with him and carry the produce off. That would be stealing. This was very similar to the practice of leaving the corners of the grain fields unharvested in order that the poor might find food. Our thoughts turn to the case of Ruth who was allowed to glean in the fields of Boaz.

**DEU 23:25 When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.**

It was quite permissible for the passerby to pick small amounts of grain with his hands. It was a different matter if he brought a sickle and began to use it to harvest the grain in sizable quantities.

One of the accusations made against Jesus and his disciples was that they were laboring on the sabbath day when they passed through a field and picked ears for their own hunger as spoken of in this verse. Jesus reminded the Pharisees that they were not harvesting. They were only plucking the ears to relieve their hunger. (See Luke 6:1-5.)

Luk 6:1 And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

Luk 6:2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto



them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

Luk 6:3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him;

Luk 6:4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

Luk 6:5 And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

## *Chapter 24*

We continue in this chapter with a variety of legislation from God, as He speaks through Moses. The people of Israel are still on the east side of the Jordan River, preparing to cross the River and take the land inhabited by the Jebusites, Philistines, etc.

The topics discussed this time are: divorce and remarriage, exemption from military duty after a new marriage, collateral and pledges for loans, kidnapping, treatment of the poor and needy, and individual responsibility for sin.

**DEU 24:1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.**

The problem discussed here is by no means a new one. Sometimes marriages last until either the husband or the wife dies. Sometimes they do not. Some of the most miserable persons in the world are those who thought at the beginning that their marriage would be a never ending honeymoon.

It takes great patience and loyalty to remain devoted to one another for fifty or sixty years. All too often those two qualities are not present in the degree needed. Love can then turn into hatred. If

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the society in which a man and wife live tends to overlook the seriousness of divorce, the divorce rate rises rapidly.

The man pictured above was disillusioned with respect to his wife. In some way she had fallen short of his expectations. The word “uncleanness” is one often connected with immodesty. Other things may be included. She might have been immodest or perhaps flirtatious with men other than her husband. She might have been careless in physical cleanness. She might have been a very poor housekeeper.

Whatever the uncleanness amounted to, the husband was given permission to divorce her. He could present her with a bill of divorce and send her packing.

It was this passage of scripture that was quoted to Jesus when He was asked about divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19:3-8.

Mat 19:3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

Mat 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

Mat 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mat 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then





command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

Mat 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Moses, speaking for Jehovah, had suffered, or tolerated divorce. The Lord did not intend for marriages to be broken from the very first. It was tolerated only because of the hardness of their hearts.

**DEU 24:2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.**

The bill of divorcement freed her from the man who had divorced her and he had no further claim on her as a wife. Another man could marry her if he wished to.

Nevertheless, those who have been married, divorced, and then remarried will usually advise you that the second marriage is harder to hold together than the first was.

**DEU 24:3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;**



The second marriage might be broken for two reasons. The second husband might also come to despise the woman and divorce her. He might also die and leave her as a widow.

**DEU 24:4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.**

If either of these things happened, she was not to return to her first husband and remarry him. She was considered defiled after the second marriage and such behavior would be a reproach to the entire land. We are not told here whether she was free to marry a third husband who was not the same as the first who had divorced her. Nor are we told whether the first husband was free to marry again after he put her away. The whole matter is beginning to look very much like the case of the woman Jesus met at the well of Samaria. (See John 4:16-18).

Joh 4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

Joh 4:17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

Joh 4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.



**DEU 24:5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.**

The family was very important in the eyes of the Lord. In spite of the importance of the war Israel was to fight as they took the land of Canaan, a man was exempted from military duty if he had just entered into marriage. It was important that he produce children who would be followers of the One God.

Also, it would be a tragedy if he was drafted for military duty and then killed before he had a chance to enjoy the company of the new wife for at least a short time. Thus, he was excused from duty for one year after marriage. The “cheering up” was a mutual happiness which the two could share for that first year.

**DEU 24:6 No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man’s life to pledge.**

If an Israelite gave a loan to another Israelite, he could not charge interest. He could take a pledge to insure the repayment of the loan. That pledge was not to leave the life of the debtor in a perilous state. To take either of the millstones with which he ground his daily flour to make bread was to take his very life as a pledge. That was forbidden.



**DEU 24:7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.**

No Israelite was to enslave a fellow Israelite so as to treat him as merchandise. To take one of his own brethren and sell him was to steal his life. Kidnapping of either adults or children and selling them was a sin serious enough to deserve the death of the thief.

**DEU 24:8 Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do.**

The word “leprosy” included the terrible disease which we know as leprosy. It also had reference to other skin diseases such as eczema, etc. If the people discovered such diseases in their midst, they were to go to the Levite priests to be treated. God had given them instructions for the treatment.

**DEU 24:9 Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.**

The leper had to be put out of the camp for several days. Even Miriam, the sister of Moses, had



to endure this treatment. The entire congregation was delayed in their travel for days, until she completed her quarantine.

**DEU 24:10 When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge.**

**DEU 24:11 Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee.**

The person who made the loan could take a pledge from the one who borrowed. That did not mean he had the right to run roughshod over the dignity of the borrower. He could not go into the house and decide what he wanted as a pledge. He must wait outside until the borrower brought the pledge out to him. Then he could decide if it was satisfactory or not.

**DEU 24:12 And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge:**

**DEU 24:13 In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.**

The pledge might be a garment in which the poor man wrapped himself at night. Such a pledge was to be returned at the end of each day that the borrower might not have to sleep without warmth.



The borrower would be grateful, and the Lord would consider it a righteous deed.

**DEU 24:14 Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates:**

**DEU 24:15 At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.**

There would be those who were forced to work by the day to have sufficiency for their families and themselves. They would not have any financial reserves. It was only right and proper that they be paid at the end of each day. If this was not done, the laborer might cry out to God that he had been abused. God would count the withholding of the pay as a sin.

Workers are to give honest effort for those who employ them. Employers are to see that those whom they employ are paid promptly.

**DEU 24:16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.**

Children are not to be charged with the sins of their parents. One does not kill a child because that child's father committed a sin worthy of death.

It is still true, however, that the effects of the  
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sin may reach down through several generations. If a father has to pay the death penalty, his children may suffer from poverty and want.

**DEU 24:17 Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge:**

**DEU 24:18 But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.**

Those who were not of Israel might choose to accept the faith of Israel. Such proselytes would be at a disadvantage. They were not to be oppressed just because they were helpless

The same was true of orphans and widows. Israel was to remember the days when they were slaves in the land of Egypt. God had been merciful to them and brought about their release. They were to treat other helpless persons as God had treated them.

**DEU 24:19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.**

Sometimes when a sheaf of grain was being loaded on a cart, it might slip off and fall to the ground. The one taking in the harvest would not

be damaged if he left the fallen sheaf for the poor to use in keeping them and their families alive. If the rich aided the poor, God would see that they did not lose their own fortune as a result.

**DEU 24:20 When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.**

The same principle held true in the gathering of olives. Every olive was not to be knocked down from the tree and taken in. A remnant was to be left for the poor and helpless.

**DEU 24:21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.**

**DEU 24:22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.**

The diligent Bible student will immediately recall the beautiful story of Ruth who gleaned in the fields of Boaz, and who became an ancestor of our Saviour.





## Chapter 25

Much of this chapter deals with the need for justice. Guild and innocence is to be carefully determined before punishment is assessed by a valid court. Punishment should not be reduced or increased at the whim of the one doing the punishing. Animals should be rewarded for their labor. A woman may call upon a brother of her husband to raise up children who will perpetuate the dead man's name. A woman is not to defend her husband by damaging the private parts of the man who is fighting with him. Weights and measures were to be honest and fair.

Israel was to remember the hatred the Amalekites had for them and to blot that nation out of existence.

**DEU 25:1 If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.**

The controversies here were those which did not involve the death sentence. These were offenses that would be punished by scourging with a certain number of stripes.

The decisions as to which of the persons was guilty and which was innocent were not to be made impulsively. They were to be rendered by an impartial court. The innocent party was to be declared just. The guilty party was to be condemned

and punished. The prophets in the latter days of Israel scolded the nations for justifying the guilty and condemning the innocent.

**DEU 25:2 And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number.**

When the judge passed sentence, the punishment was to be administered in his presence. The number of stripes was to be greater for the more serious crimes and lesser for the less serious. In this way the guilty person would not be at the mercy of the man wielding the whip.

If some of the persons in our own day were flogged publicly for their criminal behavior, there would be less of that behavior. Lack of parental and other discipline has persuaded some that a jail cell with adequate air conditioning and three meals a day is not sufficient punishment to prevent them from drug dealing and other serious crimes.

**DEU 25:3 Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.**

The number forty is often associated with punishment in the Bible. Israel wandered for forty years. Jesus fasted for forty days as he suffered for our sins. Paul the apostle was beaten five times with



forty stripes save one.

Forty stripes was the maximum which could be given for the types of sins dealt with here. The death sentence by stoning could be administered for certain sins such as adultery and murder.

But why is the limit forty? The reason is that if a person was beaten unmercifully for an extended period of time, he would be regarded as no more than an animal. The verse uses the word "vile." Was the person not already vile if he or she had committed a crime worthy of scourging? The point here is that even a criminal is not to be unmercifully tortured. Either execute him quickly or hold his punishment to that which matches the seriousness of his crime.

There may be a reason why the forty minus one was decided upon. This would take into account the possibility of a miscount. It was better that it be just under forty than just over forty. In addition, the whip usually had three cords on it. Each time it was brought down on the criminal, it left three stripes. If it was brought down thirteen times the total number of stripes would be thirty-nine. One extra stroke with the lash would result in forty-two stripes. That would not exceed the divine limit of forty.

**DEU 25:4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.**

This may seem like a very simple verse. The entire thought is contained in this one verse. Yet is important enough that Paul referred to it in justifying the adequate financial support of those

who devote their time to the preaching of the gospel.  
(See I Cor. 9:7-10.)

1Co 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

1Co 9:8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

1Co 9:9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

1Co 9:10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

Threshing was done by placing the grain on a hard floor and driving oxen around and around on the grain. It would be inhumane to work the ox within sight of the food which he desired to eat. He was not to be muzzled and unable to reach down occasionally for a mouthful of the grain.

This law is quite in place here in the midst of a number of others intended to regulate merciless conduct toward life in general.

**DEU 25:5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.**



I will frankly admit to the reader that I wish I did not have to comment upon verses five through ten of this chapter. I was registering my feelings about a number of topics I would prefer to skip over in this book of Deuteronomy. One of those who were listening knew I had finished the comments on the New Testament and jokingly said, “Well, you should have stopped while you were ahead.” I have found this technique used by many authors. They seem to feel that if they do not know the meaning of, or the reason for a certain passage, they will save their reputation by just declining to comment.

If God saw fit to include a passage in the inspired Word, I feel it should be looked at seriously. Then what is the justification for requiring a brother of a dead man to marry the dead man’s wife and raise up children to take his name?

Here is the best I can do. When the land was allotted in Canaan the families received an inheritance. God intended that this inheritance be kept within the family to which it was first allotted. If a man died and had no children, his name would be erased from the inheritance and it would pass on to some other family. I have seen attempted explanations of why this was so important to the Lord, but I must leave it to the reader to discover God’s reasons. He expressed His will and I will make a few remarks about it.

**DEU 25:6 And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name**

**of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.**

When the brother of the dead man fathered a child, the firstborn would take the name of the dead man and not the name of the one who had married his wife. This the name of the dead man would not be cut off in the land.

**DEU 25:7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.**

More than one possible reason for declining could have been in the mind of the brother who was expected to marry his brother's widow. What was to happen to his own inheritance if he took this woman who had no children and she continued to be barren? If she had only the one child and it was not to be considered his, how would his own inheritance be affected?

Then there is the question of the woman's desirability to him. Marriage is expected to be on a basis of mutual love and affection. I picked my own wife because she and I were in love with one another. I have three brothers who have been married. I hope I will not insult any of the three by saying I doubt if I would have picked them. Not surprisingly, I expect they would say the same about me.



