EDIFIED EDITION

Deuteronomy

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

34	959	Old	5
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Deuteronomy 1 opens Moses' last words to Israel, spoken east of the Jordan in the fortieth year. He reminds the people how the LORD told them to leave Horeb and take the land, how he appointed leaders and judges to share the weight of governing them, and how at Kadesh-barnea they listened to the spies' fears and refused to go up. The LORD swore that none of that generation except Caleb and Joshua would see the good land. When they then attacked against His word, the Amorites drove them back.

1 These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel
across the Jordan, in the wilderness, in the Arabah
opposite Suph,[1] between Paran and Tophel, Laban,
Hazeroth and Di-zahab.

2 It is eleven days' journey from Horeb[2] to Kadesh-
barnea by the Mount Seir road.

3 In the fortieth year, on the first day of the
eleventh month, Moses spoke to the Israelites,
telling them everything the LORD had
commanded him to tell them.

4 This was after he had struck down Sihon king of
the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, and Og
king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth, at
Edrei.

5 Across the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses set
about explaining this law.[3] He said:

6 "The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb and
said, 'You have stayed long enough at this
mountain.

7 Turn and set out, and go to the hill country of the
Amorites and to all their neighbours in the
Arabah, in the hill country, in the lowlands, in the
Negev and along the coast: the land of the
Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river,
the River Euphrates.

8 See, I have set the land before you. Go in and
take possession of the land the LORD swore to
give to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
and to their offspring after them.'

9 At that time I said to you, 'I cannot carry you by
myself.

10 The LORD your God has multiplied you, and
today you are as many as the stars in the sky.

11 May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase
your number a thousandfold and bless you, just as
He promised!

12 But how can I bear on my own the load of you,
the burden of you and your quarrels?

13 Choose wise, discerning and respected men
from each of your tribes, and I will set them as
heads over you.'

14 You answered me, 'What you have told us to do
is good.'

15 So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise
men and well known, and set them over you as
heads: some over thousands, some over hundreds,
some over fifties and some over tens, with officials
for each tribe.

16 At that time I charged your judges, 'Hear the
cases between your brothers, and judge fairly
between one man and another, whether his
brother or a foreigner living with him.

17 Do not show favour in judgement; hear the small
and the great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for
judgement belongs to God. Any case too hard for
you, bring to me, and I will hear it.'

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

19 We then left Horeb as the LORD our God had
commanded us, and crossed the whole of that vast
and fearful wilderness you saw on the way to the
Amorite hill country, until we reached Kadesh-
barnea.

20 I said to you, 'You have reached the hill country
of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving
us.

21 See, the LORD your God has set the land before
you. Go up and take possession of it, as the LORD,
the God of your fathers, told you. Do not be afraid
or lose heart.'

22 Then all of you came to me and said, 'Let us
send men ahead of us to search out the land for us
and bring us back word about the route we should
take and the towns we will come to.'

23 The plan seemed good to me, so I took twelve of
your men, one from each tribe.

24 They set off up into the hills, reached the Valley
of Eshcol and explored it.

25 Taking some of the land's fruit with them, they
brought it down to us and reported, 'It is a good
land that the LORD our God is giving us.'

26 But you were not willing to go up. You rebelled
against the command of the LORD your God.

27 You grumbled in your tents and said, 'It is
because the LORD hates us that He brought us
out of the land of Egypt, to hand us over to the
Amorites to destroy us.

28 Where can we go up to? Our brothers have
made our hearts melt by saying, "The people are
bigger and taller than we are; the towns are large,
with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakim[4]
there."'

29 Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified or afraid
of them.

30 The LORD your God, who goes before you, will
Himself fight for you, just as you saw Him do for
you in Egypt,

31 and in the wilderness, where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, all the way you travelled until you came to this place.’

32 Yet for all this you did not trust the LORD your God,

33 who went before you on the way, in fire by night and in the cloud by day, to seek out places for you to camp and to show you the road you should take.

34 When the LORD heard what you said, He was angry and swore,

35 ‘Of all the men of this evil generation, not one shall see the good land I swore to give your fathers,

36 except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and to him and his sons I will give the land he has walked on, because he followed the LORD wholeheartedly.’

37 Because of you the LORD was angry with me too, and said, ‘You also shall not go in there.

38 Joshua son of Nun, who serves you, shall go in. Encourage him, for he will lead Israel to take it as their inheritance.

39 And your little ones, who you said would be taken as plunder, your children who today do not yet know good from bad, they shall go in. To them I will give it, and they shall possess it.

40 But as for you, turn round and set out for the wilderness by the road to the Red Sea.’

41 Then you answered me, ‘We have sinned against the LORD. We will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.’ And each of you strapped on his weapons, thinking it an easy thing to go up into the hill country.

42 But the LORD said to me, ‘Tell them, “Do not go up and do not fight, for I am not among you. You will be beaten by your enemies.”’

43 So I told you, but you would not listen. You rebelled against the LORD’s command and went up into the hill country in your arrogance.

44 Then the Amorites living in that hill country came out to meet you, and they swarmed after you like bees[5] and cut you down in Seir, all the way to Hormah.

45 You came back and wept before the LORD, but the LORD did not listen to your voice or turn His ear to you.

46 So you stayed at Kadesh many days, all the days that you stayed there.

1 Perhaps short for Yam Suph, the Red Sea (Hebrew ‘Sea of Reeds’); the places named in this verse cannot all be identified.

2 Horeb is Deuteronomy’s usual name for Mount Sinai.

3 Hebrew תּוֹרָה (torah), ‘instruction, teaching’; in Deuteronomy the whole of Moses’ teaching, later written in ‘the Book of the Law’ (31:24–26).

4 The descendants of Anak, remembered for their great size; see Numbers 13:22, 33.

5 That is, in swarms and without letting up.

Chapter 2

Deuteronomy 2 continues Moses’ review of the journey. After long years around Mount Seir the LORD sends Israel north, telling them not to provoke Edom, Moab or Ammon, for He has given those lands to the descendants of Esau and Lot, just as He drove out the giant peoples before them. By the time Israel crosses the Zered Valley, the whole generation of fighting men has died. Sihon king of Heshbon refuses Israel passage, and the LORD gives him and his land into Israel’s hand.

1 Then we turned and set out into the wilderness by the road to the Red Sea, as the LORD had told me, and for many days we went round Mount Seir.

2 Then the LORD said to me,

3 ‘You have gone round this hill country long enough. Turn north.

4 Give the people this command: “You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be very careful.

5 Do not start a fight with them, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to set your foot on. I have given Mount Seir to Esau as his possession.

6 Pay them money for the food you eat, and pay them money for the water you drink.”

7 For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have lacked nothing.’

8 So we went on past our brothers, the descendants of Esau who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road from Elath and Ezion-geber. Then we turned and went along the road to the wilderness of Moab.

9 And the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab or provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession. I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as their possession.’

10 (The Emim used to live there, a people great and numerous and as tall as the Anakim.

11 Like the Anakim, they were also counted as Rephaim,[1] but the Moabites call them Emim.

12 The Horites also used to live in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them. They destroyed them and settled in their place, just as Israel did in the land the LORD gave them as their possession.)

13 ‘Now get up and cross the Zered Valley.’ So we crossed the Zered Valley.

14 From the time we left Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley was thirty-eight years, until the whole generation of fighting men had gone from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them.

15 Indeed the LORD’s hand was against them, to wipe them out from the camp, until they were all gone.

16 When the last of the fighting men among the people had died,

17 the LORD said to me,

18 ‘Today you are to cross the border of Moab at Ar.

19 When you come near the Ammonites, do not harass them or provoke them, for I will not give you any of the land of the Ammonites as a possession. I have given it to the descendants of Lot as their possession.’

20 (That too was counted as a land of the Rephaim. Rephaim used to live there, but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim,

21 a people great and numerous and as tall as the Anakim. The LORD destroyed them before the Ammonites, who dispossessed them and settled in their place,

22 just as He had done for the descendants of Esau who live in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites before them. They dispossessed them and have lived in their place to this day.

23 And the Avvim, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, were destroyed by the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor[2] and settled in their place.)

24 ‘Get up, set out and cross the Arnon Valley. See, I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand. Begin to take possession of it, and engage him in battle.

25 This very day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you on all the peoples under the whole sky. When they hear the report of you, they will tremble and writhe in anguish because of you.’

26 So I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon with an offer of peace:

27 ‘Let me pass through your land. I will keep strictly to the road; I will not turn aside to the right or to the left.

28 Sell me food for money, so that I may eat, and give me water for money, so that I may drink. Only let me go through on foot,

29 as the descendants of Esau who live in Seir did for me, and the Moabites who live in Ar, until I cross the Jordan into the land the LORD our God is giving us.’

30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate, in order to give him into your hand, as He has now done.

31 The LORD said to me, ‘See, I have begun to hand Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to take possession, so that you may own his land.’

32 Then Sihon came out against us with all his army to fight at Jahaz.

33 The LORD our God handed him over to us, and we struck him down, with his sons and all his people.

34 At that time we captured all his towns and devoted every town to destruction,[3] men, women and little ones. We left no survivor.

35 Only the livestock we took as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the towns we had captured.

36 From Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley, and the town in the valley itself, as far as Gilead, not one town was too high for us. The LORD our God gave them all to us.

37 But you did not go near the land of the Ammonites, nor anywhere along the Jabbok River, nor the towns of the hill country, nor any place the LORD our God had forbidden.

1 An old name for the giant peoples who once lived east and west of the Jordan; compare Genesis 14:5 and 15:20.

2 Probably Crete; the Caphtorim are the Philistines (Amos 9:7).

3 Hebrew חָרַם (charam), to give something over wholly to the LORD, here by destroying it; see the notes at Numbers 18:14 and 21:2.

Chapter 3

Deuteronomy 3 completes Moses' account of the conquest east of the Jordan. The LORD gives Og king of Bashan into Israel's hand, with sixty fortified towns, and the land from the Arnon to Mount Hermon is shared out among Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh, on condition that their fighting men cross over to help their brothers. Moses pleads to be allowed to cross the Jordan and see the good land, but the LORD refuses. He is to view it from the top of Pisgah and to strengthen Joshua, who will lead the people in.

