

# Commentary & Notes on Deuteronomy

The commentary and notes below are adapted from the teaching materials of Annie Kartoizian (1906-1989). In 1934 Annie became a missionary in China with OMS. During World War II she spent 21 months in a Japanese concentration camp as a prisoner. She was repatriated in 1943 and sailed on the famous vessel Gripsholm. In 1949 she made a miraculous last-minute escape from Beijing before it fell to Mao's Communists. When she could no longer enter China, Annie went to Taiwan. Annie and her family have been life-long friends of our family. In 1989, while pastoring with the United Armenian Congregational Church of Hollywood I had the honor of participating in her funeral. It was during those years in Los Angeles that Annie gave me her teaching notes (the commentary below) - laboriously typed on what is now yellowed paper with hand written marginal notes, many of which are in Chinese. - Pastor Steve

## INTRODUCTION

### Name Of The Book

The name Hebrew name of the book is "El-leh Had-barim" which means "these are the words." The name "Deuteronomy" is derived from two Greek words, "deuteros" meaning "second" and "nomos" meaning law. Deuteronomy, however, is not a repetition of the law as the name would imply. It is a restating of the law for the new generation which had grown up in the wilderness. They are leaving a nomadic life for the settled life in the chosen land of promise. In this book God reviews their history and the laws which are to keep them in the path of obedience to Him.

### Author Of The Book

The author of the book is Moses.

### Reliability Of The Book

The greatest proof of its reliability comes from Jesus' use of the words from this book when being tempted of the Devil (Matthew 4:1-11). He quoted Deuteronomy 6:13,16; 8:3; 10:20. Satan's departure shows that he too knew and felt the power of the words quoted.

### Brief Outline Of The Book

1. Review of history the children of Israel - chapters 1-3 (page 2)
2. Review of the law - chapters 4-11 (page 3)
3. Instructions and warnings - chapters 12-27 (page 7)
4. Prophecy of Israel's future - chapters 28-30
5. Moses' final words, his song and blessing - chapters 31-33
6. Moses' death - chapter 34

### Central Lesson Of The Book

This is stated in 11:22-28 and points out four important words: "*obey, blessing disobey, curse.*" See also 10:12,13

### Key Word

"Remember" - "forget not"

1. "*Lest you forget*" the law and the covenant - 4:9-13,23
2. "*Remember the Lord your God*" - 8:18
3. "*Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt*" - 5:15; 16:12
4. "*Remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt*" - 7:18; 16:3
5. "*Remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you... in the wilderness*" - 8:2; 9:7; 24:9; 25:17
6. "*Remember the days of old*" - 32:7

## I. REVIEW OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY Chapters 1-3

### Chapter 1

Verse 2: Mount Horeb (Exodus 17:6) the stage before Mount Sinai. The Israelites were eleven days going from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea where they were near the verge of the promised land; after which they were thirty-eight years wandering up and down in the vicinity of this place not being permitted because of their rebellions to enter into the promised land, though they were the whole of the time within a few a miles of the land of Canaan. They were slow travelers because they were slow learners (Hebrews 5:12; 2 Timothy 3:7).

Verse 3: This was a sad year for the children of Israel. In the first month Miriam died (Numbers 20:1). On the first day of the fifth month, Aaron died (Numbers 33:38). And about the conclusion of it, Moses himself died..

Verse 5: The children of Israel were still on the east side of the Jordan over against Jericho.

Verse 6: The children of Israel were at Mount Sinai (Horeb) about eleven months.

Verse 7: The boundaries of the land were set by God - on the south to the mount of the Amorites, on the west to the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, on the north to Lebanon, and on the east to the River Euphrates. Solomon came the nearest to ruling over all this land (1 Kings 4:21).

Verses 9-18: The appointment of the judges, Moses attributes to his own suggestion (Numbers 11:16).

Verses 19-40: Moses states that the sending of the spies was the suggestion of the people. Their wish was the result of unbelief as "faith never wants to spy out what God has given."

Verses 41-46: Their confession of sin was useless. Had they felt what they were saying, they would have bowed to the judgment of God and meekly accepted the consequence of their sin. There is no finer proof of true contrition than quiet submission to the governmental dealings of God. Moses accepted the punishment of God (verses 37,38). Their tears in verse 45 were not true either... Finally the people had to turn back into the wilderness and wander there for nearly forty years. They would not go up into the land in simple faith with God; and God would not go up with them in their self-will and self-confidence.

### Chapter 2

Verses 1-6: God remembers and respects His promise to Esau (Joshua 24:4).

Verse 14: The unbelieving generation died in the wilderness.

Verses 9 and 19: The land which belonged to the descendents of Lot was not to be taken away from them (Genesis 19:37,38).

Verses 24-37: God gave them their commission; some were to be cut off, others were to be spared.

### Chapter 3

Verses 1-11: The story of their initial victories over those whom the Lord was to cut off.

Verses 12-20: The possessions which were given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. Again the men of these two and a half tribes were ordered to cross the Jordan with their brethren and fight until there was rest in the land.

Verses 21,22: Moses spoke words of encouragement to the man who was to do the very thing that he so much wished to do.

Verses 23-27: It is very touching to find this great servant of the Lord requesting that

which could not be granted. He longed to enter Canaan. The portion chosen by the two and a half tribes could not satisfy him. Moses had suffered much both in body and mind in bringing the people to the borders of the promised land; and it was natural enough for him to wish to see them established in it and to enjoy a portion of that inheritance himself. In spite of his earnest prayer and in spite of God's special favor to him, he was not permitted to go over Jordan. God permitted him to see it and he was fully assured that his people were to enter and possess it.

Verses 28,29: He was to help Joshua the chosen leader by: 1) giving him authority in the sight of the people; 2) by encouraging him so that he could meet the difficulties of the work to which he had been called; and 3) by strengthening him in the unfailing promises of God.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LAW Chapters 4-11

### Chapter 4

Verse 1: Here we have the special characteristic of the entire book of Deuteronomy "listen" and "do" that you may "live" and "possess." This is a universal and abiding principle.

Verse 2: The word of God abideth forever and cannot be added to nor can any portion of it be subtracted (1 Peter 1:23). There is nothing lacking, so it cannot be added to; there is nothing superfluous, so it cannot be diminished. Everything we want is there and nothing that is there can be done without (Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18,19).

Verse 6: What makes a nation wise and understanding? Keeping and doing the word of God constitutes wisdom. Almost all the nations in the earth have borrowed from the Jews the principal part of their civil code. Take away what ancient and modern Asia and Europe have borrowed from the Mosaic law and you leave little behind that can be called excellent.

Verses 7,8: This give the true definition of a great nation.