Then, again, we are not told whether the brother she picked to raise up children to the name of her dead husband already had a wife. My wife would no doubt have considerable input if I were to be asked to marry one of my brother's wives!

Regardless of the reason for his refusal to marry her, the woman was to go to the elders of the city and report his refusal to them.

**DEU 25:8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her;**

The elders were then to call him in and ask him if this was true. If his answer supported the woman's accusation, and he did not want to marry her, there was a way out. He did not have to take her.

**DEU 25:9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.**

The woman was to come into the presence of the elders and the man who had refused her. She was to take off the man's shoe and spit in his face. This would show her disdain for a man who would act like that, and refuse to raise up children in the name of his dead brother.

**DEU 25:10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.**

From that time on, the name of the man who refused was to be disgraced in the community. He was to be known from then on as the man whose shoe had been removed.

The remarks of J. Vernon McGee are interesting here. He suggested that if a man was thinking about getting married to a woman whom his brothers would not wish to marry at some future time, they might tell him to have a physical examination to make sure he outlived them!

The reader may wish to consult the book of Ruth for further thoughts on Levirate marriage. Particularly see the entire third chapter.

**DEU 25:11 When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets:**

**DEU 25:12 Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.**

Now we come to another disgusting situation. Two men are fighting with one another. (Some commentators say they were wrestling. That leaves a false implication.) One man had smitten the other. The wife of one of the men approaches and notes that her husband is getting the worst of the fight.

She decides to assist her husband by reaching



out and seizing the secrets of her husband's foe. (In modern English we would speak of them as privates.) She clearly intends to wound him by taking away his ability to have children. We are not told whether she was successful. That will not alter the case. She has committed a crime and she must give up her hand. It is to be cut off. The law says an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It is hardly possible to take away from the woman what she has was trying to take away from her husband's foe. To remove her hand is as close as one could come without performing internal surgery on her reproductive organs.

**DEU 25:13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small.**

Weighing out of merchandise was done with a balance. A known weight was placed on one end of the balance and enough of the product was placed on the other end to bring it to a balanced condition. If one was selling merchandise, he might carry a false weight with him. The small weight would be balanced by a smaller amount of merchandise and the merchant would give the customer less than he thought he was receiving.

If the dishonest merchant was buying produce, he would place a large weight on one end of the scale. It would require more merchandise to bring the balance to a balanced condition. He would then receive more than what he was paying for. The honest buyer and seller would have weights which were precisely equal to some standard. Scales

today are checked by state and federal inspectors to make certain they are accurate. This would not be necessary if all men were honest.

**DEU 25:14 Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small.**

Some materials are sold by weight. Others are sold by volume. The dishonest seller might have an ephah container which was smaller than it was claimed to be, and another which was larger than claimed. He would use one measure when buying and the other when selling.

**DEU 25:15 But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.**

**DEU 25:16 For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the LORD thy God.**

God's law specified that honesty in weights and measures was to be practiced. When this was true, the people could look forward to a long tenure in the land. If such honesty was lacking, probably other abominations were also being practiced. Enough of such sins would cause God to remove them from the land of Canaan.

**DEU 25:17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;**

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**DEU 25:18 How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.**

Shortly after Israel left Egypt, the Amalekites attacked the rear of the camp where the weaker and more feeble of the people had lagged behind. From that time forward, they were a wandering people who had to be contended with by God's people.

The Amalekites had good reason to know Israel was traveling in the presence of Jehovah. The pillar and the cloud constantly led Israel. This made no difference to the Amalekites. They feared neither Israel nor Jehovah.

Because of her ferocious actions toward His people, God had it written that the Amalekites were to be removed from the face of the earth. (See Exodus 17:11-16.)

Exo 17:11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

Exo 17:12 But Moses hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

Exo 17:13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Exo 17:14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write



this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Exo 17:15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi:

Exo 17:16 For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

**DEU 25:19 Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.**

(Compare I Samuel 15:1-3.)

1Sa 15:1 Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

1Sa 15:2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

1Sa 15:3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.



Has the will of God been followed with respect to Amalek? We are still reading of them in the year 2000 A.D. Regardless of that, I believe the will of God was done. There is no group of persons who go under the name Amalekites today. Their influence has been cancelled except for the lessons we can learn from their opposition to God.

## *Chapter 26*

The book of Deuteronomy consists of three major sections. The first four are devoted to what God had done for His people. The fifth through twenty-sixth chapter spell out the commandments, statutes and judgments which God expected His people to hear and heed. The last eight chapters, from twenty-seven to thirty-four speak of the blessings which will be poured out upon the people if they obey, and the cursings which will fall upon them if they disobey. The transfer of authority from Moses to Joshua makes the transition from Deuteronomy to the book of Joshua.

As this present chapter begins, Israel is still on the east side of the Jordan River and is on the plains of Moab. It will be but a short time before Moses will be taken from them by death. The great leader is closing out his tenure as God's spokesman.

**DEU 26:1 And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein;**

God had first made the land promise to Abraham, then to Isaac thirdly, to Jacob. He had been faithful to His promise. The land lay before them as an inheritance and a possession. There was a need to review their blessings and express their dedication to their Heavenly Guide and Support. This was to be done soon after coming into the land.



**DEU 26:2 That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there.**

The word “first” can be thought of in two ways. It can mean the very first of the harvest in point of time. It is always pleasing to look out across the field which is ripening and realize the wonders of God’s providence. The word “first” can also mean the very best part. In this passage it could mean both. God wished for Israel to look upon the first fruits of the harvest and thank Him for His care. He also desired that they offer to Him a portion of the very best of that which they would harvest.

The place where God had chosen to place His name was the place where the ark was located. When the temple was built, the ark was located in the temple and that was the place where He placed His name.

While wandering in the wilderness, Israel had not been dependent upon grain and olive trees, etc. Since they were moving from place to place, they would have found it very difficult to plow a field, plant and cultivate it, and then take in the harvest. When they came into the land, they would have a different life style. They would still be dependent upon the grace of God for His mercy and grace. But, through the wandering they had been fed with manna. Now they would work the fields and watch for the ripening of the wheat and the olives.

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They were to go through a ceremony of thanksgiving and dedication to their Maker. The offering of these first fruits was to play a vital part in keeping their memory fresh.

**DEU 26:3 And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us.**

It seems that each head of a family was to present a basket of these first fruits to the priest who was in charge of this activity. The offerer was to declare that he realized this new land was a result of the fulfillment of God's promise reaching back to the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**DEU 26:4 And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.**

The priest was to receive the basket as a representative of Jehovah. He was to set the basket down in front of the altar to show its purpose. The altar was where the people's offerings were presented on many occasions.

**DEU 26:5 And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:**





The Syrian who was ready to perish was Jacob. He had served Laban for twenty years and had married two of his daughters, Leah and Rachel. Laban lived in Aramea. The original Hebrew has the word Aramean here rather than Syrian. The two words can be easily harmonized.

Laban had made life very difficult for Jacob. Jacob finally left with his wives and settled in the area of Shechem in Canaan. After some time Jacob's son Joseph was sold by his brothers and taken to Egypt. He rose from servitude to become second only to Pharaoh.

**DEU 26:6 And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:**

**DEU 26:7 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression:**

**DEU 26:8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:**

A famine came upon the land and Jacob, along with his family of seventy souls fled to Egypt in search of food. He had been ready to perish. He and his family were placed in bondage and served for many years in Egypt. When God finally intervened and allowed Jacob's descendants to escape from slavery, they had become a mighty nation which was to be known as Israel.

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**DEU 26:9 And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.**

These words which were to be recited by the one bringing the firstfruit offering upon the first harvest after entering the land.

**DEU 26:10 And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:**

Some have cried “contradiction” when verse four is compared with verse ten. Any ignoramus would know enough not to place two contradictory passages of writing this close to one another. They are not contradictory. The priest first placed the basket before the altar. Then he handed it back to the one offering it and the one doing the offering placed it before the altar himself.

He was acknowledging the goodness of God and offering his praise to the One who had blessed him so bountifully. Our own holiday called “Thanksgiving” is reminiscent of what was to take place on that day of the firstfruits.

**DEU 26:11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.**



This was to be a time of rejoicing. The happiness was to be share with the priests and even those who were not of the household, but were passing through.

**DEU 26:12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;**

This is a separate event from the one just handled. The third year after the people entered the land they were to give one tenth of their product to the Levites and to the poor. The Levites did not have land from which they could draw a harvest. They were supported by these tithes and offerings. The orphans and widows had no support because they had lost the man of the family. The strangers were non Israelites who had decided to cast their lot with Israel and had become proselytes who accepted Jehovah as their God.

If the people did not aid these deprived persons, they would perish. God expected the people to give one tenth on the third year to help them. This is a model which those of us in latter days might well follow. In God's sight, all of us are poor. If He did not provide for us, we would all perish. Therefore, He wants us to pass on the blessings we receive to those who have less than we do.



**DEU 26:13** Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them.

The person who had given the help which God commanded was to speak out before the priest and relate the fact that he had done as he had been commanded. He had not forgotten the poor. None of that which should have been given had been held back for his own use.

**DEU 26:14** I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.

The person could have subtracted from his tithe and tried to justify himself by using that part during mourning for loved ones, or he could have used some of it for funeral expenses. That was not a proper reason for withholding from this third year tithe.

Some have explained this giving for the dead as being a contribution to false gods such as Baal.



They claim that the use of the words “unclean use” give support to that position. It is more likely that the offerer was to state he had not reduced his tithe as a result of mourning for the dead or finding it necessary to pay burial expenses.

**DEU 26:15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.**

Does God live up? Does He not fill heaven and earth? Certainly it is true that these primitive people had little concept of a round earth. Did they believe earth was down and Jehovah dwelt among the stars, or beyond them?

I rather think they were to realize that God’s ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. In fact, we do not hesitate to call upon God in this more enlightened age to look down upon us, hear our prayers and care for our needs.

The Lord had been responsible for bringing them from the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through Egyptian bondage, through the wilderness wandering, and by the time the offering was being made on the third year, He had brought them into the promised land. What a wonderful contrast it was to live in that bountiful land. Their hearts were to be filled with gratitude.



**DEU 26:16 This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.**

Now we come to the agreement which was to be kept between Jehovah and Israel. Each would make a public statement of willingness to keep the covenant which had been agreed to long before and was now to be repeated.

**DEU 26:17 Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice:**

The word “avouched” is used twice in two verses; once in this and once in the next. In this verse the people are promising to keep their part of the contract. They will recognize God as the Only True God. They will honor His commands and accept His judgments. They will walk according to His will.

**DEU 26:18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;**

The Lord would continue to keep His part of the contract. If they would accept Him as their God and walk in His ways, He would make them a special



people, separate from all others.

**DEU 26:19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.**

By following His will they would become a nation higher than all others. They would be praised, by other nations and find themselves in places of honor.

There is a strong lesson for all mankind today. Abraham is today the father of all the faithful, not just his seed through the flesh. Christians are spiritual Israel. God will do the same today as He did yesterday. Those nations and individuals who accept Him as God, and who walk according to His will, are promised blessing in this world and bliss in the world to come. Those who refused Him are walking straight into disaster, both in this world and in that to follow.

Remember friends, that Moses was giving a liturgy or set of statements which Israel was to recite at the time of the tithe offering of the third year. It would be well for God's people to remember in every age that He has offered to lead us from bondage to freedom, and that we owe Him our wholehearted service.

## *Chapter 27*

This chapter has been attacked by Bible sceptics as an evidence of multiple authors of the book of Deuteronomy. They have felt that it breaks the continuity between chapters twenty-six and twenty-eight. In addition, Moses is spoken of in the third person, as if the material was written by someone else about Moses, rather than by Moses.

The first objection may be explained by the fact that Moses was about to die. God desired that he establish the covenant upon as solid a foundation as possible before Joshua would assume the leadership of the people. After Joshua rose to leadership, there would be another dedication when Israel entered the land.

The second objection may be cleared by the possibility of Joshua having been the author and writing the material after Moses death.