1 Next we turned and went up the road to Bashan, and Og king of Bashan came out with all his army to meet us in battle at Edrei.

2 The LORD said to me, 'Do not be afraid of him, for I have given him into your hand, with all his people and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon.'

3 So the LORD our God gave Og king of Bashan into our hand as well, with all his people, and we struck him down until no survivor was left to him.

4 At that time we captured all his towns. There was not a town we did not take from them: sixty towns, the whole region of Argob, Og's kingdom in Bashan.

5 All these were fortified towns with high walls, gates and bars, besides a great many villages without walls.

6 We devoted them to destruction, as we had done to Sihon king of Heshbon, devoting every town to destruction, men, women and little ones.

7 But all the livestock and the spoil of the towns we took as plunder for ourselves.

8 So at that time we took from the two kings of the Amorites the land across the Jordan, from the Arnon Valley to Mount Hermon

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

10 all the towns of the tableland, all Gilead and all Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, towns of Og's kingdom in Bashan.

11 (Og king of Bashan was the only one left of the remnant of the Rephaim. His bed[1] was made of iron; is it not still in Rabbah of the Ammonites? It was nine cubits long and four cubits wide,[2] by the ordinary cubit.)

12 Of the land we took possession of at that time, I gave the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory from Aroer by the Arnon Valley, with half the hill country of Gilead and its towns.

13 What remained of Gilead, together with all Bashan where Og had been king, I assigned to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (All Argob, the whole of that part of Bashan, was once known as Rephaim country.

14 Jair, of the tribe of Manasseh, took all Argob up to the Geshurite and Maacathite border, and gave his own name to Bashan, calling it Havvoth-jair,[3] the name it still bears.)

15 To Machir I gave Gilead.

16 And to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave the land from Gilead down to the Arnon Valley, with the middle of the valley as the border, and up to the Jabbok River, the border of the Ammonites,

17 and the Arabah too, with the Jordan as its border, from Chinnereth[4] down to the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea,[5] below the slopes of Pisgah on the east.

18 At that time I commanded you, 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All your fighting men are to cross over armed ahead of your brothers the Israelites.

19 But your wives, your little ones and your livestock (I know you have a great deal of

livestock) may stay in the towns I have given you,

20 until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as He has to you, and they too take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving them across the Jordan. Then each of you may return to the possession I have given you.’

21 At that time I commanded Joshua, ‘Your own eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings. The LORD will do the same to all the kingdoms you are crossing over to.

22 Do not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.’

23 At that time I pleaded with the LORD:

24 ‘Lord GOD, You have only begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand. What god is there in heaven or on earth who can do deeds and mighty acts like Yours?

25 Please let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that fine hill country, and Lebanon.’

26 But the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. ‘Enough!’ the LORD said to me. ‘Do not speak to Me about this matter again.

27 Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes to the west and north, to the south and east. Look with your own eyes, for you are not going to cross this Jordan.

28 But give Joshua his charge, and strengthen and encourage him, for he will cross over at the head of this people, and he will give them the land you are about to see as their inheritance.’

29 And we remained in the valley facing Beth-peor.

1 Or ‘his coffin’. The Hebrew word usually means a bed or couch.

2 About 4 metres by 1.8 metres (13 feet by 6 feet); a cubit is about 45 centimetres.

3 ‘The villages of Jair’; compare Numbers 32:41.

4 The Sea of Galilee.

5 The Dead Sea.

Chapter 4

Deuteronomy 4 calls Israel to keep the statutes and rules Moses teaches, neither adding to them nor taking from them, for they will show the nations Israel’s wisdom. At Horeb the people heard the LORD’s voice from the fire but saw no form, so they must make no image of anything in heaven or on earth. If they turn to idols they will be scattered among the nations, yet if they seek the LORD with all their heart they will find Him, for He is a merciful God. No other people has heard God speak and lived; the LORD is God, and there is no other. Moses sets apart three cities of refuge east of the Jordan, and the introduction to the law that follows is given.

1 Now, Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you to do, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

2 Do not add anything to the word I am commanding you, nor take anything away from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I am giving you.

3 Your own eyes have seen what the LORD did over Baal of Peor: the LORD your God destroyed from among you every man who followed Baal of Peor.[1]

4 while every one of you who clung to the LORD your God is still living today.

5 See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may live by them in the land you are entering to possess.

6 Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the peoples. When they hear of all these statutes they will say, ‘This great nation is surely a wise and understanding people.’

7 For what great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us whenever we call on Him?

8 And what great nation has statutes and rules as righteous as this whole law that I am setting before you today?

9 Only be on your guard and watch yourselves closely, so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Make them known to your children and your grandchildren.

10 Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me,

‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear
My words, so that they may learn to fear Me all
the days they live on the earth, and teach them to
their children.’

11 You came near and stood at the foot of the
mountain, while the mountain blazed with fire to
the very heart of the sky, with darkness, cloud and
thick gloom.

12 Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You
heard the sound of words but saw no form; there
was only a voice.

13 He made known to you His covenant, the Ten
Words,[2] and commanded you to keep it; and He
wrote them down on two stone tablets.

14 And at that time the LORD commanded me to
teach you statutes and rules for you to keep in the
land you are crossing over to possess.

15 So watch yourselves very carefully. Since you
saw no form of any kind on the day the LORD
spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire,

16 do not act corruptly by making yourselves a
carved image in the shape of any figure, whether
formed like a man or a woman,

17 or like any animal on the earth, or any winged
bird that flies in the sky,

18 or anything that creeps on the ground, or any
fish in the waters below the earth.

19 And when you look up to the sky and see the
sun, the moon and the stars, all the host of
heaven, do not be drawn away into bowing down
to them and serving them, things the LORD your
God has allotted to all the peoples under the
whole sky.

20 You, though, the LORD took and led out of
Egypt, that furnace for smelting iron, to be His
very own people, His inheritance, as you are this
day.

21 The LORD was angry with me because of you,
and He swore that I would not cross the Jordan or
enter the good land the LORD your God is giving
you as an inheritance.

22 I am to die in this land; I will not cross the
Jordan. But you are about to cross over and take
possession of that good land.

23 Take care not to forget the covenant the LORD
your God made with you, by making yourselves a
carved image in the shape of anything the LORD
your God has forbidden.

24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire,[3] a
jealous God.

25 When you have had children and grandchildren
and have grown old in the land, if you then act
corruptly by making a carved image in any shape,
and do what is evil in the sight of the LORD your
God, provoking Him to anger,

26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you
today that you will quickly perish from the land
you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will
not live long there; you will be utterly destroyed.

27 The LORD will scatter you among the peoples,
and only a few of you will be left among the
nations where the LORD will drive you.

28 There you will serve gods made by human
hands, of wood and stone, which cannot see or
hear or eat or smell.

29 But from there you will seek the LORD your
God, and you will find Him, if you search for Him
with all your heart and with all your soul.

30 When you are in distress and all these things
have come upon you, in the days to come you will
return to the LORD your God and listen to His
voice.

31 For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He
will not let you go or destroy you, nor forget the
covenant with your fathers which He swore to
them.

32 Ask now about the days long past, before your
time, from the day God created human beings on
the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the
other: has anything as great as this ever
happened, or has anything like it ever been heard
of?

33 Has any people heard the voice of God speaking
out of the fire, as you have heard, and lived?

34 Or has any god ever tried to go and take for
himself one nation out of another nation, with
trials, with signs and wonders, with war, with a
strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with
great and terrible deeds, as the LORD your God
did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 You were shown these things so that you might
know that the LORD is God; there is no other
besides Him.

36 From heaven He made you hear His voice to
discipline you, and on earth He showed you His
great fire, and you heard His words out of the fire.

37 Because He loved your fathers, He chose their offspring after them, and brought you out of Egypt by His own presence and His great power,

38 to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you, to bring you in and give you their land as an inheritance, as it is today.

39 Know this today, then, and take it to heart: the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.

40 Keep His statutes and His commandments, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you, and so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

41 Then Moses set apart three towns east of the Jordan,

42 to which anyone who had killed his neighbour unintentionally, without having been his enemy beforehand, might flee and, by fleeing to one of these towns, save his life:

43 They were Bezer, on the tableland in the wilderness, belonging to Reuben; Ramoth in Gilead, belonging to Gad; and Golan in Bashan, belonging to Manasseh.[4]

44 This is the law that Moses set before the Israelites.

45 These are the testimonies, the statutes and the rules that Moses spoke to the Israelites after they came out of Egypt,

46 It was across the Jordan, in the valley facing Beth-peor, in the country of the Amorite king Sihon who had reigned at Heshbon; Moses and the Israelites defeated him on their way out of Egypt.

47 They seized his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan as well, both of them Amorite kings whose territory lay beyond the Jordan towards the sunrise,

48 from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley as far as Mount Sion (that is, Hermon),

49 with all the Arabah east of the Jordan, as far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah.

1 See Numbers 25:1–9.

2 Hebrew עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים (aseret haddevarim), the Ten Commandments; so also 10:4. Compare Exodus 34:28.

3 Quoted in Hebrews 12:29.

4 The cities of refuge; see Numbers 35:9–15.

Chapter 5

Deuteronomy 5 begins Moses' second and longest address. The covenant made at Horeb was made with the generation now living, and Moses repeats the Ten Words the LORD spoke from the fire. The Sabbath command is grounded here in Israel's slavery in Egypt, and the last command forbids both coveting a neighbour's wife and craving his goods. Moses recalls how the people, afraid of the fire, asked him to hear the LORD for them, and how the LORD approved and wished that they would always have such a heart to fear Him.

1 Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "Hear, Israel, the statutes and the rules I am speaking in your hearing today. Learn them and be careful to do them.

2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb.

3 It was not with our fathers that the LORD made this covenant, but with us, all of us who are alive here today.

4 The LORD spoke with you face to face on the mountain, out of the fire.

5 At that time I was standing between the LORD and you to tell you the word of the LORD, because you were afraid of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He said:

6 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you lived as slaves.

7 You shall have no gods other than Me.

8 You shall not make yourself a carved image, nor a likeness of any form in the heavens above, on the earth below, or in the waters beneath the earth.