Verses 9,10,40: These verse set before us two things of importance - individual and domestic responsibility - personal and household testimony. God's people were not only to keep their own hearts with diligence, but they were also to solemnly instruct their children to do likewise. This is a universal and abiding duty which cannot be neglected. God attaches great importance to the matter (Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19; Psalm 78:5,6; Ephesians 6:4). Joshua felt this responsibility (Joshua 24:15). If a man knows the worth of his own soul, he will fee the importance of the salvation of the souls of his family. Those who neglect family religion, neglect personal religion.

Verses 10-20: Of all the commandments, the first and second are most emphasized. Here a very solemn warning against idolatry is given. The human heart is prone to idolatry of one kind or another. It was for this reason (verses 12,15) that God did not show Himself to them. He did not assume any bodily shape of which they might form and image. He gave them His word but they heard "only His voice." However God chose to manifest Himself, He took care never to assume any describable form. He would have no image worship because He is spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). These outward things tend to draw the energy of the mind to them, causing it to concentrate on the outward. Acting in this way, a person cannot know much of heart religion... the worship of the heavenly bodies is the oldest form of idolatry.

Verses 21,22: This is the third time that Moses has referred to this fact (1:37; 3:26). Why? Was he seeking to blame others or trying to defend himself? The answer is given in...

Verses 23,24: Moses referred to his own failure in order to make his warning more solemn. It is a serious thing to have to do with God... There are three was of reacting to

discipline: “despise, faint, exercised” (Hebrews 12:5-11).

Verses 25-31: A prophecy of the future and of the mercy of God to a repentant people.

Verses 32-38: It seemed to be a common belief among people that if God appeared to men it was to destroy them. It is true that God often appeared to men to pronounce judgment. But it was different in the case of the chosen people.

Verses 39-40: The basis for their obedience is stated. God had marvelously manifested Himself on their behalf. What claims do God and His Son have on us?

Verses 41-43: In choosing their inheritance on this side of Jordan, the two tribes and a half did not go as far as God desired; but in spite of this failure, God dealt mercifully with them.

Verses 44-49: Probably added either by Joshua or Ezra.

## **Chapter 5**

Verse 1: There are four characteristic verbs: “Hear - learn - keep - do.” The hearing ear is the basis of a true Christian life (Romans 10:17; Proverbs 20:12). 1) God speaks to the people. 2) The people are called to hear what God speaks. 3) To learn what they heard in order that they may be thoroughly instructed in the will of God. 4) To keep God’s testimonies ever in mind, and to treasure them up in a believing and upright heart. 5) That they might do them - obey the whole will of God, taking His word as the basis of their conduct.

Verses 2,3: The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers (only) but with us (also). God made His covenant not with individuals but with the nation. This is known as the Mosaic Covenant - the Ten Commandments. (The New Covenant - Hebrews 8:8) It was first given in Exodus 20.

Verses 6-21: Here we have the Ten Commandments but not exactly as we had them in Exodus 20. In Exodus 20 we have history; in Deuteronomy 5 we have not only history but commentary. This is not intended to be a literal repetition of the former statement. Notice the two statements concerning the keeping of the Sabbath. In Exodus 20:8-11 the command to keep the Sabbath is grounded on creation (Exodus 20:11). In Deuteronomy 5:12-15 it is grounded on redemption (Deuteronomy 5:15). Here the thought is that one day in seven should be sanctified (returned / redeemed) so that the servants might rest, and this is urged upon them on the consideration of their having been servants in the land of Egypt. They were now to enter into Canaan where they would have servants and this comment was necessary.

Verses 22-33: Moses now proceeds to remind them of the solemn circumstances which accompanied the giving of the law, together with their own feelings and utterances at the time. They were afraid when they heard the voice of the Lord and saw the fire that surrounded Him. They asked Moses to hear the words of the Lord and relay them to them—lest they die. But the way of life was pointed out to them (verses 29,32,33). God never gave a command which He did not design that man should obey. He who would select some portions and reject others cannot live. The way of life is obedience to the word and command of the Lord.

## **Chapter 6**

Verses 1-3: God has given the moral law as a rule of life, therefore obedience to it is absolutely necessary. The commandments must be observed in order to be understood; and they must be understood in order to be obeyed.

Verse 4: Here we see the great cardinal truth which the nation of Israel was specially responsible to hold fast and confess—the unity of the Godhead. The words of verse 4 may be variously rendered in English: “*Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one; Jehovah is*

*our God, Jehovah alone; Jehovah is our God, Jehovah who is one; Jehovah, who is our God, is the one Being.*” Israel was called to confess this truth in the face of an idolatrous world with its many gods. In Joshua 24:14,15, Joshua reminds the people of the fact that their fathers had served other gods and he warns them of the danger of giving up this central and foundational truth of the one true living God. On this verse the Jews lay great stress. It is one of the four passages which they write on their phylacteries (frontlets worn to preserve the law in memory) - Deuteronomy 6:8; 11:18; Matthew 23:5. (These frontlets or phylacteries were strips of parchment on which were written four passages of Scripture in the following order: Deuteronomy 11:13-22; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Exodus 13:11-16; Exodus 13:1-10) A special ink prepared for the purpose was used. They were then rolled up in a case of black calfskin which was attached to a stiffer piece of leather. They were placed at the bend of the left arm. Those worn on the forehead were written on four strips of parchment and put into four cells within a square case. The statement, *“They make their phylacteries broad”* (Matthew 23:5) refers not to the phylactery itself but to the case in which the parchment was kept.

Verse 5: So wonderful was their relationship to Jehovah that they were to love Him supremely (Deuteronomy 10:12; 11:1,13,22; cf., Matthew 22:37).

Verses 6-9: Where were the words of the commandment to be? 1) *“On your heart”* - If the words were not in the heart then there would be no love for Jehovah. The heart is the very source of all the issues of life. Whatever is in the heart comes out through the lips and in the life. 2) *“Teach them diligently to your children”* - This was to be done with diligence. It was to be done at home as well as abroad. They were to begin and end the day with God. Thus religion was to be the great business of their lives. 3) *“On your hand, and...between your eyes”* - This was to keep the commandment of the Lord ever before them. 4) *“On the doorposts of your house and on your gates”* - This was also to keep the word of Jehovah before them as well as to be a public testimony. As the years passed, some Jews forgot the purpose of this precept and used these words as superstitious charms.

Verses 10-12: In earthly prosperity men are apt to forget heavenly things.

Verses 13-19: How did they tempt Him in Massah (Exodus 17:1-7). They said, *“Is the Lord among us or not?”*

Verses 20-25: Here is a brief catechism, containing the essentials of religion. This was to be taught by parents to children.

## **Chapter 7**

Verses 1-5: In these verses we see God’s mercy toward His people and His judgment upon nations who persist in their wicked way. These idolatrous nations were to be utterly destroyed by the command of God. Their cup of iniquity was full and they were to be cut off...No marriages could be made with them because the heart is naturally wicked and there was more likelihood that the idolatrous wife would draw the believing husband aside than the believing husband would be able to bring over his idolatrous wife to the true faith.

Verse 6: This is the reason for the separation that must exist between Canaanites and the children of Israel. There could be no connection with the workers of iniquity because they were related to a holy God.