**DEU 27:1 And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day.**

This verse is unusual in that the elders are included in the presentation. Normally Moses would have emphasized that these were not his own words, but that they were actually the commandments of the Lord. The elders may have been included because

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they would provide a link between the leadership of Moses and that of Joshua.

There is no lack of respect for the Lord. If the reader will count the number of times the two words, “the Lord” are used in the chapter, he will hardly reach the conclusion that the Lord has been left out.

God’s commandments must be obeyed! Enough had been said previous to this time, and enough had been experienced between the escape from Egypt and the arrival at the east side of the Jordan River, that the people had no legitimate excuse for failing to follow His will.

**DEU 27:2 And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister:**

This passage does not mean that they were to set up the stones in the same twenty-four day that they crossed over the river. It has reference to a brief time right after the crossing. Mount Ebal and Mount Gerazim were not located directly across the river from where Israel crossed. It would take more than a twenty-four hour period for all to cross and settle in that location.

We are not given the dimensions of the stones which were to be used. Those who have traveled in the land of Canaan will have observed some very large stones in the foundations of walls and



buildings. A number of these were to be set up in a wall. Then they were to be plastered with some substance that would result in a flat surface which could be used for writing.

**DEU 27:3 And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee.**

It is somewhat surprising that disagreement exists as to just what was to be included in the writing. The verse clearly says “all the words of this law.” This commentator cannot accept lesser descriptions. It was not the ten commandments alone. It was not the curses which were soon to be declared. It was the complete law of Moses. The objection that this would have required more space than would have been available is invalid. We are informed that some three times as many words as are contained in the entire book of Deuteronomy have been written on stone surfaces at Behistun.

A rock surface large enough to hold the entire law of Moses would have left an indelible memory upon anyone who had seen it.

**DEU 27:4 Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister.**

The stone were to be erected on Mount Ebal where they would be easily seen by anyone who passed by that way.

**DEU 27:5 And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them.**

Beside the stones for writing, an altar was to be constructed. This altar was to be built without the aid of human tools. The altars of the pagans were sometimes very elaborate and great pride could have been taken in the human contribution. This altar was not to contribute to human pride. It was for the praise of Jehovah.

Compare the instructions given through Moses in Exodus 20:25 with respect to the use of tools.

Exo 20:25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

**DEU 27:6 Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God:**

Before the law was written on the stones mentioned in verses two through four, they were to build the altar of verses five and six. This would allow them to make some offerings to the Lord.

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These would include both burnt offerings and peace offerings. The burnt offerings were completely burned, and were not shared by the people.

**DEU 27:7 And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.**

The peace offerings were a means of stating the willingness to work together in the accomplishment of the will of God and the welfare of His people. Part of the peace offerings were offered on the altar and other portions were eaten as we would eat with earthly friends.

**DEU 27:8 And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.**

After the offerings were completed, the words of the law were to be written on the plastered surface of the stones mentioned back in verses two through four. The writing was to be very easily read in order that there be no mistake about God's intentions.

**DEU 27:9 And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God.**

Israel had been the people of God from the time of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But now, in a very special way, the ratification of this

covenant was to bind God and Israel together in an even tighter bond.

**DEU 27:10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.**

If anyone had doubts about the use of the word “I” in verse one of this chapter, the present verse should remove them. The things which Moses commanded were the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

**DEU 27:11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying,**

**DEU 27:12 These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin:**

We leave the topic of the offerings on the altar and the writing of the words of the law and turn to a related line of thought.

Six of the twelve tribes were to stand over against Mount Gerazim to bless the people. These six included those tribes coming from the two true wives of Jacob. They were Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. Two of the tribes coming from these two wives were not to stand on Mount Gerazim. They were Reuben, who had been guilty of incest, and Zebulun who was the youngest.



**DEU 27:13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.**

The other six of the twelve tribes were to stand over against Mount Ebal. They would pronounce the curses which would befall those who broke the laws of the Lord.

There is an interesting comparison between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerazim which can be seen even in the twenty-first century. Mount Gerazim is covered with many flower gardens and other beautiful greenery. Mount Ebal is a barren peak with little vegetation.

The two Mountains are each about three thousand feet in height above the level of the Mediterranean Sea and lie close together. The city of Shechem is close by.

**DEU 27:14 And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice,**

**DEU 27:15 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.**

Twelve curses were to be pronounced by the Levites who were apparently located in the valley between the two mountains. Each time another curse was spoken by the Levites, all of the people were to say "Amen."

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The Amen was a statement of understanding the meaning of that curse and an admission that God was just in administering it to those who broke His commandments.

Each of the curses is related to one or more of the ten commandments, which were stated back at Mount Sinai. The fact that there were twelve curses and twelve tribes may not have significance.

The first curse condemned idolatry.

**DEU 27:16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

There is strong connection between these twelve curses and the ten commandments, as given in the twentieth chapter of Exodus.

God had commanded that children honor their father and mother.

**DEU 27:17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

The one who moved his neighbor's landmark and tried to take possession of his property was guilty of stealing. God had said, "Thou shalt not steal."

**DEU 27:18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.**



The one who misled another who could not find his way was guilty. Jesus said, "If the blind follow the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch."

**DEU 27:19 Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

God's curse was to fall upon those who took advantage of others who were helpless such as orphans, widows, etc.

**DEU 27:20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

We can only hope this offense was with the man's stepmother rather than with his real mother. Both would be atrocious sins. To uncover his father's skirt was to have sexual relations with his father's wife.

**DEU 27:21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

This is a sin against nature. Man was made in the image of God. When he lowers himself to sharing sexual relations with animals he has insulted Jehovah.





**DEU 27:22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

If sexual relations were to be had with one's own full sister, one's half sister through his father, or his half sister through his mother, this would bring God's curse upon him.

**DEU 27:23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

The sin this time would be sexual relations with one's husband's mother.

We must remember that family units traveled together in these times. The sins between members of the close family would be more apt to be committed.

**DEU 27:24 Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

This is the type of sin that would be difficult to detect. The killer would lie in wait and commit the murder in a place where the crime would not be seen. He might also use poison which would not allow others to easily fix his identity.

It may be true that men can hide their sins from men. It is not true that these sins are ever hidden from the all seeing eye of God. We shall all



be required to meet Him and give answer for our offenses against Him.

**DEU 27:25 Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

It is more understandable for a man to murder another person in a fit of anger. It is still a terrible sin, but it does not compare with the awful sin of receiving payment for the cold blooded murder of one who has done the murderer no wrong.

**DEU 27:26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.**

If the individual fails to keep any of the laws God has presented in His covenant, that individual is cursed by His Maker.

After each of the curses is presented, all of the people were to say Amen. If Jehovah was to be their God, and they were to be His peculiar people, they must make every effort to avoid the behavior which would lead to His wrath.

We still have one topic to think about. Nothing is said here about blessings. Why are only the curses mentioned. The most logical explanation is that the blessings would come about when the people walked in harmony with God's expectations.



## *Chapter 28*

There are two key words in this twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. Those words are “blessings” and “cursings.” Although the chapter has a total of sixty-eight verses, The entire chapter could be summed up by saying that God will bless those who love and obey Him, and He will curse those who forget Him and disobey His laws.

The whole chapter is but a detailing of this main theme. There are fourteen verses describing the wondrous blessings which are promised to the obedient. There are over three times that many describing the hideous curses which will come upon those who are disobedient.

**DEU 28:1 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:**

This chapter marks the close of the second section of the book of Deuteronomy. Moses had shown in the first few chapters how God had loved and cared for Israel. Then in this second section He laid out His statutes, judgments and commandments. He is now making plain just what the consequences will be for both accepting His will or rejecting it.



There is a powerful little two letter word found in this first verse. That word is “if.” The blessings which are about to be listed are conditional. Israel will not earn them by being righteous. But she will certainly forfeit them by wickedness.

The first blessing is being set high above all nations of the earth. Israel was a small nation of just a few million people even in the glory days of David and Solomon. She did not occupy a territory as large as Russia or the United States. Yet, if she was faithful, God promised her a prominent place in the history of mankind. This promise has been kept. It was through Israel that Jesus Christ was born. By connection with His great influence over all nations of the earth, Israel has been set on high.

**DEU 28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.**

It is terrifying to realize that some things will overtake us. In this case it is just the opposite. If obedient, Israel would find that the most wondrous things would seek them out.

They were not to forget that big “if.” It is repeated in this second verse.

**DEU 28:3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.**

The city is where commerce is centered. It is where courts are held. It is where social interactions

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of many kinds take place.

The field is where crops are produced. It is where the flocks and the herds pasture. It is where the olive trees and the grape vineyards grow.

All of these activities would thrive if God's commandments were kept. There would be an abundance of food and business transactions would lead to prosperity.

**DEU 28:4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.**

The soil would bring forth fine yields. The children would be healthy and numerous. Sheep and other livestock would produce young and thus multiply in numbers.

**DEU 28:5 Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.**

The basket would contain that which was needed for the day at hand, and the storehouse of food for livestock and for humans would offer a back up for the days to come.

**DEU 28:6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.**

When the people went forth to enter into some activity, that venture would prove successful. When they came in from their labors, they would rest in confidence that all was well.

**DEU 28:7 The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.**

There would be enemies who would attempt to invade the land, but all such efforts would be defeated. Any force that came against them in an ordered and united manner would be scattered and flee in many directions.

**DEU 28:8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.**

**DEU 28:9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.**

Israel was to be a separate and peculiar people. They were to walk with Him and enjoy His constant care and support.

**DEU 28:10 And all people of the earth shall**



**see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.**

The relationship between Jehovah and His chosen people would become known to every nation. The blessings which had fallen upon Israel would cause other nations to respect them. They would understand the danger of misusing the chosen people of the Almighty God.

**DEU 28:11 And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee.**

This is repetition for emphasis. God uses this technique throughout the Holy Scriptures. Logical reasoning is not forgotten, but emotional appeals on a repeated basis are used to reinforce the impact of the logic.

**DEU 28:12 The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.**

God has many treasures which can be poured out upon man. Rain is one of them. It was no doubt a partial mystery to Israel of that day. They did know they could not control the amount of rainfall. They also knew it was vital to their welfare. If they were



obedient to the Lord, He would open the windows of heaven and the rain would fall in the proper amounts at the proper times.

Their prosperity would be so great that they would have no need to plead with other nations for help. The opposite would be true. They would have an overabundance and other nations would come to them for support.

**DEU 28:13 And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:**

The head controls the tail. Israel would be in a higher position. They would not be controlled by other nations. Strength and independence would identify them.

But here is that little two letter word again. All of this would be true “if” they heard and obeyed the commandments of Jehovah. It would not be enough to observe them in the sense of reading them. It would be necessary to do them.

**DEU 28:14 And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.**

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man.





That way may or may not coincide with the way of the Lord. The way of man may be crooked and confusing. It may lead to sin and death. It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. The way of the Lord is straight and leads to everlasting life.

**DEU 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:**

The blessings now give way to a description of the curses which will fall upon those who rebel against God's will. Israel would do both in future days. She would have the opportunity to see the blessings spoken of in these first fourteen verses. She would also see the curses which are now laid out most clearly.

Just as the blessings were said to overtake Israel when she was obedient, the curses would overtake her when she was rebellious. She would not seek them this time. She would attempt to flee from them. They would find her anyway.

**DEU 28:16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.**

As she would have been blessed in both commerce and agriculture, disobedience would cause the



opposite. Neither commerce nor agricultural pursuits would succeed.

**DEU 28:17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.**

The food and goods at hand for daily use would be short. There would be no backup in the pantry or the granary.

**DEU 28:18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.**

Their children would be few and unhealthy. Crops would be disappointing. Cows, goats and sheep would fail to multiply and produce needed milk, wool and work.

**DEU 28:19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.**

In entering into ventures there would be fear of failure. When returning from those ventures, the failures would become reality. Nothing would reach a satisfactory conclusion.

**DEU 28:20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly;**



**because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.**

It is wise to note that the Lord is spoken of in the third person at the beginning of the verse, and that this changes to the first person in the last word. Moses is doing the speaking, but it is Jehovah who is directing the thought.