9 You shall not bow down before them or serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God: I hold the children answerable for their fathers' wrongdoing, to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me,

10 but I keep loyal kindness for thousands, those who love Me and obey My commandments.[1]

11 You shall not take up the name of the LORD your God for an empty purpose, for the LORD will not hold guiltless anyone who takes up His name for an empty purpose.

12 Keep the day of the Sabbath and make it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you.[2]

13 You have six days to labour and do all your work,

14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath for the LORD your God. Do no work on it: not you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the foreigner within your gates, so that your male and female slaves may rest as you do.

15 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD your God brought you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

16 Honour your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may enjoy long life and that things may go well for you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.[3]

17 You shall not murder.

18 You shall not commit adultery.

19 You shall not steal.

20 You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.[4]

21 You shall not covet your neighbour's wife. You shall not crave your neighbour's house, his field, his male or female slave, his ox, his donkey, or anything else your neighbour owns.'[5]

22 These are the words the LORD spoke with a loud voice to your whole assembly on the mountain, out of the fire, the cloud and the thick darkness; and He added nothing more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

23 When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the heads of your tribes and your elders came to me

24 and said, 'See, the LORD our God has let us see His glory and His greatness, and out of the fire we have heard His voice. This day we have seen a man live, though God has spoken with him.

25 Why then should we die now? This great fire will devour us. If we go on hearing the voice of the LORD our God, it will be the death of us.

26 For what mortal has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the fire, as we have, and lived?

27 You go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us everything the LORD our God tells you, and we will listen and do it.'

28 The LORD heard your words as you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard what this people have said to you. All they have said is right.

29 If only they would always have such a heart as this, to fear Me and keep all My commandments, so that it might go well with them and their children for ever!

30 Go and tell them to return to their tents.

31 But you, stand here with Me, and I will tell you the whole commandment, the statutes and the rules that you are to teach them, so that they may do them in the land I am giving them to possess.'

32 So be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. Do not turn aside to the right or to the left.

33 Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and enjoy long life in the land you will possess.

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1 So the traditional reading; the written Hebrew has 'His commandments'.

2 Exodus 20:8 has 'Remember'; here 'Keep' (שָׁמוֹר, shamor). The other differences from Exodus 20 are in verses 14–15 and 21.

3 Quoted in Ephesians 6:2–3.

4 Hebrew עֵד שָׁוְא (ed shav), 'an empty witness'; Exodus 20:16 has עֵד שֶׁקֶר (ed sheqer), 'a lying witness'.

5 Exodus 20:17 puts the house first and uses one verb; here the wife comes first, and a second verb (תִּתְאַוֶּה, titavveh, 'long for, crave') is used of property.

Chapter 6

Deuteronomy 6 sets out the heart of the law: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one." Israel is to love the LORD with all their heart, soul and strength, keep His words on their hearts, teach them to their children, and bind and write them where they will always be seen. When they enjoy towns and houses and vineyards they did not build or plant, they must not forget the LORD or follow other gods, nor put Him to the test as at Massah. When their children ask what the law means, they are to tell the story of how the LORD brought them out of Egypt.

1 This is the commandment, the statutes and the
rules, that the LORD your God commanded me to
teach you to do in the land you are crossing over
to possess,
2 so that you may fear the LORD your God, you and
your son and your grandson, by keeping all His
statutes and His commandments that I am giving
you, all the days of your life, and so that your days
may be long.
3 Hear, then, Israel, and be careful to do them, so
that it may go well with you and you may increase
greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, as
the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised
you.
4 Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is
one.[1]
5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your
heart, with all your soul and with all your
strength.[2]
6 These words that I am commanding you today
are to be on your heart.
7 Impress them on your children, and talk about
them when you sit at home and when you walk
along the road, when you lie down and when you
get up.
8 Tie them as a sign on your hand, and let them be
a band between your eyes.[3]
9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and
on your gates.[4]
10 When the LORD your God brings you into the
land He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac
and Jacob, to give you, a land with great and fine
cities you did not build,
11 houses full of good things you did not fill,
cisterns cut out that you did not cut, vineyards
and olive groves you did not plant, and you eat
and are full,
12 then take care that you do not forget the LORD,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where
you lived as slaves.
13 Fear the LORD your God, serve Him, and swear
by His name.[5]
14 Do not go after other gods, the gods of the
peoples around you,
15 for the LORD your God who is among you is a
jealous God. Otherwise the anger of the LORD
your God will blaze against you, and He will wipe
you off the face of the earth.
16 You shall not put the LORD your God to the test,
as you tested Him at Massah.[6]
17 Keep the commandments of the LORD your God
with care, and His testimonies and His statutes
that He has commanded you.
18 Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight,
so that it may go well with you, and you may go in
and take possession of the good land the LORD
swore to give your fathers,
19 driving out all your enemies before you, as the
LORD has said.
20 In time to come, when your son asks you, 'What
is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes and
the rules that the LORD our God has commanded
you?'
21 then tell your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in
Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with
a strong hand.
22 Before our eyes the LORD sent signs and
wonders, great and terrible, on Egypt, on Pharaoh
and on all his household.
23 But He brought us out from there, to bring us in
and give us the land He swore to our fathers.
24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these
statutes and to fear the LORD our God, for our
good always, so that He might keep us alive, as we
are today.
25 And it will be righteousness for us if we are
careful to do all this commandment before the
LORD our God, as He has commanded us.'

1 The Shema, from its first word, שְׁמַע (shema), ‘hear’. As quoted by Jesus in Mark 12:29. The Hebrew may also be read ‘the LORD is our God, the LORD alone’.

2 Quoted in Mark 12:30 and Matthew 22:37, where ‘mind’ is added. Hebrew מְאֹד (me’od), ‘muchness’, all you have and are.

3 Later Jewish practice took this literally in the tefillin, small boxes holding these verses, worn on the arm and forehead (compare Matthew 23:5).

4 The mezuzah (Hebrew ‘doorpost’) is the small case holding these verses fixed to Jewish doorways.

5 Quoted by Jesus in Matthew 4:10 and Luke 4:8, following the Greek: ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only.’

6 Quoted by Jesus in Matthew 4:7. Massah means ‘testing’; see Exodus 17:1–7.

Chapter 7

Deuteronomy 7 commands Israel to make no covenant with the seven nations of Canaan, nor to marry them, but to destroy their altars and images, because Israel is a people holy to the LORD, His own treasure. The LORD chose them not because they were many but because He loved them and kept His oath to their fathers; He is the faithful God who keeps covenant and loyal kindness for a thousand generations. If they obey, He will bless them in every way. They are not to fear the nations, for the LORD will drive them out little by little, and the idols’ silver and gold must not be taken, for it is detestable to Him.

1 When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you,

2 and when the LORD your God hands them over to you and you defeat them, then you must devote them to destruction.[1] Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy.

3 Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons,

4 for they would turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods. Then the LORD’s anger would blaze against you, and He would quickly destroy you.

5 Instead, this is what you are to do to them: tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, cut down their Asherah poles[2] and burn their carved images in the fire.

6 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His own treasure.[3]

7 It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the LORD set His heart on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

8 It was because the LORD loved you and was keeping the oath He swore to your fathers that the LORD brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 Know, then, that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His loyal kindness to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments,

10 but who repays those who hate Him to their face, by destroying them. He will not be slow to repay to his face the one who hates Him.

11 So keep the commandment, the statutes and the rules that I am giving you today, and do them.

12 If you listen to these rules and keep them and do them, then in return the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the loyal kindness He swore to your fathers.

13 He will love you, bless you and multiply you. In the land He swore to your fathers to give you, He will bless your children and the crops of your soil, your corn, new wine and olive oil, the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

14 You will be blessed above all peoples. None of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young.

15 The LORD will keep every sickness away from you. None of the dreadful diseases of Egypt that you knew will He bring on you, but He will lay them on all who hate you.

16 You are to consume all the peoples the LORD your God hands over to you. Do not look on them with pity, and do not serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

17 You may say to yourself, ‘These nations are more numerous than I am. How can I drive them out?’

18 Do not be afraid of them. Remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:

19 the great trials your eyes saw, the signs and wonders, the strong hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you fear.

20 What is more, the LORD your God will send the hornet[4] against them, until even those who are left and those who hide from you have perished.

21 Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God is among you, a great and awesome God.

22 The LORD your God will clear these nations away before you little by little. You will not be able to make an end of them at once, or the wild animals would multiply around you.

23 But the LORD your God will hand them over to you and throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed.

24 He will give their kings into your hand, and you will wipe out their names from under heaven. No one will be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

25 The carved images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver or gold on them or take it for yourself, or you will be caught in a snare by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God.

26 Do not bring a detestable thing into your house, or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly loathe it and abhor it, for it is set apart for destruction.

1 See the note at 2:34. The command concerns the nations of Canaan and their worship (verses 4–5), not Israel’s dealings with other peoples (20:10–15).

2 Wooden poles or images of the goddess Asherah; compare Exodus 34:13.

3 Hebrew סְגֻלָּה (segullah), a king’s private treasure; as in Exodus 19:5. Compare 1 Peter 2:9.

4 Or ‘panic’, ‘terror’; the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain. Compare Exodus 23:28.

Chapter 8

Deuteronomy 8 calls Israel to remember the forty years in the wilderness, when the LORD humbled them and fed them with manna to teach them that a person does not live on bread alone but on every word from the LORD’s mouth. He disciplined them as a father disciplines his son. Now He is bringing them into a good land of streams, wheat and vines, olives and honey, iron and copper. When they have eaten their fill and grown rich, they must not grow proud and forget Him, or say their own strength won them their wealth. If they follow other gods, they will perish like the nations before them.

1 Be careful to do the whole commandment that I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase, and go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore to your fathers.

2 Remember the whole way the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commandments.

3 He humbled you and let you go hungry, and then fed you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that a person does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out of the mouth of the LORD.[1]

4 Your clothes did not wear out on you, and your feet did not swell, these forty years.

5 Know then in your heart that the LORD your God disciplines you as a man disciplines his son.[2]

6 So keep the commandments of the LORD your God, walking in His ways and fearing Him.

7 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of streams of water, of springs and deep waters welling up in valleys and hills,

8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey,

9 a land where you will not eat bread in poverty and will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you can dig copper.