Verses 7,8: It was not because of their goodness that God choose them to be His people. He intended to show His goodness to the world through them, but not because of their goodness or holiness (see Ezekiel 16). They were to remember that they owed all their dignity, their privileges, and their blessings to the goodness of God.

Verses 9,10: There are two important facts set before us here. Toward those who keep His commandments, God is faithful and merciful. Those who hate Him shall be dealt with

by the righteous Judge.

Verses 11-16: Israel was to “*listen - keep - do*” and Jehovah was to “*love - bless - multiply.*” (verses 12,13)

Verse 17-26: The remedy for their fears was God’s presence (verse 21). But there was something more to be feared than the strength of the enemy - the snare of their idols. God’s presence with them depended upon their separation from all that pertained to the enemy.

## **Chapter 8**

Verses 1-5: They were to look back and review all that God had done for them. This was to draw out their hearts in praise for the past and to strengthen their confidence in God for the future. His blessings, His humblings, His discipline were all to be reviewed. Note on verse 3: This is the first of our Lord’s quotations from the book of Deuteronomy in His wilderness temptation by the devil (Matthew 4:1-11). Christ did not reason with Satan. He did not use any special power. He used the one weapon against the enemy which we can use - the Word of God.

Verses 6-9: They were not only to look backward but they were also to look forward. The land of promise, their inheritance, their home before them; and God was leading them into it. The same demand was to be made of them in the future as has been made in the past - Keep the commandments, walk in His ways and fear Him.

Verse 10: Their primary business was to bless the Lord for His goodness to them. (Psalm 50:23).

Verses 11-20: A warning against the danger of being full. It is then easy to forget the Giver. Why is there constant repetition of such warnings and admonitions? It is easy for us to forget, therefore God constantly warns and calls us to remembrance (2 Peter 1:12-15).

## **Chapter 9**

Verses 1,2: This chapter opens with the words “*Hear, O Israel.*” This is one of the key words of this book (5:1; 6:3,4; 9:1; 20:3). These words are followed by words of weight and importance.... Thirty-eight years before this they had come nearly to the verge of the promised land, but they were not permitted to pass over. Now the time had come for them to cross the border... Moses does not hide from them the fact that there were serious difficulties and great enemies to be overcome by the children of God; but we may look at the difficulties from the human viewpoint or the divine one.

Verse 3: This verse gives the answer to all difficulties (c.f. Romans 8:31).

Verses 4-7: Two principles are set forth here. The children of Israel came into possession of this land because God was faithful (7:7,8) to His promises to their fathers. The seven nations who were to be cast out were driven out because of their wickedness. Every landlord has a perfect right to eject bad tenants; and the nations of Canaan had transgressed the law of their Creator (later Israel was ejected for the same reason).

Verses 8-14: Israel had no ground for self-satisfaction. Their own history was one of failure and rebellion. The intercession of Moses, the man who was accused of taking too much upon him (Numbers 16:3), saved them from destruction. He did not even consider the matter of becoming a great nation himself; he sought the glory of God in the forgiveness of the children of Israel.

Verse 15-29: Moses only desires that Jehovah should be glorified and Israel pardoned and blessed. The Lord said, “*Your people whom you have brought from Egypt*” (verse 12); but Moses said, “*They are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out*” (verse 29).

## **Chapter 10**

Verses 1-5,10,11: Moses never seemed to weary of God's constant repetition of the past (cf. Philippians 3:1).

Verses 6-9: The journeyings of Israel.

Verses 12,13: What God required was very plainly state to them and repeated many times. In the New Testament dispensation, we are not under the law but "love" leads us to keep His commandments (John 14:15,23). Whole hearted obedience is the only path of true happiness. "*For your good*" (verse 13).

Verse 14-22: Who is the God whom they are instructed to obey? They were not only to keep their eyes upon God, but they were also to remember their own past history and experience in order that their hearts might be drawn out in sympathy and compassion toward the poor homeless stranger (verse 19).

## **Chapter 11**

Verse 1: They were to love the Lord because without this there could be not obedience coupled with happiness in the soul.

Verses 2-7: It was of the highest importance that all the mighty acts of Jehovah should be kept prominently before the hearts of the people and deeply engraved on the tablets of their memory. The human mind is in constant danger of forgetting and losing the impression which God desired them to keep forever in their hearts.

Verses 8,9: Note the two clauses linked together: "*keep the whole commandment...that you may be strong.*" The greatest strength in the Christian life comes through obedience to the Word of God.

Verses 10-12: Here is a vivid contrast between Egypt and Canaan. Egypt had no rain from heaven; it was all human effort there. The land of Egypt was dependent upon its own resources; the land of Canaan was wholly dependent upon God - upon what came from heaven. The habit in Egypt was to water with the foot; the habit in Canaan was to look up to heaven. It was Israel's privilege to love and serve Jehovah; it was Jehovah's desire to bless and prosper Israel. Happiness and fruitfulness were to be the sure accompaniments of obedience.

Verses 13-15: As long as they walked in loving obedience, the blessings of heaven were to be upon them and their land.

Verses 16,17: The feet are sure to follow the heart. Hence the need of keeping the heart with all diligence (Proverbs 4:23; 23:26). The blessings of heaven were dependent upon the obedience of the people.

Verses 18-21: The commandments were not to be a heavy yoke; obeying them was a privilege which would result in making their land the very atmosphere of heaven.

Verses 22,23: Victory was dependent upon obedience too.

Verses 24,25: The whole land lay before them; they had but to take possession of it as a gift from God. They were simply to plant the foot upon the possession which God had given them; but they had to take each step in faith.

Verse 26-32: See following: Deuteronomy 27:12,13; Joshua 8:33-35.

### **III. REVIEW OF THE LAW Chapters 12-27**

#### **Chapter 12**

Verses 1-3: The all important principal of obedience has now been established and we come to the practical application of the principal to the habits and ways of the people. The land was Jehovah's; they were to hold it as tenants. Therefore it was absolutely necessary that they immediately demolish all that pertained to idol worship.

Verses 4-7: They were to have one place of worship - a place chosen by god and not chosen by man. Here they were to come with their sacrifices and offerings.

Verses 8-14: In the manner of their worship (as well as in the object and place) they were to be governed entirely by the word of Jehovah. Self-pleasing, self-choosing, and self-will was to end (cf. verse 8 with Judges 17:6; 21:25). The Lord was to make these choices because: 1) it was necessary to prevent idol worship; 2) it was necessary to have uniformity in the worship of Jehovah; and because 3) every rite and ceremony had a meaning and pointed out the good things which were to come (2 Chronicles 11:16-19). Had it not been so, every man would have varied slightly at least from his neighbor.

Verses 20-25: Personal liberty and enjoyment were not entirely curtailed. The only restriction was in reference to the blood which could not be eaten. It had to be offered to God because it represented life and atonement (Leviticus 17:11).