Just how quickly would God cause them to perish if they disobeyed? It is only necessary to reflect upon the rapidity of Job's sufferings to see how quickly it might be done. Job was reduced from riches to poverty in a matter of days. It might take a bit longer for God to chastise Israel, but they could well be surprised at how quickly it could happen.

**DEU 28:21 The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.**

A few details are given as to the nature of the calamities which would appear. Pestilence would strike. Locusts and other insects could eat the vegetation and leave both the trees and the fields of grain stripped.

**DEU 28:22 The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until**

**thou perish.**

Many guesses are hazarded by various commentators as to just what each of these illnesses or diseases might be. I think it much safer to refrain from any attempt to point to tuberculosis or other medical problems known today. The general picture is a multitude of serious health problems.

Blasting and mildew were no doubt disastrous problems striking the crops.

**DEU 28:23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.**

Whereas God had promised to pour rain from the treasures of heaven upon those who were obedient, He now declares that heaven would be as brass, allowing no rain to fall. The result of the drought would cause the land to become as hard as iron. It would be useless for crop production.

**DEU 28:24 The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.**

Rather than raining water, it would rain dust and powder because of the dry weather. The winds that came in off the desert would carry sand in upon them until life would be impossible.



**DEU 28:25 The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.**

When Israel was obedient they were secure from their enemies. The enemies would come to them in force and great order. Then they would flee in every direction.

Now the opposite is true. Israel would go out against their enemies in order and defeat would cause them to scatter in all directions before the foe.

**DEU 28:26 And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away.**

Disease, war and famine would leave dead bodies scattered over the earth. Flesh eating birds and beasts would feed upon these bodies and there would be no one to drive them away.

**DEU 28:27 The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.**

Physical ailments of every kind would plague them. Each of the above problems is about as self explanatory as any guesswork we might try. These

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all seem to be diseases striking the skin and flesh. They are difficulties which would not be dismissed easily. They would be incurable.

**DEU 28:28 The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:**

People would be driven insane. They would not know which way to turn. They would be overcome with fear and confusion. Note the contrast between being the head and the tail. They would be at the mercy of other nations who would control them.

**DEU 28:29 And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.**

When man leaves the counsel of the Lord and walk in his own ways he will stumble and fall because he cannot see afar off. God can see the end from the beginning. Man cannot. Thus man trips and falls over that which he did not realize was a pitfall. Only the hand of God can lift him from his misery. But, he must reach out and take it.

**DEU 28:30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.**

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Every promise of happiness will come to nothing. A man marries a wife and she is taken from him by another man. One wonders if this other man is a stranger in the land, or one of this man's own fellow Israelites. Abandoning God's word can lead to just such events between those who should be trusted.

One builds a house and someone else drives him out and lives in the house which he has built. There is great pride in constructing a house or having one built. To go to the expense and time of building and then to have someone else enjoy the fruits of one's labor would be humbling.

We can almost see the land owner planting his vineyard and then carefully tending it until the grapes were ripe, then watching helplessly as someone else harvested the grapes.

**DEU 28:31 Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.**

The ox that was supposed to provide meat would be slaughtered and the owner would be unable to eat that meat. The ass which was supposed to work the field would be forcefully taken from his owner. It would not be returned. The sheep which was supposed to produce wool for clothing and meat for the table would be possessed by others with no possibility of getting them back.



**DEU 28:32 Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thine hand.**

Even the children of the Israelites would be taken captive by invaders. Their parents might weep and long for them day and night. They would be able to do nothing about it.

**DEU 28:33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always:**

**DEU 28:34 So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.**

**DEU 28:35 The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.**

We have more repetition for the sake of planting the conclusion deep in the heart of Moses listeners. Everything would collapse around them. Nothing would come to a satisfactory end.

**DEU 28:36 The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.**





Israel actually desired to have a king other than Jehovah to rule over them. God warned that setting a human king over Israel would result in both the nation and the king being taken captive by a nation serving false gods of wood and stone which they had never heard of in the past. This took place in both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.

**DEU 28:37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.**

When they were obedient other nations were astonished at their success. When they turned to disobedience they would be despised by all the nations into which Jehovah would allow them to be taken. Do not miss the fact that God would not only allow them to be taken. He would “lead” them into captivity.

To this very day Jews are considered by many to be of questionable character. Hitler tried to exterminate them from the land of Germany. The term applied to business deals with Jews is sometimes to “Jew down.”

This is tragic. Jews have made enormous contributions to many different fields of human endeavor. Einstein, and Schweitzer are examples of such talent.

**DEU 28:38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for**

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**the locust shall consume it.**

**DEU 28:39 Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.**

**DEU 28:40 Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.**

The only new thought here is the casting of the olives before they can be harvested and the infesting of grapes by worms. Either would have been a source of grief.

**DEU 28:41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity.**

**DEU 28:42 All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.**

**DEU 28:43 The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.**

**DEU 28:44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.**

Here we have a more specific statement of the fall of Israel from the head where she is respected to the tail where she is dependent on others.



**DEU 28:45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee:**

These catastrophes were not just happenstance. They were a direct result of disobedience. Israel did not want a covenant with the Lord. He would oblige them by treating them as strangers.

**DEU 28:46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.**

These troubles would serve to demonstrate to both Israel and to the rest of the nations of the world that God must be held in awe. As long as these defiant actions before God continued, Israel would feel the curses.

**DEU 28:47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;**

It is not even enough to serve God through a sense of duty. He expects those whom He blesses to rejoice in His service. The real attitude which God expects is not one that serves because it desires blessings. It is that one serves because of past blessings. Then the future blessings will come from His loving hand.

**DEU 28:48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.**

Those who invaded the land and carried them captive would find their want of food and clothing, as well as their physical and mental ailments, would render them easy prey.

Israel would be enslaved even as a yoke of oxen would be, except the yoke would not be of wood. It would be far heavier.

**DEU 28:49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;**

This does not speak of many nations. It speaks of one. That nation would come from a distance. It would enter as fast as the flight of an eagle. It would speak a language Israel would not be able to comprehend.

**DEU 28:50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:**

That nation would have no pity toward young or old. The fierce countenance would strike fear into the hearts of those whom God had decided to punish.

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This nation from far off is thought by many to be Rome. The banners of the Roman forces were decorated with pictures of eagles. They were merciless. We must not forget Assyria and Babylonia who both invaded the land of Canaan. Any of the three; Rome, Assyria or Babylonia fit the description of the nation from far off very well. Rome probably fits best.

**DEU 28:51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.**

Everything worthwhile would be ransacked. The crops, the livestock and the people would all be laid waste or taken into possession. Israel as a nation would be recognizable no longer.

**DEU 28:52 And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.**

The villages would fall to the enemy all over the land. Even the fortified and walled cities such as Jerusalem would be defenseless. Israel would be helpless before the onslaught.



**DEU 28:53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:**

The fruit of the human body is their sons and their daughters. The Lord had given them, and the Lord would allow them to be killed. But not just killed, murdered by their own parents and eaten to keep from starving.

**DEU 28:54 So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:**

The man whom no one had ever thought could be guilty of unkindness would become vicious. His attitude toward his own wife would become unbearable. He would kill some of his own children for food and would abuse those who were left.

**DEU 28:55 So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.**

Because the man would not see any other source of food, he would deny his wife and his other children the flesh of the ones he had killed.

**DEU 28:56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,**

The daintiest and tenderest of the women who previously had not found it necessary to walk out into the fields to work would cast an evil eye upon her beloved husband, toward her sons and toward her daughters.

**DEU 28:57 And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.**

What is the difference between the young one that comes out from between the woman's feet, and the children that she shall bear? I do not care to put in print what some commentators have said these two words mean. See Barnes Notes if you wish to investigate farther!

We do have records of women eating their own children when under siege by the enemy. One case is found in 2 Kings 6:28.



2Ki 6:28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow.

The other incident is recorded in Josephus' account of the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans.

**DEU 28:58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;**

Again this word "if." It seems that all the words of this law that are written in this book are the same as those mentioned before as being written on the plastered stones.

**DEU 28:59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.**

If we had been writing this record, we would not have used the word "wonderful" since it conveys a different message today. We would have been more apt to use the word "hideous" or "shocking."

These were not the average plague. They were more nearly like those that were brought on Egypt when Israel departed. Now the same awesome plagues would be laid on Israel's back. They would



be grievous and long lasting.

**DEU 28:60** Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.

**DEU 28:61** Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

The plagues and sickness which would come upon the defiant nation of Israel would be like those seen in Egypt, but they would include others not even mentioned before.

**DEU 28:62** And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.

**DEU 28:63** And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

When Israel was obedient she increased according to the promise God had made to Abraham. When she was disobedient her numbers would be reduced. Only a remnant of those in the days of her glory returned from captivity after she had been reduced.



**DEU 28:64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.**

One can look at almost any nation in existence today and find recognizable Jews. They have truly been scattered from one end of the earth to the other. In Babylon and in Rome they were forced to bow down to false gods that were unknown to them in Egypt or Canaan.

**DEU 28:65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:**

Could we find a better description of pure misery than is presented in this chapter. Let the Christian take heed. Those nations where Christians have enjoyed the wonderful blessings of the Lord may lose those precious blessings just as surely as Israel did. The food, clothing and shelter can very quickly be replaced with hunger, nakedness and homelessness. Such can be avoided by truly serving God with gladness and eagerness.

**DEU 28:66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:**



Fear would come upon the disobedient until life itself hung in the balance. Neither day nor night would afford relief.

**DEU 28:67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.**

Every minute of the day and every minute of the night a person would wish for that minute to pass by. The passing would not help. The next minute would be just as miserable as the one just passed.

**DEU 28:68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.**

How bad could things get for Israel? They could get just as bad as they were when they were bondservants in Egypt. They would become so despicable in the eyes of others that no one would even buy them as slaves.

We doubt if this actually refers to a return to the nation of Egypt. It is more apt to mean a condition of bondage similar to the one they left forty years before the time at which Moses is addressing them.



## *Chapter 29*

It must seem to the careful student of the Bible that the thoughts to be presented in this chapter have been repeated so many times that no one should ever forget them. God knows far better than we do just how many times instructions must be reviewed. All we have to do to realize this truth is to look around us at the number of former faithful Christians who have become unfaithful. Like Israel of old, they have heard over and over again what God expects of those who anticipate being welcomed into the bliss of heaven. Yet they go astray.

**DEU 29:1 These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.**

Because the word “beside” is used in this verse, some feel this should be regarded as a different covenant from that made at Mount Sinai (Horeb). In one sense it is the same covenant with an update. In another sense it is not the same covenant because it is being ratified with an almost completely new Israel. Only Joshua, Caleb and Moses remain of those who were over twenty years of age at the time the ten commandments were first given.

**DEU 29:2 And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt**

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**unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land;**

Most of Moses hearers had not seen what the Lord had done unto Pharaoh in the land of Egypt, but Moses is presenting an overview of what God had done from the delivery from slavery until the present day.

**DEU 29:3 The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles:**

**DEU 29:4 Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.**

The people had been tempted and tested on their way through the wilderness. They had been hungry. They had been thirsty. They had heard of the giants in the land which they were to conquer.

In connection with these temptations they had seen the power of God in providing food, water and victory over the giant king Og. Though they had heard and seen all of these things, God had not done enough to cause them to truly see, hear and understand the need to trust Him.

**DEU 29:5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.**



Even their shoes and other clothing had not fallen apart over the forty years of travel.

**DEU 29:6 Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God.**

No, they had not eaten bread which they prepared in their own ovens. They had eaten manna. No, they had not drunk wine. They had drunk water from the rock which followed them.

**DEU 29:7 And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them:**

**DEU 29:8 And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh.**

By this time they had seen victory over a land where giants dwelt. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and one half the tribe of Manasseh had already been given the land east of the Jordan.

**DEU 29:9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.**

They had prospered before. They could continue to prosper if they kept their covenant with Jehovah.