10 When you have eaten and are satisfied, bless the LORD your God for the good land He has given you.

11 Take care that you do not forget the LORD your God by failing to keep His commandments, His

rules and His statutes, which I am giving you today.

12 Otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, when you have built fine houses and live in them,

13 when your herds and flocks increase, and your silver and gold increase, and all you have increases,

14 then your heart will grow proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you lived as slaves.

15 He led you through that great and terrible wilderness, with its burning snakes[3] and scorpions, a thirsty land with no water. He brought water out for you from the flint rock.

16 He fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers had not known, to humble you and to test you, so as to do you good in the end.

17 You might say to yourself, 'My own strength and the might of my own hand have won me this wealth.'

18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the power to gain wealth, so that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as He is doing today.

19 If you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods, and serve them and bow down to them, I warn you today that you will surely perish.

20 Like the nations the LORD is destroying before you, so you will perish, because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.

1 Quoted by Jesus in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4.

2 Compare Proverbs 3:11–12 and Hebrews 12:5–11.

3 Hebrew נָחָשׁ שָׂרָף (nachash saraf); see the note at Numbers 21:6.

Chapter 9

Deuteronomy 9 warns Israel not to think the LORD is giving them the land because of their own righteousness. He is driving out the nations because of the nations' wickedness and to keep His oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for Israel has been stubborn from the start. Moses recalls the golden calf made while he was on the mountain receiving the tablets, how he broke the tablets before their eyes, ground the calf to dust, and lay before the LORD forty days and nights praying for the people and for Aaron. He lists other places where they provoked the LORD and repeats his plea: "They are Your people, Your inheritance."

1 Hear, Israel. Today you are about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you, with large cities walled up to the sky,

2 a people great and tall, the Anakim. You know about them, and you have heard it said, 'Who can stand up to the sons of Anak?'

3 Know then today that it is the LORD your God who goes across ahead of you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you, and you will drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the LORD has told you.

4 When the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, do not say to yourself, 'It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land.' No, it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you.

5 It is not for your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you are going in to possess their land. It is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, and to fulfil the promise the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

6 Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

7 Keep in mind, and do not let yourselves forget, how you angered the LORD your God in the wilderness. From the day you came out of Egypt until your arrival here, you have been in rebellion against the LORD.

8 Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD, and the LORD was angry enough to destroy you.

9 When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant the LORD had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I ate no bread and drank no water.

10 The LORD gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

11 At the end of the forty days and forty nights the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.

12 Then the LORD said to me, ‘Get up and go down from here at once, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly. They have been quick to turn from the way I commanded them; they have made themselves a cast image.’

13 The LORD also said to me, ‘I have seen this people, and they are indeed a stiff-necked people.

14 Leave Me alone, so that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven. And I will make of you a nation stronger and more numerous than they.’

15 I turned and went back down the mountain, which was still blazing with fire, carrying the two tablets of the covenant, one in each hand.

16 And I looked, and there you had sinned against the LORD your God. You had made yourselves a calf, a cast image. You had been quick to turn from the way the LORD had commanded you.

17 So I seized the two tablets, flung them down out of my hands and smashed them in front of you.

18 Then I lay prostrate before the LORD as before, forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all the sin you had committed in doing what was evil in the LORD’s sight and provoking Him to anger.

19 For I was afraid of the anger and the fury that the LORD felt against you, enough to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me that time also.

20 The LORD was very angry with Aaron too, enough to destroy him, and at that time I prayed for Aaron as well.

21 Then I took the sinful thing you had made, the calf, and burned it in the fire. I crushed it, grinding it thoroughly until it was as fine as dust, and threw the dust into the stream that flows down from the mountain.

22 At Taberah, at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah[1] you also provoked the LORD.

23 And when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, ‘Go up and take possession of the land I have given you,’ you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. You did not trust Him or listen to His voice.

24 You have been rebels against the LORD ever since I have known you.

25 So I lay prostrate before the LORD those forty days and forty nights, because the LORD had said He would destroy you.

26 I prayed to the LORD and said, ‘Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people, Your inheritance, whom You redeemed by Your greatness and brought out of Egypt with a strong hand.

27 Remember Your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Pay no attention to the stubbornness of this people, or to their wickedness or their sin,

28 or the land You brought us out of will say, “It was because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land He promised them, and because He hated them, that He brought them out to put them to death in the wilderness.”

29 For they belong to You; they are Your inheritance, the people You led out with mighty power and with arm outstretched.’

1 See Numbers 11:3, Exodus 17:7 and Numbers 11:34.

Chapter 10

Deuteronomy 10 tells how the LORD wrote the Ten Words again on two new tablets, which Moses placed in an ark of acacia wood, and how the tribe of Levi was set apart to carry the ark and serve the LORD, with the LORD Himself as their inheritance. Moses then asks what the LORD requires: to fear Him, walk in His ways, love Him and serve Him with all the heart and soul. The God of gods and Lord of lords, who shows no partiality, defends the fatherless and the widow and loves the foreigner, so Israel must love the foreigner too, for they were foreigners in Egypt.

1 At that time the LORD said to me, ‘Cut out two tablets of stone like the first ones and come up to Me on the mountain. Make yourself an ark of wood as well.

2 On these tablets I will write again the words that were on the first ones, the ones you smashed, and you shall place them in the ark.'

3 So I made an ark of acacia wood, cut out two tablets of stone like the first ones, and went up the mountain with the two tablets in my hand.

4 He wrote on the tablets, as He had written before, the Ten Words that the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the assembly, and the LORD gave them to me.

5 I turned and went back down the mountain, and placed the tablets in the ark I had made; they are still there, just as the LORD commanded me.

6 (The Israelites set out from Beeroth Bene-jaakan[1] to Moserah. There Aaron died and was buried, and his son Eleazar served as priest in his place.

7 From there they set out to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land with streams of water.

8 At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to serve Him and to bless in His name, as they do to this day.

9 That is why Levi has no share or inheritance with his brothers; the LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD your God told him.)

10 I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights, as I had the first time, and the LORD listened to me that time also. It was not the LORD's will to destroy you.

11 The LORD said to me, 'Get up and go on your journey at the head of the people, so that they may go in and take possession of the land I swore to their fathers to give them.'

12 And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD that I am giving you today, for your own good?

14 See, heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, the earth and all that is in it.

15 Yet the LORD set His heart on your fathers and loved them, and He chose their offspring after them, you, out of all the peoples, as you see today.

16 So circumcise your hearts,[2] and do not be stiff-necked any longer.

17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and takes no bribe.

18 He upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and He loves the foreigner and provides him with food and clothing.

19 So you too must love the foreigner, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

20 Fear the LORD your God. Serve Him, hold fast to Him, and swear by His name.

21 He is the One you praise; He is your God, who has done these great and fearful deeds for you, which you have seen with your own eyes.

22 Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as many as the stars in the sky.

1 'The wells of the sons of Jaakan'. Compare the list of stages in Numbers 33:30–38, which gives a different order.
2 Hebrew 'circumcise the foreskin of your heart'; compare 30:6, Jeremiah 4:4 and Romans 2:29.

Chapter 11

Deuteronomy 11 urges the generation that saw the LORD's mighty acts in Egypt, at the Red Sea and in the wilderness to love Him and keep His commandments. The land they are entering is not like Egypt, watered by hand, but a land of hills and valleys that drinks the rain of heaven, under the LORD's eye all year round. If they obey, He will send the autumn and spring rains; if they turn to other gods, He will shut up the sky. They must keep His words on their hearts and teach them to their children. Moses sets before them a blessing and a curse, to be proclaimed on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal.

1 Love the LORD your God, then, and always keep what He requires,[1] His statutes, His rules and His commandments.

2 Understand today that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen the discipline of the LORD your God: His greatness, His strong hand and His outstretched arm,

3 His signs and the deeds He did in Egypt to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to all his land,

4 what He did to the army of Egypt, its horses and chariots, how He made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued you, and the LORD destroyed them, as can be seen to this day,

5 and all He did for you in the wilderness on your way here,

6 and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab son of Reuben, when the earth opened its mouth in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them.[2]

7 It is your own eyes that have seen every great work the LORD has done.

8 So keep the whole commandment that I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to go in and take possession of the land you are crossing over to possess,

9 and so that you may live long in the land the LORD swore to give your fathers and their offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 For the land you are entering to possess is not like the land of Egypt, which you came from, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot,[3] like a vegetable garden.

11 The land you are crossing over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven,

12 a land the LORD your God cares for. The eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to its end.

13 So if you listen carefully to My commandments, which I give you today, loving the LORD your God and serving Him with your whole heart and your whole soul,

14 then I will send rain on your land in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain,[4] so that you may gather in your grain, your new wine and your oil.

15 I will make grass grow in your fields for your cattle, and you will have all you want to eat.

16 Be careful that your heart is not led astray, so that you turn aside to serve other gods and bow down to them.

17 Then the LORD’s anger would blaze against you; He would shut up the sky so that there is no rain and the ground yields no harvest, and you would soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you.

18 Fix these words of mine in your heart and in your soul. Tie them as a sign on your hand, and let them be a band between your eyes.

19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

20 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,

21 so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your fathers, as many as the days the heavens are above the earth.

22 For if you carefully keep this whole commandment that I am giving you to do, loving the LORD your God, walking in all His ways and holding fast to Him,

23 then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and stronger than yourselves.

24 Every place where the sole of your foot treads will be yours. Your territory will reach from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the River, the River Euphrates, to the western sea.[5]

25 No one will be able to stand against you. The LORD your God will lay the fear and dread of you on all the land you tread on, as He has promised you.

26 See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse:

27 the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am giving you today;

28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way I am commanding you today to go after other gods you have not known.

29 When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.[6]

30 Are they not across the Jordan, west of the road, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?

31 For you are about to cross the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you have taken it and are living in it,

32 be careful to do all the statutes and rules that I
am setting before you today.