Verses 29-32: The Word of God was to form a sacred enclosure round about His people, within which they might enjoy His presence and receive His blessings.

### **Chapter 13**

Verses 1-5: Here we have divine provision made for all cases of false teaching and false religious influence. The human heart is easily led astray by any thing that appears to be a sign or a wonder, especially if such are connected with religion. We do not have the ability in ourselves to resist the influence of signs and wonders. Only the Word of God can fortify the soul against such. In this way error, even when backed up by miracles, can be detected. Security is to be found in the love of the truth which is only another way of expressing love for God.

Verses 6-11: Withstanding and rejecting a prophet or dreamer with whom there was no personal relationship is nothing as compared with having to treat severely one who is loved. The teacher of idolatry was to be put to death. One could not spare nor conceal his most intimate one if he was guilty of such sin. This was the highest offense against God and had to be punished by death.

Verses 12-18: The evil referred to in the text was of the very gravest character. It was an attempt to draw the people away from the one living and true God. It touched the very foundation of Israel's national existence. It was not merely a local municipal question, but a national one. If one city was permitted to practice idolatry, the evil would soon spread; therefore the contagion had to be destroyed in its birth. God did not permit them to take the spoils of these idolatrous cities. Therefore this work of destruction could not be a temptation to them; it was only done in obedience to the law of God.

### **Chapter 14**

Verse 1,2: They were not their own; they belonged to Jehovah. It was for this; They belonged to Jehovah. It was for this reason that they had not right to disfigure themselves in any way displeasing to Him. The Lord is so near to us and so intimate in our relationship to Him that He is interested in all our habits and ways (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

Verses 3-20: The law as to clean and unclean beasts, fishes, and fowls. The eleventh chapter of Leviticus also presented this subject. The instructions in Leviticus are given primarily to Moses and Aaron. In Deuteronomy they are given directly to the people. Deuteronomy is not a mere repetition of Leviticus.

Verse 21a: There is a marked distinction between the Israel of God and the stranger. It was not that Israel in itself was better than the stranger; it was their relationship to God. Jehovah was holy and they were His people.

Verse 21b: (cf. Exodus 23:19; 34:26). The Lord's people must carefully avoid everything contrary to nature.



Verses 22,23: This referred to the second tithe which they themselves were to eat (cf. Leviticus 27). The first tithe was given to the Lord by giving it to the Levites. They in turn paid a tenth part of this tithe to the priests (Numbers 18:24-28; Nehemiah 10:37,38). Then of that which remained, the owners separated a second tithe which they ate before the Lord the first and second years, but in the third year it was given to the Levites and to the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). In the fourth and fifth years it was eaten again by the owners, and in the sixth year it was given to the poor. The seventh year was a Sabbath to the land and then all things were common (Exodus 23:10,11). Through the tithe they acknowledged the ownership of God.

Verses 24-26: God had appointed a place but He recognized human limitations of strength.

Verses 27-29: *“Shall come... shall eat...shall be filled.”* God delights to meet the need of all.

## **Chapter 15**

Verses 1-6: Glory to God and blessing to man are two things that are linked together by God.

Verses 7-11: *“You shall open your hand to him”* (cf. Leviticus 25; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Galatians 6:10; James 1:5). An open heart and a wide hand are characteristics of God.

Verses 12-14: Liberty and poverty would not be in moral harmony. The brother was to be sent on his way free and full. The poor were never to cease out of the land. To this passage our Lord refers in Mark 14:7. God leaves the poor among men in order to exercise the feelings of compassion, tenderness, and mercy. Otherwise man would become stoic or a brute. (cf. Leviticus 25)

Verse 15: The remembrance of Jehovah’s grace in redeeming them out of Egypt was to be the ever-abiding and all-powerful motive of their acts of mercy toward others.

Verses 16,17: If a servant preferred perpetual slavery and a mark thereof, he was free to chose such a course. This testified well of the master and the servant. Speaking to a master one might say, *“How many hearts do you employ?”*

Verse 18: The Lord would not only have the generous thing done but done in such a way as to gladden the heart of the one to whom it was done.

Verses 19-23: Only that which was perfect was to be offered to God. The first-born, unblemished male was the figure of the spotless Lamb of God.

## **Chapter 16:1-17**

Verses 1-8: Chapter 16 lists three unusual feasts. First is The Passover (cf. Leviticus 23). In Deuteronomy the place of celebration is insisted upon. It was not mentioned in Exodus because it was then celebrated in Egypt (cf. Exodus 12). We have nothing about the place in Numbers because there it was kept in the wilderness (cf. Numbers 28-29). In Deuteronomy it is settled because instructions are given for Canaan. In this section the unleavened bread is spoken of as the “bread of affliction” (verse 3). There is not a word about joy, praise, or triumph. This was because the unsavory unleavened bread was to keep them in mind of their affliction and bondage in Egypt and also because it points to the great price paid by our Redeemer to free us from the bondage of sin.

Verses 9-12: The Feast of Pentecost.

Verse 16,17: They were not to come empty into the Lord’s presence. They were to come with the heart full of praise and the hands full of the fruits given by God to gladden the hearts of the Lord’s servants and the Lord’s poor.

Verses 18-20: God’s government is characterized by justice and truth. Human judgment and human government, if left to themselves, are subject to great corruption. Hence it

was necessary to list the dangers that would prove temptations to those who served as judges and officers.

Verses 21,22: Groves were planted about idol temples for the purpose of the obscene worship performed in them. The Israelites were carefully to avoid everything which might lead them in the direction of the idolatries of the heathen nations about them. The altar of God was to be distinctly separate from the groves and shady places where false gods were worshipped. The divine worship was to be publically performed for the general edification of all (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

## **Chapter 17**

Verses 1-7: The charge of idolatry was the most solemn and awful that could be brought against an Israelite. Therefore God required that the charge be substantiated by the most careful witnesses. This principal is of absolute importance in government. There must be competent testimony before forming a judgment.

Verses 8-13: Here is the divine provision made for the perfect settlement of all questions. All matters of controversy were to be definitely settled by the judgment of God as expressed by the priest or the judge appointed by God for the purpose. The man who refused to abide by this final settlement forfeited his life because he was then in a state of rebellion against the highest authority and against God.

Verses 14-17: There were three things which the king was not to do: multiply horses, wives, gold and silver. The first was forbidden because: 1) horses appear to be generally furnished by Egypt and such commerce might lead to idolatry; 2) horses might lead the people to depend upon a cavalry. The second was prohibited because it would lead to foreign alliances and would be the means of introducing the manners and customs of other nations as well as their idolatry (cf. 1 Samuel 8:5,19,20; 10:19; 12:17; 1 Kings 9:26-28; 10:14,26-29; 11:1,3,4).

Verses 18-20: The surest way to bring the king to an acquaintance with the divine law was to oblige him to write out a fair copy of it with his own hand in which he was to read daily. This was essential as the laws of God were permanent and no king could make any new law. The kings were considered to be vice-regents of Jehovah (2 Chronicles 23:11).