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**DEU 29:10** Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel,

**DEU 29:11** Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water:

**DEU 29:12** That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day:

The entire nation had been gathered to hear Moses and to agree to live in accord with the covenant God offered them. From the greatest to the least, they were being offered the privilege of becoming the most privileged people on the face of the earth. They could be the peculiar chosen people of the Everlasting God.

**DEU 29:13** That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

**DEU 29:14** Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath;

**DEU 29:15** But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God,





**and also with him that is not here with us this day:**

Agreement had begun in the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was now being renewed with those who stood with Moses on the plains of Moab. That covenant was not to be dissolved when those present were dead. It was to be continued between God and their descendants for generations to come.

**DEU 29:16 (For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which ye passed by;**

**DEU 29:17 And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them:)**

Israel had seen idolatry in the land of Egypt. They had also seen it in such nations as Edom and Moab. Those idols were not divine. They were no more than carved wood, or silver and gold poured into molds and polished. They could neither hear, see nor support those who worshiped them.

**DEU 29:18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;**

**DEU 29:19 And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless**

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**himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst:**

These two verses are one extended sentence warning any doubtful heart of the danger of following the foolishness of the pagan nations. It mattered not whether it was man or woman, entire family, or even a whole tribe, those who turned away would be like the root of a plant that sent poison instead of nutrition into the entire nation of Israel.

**DEU 29:20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.**

Such persons need to try to convince themselves they could travel the road of idolatry without bringing the wrath and jealousy of Jehovah down upon them. Adding drunkenness to thirst was like thirsting for strong drink and then allowing the thirst to dominate and result in a drunken state. They were not to look upon the idols of the pagans and desire to enter into their shameful worship.

The hideous curses which had been listed in the last couple of chapters would fall upon these traitors. They would be destroyed.

**DEU 29:21 And the LORD shall separate**



**him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law:**

The Lord knew, even at this time, there would be individual, and even national falling away from true worship to that which God hated. When that took place, the curses were bound to follow.

**DEU 29:22 So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it;**

In the mind of God, it was not a matter of “if” Israel would turn away from Him to idolatry. It was a matter of “when.”

When the people had turned from the truth and set their hearts upon idols, the results would be most shocking to their descendants and to any non Israelites who came and visited the land after the curses had fallen. The plagues which fell upon Canaan would leave it not as a land flowing with milk and honey, but as one which was sick unto death.

**DEU 29:23 And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and**

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**Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:**

I have visited that land. Brimstone and salt are not the finest of fertilizers. Much of the land of Canaan is rocky and non productive. This is especially true of the region of the Dead Sea, but it is not confined to that area. Those who have been raised in fertile farm country in other parts of the world, and who then visit Canaan, wonder how it could have ever been called a promised land of milk and honey.

**DEU 29:24 Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger?**

The natural question would be, “If Israel’s God is loving and almighty, what could have possibly caused Him to reduce a fertile land to such barren ugliness? What could ever cause Him to be this angry?”

**DEU 29:25 Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt:**

The answer to that question is that Israel broke their promise to worship the Lord their God and



Him only. After all He had done for them, they betrayed Him.

**DEU 29:26 For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them:**

They went after false gods and worshiped them. Following the idols caused them to lie, to steal, to commit fornication and adultery, plus all of the other forbidden thoughts and actions of the law.

**DEU 29:27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:**

It would not be because God had neglected to inform Israel of what would take place if they; failed Him. With the words of the covenant ringing in their ears, they would have chosen falsehood over truth and lust over loyalty to Him. The curses would come.

**DEU 29:28 And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.**

Certainly God did root Israel out of the land of Canaan. He scattered them from one end of the earth to the other as a result of their later transgressions.

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It is difficult to explain what is meant by saying, “as it is this day.” The most likely explanation is that this is being said in the time of the shocked person who viewed the land after God had brought the curses upon it, This had not yet taken place in the day in which Moses was speaking to Israel, shortly before they entered the land.

**DEU 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.**

There are many things God know that even the wisest of men do not know. Man has made remarkable advances in scientific knowledge. All he is doing is discovering a small part of what the Creator knew in designing all things.

This verse is not discouraging intellectual curiosity. When God created man and gave him a mind, He expected man to use it. What God did not expect man to do was to use that mind to question His commandments and judgments.

There are several other passages which must be placed alongside this very important one. See the following.

Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Jer 10:24 O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.



Pro 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Pro 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Isa 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.







## *Chapter 30*

The departure from God's commandments after having entered the land is spoken of as certain. It is not that it has been predetermined and Israel had no choice. It is that Jehovah is able to see the end from the beginning. He is able to see beforehand what choice Israel will make after they have been in Canaan for some time.

They will have chosen to depart from His will. This will result in the curses falling upon them. One of those curses is that they will be scattered among all nations. This chapter predicts what will happen when they come to themselves and realize what a horrible mistake they have made.

**DEU 30:1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,**

Why must catastrophe befall men before they will reflect upon the cost of disobedience to the Lord? Only after having suffered the curses which resulted in their being removed from the promised land and scattered over the earth would His people look back and remember God had "told them so."

**DEU 30:2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;**

Here is a prediction that at least a portion of Israel would be shocked into penitence and make the decision to hear and obey the voice of the Almighty. It is late, but it is not too late! It would be necessary for them to reenter His service with all the heart and soul. Their children would have to be taught to do the same.

**DEU 30:3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.**

When it was clear that these changes in attitude had been made, God would respond to the changes and gather those who were penitent back from where they had been scattered. God had caused their scattering, and He could bring them back. His promise was that He would do just that.

**DEU 30:4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:**



This is not a reference to Babylon alone. Israel was scattered into many nations. Babylon was but one of several. (See Isaiah 11:11-12.)

Isa 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Isa 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

We must also realize that there were two restorations of God's people. The first return was during the Mosaic dispensation when the fleshly descendants of Abraham came to themselves and were restored to Canaan in the times of Ezra, Nehemiah, etc.

This restoration was conditional. Only a remnant were involved. Most remained scattered because they would not turn from their idols and serve God with all their heart and soul.

The second restoration of the Jews was that which is taking place in the Christian age when God set His hand the second time to call both Jew and Gentile back into one body in Jesus Christ. Again, this is conditional. It is not to happen in mass. Only those who recognize the need to turn from allegiance to the world, and be born a second time into the spiritual kingdom of God. In the church of Christ



there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Greek. All are one in Christ Jesus. As in the case of the return from the idolatrous lands into which they had been scattered in days of old, only a remnant will hear this second call through the gospel.

**DEU 30:5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.**

This verse seems clear enough that the remnant whom God brings back from Babylon were to reenter Canaan and live full lives there.

That did take place, but that is not the end of the matter. Only a remnant returned. Many remained scattered to be called a second time through the preaching of the Saviour and His followers.

**DEU 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.**

To circumcise the heart is to cut off the fleshly desires which draw one away from the path that God has laid out before His subjects. Real life lies in loving the Lord with all the heart and soul. Only when one serves Him in that manner can the fullness of life be found.

We are informed that the Lord is the one who will do the circumcising. That does not mean He does so without the consent of the individual. God



makes the need for such circumcision so forceful that the individual moves away from the world and toward the Lord.

**DEU 30:7 And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.**

Just as was true in Egypt when God placed curses upon the slavemasters there, He promised to turn the curses which Israel had experienced while they were fighting against Him in the direction of those who had persecuted them.

The Jews have been made miserable in many parts of the world in the times of Babylonian and Assyrian captivity, and also as a result of the Roman persecution. Those who repented in Babylon would find peace. Those who persecuted them would become miserable. Those who have persecuted the spiritual Jews, (Christians) will ultimately find life miserable

**DEU 30:8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.**

Although Moses is speaking to those of his own day, the words may be applied just as easily to the latter days.

**DEU 30:9 And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy**

**cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:**

Here are the same promised blessings that were laid out before. The land of Canaan would be productive. The livestock would be both plenteous and healthy. Their own children would be numerous.

Things would be like they were before Israel turned away from God and followed the sins of the nations around them.

**DEU 30:10 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.**

**“IF! IF and only “IF.”**

**DEU 30:11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.**

When the time comes, they were not to try and excuse themselves for their sins by claiming they had not been warned. Neither were they to claim that the commandments were to impossible.

**DEU 30:12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven,**

**and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?**

The commands had not been kept in heaven where no one could know of them. They did not have to find someone to go from earth to heaven to bring them back.

**DEU 30:13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?**

One could go even farther and say the commandments had not been given in some far off location of the earth where the Jews could not have heard or read them.

**DEU 30:14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.**

The Lord had seen to it that His word had penetrated their very hearts. They were even able to quote it with their lips. As Moses stood before them he called them to attention. They had no excuse. They had heard. They had learned. They must obey.

**DEU 30:15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;**

There are but two ways. The way of life and the  
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way of death. Joshua echoed the same truth as he lead the people across the Jordan and into Canaan. Jesus declared himself to be the way, the life and the truth. The way of death is wide and many travel it. They way of life is narrow and there are but a few who follow it.

**DEU 30:16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.**

Here is the grand conclusion to Moses oration as the spokesman for the Lord God. Does the reader recall that Moses once said he was slow of speech. Not with God moving his tongue! No one could misunderstand these last words. What fantastic things God could do with each of us if we only allowed ourselves to be fully used!

Only by dedicating themselves completely to God's commands could Israel thrive in their long awaited land of milk and honey.

**DEU 30:17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;**

**DEU 30:18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall**



**not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.**

On the contrary, if they allowed their hearts to be filled with a love for false gods and idolatry, they would be cut off. This was as sure as day and night.

**DEU 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:**

But what about predestination? Did Moses not know that all things are predetermined and that man does not have the power to alter his eternal destiny? Someone failed to inform the great prophet of this information! He called for Israel to make the greatest choice men can make; that between life and death. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. Choose life and blessings, not cursings and death.

**DEU 30:20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.**

It is only by loving God with all the heart and soul that men may receive His blessings. If this is done, life can be long and full. If Israel failed to stay close by His side, their days in the land they were about to enter would be miserable and short. They would be cast out and scattered over the earth, like sheep without a shepherd.

## *Chapter 31*

These last chapters of Deuteronomy tell of the change of leadership from Moses to Joshua. This was a momentous time in the history of God's chosen nation. We can see the wonderful character of Moses as he is called upon to abdicate his long held responsibilities and see them laid upon his successor. There is no sign of jealousy. There is only encouragement in the face of trial, and warning against future departures by the people.

**DEU 31:1 And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.**

The words concerning Moses here are much like those in which Jesus charged the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel. God had spoken to Moses. Moses was expected to relay God's message to the entire nation. It should be noted that the first and last verses of this chapter include all Israel. No one is to be left out. No one is to be left with the excuse that they did not know what God expected. They had been following Moses. Now they were to follow Joshua.

**DEU 31:2 And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.**

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Life spans in that time were somewhat longer than they are at present. Abraham, Noah, Moses and Joshua all lived longer than the three score and ten years which are common today.

Moses life was divided into three parts. The first forty years were spent in Egypt. The second forty years were in Midian. The last forty were passed in leading Israel through the wilderness from Egypt to the plains of Moab, at the border of Canaan.

Moses was remarkably well preserved. (See Deut. 34:7.)

Deu 34:7 And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

This second verse of chapter thirty-one does not say that Moses was nearly blind, nor that his energy had decreased to where he could hardly walk. He was not just looking at the present. He was concerned about the years to come. It could take a lengthy time for Israel to conquer the nations in Canaan. By that time he might be quite unable to go out before them and come back in with them after the battles. It was best that leadership be passed on to a younger man which God approved.

A second reason why new leadership was necessary was that the Lord had refused Moses permission to cross over Jordan and into the land. This had come about because of Moses failure to give God the glory when water was secured from the rock as recorded in Numbers 20:8-12.

Num 20:8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

Num 20:9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

Num 20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

Num 20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

Num 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Apparently without bitterness in his heart, Moses accepted the decision of the Lord. He would be too old by the time the conquest was completed, and he had failed to give God the glory at a very critical time.