1 Hebrew מִשְׁמַרְתּוֹ (mishmarto), ‘His charge’, what He has given you to guard and keep.

2 See Numbers 16:1–35.

3 Perhaps by treading a water wheel, or by opening and closing the channels with the foot.

4 The early rains of October and November, which soften the ground for sowing, and the late rains of March and April, which swell the grain.

5 The Mediterranean; Hebrew ‘the sea behind’, for the Hebrews faced east.

6 The two mountains on either side of Shechem; see 27:11–13 and Joshua 8:30–35.

Chapter 12

Deuteronomy 12 begins the statutes and rules for life in the land. Every place where the nations worshipped their gods is to be destroyed, and Israel is not to worship the LORD in their way. Instead they are to bring their offerings, tithes and vows to the one place the LORD their God will choose to put His name, and rejoice there before Him with their households and the Levites. Meat may be killed and eaten anywhere, but the blood must never be eaten, for the blood is the life. Israel must not ask how the nations served their gods, for they even burned their children in the fire.

1 These are the statutes and the rules that you are
to be careful to do in the land the LORD, the God
of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the
days you live on the earth.

2 You must utterly destroy all the places where the
nations you are dispossessing served their gods,
on the high mountains, on the hills and under
every leafy tree.

3 Tear down their altars, smash their sacred
pillars, burn their Asherah poles in the fire and
cut down the carved images of their gods, and
wipe out their names from that place.

4 You are not to worship the LORD your God in
that way.

5 Instead, you are to seek the place the LORD your
God will choose out of all your tribes to put His
name there for His dwelling, and there you are to
go.

6 There you are to bring your burnt offerings and
your sacrifices, your tithes and the contributions
you lift up,[1] your vow offerings and your freewill
offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and
flocks.

7 There you and your households are to eat before
the LORD your God and rejoice in all you have put
your hand to, because the LORD your God has
blessed you.

8 You are not to do as we are doing here today,
each of us whatever seems right in his own eyes,

9 for you have not yet come to the rest and the
inheritance the LORD your God is giving you.

10 But when you cross the Jordan and live in the
land the LORD your God is giving you as an
inheritance, and He gives you rest from all your
enemies around you so that you live in safety,

11 then to the place the LORD your God will choose
to make His name dwell there, you are to bring
everything I command you: your burnt offerings
and your sacrifices, your tithes and the
contributions you lift up, and all the choice
offerings you vow to the LORD.

12 And you are to rejoice before the LORD your
God, you, your sons and your daughters, your
male and female slaves, and the Levite within your
gates, since he has no share or inheritance with
you.

13 Be careful not to offer your burnt offerings in
any place you happen to see.

14 Offer your burnt offerings only at the place the
LORD will choose in one of your tribes, and there
do all that I command you.

15 But you may slaughter and eat meat in any of
your towns, as much as you wish, according to the
blessing the LORD your God has given you. Both
the unclean and the clean may eat it, as they
would gazelle or deer.[2]

16 Only you must not eat the blood; pour it out on
the ground like water.

17 You may not eat within your towns the tithe of
your grain, your new wine or your oil, nor the
firstborn of your herds or flocks, nor any of the

vow offerings you make, nor your freewill offerings or the contributions you lift up.

18 Eat them before the LORD your God at the place the LORD your God will choose, you, your son and your daughter, your male and female slaves, and the Levite within your gates; and rejoice before the LORD your God in all you put your hand to.

19 Take care not to neglect the Levite as long as you live in your land.

20 When the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He has promised you, and you say, 'I would like some meat,' because you crave meat, then you may eat meat whenever you wish.

21 If the place the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, you may slaughter animals from your herds and flocks that the LORD has given you, as I have commanded you, and eat in your own towns as much as you wish.

22 Eat it as gazelle or deer is eaten; the unclean and the clean alike may eat it.

23 Only be firm about not eating the blood, for the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat.[3]

24 Do not eat it; pour it out on the ground like water.

25 Do not eat it, so that it may go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is right in the LORD's sight.

26 But the holy things that are yours and your vow offerings you are to take and bring to the place the LORD will choose.

27 Offer your burnt offerings, both the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God. The blood of your sacrifices is to be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, but you may eat the meat.

28 Be careful to obey all these words I am commanding you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

29 When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and live in their land,

30 take care that you are not lured into following them after they have been destroyed before you. Do not enquire about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I too will do the same.'

31 You must not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every detestable thing the LORD hates they have done for their gods. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

32 Be careful to do everything I command you. Do not add to it or take anything away from it.[4]

1 Hebrew תְּרוּמָה (terumah), a portion set apart for the LORD; literally 'the contribution of your hand'.

2 Animals killed for food away from the altar are treated like game, which was never offered in sacrifice; so ritual uncleanness does not matter.

3 Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh), 'life'; compare Leviticus 17:11, 14.

4 In Hebrew this verse is 13:1, and 13:1–18 are 13:2–19.

Chapter 13

Deuteronomy 13 deals with anyone who tries to lead Israel to other gods. A prophet or dreamer who urges it must not be listened to even if his sign comes true, for the LORD is testing whether His people love Him with all their heart; he is to be put to death. The same applies to the closest relative or friend who entices someone in secret: there must be no pity. If a whole town is led astray, the report is to be searched out with care, and if it is true, the town is to be devoted to destruction and never rebuilt.

1 Suppose a prophet appears among you, or someone who has dreams, and he announces a sign or a wonder to you,

2 and the sign or wonder he spoke of comes about, and he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' gods you have not known, 'and let us serve them,'

3 do not listen to what that prophet or dreamer says. The LORD your God is putting you to the test, to learn whether you truly love Him with your whole heart and your whole soul.

4 It is the LORD your God you are to follow and Him you are to fear. Keep His commandments and listen to His voice; serve Him and hold fast to Him.

5 That prophet or dreamer of dreams must be put to death, because he has preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to draw you away from the path the LORD your God commanded you to walk in. So you shall purge the evil from among you.[1]

6 If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or your daughter, or the wife you embrace, or the friend who is as dear to you as your own life, entices you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' gods that neither you nor your fathers have known,

7 gods of the peoples around you, whether near you or far away, from one end of the earth to the other,

8 do not give in to him or listen to him. Show him no pity, do not spare him and do not shield him.

9 You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first raised against him to put him to death, and then the hands of all the people.

10 Stone him until he dies, for he set out to lure you away from the LORD your God, the One who led you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.

11 Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and never again will anyone among you do such an evil thing.

12 If you hear it said about one of the towns the LORD your God is giving you to live in

13 that worthless men[2] have gone out from among you and led the people of their town astray, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' gods you have not known,

14 then you must enquire, search and ask thoroughly. If it is true and the thing is certain, that this detestable thing has been done among you,

15 you must strike down the inhabitants of that town with the sword. Devote it to destruction, with everything in it and its livestock, by the sword.

16 Gather all its spoil into the middle of its square and burn the town and all its spoil in the fire as a whole offering to the LORD your God. It is to be a ruin mound for ever, never to be rebuilt.

17 None of what is devoted to destruction is to stick to your hand, so that the LORD may turn from His burning anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you, as He swore to your fathers,

18 because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God by keeping all His commandments that I am giving you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.

1 This refrain recurs through Deuteronomy (17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21–24; 24:7) and is quoted in 1 Corinthians 5:13, 'Drive out the evil person from among you.'

2 Hebrew בְּנֵי בְלִיַּעַל (bene beliyya'al), 'sons of worthlessness'. Belial became a name for Satan (2 Corinthians 6:15).

Chapter 14

> *Deuteronomy 14 reminds Israel that they are children of the LORD and a holy people, so they must not gash themselves or shave their heads for the dead, nor eat anything detestable. It lists the animals, fish and birds that may and may not be eaten, as in Leviticus 11. A tenth of all produce is to be eaten each year before the LORD at the place He chooses; those who live far away may sell it and buy food and drink there. Every third year the tithe is to be stored in the towns for the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.*

1 You are the children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead,

2 for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His own treasure.

3 Do not eat anything detestable.

4 These are the animals you may eat: cattle, sheep and goats,

5 the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep.[1]

6 You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof, split in two, and chews the cud.

7 But of those that chew the cud or have a divided hoof you are not to eat these: the camel, the hare and the rock badger. Though they chew the cud, they do not have a divided hoof; they are unclean for you.

8 And the pig, for though it has a divided hoof, it
does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You
are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses.
9 Of all that live in the water you may eat these:
anything that has fins and scales you may eat.
10 But anything that does not have fins and scales
you are not to eat; it is unclean for you.
11 You may eat any clean bird.
12 But these are the ones you are not to eat: the
eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture,
13 the buzzard,[2] the falcon, any kind of kite,
14 every kind of raven,
15 the ostrich, the nighthawk, the gull, any kind of
hawk,
16 the little owl, the great owl, the barn owl,
17 the pelican, the carrion vulture, the cormorant,
18 the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the
bat.
19 All winged insects are unclean for you; they are
not to be eaten.[3]
20 Any clean winged creature you may eat.
21 Do not eat anything that has died of itself. You
may give it to the foreigner within your gates for
him to eat, or sell it to an outsider, but you are a
people holy to the LORD your God. You are not to
boil a young goat in its mother's milk.
22 Every year you are to set aside a tenth of all the
produce of your seed that comes from the field.
23 Eat the tithe of your grain, your new wine and
your oil, and the firstborn of your herds and your
flocks, before the LORD your God at the place He
will choose to make His name dwell there, so that
you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.
24 But if the journey is too long for you, and you
are not able to carry it because the place the
LORD your God will choose to put His name is too
far from you, when the LORD your God blesses
you,
25 then turn it into money, take the money in your
hand, and go to the place the LORD your God will
choose.
26 Spend the money on whatever you want: cattle,
sheep, wine, strong drink, or anything you wish.
Then eat there before the LORD your God and
rejoice, you and your household.
27 And do not neglect the Levite within your gates,
for he has no share or inheritance with you.
28 At the end of every three years bring out the
whole tithe of your produce for that year and store
it in your towns.
29 Then the Levite, who has no share or
inheritance with you, and the foreigner, the
fatherless and the widow within your gates may
come and eat and be satisfied, so that the LORD
your God may bless you in all the work you do.