## **Chapter 18**

Verse 1-8: The priests and Levites here are linked together and presented as the Lord's servants, wholly dependent upon Him and intimately identified with His altar and His service. When the children of Israel were living near Jehovah the altar of God was well attended to and the priests and Levites were well supplied. If Jehovah has His portion, His servants were sure to have theirs; if He was neglected, so were they. They were bound up together. They were to live upon the voluntary gifts and offerings presented to God by the whole congregation. In the days of the sons of Eli the priests were erring (1 Samuel 2:13-17). In the days of Nehemiah the people were not faithful (Nehemiah 13:10-12).

Verses 9-14: Observe verse 14 - They were to remember that they were God's people and they were not to do the things that worshippers of false gods did.

Verses 15-22: Instead of diviners, observers of time, etc. God promised to give them an infallible guide who should tell them all things that made for their peace. The primary reference here may have been to Joshua and may include the prophetic order at large. But the prophesy is that of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Deuteronomy 4:25-31; 17:14-20) as these prophecies culminate in Messiah. Here is one of the Old Testament's most specific predictions of Jesus and Peter clearly understood it as such (John 5:4-6; Acts 3:20-23). Christ alone was like unto Moses as a prophet (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). Christ

was like unto Moses as Mediator between God and His people (Deuteronomy 5:5; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6 [greater than Moses]). Christ was like unto Moses in faithfulness (Hebrews 3:2,5,6). Christ was like unto Moses in that He was a Legislator. Moses gave the laws to Israel; Christ gave the new law contained in the Gospels. Note that verse 18 gives the definition of a prophet. Verses 20-22 give the test of a true prophet.

## **Chapter 19**

Verses 1-7: Reference again to the cities of refuge and those for whom the cities of refuge were provided. "You shall measure the distances" (verse 3). The Jews inform us that the roads to the cities of refuge were made very broad (32 cubits); and even, so that there should be no impediments in the way; and were constantly in repair.

Verses 8-13: In providing a refuge for the slayer the glory of God is maintained. In pronouncing judgment upon the murderer, His glory is also maintained. The unwitting slayer was met by a provision of mercy; the guilty murderer fell beneath a sentence of justice.

Verse 14: Jehovah had given the land to Israel and assigned to each tribe and family their proper portion marked off and indicated with landmarks. Fences were not used in these early days; property was marked out by stones or posts. It was easy to remove one of these landmarks and set it in a different place, and thus the dishonest man enlarged his own estate and lessened that of his neighbor. According to the word of the Lord the landmarks were not to be meddled with. Each portion was to be left intact as Jehovah had given it and according to the boundary lines He had set.

Verse 15: This subject has already come before us. We may judge its importance from the fact of the numerous references made to it in the Bible (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; Matthew 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28).

Verses 16-21: We see here how God hates false witnesses (cf. Exodus 20:16). Though we are under grace now and not under the law, still the false witness is just as hateful to God. Surely the more fully we enter into the grace in which we stand, the more intensely we shall abhor false witness, slander, and evil-speaking in every shape and form.

## **Chapter 20**

Verses 1-4: This presents the Lord as a Man of War. The battles described are those which the children of Israel were to have with the Canaanites in order to get possession of the promised land. This conquest was not theirs but Jehovah's. Vengeance is still in His hands (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19-21). The people were to be addressed first by the priest and then by the officers. The priest was here the representative of God.

Verses 5-9: From this passage we learn that there are two things essential to all who would fight for the Lord: 1) a heart disentangled from the affairs of the world (Deuteronomy 24:5; 2 Timothy 2:4); and 2) an unclouded confidence in God (Judges 7:3). How are these obtained (Ephesians 6:13-18).

Verses 10-18: They were to discriminate between the cities which were far from them and those that pertained to the seven judged nations (cf. Joshua 9:1ff). In verses 10-15 we learn that they were to make overtures of peace to those who were far from them. In verses 16-18 we learn that they were to make no terms whatsoever with the cities of the seven judged nations.

Verses 19,20: They were instructed to carefully guard against all reckless waste of aught that can be made available for human use. To waste any creature of God is displeasing in His sight.

## Chapter 21

Verses 1-9: First of all the elders and judges appeared to attend to the claims of truth and righteousness. Then the priests came to obtain forgiveness for the land. Truth and righteousness, grace and mercy - all entered into the solution of the problem when the land was polluted.

Verses 10-14: The question of the female captive. Does not apply to the Canaanite women as they were forbidden to marry them (Deuteronomy 7:3).

Verses 15-17: The unchangeable right of the first-born.

Verses 18-21: The case of the stubborn and rebellious son. This law was very severe but it must have acted as a preventative of crime. Children have rights but they also have duties (Exodus 20:12; 21:15,17). See following: The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. Under the law the father is called upon to lay hold of his son and bring him forth to be stoned; under grace, the father runs to meet the returning son, falls on his neck and kisses him, clothes him in the best robe, puts a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and then prepares a feast for him.

Verses 22,23: (cf. Galatians 3:10; Philippians 2:8). This shows the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in making Himself a curse for us. It also furnishes us with an illustration of the way in which the Holy Spirit puts His seal upon the writings of Moses in general and upon Deuteronomy 21 in particular.

## Chapter 22

Verses 1-4: God looks upon life as a precious thing. These rules emphasize the fact that a man must love his neighbor as himself (Leviticus 19:18,34; Mark 12:28-31). "*You shall not...ignore them*" (verse 1). "*You may not ignore it*" (verse 3). A man cannot pretend that he does not see the occasion to give assistance to his neighbor. The priest and Levite, when they saw the wounded man, passed by on the other side (Luke 10:31,32). This was an outstanding breach of the merciful law mentioned above.

Verse 5: Natural distinctions God Himself has appointed ought to be respected. Here is a probably allusion to the unchaste practices connected with certain idolatrous rites in which the sexes exchanged clothing.

Verses 6,7: Kindness extends to animals as well (Exodus 20:10; Leviticus 22:27,28; Deuteronomy 25:4). If they destroyed both young and old, the breed would soon fail. By cutting off the means of their continual support their days would be shortened on the land. The young never knew liberty, the older did. The young might be taken and used for any lawful purpose but the older was not to be brought into a state of captivity. All these creatures are objects of God's particular care and provision and it cannot be well with us if we treat them without consideration and feeling. Everything contrary to the spirit of kindness and mercy God abhors. Note the reward - same as in Deuteronomy 5:16,33.

Verse 8: Houses in the east are in general built with flat roofs and on them men walk to enjoy the fresh air, to converse, and to sleep. The battlement or balustrade was to prevent person from falling off. The Lord expects His people to be thoughtful and considerate of others' in building a house they were to think not only of themselves and their convenience but also of the safety of others. If a man neglected this law and the death of another was occasioned by it, the owner of the house was considered in the light of a murderer. These rules show us what man is capable of if left to himself (Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19). These rules also show us the way in which God provides and plans for everything connected with His people. Nothing is too trivial for His care and planning. The divine presence in their midst was to govern their private habits as well as their outward deeds (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19).