I might add that leaving positions of leadership is not easy. Age makes such decisions necessary, but they do not leave the former leader comfortable. Regardless of what may have been accomplished in the past, most wish to do more, not less. Moses is to



be given much credit for accepting the change.

**DEU 31:3 The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.**

Moses is speaking to all of the people. He does not go back to their lack of trust in the Lord after the spies reported giants in the land. He only goes back to the victories over Sihon and Og, the kinds of the Amorites. They must not fear. God and Joshua would go before them into the land.

**DEU 31:4 And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed.**

**DEU 31:5 And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you.**

**DEU 31:6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.**

Without God they would fail. With God leading the way, they would be able to conquer every foe. They had been commanded to erase every memory



of idolatrous worship from the land. That command could be kept with the help of Jehovah.

**DEU 31:7 And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.**

Joshua, along with Caleb, had contended forty years back that Israel could take the land with the help of God, even if giants were present. Joshua had been a tower of strength when the Amelakites attack Israel in the wilderness. He was a proven military leader. Moses turned from the people to address Joshua while they listened.

Joshua must continue the same courage and strength which he had shown in past times. He must lead Israel into Canaan and help them to inherit the land which God had promised from the time of Abraham.

**DEU 31:8 And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.**

Neither Joshua nor the people must lose confidence in the task ahead of them. God would keep His promise. He would not forsake Israel if Israel did not forsake Him.

**DEU 31:9 And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.**

What was it that Moses wrote and delivered to the priests? Was it the entire five books of the pentateuch? Was it the book of Deuteronomy? Was it only the highlights of the entire law?

Opinions are sharply divided as to which of the above is meant by the statement. Some object that it would take an enormous amount of time for Moses to write an entire copy of the five books of the law.

Let's do a little simple arithmetic and see just how long it might have taken. The copy of the Bible I have at hand has two hundred sixty pages from Genesis through Deuteronomy. Each page has approximately six hundred words. Multiplying 260 times 600 give a product of 156,000 words. The average person can print about 15 words per minute. I say print because Hebrew is a block type of writing rather than cursive. Dividing 15 into 156,000, we arrive at 10,400 minutes to complete all five books. There are 60 minutes in one hour and thus it would require 173 hours. If one wrote 8 hours per day, it would take about 22 days. Admittedly, Moses might have had a severe case of writer's cramp at a rate of 8 full hours each day for 22 days. We must give him some rest time. Suppose we let him write for 1 1/2 hours and then rest for 1/2 hour. This would increase the total time to about 30 days.

This is not an impossibility, but it does allow a





question mark. But did Moses have to write this copy of the law personally, or could he have enlisted the help of several scribes. The law had been given back at Mount Sinai. A number of copies could have been in existence. Still, in that case, what would be the reason for Moses directing the production of one more copy. It seems more reasonable to believe Moses wrote this copy personally.

Some even go so far as to say there was one copy delivered to the priests, and in addition a copy was given to each of the twelve tribes. It would be difficult to establish this position by the use of verse nine.

**DEU 31:10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles,**

**DEU 31:11 When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.**

One of the reasons for Moses making a copy of the law was that it was to be read every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles, sometimes called the Feast of Booths. At this time the entire nation was to come together. At other times only the males above twenty years of age were to gather. At this feast women, children and non Israelites who had chosen to live among them were all to be present.

At that time the copy of the law was to be read aloud to the people. The word "thou" cannot mean

Moses because Moses would not be present among them seven years from the time he made this copy. Moses was only saying, "Make certain the law is read once every seven years at the Feast of Tabernacles."

Even the reading of the entire five books of the law by Moses would have taken two full eight hour days. Still possible, but he would have needed some cough drops.

**DEU 31:12 Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:**

**DEU 31:13 And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.**

All it takes is one generation for truth to be lost. It must be passed from parents to children and then to grandchildren. The elderly must be reminded. The newcomers must be introduced.

**DEU 31:14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.**

God was ready to charge Joshua with his future responsibilities. He called both Moses and Joshua to the tabernacle. Both must be present for the transfer of authority.

**DEU 31:15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.**

The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire had demonstrated the presence of the Lord from the time the law was presented to Moses at Sinai. Here again we find God speaking from the midst of the cloud. It would normally have appeared between the cherubim on the ark. This time it appeared at the door of the tent.

**DEU 31:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.**

The words which Moses was about to hear must have filled his heart with sadness. He had warned the people over and over not to take up the idol worship which was practiced by the nations through which they had passed. Now God is telling Moses that after his death, the people will forsake Him and



commit spiritual adultery with the false gods of the heathen. They will break the covenant which Moses has been delivering to them even at that time.

**DEU 31:17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?**

If the people are determined to forsake Jehovah, He will respond by forsaking them. When He does forsake them, all kinds of misery will follow. Some will come to their senses and recall that these curses were exactly what the Lord predicted would take place if they turned from Him.

**DEU 31:18 And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.**

Prayer to Jehovah and worship of idols cannot exist simultaneously. "Him only shalt thou serve." His face will be turned away in disgust when their prayers ascend.

Was there anything that could be done?

**DEU 31:19 Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a**



**witness for me against the children of Israel.**

The falling away would not be prevented. It would take place. There was something Moses could do. He could write a song which would be sung by the people through the years to remind them of their duties and what would take place if those duties were neglected. The song would act as a witness that God had warned them ahead of time.

**DEU 31:20 For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.**

Man has great difficulty in handling prosperity. Wealth tends to corrupt. We forget that the source of all wealth is God Almighty. Israel would become forgetful and ungrateful when they found themselves surrounded with an abundance of food, productive livestock and grain fields, plus a multitude of healthy children. They would begin to worship the creation rather than the Creator.

**DEU 31:21 And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now,**



**before I have brought them into the land which I swear.**

After the falling away resulted in terrible curses, the song which Moses was to write would haunt their consciences. Even the children would remember the words of the song and would know the troubles were a result of their forsaking of the Lord.

**DEU 31:22 Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.**

The song was written and it is recorded in the next chapter of this book. It would go with the people as a testimony to their breaking of the covenant.

**DEU 31:23 And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee.**

Moses charged Joshua with leading the people into the land. This verse is interesting in that it begins with the word “he.” This seems to point back to Moses who had just given the charge to Joshua. Then, in the last part of the verse the words “I will be with thee.” are found. This is surely the voice of the Lord. Moses would be dead as they entered in.

This is not completely unexpected. Moses was not the author of the presentation which passed his

lips. God was the author. Moses was to see that the will of God was conveyed to Israel.

**DEU 31:24 And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished,**

The fact that Moses personally wrote this copy of the law is emphasized by what is said here. Now what was to be done with it?

**DEU 31:25 That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying,**

**DEU 31:26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.**

The copy of the law was to be placed in the side of the ark. This would mean that it would be a constant memorial to the fact that it had been written long before the transgression which was to come. When read, it would say “This is what God predicted would happen. They could look out around themselves and see that they should have known better.

**DEU 31:27 For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?**

If Israel had already begun to harbor rebellion in their minds and direct their own steps while Moses was still in their midst, what would happen when he was no longer with them? The dissension would not doubt increase until it ripened into full blown apostasy.

**DEU 31:28 Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them.**

Moses was ready to present the song he had written at God's command. He called for the leaders of the tribes to him in order that the song could be given to them. They would then be responsible for seeing that the rest of the people had it taught to them.

**DEU 31:29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.**

How those words must have stuck in the throat of this great man of God! He does not say these things might happen, or that they could happen. He states that they will happen. They will break the covenant and bring the wrath of their Maker



upon them.

**DEU 31:30 And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.**

This verse introduces the song which Moses wrote, which is recorded in the following chapter.





## *Chapter 32*

It is best to look back at the last verse of chapter thirty-one since it is the introduction to the song which takes up the major part of this present chapter. This is a song which God commanded Moses to write in order that in the years to come the people of Israel would have a way to remember the truths of their relationships with their Maker.

Songs are a powerful means of implanting thoughts in the minds of youngsters and of retaining truths in the minds of their elders. The song “The Old Rugged Cross” has been an introduction of the love of God and the sacrifice of His Son for untold millions of children even as low as preschool age.

**DEU 32:1 Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.**

God, through Moses, calls for heaven and earth to act as witnesses to the facts presented in the song. This can be taken in two ways. First, men on earth and spiritual beings in heaven could be meant. Second, the unchanging nature of the starry heavens and the globe on which men exist could be meant.

The main point is that God will not speak alone in the days to come. He will have witnesses who can testify to His concern for those who are expected to



be subject to Him.

**DEU 32:2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:**

“My doctrine” is that which Moses is presenting in the song. However, it is approved by Jehovah.

This doctrine, or teaching, is intended to be as refreshing as the rain that falls on growing plants. Without such refreshment, the vegetation would die. With it, the same shall spring to abundant life. Just so, if men will receive the admonitions given in this song, they may flourish spiritually.

**DEU 32:3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.**

The reason for this spiritual health is that the song magnifies the name of the Lord. It calls for men to recognize His greatness. According to the wise man, “The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments.

**DEU 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.**

Rocks are known for their permanence. They are thus used as foundations stones for the largest of buildings. God is the Rock of those who build their



lives on His teaching. Jesus Christ is the Rock of our salvation. He is the chief cornerstone of the spiritual temple in which all true Christians are living stones.

God is not only an undergirding for the righteous life, He is sinless. He is accurate and fair in His judgments. He is loving. No man makes a mistake when he plans his life in accordance with the will of this Great Lord.

**DEU 32:5 They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.**

This song cannot be understood without looking back to God's dealings with His people in the past. It must also be examined from the present viewpoint. Finally, it must be seen for it's possible application to the future.

It is a song for Israel to reflect upon when God's blessings are being received during periods of obedience. But it is also a song which was to be remembered when they were driven out of Canaan as a result of their disobedience.

It was not intended for Israel alone. It is a song for the ages. Dear friends, it is a song for you and me!

As we look at this chapter, We see Israel looking back through their history. This fifth verse contrasts God's greatness with Israel's faithlessness. While God is perfect, Israel has become crooked. They are ungrateful.



**DEU 32:6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?**

God knew beforehand that Israel would rebel against Him and turn to idols. This was written well before it took place. Even while they were in the process of turning away, they could look at the words of this song and know how the Lord would feel about what they were doing.

God had treated them as His children which He had sent into Egypt as a family and removed as a nation. How foolish it was of them to mock Him when their very existence was brought about and sustained by Him.

**DEU 32:7 Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.**

If the younger generation did not actually experience the birth of the nation, they could most certainly ask those who were older and had gone through those experiences. Provided those elders were honest, they would recount the miracles of those forty years when God fed and led them through the wilderness.

**DEU 32:8 When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the**



**people according to the number of the children of Israel.**

God works in the affairs of men. From the beginning He had assigned territory to various people. Shem, Ham and Japheth had a portion. Israel also was assigned their portion.

We are left with a need to identify the “number of the children of Israel.” I shall assume that the land God assigned to Israel was sufficient to serve as a residence for His children.

**DEU 32:9 For the LORD’S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.**

The word inheritance is often used in the sense of those who inherit from their father. Israel was thus the Lord’s inheritance in that they inherited the land of Canaan from their Father in heaven.

**DEU 32:10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.**

The word “him” is Jacob, or Israel. His Father had found him just released from Egypt and helpless in the Sinai desert. He had taken Jacob by the hand and taught him. He had treated him as a father would deal with his firstborn. The apple of the eye is the pupil. It is the very center of the eye.

**DEU 32:11 As an eagle stirreth up her nest,**  
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**fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:**

What a beautiful picture this is. The mother eagle knows when it is time for the young to begin flying. At the proper time, she nudges them over the edge of the nest. She flutters her wings to show them how the flying is to be done. Then, if they are not quite ready, she flies underneath them while they are falling. She catches them upon her back and returns them to the nest until they are ready.

That was the way the Lord had treated Israel. They were not yet ready to fly when the spies returned from Canaan. He gave them another thirty-eight years to mature.