1 Several of these animals, and of the birds in verses 12–18, cannot be identified with certainty; see the note at Leviticus 11:5.

2 Hebrew רָאָה (ra'ah); perhaps an early copying slip for דָּאָה (da'ah), 'kite', as in Leviticus 11:14.

3 Leviticus 11:21–22 allows locusts and grasshoppers.

Chapter 15

> *Deuteronomy 15 sets out the year of release. Every seventh year debts owed by fellow Israelites are to be cancelled, and no one is to refuse a loan to a poor brother because the seventh year is near; the LORD will bless a generous hand. A Hebrew slave, man or woman, is to go free after six years and not be sent away empty-handed, for Israel was once a slave in Egypt. A slave who chooses to stay is to have his ear pierced at the door. Firstborn male animals belong to the LORD and are eaten before Him, unless they are blemished.*

1 At the end of every seven years you are to grant
a release.[1]
2 This is how the release is to be made: every
creditor is to let go of what he has lent to his
neighbour. He must not press his neighbour, his
brother, for payment, because the LORD's release
has been proclaimed.
3 You may press a foreigner for payment, but
whatever your brother owes you, your hand must
let go.
4 However, there should be no poor among you, for
the LORD will richly bless you in the land the
LORD your God is giving you to possess as an
inheritance,

5 if only you listen carefully to the voice of the
LORD your God, and are careful to do this whole
commandment that I am giving you today.
6 For the LORD your God will bless you, as He has
promised you. You will lend to many nations but
borrow from none; you will rule over many
nations, but none will rule over you.
7 If there is a poor man among you, one of your
brothers, in any of your towns in the land the
LORD your God is giving you, do not harden your
heart or close your hand against your poor
brother.
8 Rather, open your hand wide to him and freely
lend him whatever he needs for his want.
9 Be careful that no base thought enters your
heart: 'The seventh year, the year of release, is
near,' so that you look grudgingly on your poor
brother and give him nothing. He may cry out to
the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of
sin.
10 Give to him freely, and do not begrudge it when
you give, for because of this the LORD your God
will bless you in all your work and in all you put
your hand to.
11 There will never cease to be poor people in the
land.[2] That is why I am commanding you, 'Open
your hand wide to your brother, to the needy and
the poor in your land.'
12 If a fellow Hebrew, man or woman, sells himself
to you and works for you for six years, you are to
let him go free in the seventh.
13 And when you set him free, do not send him
away empty-handed.
14 Supply him generously from your flock, your
threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as
the LORD your God has blessed you.
15 Remember that you were a slave in the land of
Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you.
That is why I am giving you this command today.
16 But if he says to you, 'I do not want to leave
you,' because he loves you and your household
and is well off with you,
17 then take an awl and drive it through his ear
into the door, and he will be your servant for life.
Do the same for your female slave.
18 Do not think it hard when you set him free, for
in six years he has served you at half the cost of a
hired worker.[3] And the LORD your God will bless
you in all you do.
19 Every firstborn male born in your herd or your
flock you are to set apart as holy to the LORD your
God. Do no work with the firstborn of your oxen,
and do not shear the firstborn of your sheep.
20 You and your household are to eat it every year
before the LORD your God at the place the LORD
will choose.
21 But if it has a defect, if it is lame or blind or has
any serious defect, you are not to sacrifice it to
the LORD your God.
22 Eat it in your towns; the unclean and the clean
alike may eat it, as they would gazelle or deer.
23 But its blood is not to be eaten; pour it out on
the ground like water.

1 Hebrew שְׁמִטָּה (shemittah), 'letting go', from the word used of letting the land lie fallow in the seventh year (Exodus 23:11).
2 Compare Mark 14:7 and Matthew 26:11.
3 Or 'worth twice the wages of a hired worker'.

Chapter 16

Deuteronomy 16 sets the three yearly feasts at which every man is to appear before the LORD at the place He chooses. The Passover is kept in the month of Abib, with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, for seven days. Seven weeks later comes the Feast of Weeks, and in autumn the Feast of Booths, each a time of rejoicing for the whole household, the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. No one is to come empty-handed. Judges and officials are to be appointed in every town and must judge justly and take no bribes. No sacred pole or pillar is to be set up beside the LORD's altar.

1 Keep the month of Abib[1] and celebrate the
Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month
of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of
Egypt by night.
2 Sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God
from your flock or your herd at the place the
LORD will choose to make His name dwell there.

3 Do not eat anything leavened with it. For seven
days eat unleavened bread with it, the bread of
affliction, because you left the land of Egypt in
haste, so that all the days of your life you may
remember the day you came out of the land of
Egypt.
4 No leaven is to be found in all your territory for
seven days, and none of the meat you sacrifice on
the evening of the first day is to be left until
morning.
5 You may not sacrifice the Passover in any of the
towns the LORD your God is giving you,
6 but only at the place the LORD your God will
choose to make His name dwell there. There
sacrifice the Passover in the evening at sunset, the
time of day you came out of Egypt.
7 Cook it and eat it at the place the LORD your God
will choose, and in the morning turn and go back
to your tents.
8 For six days eat unleavened bread, and on the
seventh day hold a solemn assembly to the LORD
your God; do no work on it.
9 Count seven weeks. Begin to count the seven
weeks from the time you first put the sickle to the
standing grain.
10 Then keep the Feast of Weeks[2] to the LORD your
God with a freewill offering from your hand, given
in proportion to the blessing the LORD your God
has given you.
11 And rejoice before the LORD your God at the
place the LORD your God will choose to make His
name dwell there, you, your son and your
daughter, your male and female slaves, the Levite
within your gates, and the foreigner, the fatherless
and the widow who live among you.
12 Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and
be careful to keep these statutes.
13 Keep the Feast of Booths for seven days when
you have gathered in the produce of your
threshing floor and your winepress.
14 Rejoice at your feast, you, your son and your
daughter, your male and female slaves, and the
Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow
within your gates.
15 For seven days keep the feast to the LORD your
God at the place the LORD will choose, for the
LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest
and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will
be complete.
16 Three times a year all your males are to appear
before the LORD your God at the place He will
choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the
Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths. No one
is to appear before the LORD empty-handed.
17 Each is to give as he is able, in keeping with the
blessing the LORD your God has given you.
18 Appoint judges and officials for your tribes in all
the towns the LORD your God is giving you, and
they are to judge the people with righteous
judgement.
19 Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not
take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise
and twists the words of the righteous.
20 Justice, and only justice, you are to pursue, so
that you may live and possess the land the LORD
your God is giving you.
21 Do not plant any tree as an Asherah pole beside
the altar you build for the LORD your God,
22 and do not set up a sacred pillar, which the
LORD your God hates.

1 The month of ripening ears of grain, March to April; later called Nisan.

2 Later called Pentecost, ‘fiftieth’ (Acts 2:1).

Chapter 17

Deuteronomy 17 forbids offering blemished animals and requires anyone proved to have served other gods to be put to death, but only on the evidence of two or three witnesses. Cases too hard for the local courts are to be taken to the priests and the judge at the place the LORD chooses, and their decision must be followed. If Israel asks for a king, he must be one the LORD chooses, an Israelite, who does not multiply horses, wives or wealth. He is to write a copy of this law and read it all his life, so that he does not exalt himself above his brothers.

1 Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a
sheep that has a blemish or any defect, for that is
detestable to the LORD your God.
2 If there is found among you, in one of the towns
the LORD your God is giving you, a man or a

woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God by breaking His covenant,

3 going off to serve other gods and worship them, or the sun, the moon or any of the stars of heaven, contrary to My command,

4 and you are told of it or hear of it, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and the thing is certain, that this detestable thing has been done in Israel,

5 then bring out to your gates the man or woman who has done this evil thing, and stone that man or woman to death.

6 On the evidence of two or three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; no one is to be put to death on the evidence of a single witness.[1]

7 The hands of the witnesses must be the first raised against him to put him to death, and then the hands of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

8 If a case comes before you that is too difficult for you to judge, whether bloodshed, a legal claim or an assault, matters of dispute in your towns, then go up to the place the LORD your God will choose.

9 Go to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is in office at that time. Enquire of them, and they will declare to you the verdict.

10 Then you must act according to the decision they declare to you from the place the LORD will choose, and be careful to do all they instruct you.

11 Act according to the instruction they give you and the judgement they pronounce. Do not turn aside from the verdict they declare to you, to the right or to the left.

12 The man who acts presumptuously and will not listen to the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or to the judge, that man shall die. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.

13 All the people will hear and be afraid, and will not act presumptuously again.

14 When you come into the land the LORD your God is giving you, and you take possession of it and live in it, and then say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations around me,'

15 you may indeed set over you a king whom the LORD your God chooses. He must be one of your own brothers. You may not set a foreigner over you, one who is not your brother.

16 Only he must not acquire many horses for himself, or make the people go back to Egypt to get more horses, for the LORD has told you, 'You are never to go back that way again.'

17 He must not take many wives for himself, or his heart will turn away. Nor must he gather great amounts of silver and gold for himself.[2]

18 When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself in a book a copy of this law,[3] taken from the one kept by the Levitical priests.

19 It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them,

20 so that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or to the left. Then he and his sons will reign long over his kingdom in Israel.

1 Compare 19:15, Matthew 18:16, 2 Corinthians 13:1 and Hebrews 10:28.

2 Compare Solomon in 1 Kings 10:14–11:4.

3 Hebrew מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה (mishneh hattorah), 'a copy' or 'repetition of the law'. The Greek translated it 'second law', deuteronomion, which gave the book its English name.

Chapter 18

Deuteronomy 18 provides for the Levitical priests, who have no inheritance but the LORD and live from the offerings and the first fruits; any Levite who comes to serve at the chosen place is to share equally. Israel is not to imitate the nations' detestable practices: child sacrifice, divination, sorcery, spells, or consulting the dead. Instead the LORD will raise up a prophet like Moses from among their brothers, and put His words in his mouth; they must listen to him. A prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or presumes to speak what the LORD has not commanded, must die; if his word does not come true, the LORD has not spoken it.