Verses 9-11: Some suppose that mixtures of different sorts in seed and breed, etc., were

employed for superstitious purposes (Leviticus 19:19). Perhaps there was also a physical reason for these laws - two beasts of separate species cannot comfortably associate together and work together. However the general design of these laws was to prevent improper alliances in civil and religious life. To this Paul seems to refer in 2 Corinthians 6:14. This is simply to be understood as prohibiting all intercourse between Christians and idolaters in social, matrimonial, and religious life. To teach the Jews this important lesson, a variety of precepts relative to mixtures were placed in the law so that they might ever have this truth before their eyes and in their thinking.... verse 9: "seed" - the Word of God - the only proper material for the spiritual workman to use (Luke 8:11).

Verses 13-30: Punishment for unchastity.

### **Chapter 23**

Verses 1-8: That which God abhors cannot remain in His camp. The persons here designated should not be incorporated with the Jews as to partake of their civil privileges.

Verses 9-14: They were cautioned against wickedness when they went forth against their enemies in order that the camp might be kept free from every defilement. All this was necessary because God was in the midst (verse 14).

Verses 15,16: This probably refers to a servant who had left an idolatrous master that he might join himself to God and His people. In any other case it would have been injustice to have harbored the runaway slave.

Verse 18: Many public prostitutes dedicated to their gods a part of their impure earnings. These were an abomination to the Lord. Probably Micah referred to this in Micah 1:7.

Verses 19,20: Love and mercy were to govern them not the desire for gain (Leviticus 25:35-38).

Verses 21,23: Vows must be diligently paid (Numbers 30; Ecclesiastes 5:4,5).

Verses 24,25: In passing through a vineyard or a field a man might eat of the grain or corn but could not carry any away with him. It was on the permission granted by this law that the disciples plucked the ears of corn as related in Matthew 12:1. This was a considerate and humane law made for the traveler (Deuteronomy 24:19-22). Jewish commentaries limit this law to harvest laborers.

### **Chapter 24**

Verse 1-5: Marriage and divorce. Jesus referred to these laws in Matthew 5:31,32; 19:3-9. It appears that a Jew might put away his wife for any cause that seemed good to himself and so hard were the hearts that Moses suffered this. We find they continued this practice even to the time of our Lord, who strongly reprehended them on the account and showed that such license was wholly inconsistent with the original design of marriage. Though God suffered them to put away their wives, yet He considered all after-marriages in that case to be pollution and defilement (verse 4). In the sight of God nothing can be a legal cause of separation and adultery on either side. In such a case, according to the law of God, a man may put away his wife and a wife may put away her husband for it appears that the wife had as much right to put away her husband as the husband had to put away his wife (Mark 10:12).

Verses 6-11: Verses 6 through 22 focus on consideration for the poor. Small hand mills which can be worked by a single person were formerly in use among the Jews. As therefore the day's meal was generally ground for each day, and there was no stock from beforehand, they were forbidden to take either of the stones to pledge because in such a case the family must be without bread. On this account the text terms the millstone the man's life.

Verse 12,13: The man might resume his claim in the morning and have the pledge daily

returned and thus keep up his property in it till the debt was discharged. The Jews in several cases did act contrary to this rule and we find them reprov'd for it by the prophet Amos (Amos 2:8).

Verses 14-15: If a servant's pay was delayed, he would naturally be expected to cry unto God against him who withholds it.

Verse 16: For example see 2 Kings 14:6; Ezekiel 18:2-4,19,20.

Verse 17: God gives special consideration to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (Psalms 10:14,18; 146:9).

Verse 18: Forgetting the feelings, fears, and anxieties of the poor is the reason for pride and arrogance in the rich.

Verses 19-22: The corners of the field, the gleanings, and the forgotten sheaf were all the property of the poor. This the Hebrews extended to any part of the fruit or produce of the field which had been forgotten in the time of general ingathering as appears from the concluding verse of this chapter. For comments on verse 22 see verse 18 above.

## **Chapter 25**

Verses 1-3: Chapter 25 focuses on justice in law and in business. This is a very important passage in God's administration of justice. "*Forty stripes*" - more stripes would be inhumane. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 11:24, "*forth lashes less one,*" refer to a custom that came as a result of their manner of beating. They used a scourge that had three cords so that every stroke was counted for three stripes. They could not give an even forty - either thirty nine or forty-two. The latter was above the number set by God. This number forty is used many times in cases of humiliation, affliction, or punishment. Moses fasted and prayed forty days and forty nights (Deuteronomy 9:9,18). Elijah fasted forty days as did our Lord (1 Kings 19:8; Matthew 4:2). Israel was afflicted in the wilderness forty years for their sins (Numbers 14:33,34). See also Leviticus 12:4,5; Ezekiel 4:6; Jonah 3:4.

Verse 4: While the oxen were at work some muzzled their mouths to hinder them from eating the corn. Here Moses forbids this. This was to be a symbolic precept teaching the people to be kind to their servants and laborers, especially to those who ministered to them in holy things - so Paul applies it (1 Corinthians 9:9-14; 1 Timothy 5:17,18).

Verses 5-10: The ordinance concerning marrying the wife of that brother who died childless (cf. Genesis 38:6-8; Ruth 4:4-6; Matthew 22:24-26). The eldest child was to take the name of the deceased husband and inherit the estate.

Verses 11,12: Miscellaneous laws.

Verses 13-16: Just weights demanded by a just God. Weights were anciently made of stone and some had two sets of stones, a light and a heavy. With the latter they bought their wares. By the former they sold them. Such scheming has ever been possible to the human race (Leviticus 19:35,36; Proverbs 11:1; Ezekiel 45:10; Micah 6:11).

Verses 17-19: Judgment pronounced against Amalek (cf. 1 Samuel 15; Esther 3:1,10).

## **Chapter 26**

Verses 1-4: This contains the ordinance of the basket of the first-fruits. After God had led them into the land of promise they could offer the fruits of Canaan. This was intended to keep them in continual remembrance of the kindness of God in preserving them through so many difficulties and literally fulfilling the promise He had made to them. God being the author of all their blessings, the first-fruits of the land were consecrated to Him as the author of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17).

Verses 5-11: Israel had nothing to boast of as far as nature was concerned. Their history showed that. "*A wandering Aramean was my father*" from this we are to understand that

Jacob was so-called from his long residence in Syria with his father-in-law Laban. These verses may have been an early Israelite creed recounting God's faithfulness to His promises. (cf. Genesis 28:1-5; 29-31)

Verses 12,13: This is suppose to mean the third year of the Sabbatical year in which the tenths were given to the poor (cf. Deuteronomy 14:22,27-29). Here we find put together two very important things - praising God and doing good to men. They must always go together.