**DEU 32:12 So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.**

They had not been guided and nourished by any of the powerless false gods of the Egyptians or the Canaanites. It was Jehovah alone who tended to their needs.

**DEU 32:13 He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;**

Beginning with this verse, we find Israel in the





land of Canaan. The blessings were more than they could have imagined. The fields were rich. There was honey in the crevices of the rocky hills. Olive trees grew in plenty.

**DEU 32:14 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.**

There was butter and milk. There was choice meat and wool from the flocks. There was juice from the grapevines to quench thirst. Who could ask for more?

**DEU 32:15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.**

Jeshurun (or Israel) could not handle the prosperity. They became fat, lazy and independent. They no longer were in need of their Father. He began to fade back into the shadows of their minds.

**DEU 32:16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.**

Instead of placing their confidence in the Rock



that had been with them previously, they became fascinated with that which was new and which promised excitement they had not known before.

Dear reader, this is precisely what is happening in the present world. Sex is replacing prayer. Violence is replacing love for fellowman. Technology is supposed to solve all of our problems. Jehovah is fading back into the shadows of men's memories. It cannot last. A great HURT is ahead!

**DEU 32:17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.**

Are devils and demons real? Jesus claimed they are. When men turn to the worship of Satan and his wicked host, they may have a momentary thrill. That thrill will be followed by an eternal groan.

**DEU 32:18 Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.**

Christ told the apostle Peter that the confession Peter had made that Christ was the Son of God He would build His church. He did not say He would build it upon Peter. He said He would build it upon the confession that Christ is the Son of God. God is a Rock. Christ is a Rock. We had better not forget the Rock which formed either Israel of old, or the church of the present.



Israel did forget! Israel reaped the consequences.

**DEU 32:19 And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.**

Mother used to say I had provoked her by misbehaving. It was not God's children who were provoked. It was God, their Father. He used a very strong word to describe His feelings. He abhorred them.

**DEU 32:20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.**

His decision was to hide from them as they had hid from Him. They were acting as if they had no need of Him. He would look the other direction for a time and let them see what the end of that would be.

In actuality, He did not completely discard them. If that had been the case, they would have had no air to breath, no food to eat, no water to drink, no life in their bodies.

**DEU 32:21 They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a**

**people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.**

Israel had turned their affections toward those things which were no gods. They had made Him jealous of the idols. His response would be to fasten His own attention upon a people who were no people. He would bring a no nation upon them and let them see how well their no gods could protect them.

**DEU 32:22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.**

God was hot! Israel had raised His emotions to the boiling point. The fire of His anger would turn things into a hell on earth.

**DEU 32:23 I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them.**

All kinds of misery would fall upon them. They would find out just how horrifying life could be when He started shooting at them rather than at their enemies.

**DEU 32:24 They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.**

Famine would replace the abundance of food. They would suffer from heat and drought. Wild beasts would attack them and use them for food. Poisonous snakes would bite them.

**DEU 32:25 The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs.**

War would come. The swords would be merciless. There would be no difference between the children and the elderly and the young men of war. The enemy would destroy anyone within their path. The ones who were not mutilated in the battlefield would be trembling with fear inside their homes.

**DEU 32:26 I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men:**

It was within God's mind to scatter them from the land of Canaan to all parts of the earth, so completely that they would not even be recognized as a people, except in the history books.

**DEU 32:27 Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all this.**

God has no need to fear any foe. What is meant here is that if He had allowed Israel to be completely consumed, those who were allowed to punish them would decide the God of Israel was not capable of protecting his own. They would decide the victory was because of their own wisdom and power.

**DEU 32:28 For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them.**

The nation here is Israel. They had not listened to the commandments, statutes and judgments of Jehovah. They had lost all ability to see the end of their behavior.

**DEU 32:29 O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!**

Earthly parents have often expressed their concern over their children in the same way God expressed His concern over Israel. Oh, how He wished that they would display some willingness to see where they were going!

**DEU 32:30 How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?**



When God was with Israel, a small force was able to conquer a much larger army. When they had deserted God and He had turned His face away from them, a small force of the enemy was able to conquer a larger number of Israelites.

They should have been able to see the finger of God in the change which had come about.

**DEU 32:31 For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.**

The rock upon which the heathen depended was more like sand. Those who had opposed Israel when Jehovah was with them would be able to bear witness that Israel had a source of power far greater than they had.

**DEU 32:32 For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter:**

When your source of energy or motivation is rooted in the wicked soil of Sodom and Gomorrah, your vines will produce abominable fruit. Such had been the fields in which the heathen had planted their vines.

**DEU 32:33 Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.**



Good grapes supported tasteful life. Grapes grown in the soil of wickedness could produce only that which destroyed life. Israel had need of abandoning the death producing venom of devil worship.

**DEU 32:34 Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?**

**DEU 32:35 To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.**

A pharmacy has hundreds of bottles on the shelves. They are there for the purpose of treating many different diseases. God had a treatment for Israel's sickness. In the proper time He would take it off the shelf and make Israel swallow it.

His people did not know it, but the treatment was approaching faster than they knew. Their pride filled footsteps were to slip from the high road. They would slide into calamity

**DEU 32:36 For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.**

The Lord would allow Israel to be punished until it was evident that their condition was helpless. They were to find themselves at the mercy of their enemies.



**DEU 32:37 And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted,**

God could then ask His people the question, “Where are your idols in which you placed your confidence? Where is the foundation they provided for your security? Their rock was no rock at all.

**DEU 32:38 Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection.**

Israel had poured out their drink offerings at the feet of the false gods. They had killed their fatted calves and offered them before the idols. Now it was time for the idols to protect them from the hunger, the pestilence, the sword and the fear.

**DEU 32:39 See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.**

Now Israel must take a good close look at the real Rock they had deserted. There is no other source of protection. There is no other who can heal the wounds or feed the stomach.

If Israel would reach out and grasp the hand of their Father, no force could separate them. (See Romans 8:35-39,)



Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Rom 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Rom 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The passage above has reference to the Christian age. However, the same principle held true for Israel. They had pulled their hand out of the hand of the Father. They had a terrible need to put it back. If they would come to their senses and turn back to Him, only their own will could tear them from the Father's grasp.

**DEU 32:40 For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever.**

It is common in a court of law for a witness to be told to raise the right hand and swear to tell the truth. God raises his hand and declares that He is eternal.

**DEU 32:41 If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.**

The sword of the Lord is sharp. It is powerful. He will apply it in judgment against His enemies. There will be no mistakes. Those who are against Him will feel His vengeance. (See Romans 12:19.)

Rom 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

**DEU 32:42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.**

When God shoots at His enemies, He does not miss the mark. His arrows will be saturated with the life blood of those who hate Him. But now the scene is reversed. Israel has been punished by being taken captive and humiliated until she sees the need for Jehovah. When this happens, He will be most happy to take vengeance upon those who have captivated and abused His children.

**DEU 32:43 Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his**

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**adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.**

God makes a call for all nations to rejoice with His people. As they repent and come back to Him, He will punish their foes. He will turn His face back toward His children. He will remove the curse from the land.

The song of Moses has ended with a note of happiness. This song will be sung century after century. The cycle of friendship with God, followed by haughty independence, will bring miserable disasters. These will bring some back to reality where they will hear and obey. There will be many who refuse to enter the strait gate. They will be counted as enemies. There will be a few who will travel that narrow road. They will find mercy.

**DEU 32:44 And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun.**

Hoshea is Joshua. He joined Moses in teaching Israel this song. If only they had taken heed, as they entered Canaan, things could have been vastly different.

**DEU 32:45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel:**

**DEU 32:46 And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command**



**your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.**

When the entire song had been delivered to the people, Moses made an urgent plea. Open your hearts to these truths. Make them a part of your rules for life. Teach them to your children.

**DEU 32:47 For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.**

These were not just empty words. When heeded, they could bring happiness in the new land. The longer they attended to God's warnings, the longer they could be allowed to remain in the land to which they had been led.

**DEU 32:48 And the LORD spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying,**

Moses leadership of Israel was concluded. The very day he finished delivering this song to the people, God called for his resignation.

**DEU 32:49 Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession:**



The two names, Abarim and Nebo can be confusing to readers. They need not be. Nebo was a single mountain in the Abarim range. Nebo was in the land of Moab where the people had been gathered during the presentation of the song. Jericho was just across the Jordan on the west side of the river. Moses was to ascend that mountain where he could gain a clear view of the promised land.

**DEU 32:50 And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:**

Moses would die on that mountain. He would be gathered to his people. Aaron had died on Mount Hor. The same statement is made about him. He was also gathered to his people.

This could mean recognition of faithful friends and loved ones after death. It could mean only that he had died as they had done.

We do not know where Moses was buried. This has been a matter of curiosity from that time to this. God knows. We do not.

**DEU 32:51 Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of MeribahKadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.**



We feel a slight tug on our heartstrings when we find that God did not allow Moses to enter into the land after leading the people for all those years. He gave much of himself for others. But God pointed out one serious error. He had not sanctified his Lord when water poured forth from the rock in Meribah Kadesh. Notice that it was something Moses failed to do. It was not something which he did. He failed to give the glory to God.

**DEU 32:52 Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.**

Canaan is typical of heaven. Moses was a very great man, but he was not worthy of leading Israel across the Jordan into the promised land. No man who ever lived was great enough to lead men across the river of death and into heaven.

**Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**





## *Chapter 33*

Moses, the great prophet and leader of Israel for forty years, makes his farewell address to God's chosen nation. This was a typical procedure. Jacob blessed his sons before his death. Christ made a farewell address to his apostles.

The first verse of the chapter calls the address a blessing. It is just as truly a prophecy as it is a blessing. Because a number of the statements later became realities, liberal commentators who discount the possibility of predictive prophecy claim much of this chapter was written after the events took place. This is an incorrect conclusion. Jehovah is not limited to seeing the past.

**DEU 33:1 And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.**

This first verse, along with the next four, are devoted to praise of God for demonstrating His glory and communicating His will to the people. Moses was but a spokesman for the Lord. The blessing is truly God's blessing.

Moses death was just ahead. This must have been an extremely touching time for him. He is now one hundred twenty years of age. Except for the major mistake in failing to give Jehovah the glory for providing water from the rock, he served with honor.

**DEU 33:2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.**

There is no great problem here in that Moses is referred to in the third person. It is quite possible to speak or write of one's self in that manner. In addition, Joshua could have had a small part in the polishing of this account.

The glory of God on Mount Sinai was so brilliant that the people had begged to be excused and that Moses act as an intermediary. Moses received the law on Sinai and transferred it to the people.

The glory shone forth again from Mount Seir. The Lord was accompanied by ten thousands of His holy ones.. Some translate the word as saints. Some see the ten thousand as angels. (Compare Hebrews 2:2.)

Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

A fiery law proceeded from God's right hand. The reader will recall that on the day of Pentecost,



tongues of fire alighted upon the apostles before they were commanded to begin the spread of the gospel. God's authority and power have been demonstrated in both the old testament and the new testament ages. His energy is unlimited. He has a right to be heard!

**DEU 33:3 Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.**

God was the one who loved the people. That is why He chose to reveal His will to them through Moses. The people were to hear the Word of the Lord. They were to receive that Word at the feet of Moses. In doing so, they were also sitting at the feet of Jehovah.

**DEU 33:4 Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.**

Moses was faithful in transmitting God's law to Israel. There are two senses in which the law could be spoken of as the inheritance of the congregation. First, the law itself was a blessing passed down from the Father to His faithful. Second, obedience to the law would lead to the eternal inheritance which awaits the faithful.

**DEU 33:5 And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.**



God was king in Jeshurun (Israel). His law was to be honored. All were His subjects, from the leaders of the tribes, to the least among the congregation. In later days Israel desired a human king like the nations around them. At this point in time such a desire had not been expressed. What would the King have to say about the destiny of His people?

The meat of what is to be said will be built upon a framework of the twelve tribes, or twelve sons of Jacob. It is wise for the reader to compare what is said here with what was said by Jacob when he pronounced his blessing on his sons at the time of his death.