1 The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, are to have no share or inheritance with Israel. They shall live on the fire offerings to the LORD, which are His inheritance.

2 They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as He promised them.

3 This is what is due to the priests from the people who offer a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: they are to give the priest the shoulder, the two cheeks and the stomach.

4 You are to give him the first fruits of your grain, your new wine and your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep.

5 For the LORD your God has chosen him and his sons out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the name of the LORD always.

6 If a Levite comes from any of your towns in all Israel where he is living, and comes with all his heart's desire to the place the LORD will choose,

7 he may minister in the name of the LORD his God like all his fellow Levites who stand there before the LORD.

8 He is to have an equal share to eat, besides what he receives from the sale of his family's property.[1]

9 When you come into the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of those nations.

10 Let no one be found among you who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or who practises divination, or tells fortunes, or interprets omens, or practises sorcery,

11 or casts spells, or consults a medium or a spiritist, or enquires of the dead.

12 For anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God is driving those nations out before you.

13 You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

14 The nations you are about to dispossess listen to fortune-tellers and diviners. But as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so.

15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers. You must listen to him.[2]

16 This is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear the voice of the LORD my God again, or see this great fire any more, or I shall die.'

17 And the LORD said to me, 'They are right in what they have said.

18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

19 Whoever will not listen to My words that he speaks in My name, I Myself will call him to account.

20 But any prophet who dares to speak a word in My name that I did not command him to say, or speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.'

21 You may say to yourself, 'How are we to know the word that the LORD has not spoken?'

22 When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD and what he says does not happen or come true, that is a word the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not be afraid of him.

1 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

2 Quoted in Acts 3:22–23 and 7:37 of Jesus; compare John 1:21, 45; 6:14.

Chapter 19

Deuteronomy 19 sets apart three cities of refuge in the land west of the Jordan, with roads to them, so that someone who kills a neighbour by accident, like a man whose axe-head flies off its handle, can flee there from the avenger of blood. A deliberate murderer who flees there is to be handed over to the avenger. No one is to move a neighbour's boundary stone. A single witness is not enough to convict anyone; and a malicious witness who testifies falsely is to receive the penalty he intended for his brother: life for life, eye for eye.

1 When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you have dispossessed them and are living in their towns and houses,

2 set apart for yourselves three towns in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

3 Prepare the roads, and divide into three the territory of the land the LORD your God is giving

you as an inheritance, so that anyone who has killed someone may flee there.

4 This is the case of the killer who may flee there and live: he has struck his neighbour unintentionally, without having hated him beforehand.

5 Suppose a man goes into the forest with his neighbour to cut wood, and as he swings the axe to fell a tree, the head flies off the handle and strikes his neighbour, and he dies. That man may flee to one of these towns and live.

6 Otherwise the avenger of blood,[1] in the heat of his anger, might pursue the killer and overtake him because the way is long, and strike him dead, though he did not deserve to die, since he had not hated his neighbour beforehand.

7 That is why I command you to set apart three towns for yourselves.

8 If the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you all the land He promised to give your fathers,

9 because you are careful to keep this whole commandment that I am giving you today, loving the LORD your God and always walking in His ways, then you are to add three more towns to these three.

10 So innocent blood will not be shed in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you will not be guilty of bloodshed.

11 But if a man hates his neighbour, lies in wait for him, attacks him and strikes him dead, and then flees to one of these towns,

12 the elders of his town shall send and fetch him from there and hand him over to the avenger of blood to die.

13 Show him no pity. You must purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, so that it may go well with you.

14 Do not move your neighbour's boundary stone, set up by those who came before, on the inheritance you will receive in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

15 A single witness shall not be enough to convict a man of any wrongdoing or sin he may have committed. Every matter is to be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.[2]

16 If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing,

17 then both parties to the dispute are to stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days.

18 The judges are to investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a liar who has testified falsely against his brother,

19 then do to him what he planned to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

20 The rest will hear and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you.

21 You are not to pity him. It is to be a life for a life: eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.[3]

1 Hebrew גֹּאֵל הַדָּם (go'el haddam); see the note at Numbers 35:12.

2 Quoted in Matthew 18:16 and 2 Corinthians 13:1; compare John 8:17 and 1 Timothy 5:19.

3 Compare Exodus 21:23–25, Leviticus 24:20 and Matthew 5:38.

Chapter 20

Deuteronomy 20 gives the rules of war. Israel is not to fear larger armies, for the LORD goes with them; the priest is to encourage the troops. The officers are to send home any man who has built a new house, planted a vineyard or become engaged, and anyone who is afraid. A distant city is first to be offered peace; if it refuses, its men are to be killed but the women, children and goods may be taken. The cities of the nations within the land itself are to be devoted to destruction, so that they do not teach Israel their detestable practices. In a siege, fruit trees must not be cut down.

1 When you go out to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army larger than yours, do not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you.

2 When you are about to go into battle, the priest is to come forward and address the army.

3 He is to say to them, 'Hear, Israel: today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be

faint-hearted; do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not tremble before them,

4 for the LORD your God is the One who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies and to save you.'

5 The officers are to say to the army, 'Has anyone built a new house and not yet dedicated it? Let him go back home, or he may die in battle and another man dedicate it.

6 Has anyone planted a vineyard and not yet enjoyed its fruit?[1] Let him go back home, or he may die in battle and another man enjoy it.

7 Has anyone become engaged to a woman and not yet married her? Let him go back home, or he may die in battle and another man marry her.'

8 Then the officers are to add, 'Is anyone afraid or faint-hearted? Let him go back home, so that he does not make his brothers lose heart as he has.'

9 When the officers have finished speaking to the army, commanders are to be appointed at the head of the troops.

10 When you march up to a city to fight against it, first offer it terms of peace.

11 If it accepts your terms and opens its gates to you, then all the people found in it are to do forced labour for you and serve you.

12 But if it will not make peace with you and goes to war against you, lay siege to it.

13 When the LORD your God gives it into your hand, put all its males to the sword.

14 But the women, the little ones, the livestock and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you may take as plunder for yourselves, and you may enjoy the spoil of your enemies that the LORD your God has given you.

15 That is how you are to treat all the cities that are a long way from you and do not belong to these nations here.

16 But in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not leave alive anything that breathes.

17 Devote them to destruction, as the LORD your God has commanded you: Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites,

18 so that they do not teach you to do all the detestable things they have done for their gods, and so cause you to sin against the LORD your God.

19 When you besiege a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an axe to them. You may eat their fruit, but do not cut them down. Are the trees of the field people, that you should besiege them?[2]

20 Only the trees you know do not bear fruit you may destroy and cut down, to build siege works against the city that is at war with you, until it falls.

1 Fruit was not eaten from a new vineyard until the fifth year (Leviticus 19:23–25).

2 So most interpreters understand the Hebrew, which reads literally 'for the tree of the field is a man'.

Chapter 21

Deuteronomy 21 gives a ritual for an unsolved killing: the elders of the nearest town break a heifer's neck in an untilled valley, wash their hands over it and pray that the LORD will not hold innocent blood against His people. A woman taken captive in war may be married only after a month of mourning, and if she is later sent away she must go free, not be sold. A firstborn son must receive his double share even if his mother is the less loved wife. A stubborn and rebellious son may be brought before the elders. The body of an executed man hung on a tree must be buried the same day, for one who is hung is under God's curse.

1 If, in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess, someone is found slain, lying in the open country, and it is not known who killed him,

2 your elders and judges are to go out and measure the distance from the body to the surrounding towns.

3 The elders of the town nearest the body are to take a heifer that has never been worked or worn a yoke,

4 and lead her down to a valley with running water,[1] where there has been no ploughing or sowing, and there in the valley they are to break the heifer's neck.

5 Then the priests, the sons of Levi, are to come forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to serve Him and to bless in the name of the LORD, and by their word every dispute and every assault is to be settled.

6 All the elders of the town nearest the body are to
wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was
broken in the valley,[2]
7 and they are to declare, ‘Our hands did not shed
this blood, and our eyes did not see it done.
8 Make atonement, LORD, for Your people Israel,
whom You redeemed, and do not hold the guilt of
innocent blood against Your people Israel.’ Then
the bloodshed will be atoned for.
9 So you will purge the guilt of innocent blood from
among you, when you do what is right in the
LORD’s sight.
10 When you go out to war against your enemies
and the LORD your God gives them into your hand
and you take captives,
11 and you see among the captives a beautiful
woman and desire her and would take her as your
wife,
12 bring her home to your house. She is to shave
her head, trim her nails
13 and put off the clothes she was captured in, and
live in your house, mourning her father and
mother for a full month. After that you may go in
to her and be her husband, and she will be your
wife.
14 If you are no longer pleased with her, you must
let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell
her for money or treat her as a slave, since you
have humiliated her.
15 If a man has two wives, one loved and the other
unloved,[3] and both have borne him sons, but the
firstborn is the son of the unloved wife,
16 then when he divides his property among his
sons as their inheritance, he may not treat the son
of the loved wife as firstborn in place of the son of
the unloved wife, who is the firstborn.
17 He must acknowledge the son of the unloved
wife as firstborn by giving him a double share of
all he has, for he is the first sign of his father’s
strength. The right of the firstborn is his.
18 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who
will not obey his father or his mother, and will not
listen to them even when they discipline him,
19 his father and mother are to take hold of him
and bring him out to the elders of his town at the
gate of his home town.
20 They shall say to the elders of his town, ‘This
son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not
obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.’
21 Then all the men of his town are to stone him to
death. So you shall purge the evil from among
you, and all Israel will hear and be afraid.
22 When someone guilty of a crime that carries the
death penalty has been executed, and you hang
his body on a tree,
23 his body must not remain all night on the tree.
You must bury him the same day, for anyone who
is hung is under God’s curse.[4] You must not defile
the land the LORD your God is giving you as an
inheritance.

1 Or ‘a valley that is never dry’.
2 Compare Pilate in Matthew 27:24.
3 Hebrew ‘hated’; that is, loved less. Compare Genesis 29:30–31.
4 Quoted in Galatians 3:13, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’; compare Acts 5:30, 10:39 and 1 Peter 2:24. Or ‘for one who is hung is an insult to God’.