Verses 14-19: Thus the people publically declared that they had taken Jehovah to be their God. God also publically declared that He had taken them to be His people by the blessings which He poured down upon them. Thus the covenant between God and His followers was made and ratified. "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). While Israel regarded God's word and kept His testimonies they were the greatest and most respectable of all nations. But when they forsook God and His law they became the most contemptible of all nations.

### **Chapter 27**

Verses 1-13: Israel had already acknowledged Jehovah to be their God and Jehovah had acknowledged them as His people (cf. Joshua 8:30-35). Now they were to present sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving - burnt offerings and peace offerings (no sin or trespass offerings). "The whole commandment" - some suppose this means that the Ten Commandments were written on the stones. Probably the blessings and the curses mentioned in this and the following chapter were the words written on the stones of the altar. They contained a very good resume of the whole law both in reference to the promises and threatening.

Verses 14-26: The curses pronounced upon those who disobeyed. Commandments 1,2,3 and 4 (verse 15); commandment 5 (verse 16); commandment 6 (verses 24,25); commandment 7 (verse 20-23); commandment 8 (verse 17); commandment 9 (verse 19); commandment 10 (verse 26). They said "amen" to the law and offered burnt and praise offerings.

## **IV. PROPHECY OF ISRAEL'S FUTURE Chapters 28-30**

### **Chapter 28**

This chapter naturally divides itself into two sections: Verses 1-14 - the results of obedience (14 verses); and Verses 15-68 - the consequences of disobedience (53 verses). The section containing the curses is more than three times the length of the one containing the blessings (cf. Deuteronomy 4:24; 9:3; Hebrews 10:31; Revelation 8:1-5),

Verses 1-14: The results of obedience.

1. Supremacy as a nation - verses 1,13,14

Note: Upright men are represented as going to the kingdom of God, and God's blessings as following and overtaking them in their journey (Psalm 23:6).

2. Material prosperity - verses 3-6,8,11,12

Coming and going in their work and employment, they were to be blessed (Psalm 121:8).

3. Victory over enemies - verse 7

(Leviticus 26:17b-36b)

4. A national testimony shall go out proving that they are Jehovah's people - verses 9,10

Note: The way of obedience is a straight way; it goes right forward. He who declines either to the right or the left goes astray and misses the way (verse 14).

Verses 15-68: The consequences of disobedience.

1. The curses are the counterpart of the blessings - verses 15-35 (cf. verses 3 and 16; 5 and 17).
2. The Babylonian captivity prophesied - verses 36-48  
The prophecy was made about 1451 B.C. Fulfilled about 600 B.C. (950 years later) (cf. 2 Kings 25:1-7,9,10,18-21).
3. The Roman captivity prophesied - verses 49-63  
Titus in 70 A.D.
4. Present dispersion among all nations - verses 64-68  
Titus sent some Hebrews to the mines in Egypt.

## **Chapter 29**

Verse 1: This verse seem to belong more properly with chapter 28 as a widely different subject follows. In some of the most correct Hebrew Bibles it is marked as the 69th verse of chapter 28.

Chapter 29 focuses on The Palestinian Covenant. There are 8 covenants in all:

1. Edenic - Genesis 1:28
2. Adamic - Genesis 3:15
3. Noahic - Genesis 9:1-15; 8:20-22
4. Abrahamic - Genesis 15:18
5. Mosaic - Exodus 19:5,6
6. Palestinian - Deuteronomy 29:1; 20:1-4,19,20
7. Davidic - 2 Samuel 7:16
8. New Covenant - Hebrews 8:8

Israel entered Canaan on this conditional covenant which they utterly violated. For this reason they were disrupted and finally cast out (1 Kings 12:19,20,24; 2 Kings 17:1-8; 24:1; 25:1). The introductory words to the covenant are found in chapter 29:

Verses 2-4: They refuse to receive such a heart, such ears, and such eyes from God. If they had not been such perfectly free agents as could either use or abuse their privileges, God could not have made this complaint of them. God made the human will free, and in spite of all the influence of sin and Satan, He preserves its liberty. Had man no free will, he could neither be punished nor rewarded. A mere machine cannot be accountable for its action. God had given Israel all the means of knowledge and helps of His grace and Spirit which were necessary but they had not made faithful use of their advantages. Therefore they had not an obedient heart, seeing eyes and hearing ears. They had abused the grace which could have produced this change in them.

Verses 5-8: God's mercies to them had been great.

Verse 9: Future obedience would mean future prosperity.

Verses 10-15: They were about to enter into a covenant with God. A covenant implies two contracting parties. Hence God is represented as being there, and they and all their families are before Him. They represented not only the present generation but also all future generations of this people.

Verses 18-28: This is an awful warning to those who act as roots of bitterness in the midst of the people of God and to all who countenance the (verse 18). If they obeyed, they were to be a testimony to the nations that they belonged to Jehovah. If they disobeyed, the nations were to know why they were punished by Jehovah.

Verse 29: This verse has been variously translated and interpreted. Perhaps it might read like this: *"What God has thought proper to reveal, He has revealed. What He has revealed is essential to the well-being of man, and this revelation is intended not for the present time merely nor for one people, but for all succeeding generations. The things which He has not revealed, concern not man but God alone, and are therefore not to be*



*inquired after.*” The things that were hidden belonged unto the Lord, but those things that were revealed belonged unto the children of Israel and their descendants (cf. Deuteronomy 30:11-14).

### **Chapter 30**

Verse 1: Dispersion for disobedience (cf. Deuteronomy 28:63-68).

Verse 2: Future repentance while in dispersion (Isaiah 55:6,7; Jeremiah 29:13; Joel 2:12,13).

Verse 3: This must refer to a more extensive captivity than that which they suffered in Babylon.

Verses 4,5: As this promise refers to a return from a captivity in which they had been scattered among all nations, consequently it is not the Babylonian captivity which is intended and the repossession of their land must be different from that which was consequent on their return from Babylon.

Verse 6: National conversion. This promise remains yet to be fulfilled. Their heart, as a people, has never yet been circumcised nor have the various promises in this chapter been every yet fulfilled. The law made no provision for the circumcision of the heart, which implies the remission of sins and purification of the soul from all unrighteousness. And, as circumcision itself was only a sign of spiritual good, consequently the promise here refers to the days of the Messiah and to this all the prophets and all the apostles give witness (Romans 2:29; Colossians 2:11,12). These promises cannot be fulfilled to the Jews but in their acceptance of the Messiah (Amos 9:9-15; Romans 11:26,27).

Verses 7-9: The future of Israel and Israel’s enemies. Should we pray for them? (Psalm 122:6).