**DEU 33:6 Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few.**

Reuben had forfeited his right of the firstborn as a result of his sin with his father's concubine. Even so, he had not brought a curse of eternal extinction upon his descendants. He was to suffer loss, but the tribe descending from him would not be extinguished.

Note that Simeon's name is unexpectedly omitted at this point. There are those who believe the latter part of this verse originally had reference to Simeon, and that somehow it was later left out. If such was the case, the blessing pronounced upon Reuben and Simeon would have contrasting meanings. Reuben would survive but would be few in number. Simeon would become a tribe with a more plenteous number.



**DEU 33:7 And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies.**

This seems to be a prayer that Judah will be able to survive the battles which were ahead. According to Numbers 2:9, Judah was to lead the army of Israel into the conflict.

Num 2:9 All that were numbered in the camp of Judah were an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth.

Judah would certainly be expected to do all he was able to do. Then with God's help, the prayer is that he might be brought back safely with the rest of the army of Israel.

**DEU 33:8 And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;**

The tribe of Levi had shown a greater understanding of God's concern for the people in days gone by. As a result the tribe had been entrusted

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with the Urim and Thummim through which God's decisions were made clear. They were also given the major responsibility for the teaching of God's Word to the people of Israel.

**DEU 33:9 Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.**

The tribe of Levi had stood against the apostasy of even their own mothers and fathers when the people worshiped the golden calf, as recorded in Exodus 32:26-29.

**DEU 33:10 They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.**

It was only to be expected that such loyalty would be considered when God desired that his law be taught, and the proper worship procedures were to be instituted. Who would be better prepared to take the lead in offering incense and burning sacrifices?

**DEU 33:11 Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands; smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.**



The tribe of Levi was to enjoy health and wealth. They would find the work which they did was acceptable to the Lord. Those who hated the tribe and rose up to destroy it would be defeated. They would be unable to repeat the attacks.

**DEU 33:12 And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.**

Benjamin had been a favorite of his father Jacob. It appears that he was also approved in the sight of Jehovah. The tribe would not hesitate to enter the battles, but it would be found that God protected him as a man might carry his two year old son on his shoulders.

**DEU 33:13 And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath,**

The blessing upon the tribe of Joseph had to do with both material prosperity and with military success. The dew and the rain from heaven would give luxurious crops. The wells from which water springs up from the ground would also cause an abundance of field crops.



**DEU 33:14 And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon,**

The fruit trees would also enjoy the energy cast by the sun and moon. Figs and olives would be found in plenty.

**DEU 33:15 And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills,**

The tribe would find even the mountains bringing forth precious blessings.

**DEU 33:16 And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.**

God had dwelt in the burning bush in the time of Moses. God's affection for the tribe of Joseph would cause blessings to rain down upon his head. He had been sold into slavery in Egypt and had been separated from his family. God would reward him with exceedingly great blessings.

**DEU 33:17 His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people**





**together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.**

Joseph would be especially glorious among the tribes. The power of the tribe would be so impressive that it might be compared to the strength of the unicorn. The unicorn was not the mythical beast pictured in the books of fairy tales. It was very likely the rhinoceros, who has but one horn, but who is very strong.

We find here the mention of Ephraim and Manasseh, which were the two tribes descending from the single tribe of Joseph. The time would come when there would be no more mention of the tribe of Joseph. Ephraim and Manasseh would replace it.

**DEU 33:18 And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents.**

Zebulun and Issachar are used here to talk of blessings in ventures abroad and ventures taking place within the home. Both tribes would be blessed.

**DEU 33:19 They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.**



The success of these tribes in all types of activities would be such that they could call the rest of the tribes together to offer sacrifices together. The blessings would come from both the land and the sea.

**DEU 33:20 And of Gad he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.**

To enlarge Gad was probably to assign the tribe the land east of the Jordan River. Gad would respond by exerting the strength of a lion in the later battles.

**DEU 33:21 And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel.**

The tribe of Gad had been given land before other tribes. God, through Moses, had assigned that portion to the tribe. Gad was then pleased to add his strength to the support of the heads of the rest of the tribes as they took the land with God's approval.

**DEU 33:22 And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.**

A lion's whelp has not yet reached its full measure of strength. When it does so, it will leap



forth to conquer.

**DEU 33:23 And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south.**

There is much uncertainty as to the meaning of this blessing. Adam Clarke suggests that since a number of the apostles were natives of the territory which fell the lot of this tribe of Naphtali, and the preaching of the gospel was given a great thrust from the area, Naphtali was favoured and full of the blessing of the Lord.

The word west here could also be translated as sea. Either translation leaves us guessing. We do know the tribe of Naphtali settled to the north and the west of the Sea of Galilee, Chinnereth.

**DEU 33:24 And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil.**

The tribe of Asher was to expand numerically. It was also to be pleasant to the other tribes. The fact that this tribe was to dip his feet in oil may mean that it was acceptable to the other tribes because of it's prosperity. Oil was used to anoint the head. When the feet are dipped in oil there might be enough of the precious liquid to wash the feet with it.



**DEU 33:25 Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.**

Iron and brass are strong metals. As long as the tribe of Asher existed, it would be strong among the other tribes.

**DEU 33:26 There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.**

There are those who would place these verses from twenty-six to twenty-nine immediately after verse five, which also mentions Jeshurun. They see the verses from six to twenty-five as an editor's insertion. There is no need to see a disconnection. The first five verses glorify God. The middle verses of the chapter speak of His ability to bless His people. The final verses return to talk about the happiness of those who rest upon the mighty everlasting arms of the same God of Jeshurun. There is no other god like unto Him.

**DEU 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.**

Jehovah will provide all of the help needed by His people. His powerful arms support them. He will go before them and make the victory over His enemies, who are also theirs, certain.



**DEU 33:28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.**

This is not quite the same description as the more commonly used “land of milk and honey.” This time it is “corn and wine.” Once the land is taken, Israel will enjoy fine food and drink. Moisture will descend from His bountiful hand to refresh the soil.

**DEU 33:29 Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.**

No other people could be compared with the people of Jehovah. They will be victorious and prosperous. The Lord will fight for them with His sword, and also defend them with His shield. Their gods will be proven false. The places where those false gods were worshiped shall be demolished.

This series of blessings is incomparable. But we must not forget that these were the conditions God promised to the obedient.





## *Chapter 34*

Here we have the last chapter of the five books of the law, which are generally acknowledged to be the writing of Moses. It was to Moses and the prophets that Jesus referred when he stated that if men would not believe Moses and the prophets, those men would not believe if one rose from the dead. Moses was a prophet, and the very greatest among them, with the exception of the Christ Himself.

I think it wise to consider a matter which is worth attention. In days of old, the chapters and verse of the Scriptures were not marked off. Sometimes, even the books followed one another on lengthy scrolls without clear markings of ends and beginnings. It is possible that what we now consider to be the last verse of chapter thirty-three was more closely connected with the thought in this present chapter. This is not a major point, but it could possibly lend just a little light in our search for truth.

In this chapter we read of the final days and the death of this magnificent leader of the nation of Israel. This is followed by an account of the installation of Joshua as Moses' successor.

**DEU 34:1 And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,**

The Israelites had been camped in the plains of Moab, just east of the Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea. The city of Jericho was just across the Jordan.

From the plains, Moses went up to Mount Nebo which was one of the higher mountains of the Pisgah range. It is silly to see a contradiction in the two names, Nebo and Pisgah. Nebo was a spot on the Pisgah range from which the Promised land could be viewed.

How much of the promised land was Moses able to see from that peak? Some claim seeing all of the points mentioned in verses one through three here is completely impossible. These same objectors must accept the same with respect to Satan's temptation of Christ, when the Lord was shown all the kingdoms of the world. If Christ could see all the kingdoms of this world, from the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem, then God would have no difficulty in showing Moses the entire promised land from the top of Mount Nebo. Both must be accepted, or both must be rejected.

**DEU 34:2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea,**

**DEU 34:3 And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.**

The view begins in the north and moves around past the Mediterranean Sea, then moves to the most





southern parts, and then northward again.

**DEU 34:4 And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.**

There must have been a mixture of great joy and great sadness in the mind of Moses as he heard the voice of God. He would have rejoiced in the fact that he had been privileged to lead Israel from bondage in Egypt to the land Jehovah had promised to the three patriarchs hundreds of years before.

The sadness would have come in the realization that his grievous mistake in not giving the glory to God when the water was brought forth from the rock. We ought, however, to remind ourselves of Moses appearance, along with Elijah and Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. In that sense, he did enter into the land. The only sense in which He crossed the Jordan before the rest of Israel is in crossing of the river of death.

**DEU 34:5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.**

Of what did Moses die? All we know is that the Lord spoke, and it was done. Let us hope that the death was peaceful, and that it allowed him to be



transformed to a much better land than earthly Canaan.

**DEU 34:6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.**

Did God bury Moses personally, or did the angels bury him at God's command. Certainly men had no part in the burial. If such had been the case, we would know even thousands of years later where the body had been placed.

Nor do we know precisely why God saw fit to keep the burial place of Moses a secret. One possibility is that He did not wish Moses grave to become a shrine where the great prophet could be worshiped.

**DEU 34:7 And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.**

Ages at the time of death had decreased since the time of Adam, or even that of Abraham. The point here is that Moses was unusually able, both with respect to his senses and his energy. Verse one of this chapter says Moses went up the mountain. Weak and feeble men do not climb mountains.

Nevertheless, we need to harmonize what is stated here with what was said in chapter thirty-one by Moses himself about no longer being able to go out and come in.

There is reason to believe Moses was concerned



about the days to come. He still had the energy to climb to the top of the mountain, but he knew the strenuous days ahead required a younger man. He was not yet in need of a wheelchair. He was in need of someone to lead Israel in the conquest of Canaan.

**DEU 34:8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.**

This is quite a contrast to those days when the people wanted to know why they had been led out into the wilderness to die of hunger, etc. At that time they wished to replace Moses with someone who would lead them back to the food they had eaten in Egypt.

This mourning was not the kind of grief which is normally shared by the friends and loved ones of a departed one. This was an organized period of sorrow over the prophet of God who had led them from disaster thirty-eight years earlier, to the brink of entry into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was very deep sorrow, and also genuine.

**DEU 34:9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.**

The laying on of hands indicated a transfer of power and authority from Moses to Joshua. This new leader was not equal to Moses. Yet he was charged with leading Israel. Joshua was to continue the conquest of the land which was now in actual view.

**DEU 34:10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,**

The rest of the prophets, other than the Son of God, received their information from Jehovah in the form of dreams and visions. Moses received his information without such means.

**DEU 34:11 In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,**

**DEU 34:12 And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.**

There are many ways in which Moses was more like Christ than any other of the prophets.

Moses was born into this earthly world in a humble home. So was the Saviour.

Moses entered into a world where the people were in bondage. Christ was born into a world where men are in bondage to sin.

Moses led God's people through a terrible wilderness. The Great Shepherd calls for men to



“Follow Me.”

There are other likenesses which could be listed. The reader is encouraged to seek some of them out.

But there is one glaring contrast between this man Moses, and Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Moses could only lead Israel to the edge of the Jordan. Jesus can walk with them through the valley of death and into the glory of the streets paved with gold, and the darkness of sin never overcomes the endless day. Jesus can lead men where death is unable to follow. Only the Saviour can bring to a successful conclusion, that to which Moses and the prophets pointed.

## A PERSONAL WORD

This present commentator has reservations about adding this closing word about injecting personal comments at this point. Yet, he feels a need to express his deep gratitude to God for allowing him to read, study and write about the sacred Word of God. He is now seventy-three years of age. He has completed comments on the entire New Testament and these five books of the Law. The books of the Wisdom literature are completed. The New Testament is either in circulation, or is in the hands of a publisher.

The efforts will continue, but the eyes are dimming and the typing fingers are trembling. It is difficult to know how much more may be added.

It is my prayer that God will, in His providential



care, see that His desires be followed. I could do nothing without Him. To Him belongs whatever honor or glory might be associated with this commentary set. I also pray that I have not distorted His Word