Verses 11-20: The final warning. *“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you (to comprehend or perform) neither is it far off”* (verse 11). *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (Moses) from among you, from your brothers - it is to him you shall listen... I (God) will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all I command him”* (Deuteronomy 18:15,18). Note Micah 5:2 - He is to be born in Bethlehem of Judea. Note how Paul interprets this passage (especially verses 12-14) in Romans 10:1-9. *“Life and good”* (verse 15) present future blessings and *“death and evil”* present future miseries. Were there no such thing as free will in man these sayings could not be reconciled with sincerity. God has made the human will free. Hence man is responsible for his actions because they are his. Hence he can be rewarded and he can be punished. Without love there can be no obedience (verse 20). Without obedience love is fruitless and dead. *“Holding fast to Him”* - temporary love and obedience will ultimately fail.

## **V. MOSES FINAL WORDS, HIS SONG AND BLESSING Chapters 31-33**

### **Chapter 31**

Verses 1,2: These one hundred and twenty years were divided into three remarkable periods: 1) Forty years he lived in Egypt, in Pharaoh’s court, acquiring all the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:20,23); 2) Forty years he sojourned in the land of Midian in a state of preparation for this great and important mission (Acts 7:29,30); and 3) Forty years he guided, led, and governed the Israelites under the direction and authority of God - in all one hundred and twenty years. Moses called attention to himself not to draw out expressions of sympathy but to strengthen his appeal to the hearts of the people.

Verses 3-6: There is no word of murmuring, no tinge of jealousy or envy in his reference to the one who was to take his place. All selfish considerations seemed to be lost in his

one great objective - that of encouraging the hearts of the people to walk in the path of faith and obedience.

Verses 7,8: Joshua needed a special word for himself as one called to occupy a prominent and distinguished place in the congregation. But the word to him is the same as addressed to the whole assembly. He is assured of the divine presence and power with him. This was enough for Joshua as well as for the least of the assembly.

Verses 9-13: Moses delivered the law which he had written to the priest with a charge that they should read it every seventh year publically to all the people. Two things claim our attention: 1) The public assembly was for the purpose of hearing His word; and 2) Those who heard the Word were to put it into action. This law probably meant the discourses and precepts mentioned in the preceding chapters or the book of Deuteronomy. Probably Moses wrote two copies, one of which he gave to the priests and Levites for general use and the second of which he laid up beside the ark as a standard copy for reference and to be a witness against the people should they break the law or become idolatrous. Every seventh year was a year of release (Deuteronomy 15:1) at which time the people's minds were free to hear and profit by the words of God. It is strange that this commandment relative to the reading of the law every seven years should not have been attended to. It is first mentioned in Joshua 8:30,34 (five hundred and thirty years later it was done in the reign of Jehoshaphat - 2 Chronicles 17:7-9). Two hundred and eighty-two years later it is mentioned as having been done in the reign of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:30). Nehemiah states that they followed this commandment after the return from Babylon (Nehemiah 8;2). There is no other record from that time to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Verses 14-21: The Lord called Moses and Joshua to the tabernacle. God appeared to them and informed Moses of his approaching death. He also delivered to Moses a prophetic or historical song or poem which he was told to leave with Israel for their instruction and reproof. The song of Moses was to be a witness for Jehovah against the children of Israel. They were shown how to avoid evil but, if they did not avoid the evil, the threatened punishment was to come upon them and the song would testify against them by showing that they had been sufficiently warned and might have escaped those disasters through obedience.

Verse 22: Moses probably wrote the song the same day and taught it to the Israelites.

Verse 23: See verses 7 and 8 above.

Verses 24-29: Man's history is a blotted one from beginning to end. Moses felt himself justified in inferring what would take place from what had already happened.

## **Chapter 32**

The song of remembrance. The purpose for the song is stated in 31:16,19,22. In the original this song is a composition of great excellence. It is distinguished as poetry in every Hebrew Bible and is written in its own short half lines. It takes in the whole range of God's dealings with Israel from first to last and presents a most solemn record of their grievous sin and of divine wrath and judgment.

Verses 1-3: The name of God is the foundation of everything and it shall stand forever.

Verse 4: He is "*the Rock*" not merely a rock.

Verses 5,6: "*They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children because they are blemished.*" Because they had the blot of sin on them, because they were spotted with iniquity and marked idolaters, therefore God renounced them. There may be an allusion here to the marks which the worshippers of particular idols had on different parts of their bodies, especially on their foreheads.

Verses 7,8: When God divided the earth among mankind he reserved twelve lots

according to the number of the sons of Jacob, which He was now about to give to their descendents according to His promise.

Verses 9-14: *“The Lord’s portion is His people.”* As holy souls take God for their portion, so God takes them for His portion. God represents Himself as happy in His followers; and they are happy in and satisfied with God as their portion. The following verses show how God took care of His portion.

Verses 15-18: Up to this point we have God, His thoughts, His loving interest, His gracious dealings. Now the human side is presented. The mercies of God led the Israelites to nourish a spirit of self-complacency. The gifts were accepted but the Giver was shut out. “Jeshurun” is the poetical name of Israel “the upright.” The Septuagint translates this as “loved one.” This name is used elsewhere in the Bible and signifies Israel (Deuteronomy 33:5,26; Isaiah 44:2).

Verses 18-26: This is a record of God’s dealings with His rebellious people. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

Verse 29: God yearns over them.

Verse 43: This song ends with God.

Verses 44-47: Again Moses urges the people to obedience to the Word of God.

Verse 48-52: As God had spoken to Moses, so He now prepares to act. Moses was not to see the land of Canaan except from the mountain top.

### **Chapter 33**

Blessing the twelve tribes. There is a marked difference between the blessings of Moses and the blessings of Jacob as given in Genesis 49. Jacob gives the history of the action so his sons; Moses presents the actings of divine grace in them and toward them. Jacob views his sons in their personal history; Moses view them in their covenant-relationship with Jehovah.

Verses 1-5: The blessings of God were upon them. There are several promises to be noted in the following verses. From God’s dealings, Moses infers that God loves His people (verse 3).

Verse 12: As Benjamin was loved by his father, Jacob, so God loves His people.

Verse 23: This may refer to the great fertility of the country that fell to this tribe. However, there were other special blessings conferred on this tribe. The light of the gospel shone brightly here (Matthew 4:13-16). Christ’s chief residence was at Capernaum in this tribe (Matthew 9:1; Mark 2:1. cf. Matthew 11:23). It is generally allowed that the apostles were principally of this tribe.

## **VI. THE DEATH OF MOSES Chapters 34**

### **Chapter 34**

This chapter could not have been written by Moses. Some believe that Deuteronomy 34 should constitute the first chapter of the book of Joshua. Some think that Ezra wrote this chapter, while others think that the seventy elders added it after Moses’ death.

Verses 5,6: It is probable that the reason why Moses was buried thus privately was to prevent the Israelites from paying him divine honors.

Verses 10-12: Moses is given great honor (Luke 9:28-36; Revelation 15:1-3). God’s work does not cease because a leader dies. God’s word does not cease because a prophet dies. All are fallible. God’s work and word are everlasting (Luke 21:33).