Chapter 22

Deuteronomy 22 calls Israel to care for a neighbour’s straying or fallen animals, and to keep apart things that belong apart: men’s and women’s clothing, two kinds of seed, an ox and a donkey under one yoke, wool and linen in one garment. A mother bird is to be let go, a new roof is to have a parapet, and garments are to have tassels. Laws follow for a husband who falsely accuses his bride of not being a virgin, for adultery, and for sexual violence against a betrothed or unbetrothed young woman. A man must not marry his father’s wife.

1 If you see your brother’s ox or sheep straying, do
not ignore it. Be sure to take it back to your
brother.
2 If your brother does not live near you, or you do
not know who he is, take it home with you and
keep it until your brother comes looking for it;
then give it back to him.
3 Do the same with his donkey, his cloak, or
anything your brother loses that you find. You
must not ignore it.

4 If you see your brother's donkey or ox fallen
down on the road, do not ignore it. Be sure to help
him lift it up.

5 A woman is not to wear a man's things, nor a
man put on a woman's clothing, for whoever does
these things is detestable to the LORD your God.

6 If you come across a bird's nest beside the road,
in a tree or on the ground, with young ones or
eggs, and the mother is sitting on the young or on
the eggs, do not take the mother with the young.

7 You may take the young for yourself, but be sure
to let the mother go, so that it may go well with
you and you may live long.

8 When you build a new house, put a parapet
round your roof,[1] so that you do not bring the guilt
of bloodshed on your house if anyone falls from it.

9 Do not sow your vineyard with a second kind of
seed, or the whole crop will be forfeited to the
sanctuary,[2] both the seed you have sown and the
fruit of the vineyard.

10 Do not plough with an ox and a donkey yoked
together.

11 Do not wear cloth made of wool and linen woven
together.

12 Make tassels[3] on the four corners of the cloak
you wrap yourself in.

13 If a man takes a wife, goes in to her, and then
turns against her

14 and accuses her of shameful conduct, giving her
a bad name by saying, 'I married this woman, but
when I came near her I did not find that she was a
virgin,'

15 then the young woman's father and mother are
to take the evidence of her virginity[4] to the elders
of the town at the gate.

16 Her father is to say to the elders, 'I gave my
daughter to this man as his wife, but he has
turned against her.

17 Now he has accused her of shameful conduct,
saying, "I did not find that your daughter was a
virgin." But here is the evidence of my daughter's
virginity.' Then they are to spread out the cloth
before the elders of the town.

18 The elders of that town shall take the man and
punish him.

19 They shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver[5]
and give them to the young woman's father,
because he has given a virgin of Israel a bad
name. She shall remain his wife, and he may not
divorce her as long as he lives.

20 But if the accusation is true, and no evidence of
the young woman's virginity is found,

21 they shall bring her out to the door of her
father's house, and the men of her town shall
stone her to death, because she has done an
outrageous thing in Israel by acting as a prostitute
while in her father's house. So you shall purge the
evil from among you.

22 If a man is found lying with another man's wife,
both of them shall die, the man who lay with the
woman and the woman herself. So you shall purge
the evil from Israel.

23 If there is a young woman, a virgin, engaged to
be married, and a man meets her in the town and
lies with her,

24 you shall bring them both out to the gate of that
town and stone them to death: the young woman
because she did not cry out for help in the town,
and the man because he violated his neighbour's
wife. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

25 But if the man comes upon the engaged young
woman in the open country and takes hold of her
and forces her, then the man alone is to die.

26 Do nothing to the young woman; she has
committed no sin that deserves death. This case is
like that of a man who attacks his neighbour and
murders him,

27 for he met her out in the country, and though
the engaged young woman cried out, there was no
one to rescue her.

28 If a man meets a young woman, a virgin who is
not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her, and
they are discovered,

29 the man who lay with her shall give the young
woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall
become his wife, because he has violated her. He
may not divorce her as long as he lives.

30 A man is not to take his father's wife; he must
not uncover his father's covering.[6]

1 Roofs were flat and used as living space.

2 Hebrew ‘become holy’, and so be lost to the owner.

3 Hebrew גְּדִלִים (gedilim), ‘twisted threads’; the tassels of Numbers 15:38–41.

4 Probably the cloth or garment from the wedding night (verse 17).

5 About 1.15 kilograms (2½ pounds); a shekel is about 11.5 grams.

6 Hebrew ‘the skirt of his father’s garment’; compare Ruth 3:9 and Leviticus 18:8. In Hebrew this verse is 23:1, and 23:1–25 are 23:2–26.

Chapter 23

Deuteronomy 23 says who may enter the assembly of the LORD: not a man who has been emasculated, nor one of illegitimate birth, nor an Ammonite or Moabite, since they hired Balaam to curse Israel; but Edomites and Egyptians may enter in the third generation. The war camp is to be kept clean, for the LORD walks in it. A runaway slave is not to be handed back, there are to be no cult prostitutes, and no interest is to be charged to a fellow Israelite. Vows must be paid promptly. A passer-by may eat from a neighbour’s vineyard or field, but not carry any away.

1 No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off may enter the assembly of the LORD.

2 No one born of a forbidden union[1] may enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD.

3 No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of their descendants may ever enter the assembly of the LORD,[2]

4 because they did not meet you with bread and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram-naharaim[3] to curse you.

5 But the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you.

6 Never seek their peace or their good as long as you live.

7 Do not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not detest an Egyptian, for you lived as a foreigner in his land.

8 The children born to them in the third generation may enter the assembly of the LORD.

9 When you go out to camp against your enemies, keep yourself from everything improper.

10 If any man among you is unclean because of an emission at night, he is to go outside the camp and not come back into it.

11 Towards evening he is to wash himself with water, and at sunset he may come back into the camp.

12 You are to have a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself.

13 Among your equipment you are to have a trowel, and when you squat outside, dig a hole with it and then turn and cover your excrement.

14 For the LORD your God walks about in the middle of your camp to rescue you and to give your enemies over to you. So your camp must be holy, so that He does not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.

15 Do not hand back to his master a slave who has escaped from his master and taken refuge with you.

16 Let him live among you wherever he chooses, in whichever of your towns suits him best. Do not oppress him.

17 No daughter of Israel is to be a cult prostitute,[4] and no son of Israel is to be a cult prostitute.

18 Do not bring the wages of a prostitute or the price of a dog[5] into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, for both of them are detestable to the LORD your God.

19 Do not charge your brother interest, whether on money or food or anything else that can earn interest.

20 You may charge a foreigner interest, but not your brother, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all you put your hand to in the land you are entering to possess.

21 When you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will

certainly require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin.

22 But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty of sin.

23 Whatever your lips have uttered you must be careful to do, for you have freely vowed to the LORD your God what you promised with your own mouth.[6]

24 When you go into your neighbour's vineyard, you may eat as many grapes as you like, until you are satisfied, but you must not put any in your basket.

25 When you go into your neighbour's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you must not put a sickle to your neighbour's grain.[7]

1 Hebrew מַמְזֵר (mamzer); the meaning is uncertain, perhaps a child of incest or of a mixed marriage (compare Zechariah 9:6).

2 Compare Nehemiah 13:1–3. Ruth the Moabite was nonetheless received into Israel (Ruth 1:16; 4:13–17).

3 'Aram of the two rivers', northern Mesopotamia.

4 Hebrew קְדֵשָׁה (qedeshah), literally 'a consecrated woman'; and קָדֵשׁ (qadesh), 'a consecrated man', in the worship of other gods.

5 Probably a term for a male prostitute.

6 Compare Ecclesiastes 5:4–5 and Matthew 5:33–37.

7 Compare Mark 2:23 and Luke 6:1.

Chapter 24

Deuteronomy 24 forbids a man to take back a wife he has divorced after she has married another. A newly married man is free from military service for a year. No one is to take a millstone as a pledge, or kidnap a fellow Israelite. Lenders must not enter a borrower's house to take a pledge, and a poor man's cloak must be returned by nightfall. Wages are to be paid the same day. Each person is to die for his own sin, not for his parents' or children's. Justice is due to the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, and gleanings of grain, olives and grapes are to be left for them, for Israel was once a slave in Egypt.

1 Suppose a man takes a wife and marries her, and she does not please him because he has found something indecent[1] about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce,[2] puts it in her hand and sends her away from his house.

2 If after leaving his house she goes and becomes another man's wife,

3 and the second husband turns against her, writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her away from his house, or if the second husband who married her dies,

4 then her first husband, who sent her away, may not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled, for that is detestable before the LORD. You must not bring sin on the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

5 When a man is newly married, he is not to go out with the army or be given any other duty. He is to be free to stay at home for one year and bring joy to the wife he has married.

6 No one is to take a pair of millstones, or even the upper millstone, as a pledge, for that would be taking a person's life as a pledge.

7 If a man is found kidnapping one of his brothers, a fellow Israelite, and treats him as a slave or sells him, that kidnapper shall die. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

8 Take care in cases of skin disease[3] to do exactly as the Levitical priests instruct you. Be careful to do as I have commanded them.

9 Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way after you came out of Egypt.[4]

10 When you lend your neighbour anything, do not go into his house to take what he offers as a pledge.

11 Stay outside, and let the man to whom you are making the loan bring the pledge out to you.

12 If he is a poor man, do not go to sleep with his pledge still in your keeping.

13 Be sure to return the pledge to him by sunset, so that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you, and it will be counted as righteousness for you before the LORD your God.

14 Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your

brothers or a foreigner living in one of the towns of your land.

15 Pay him his wages each day before sunset, for he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry out to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.[5]

16 Fathers are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to be put to death for his own sin.[6]

17 Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, and do not take a widow's cloak as a pledge.

18 Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

19 When you reap the harvest in your field and forget a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.[7]

20 When you beat your olive trees, do not go over the branches a second time. What is left is for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.

21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not go over it a second time. What is left is for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.

22 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

1 Hebrew עֶרְוַת דָּבָר (ervat davar), literally 'the nakedness of a thing'; its meaning was debated in Jesus' day (Matthew 19:3–9).

2 Compare Matthew 5:31, 19:7 and Mark 10:4.

3 Hebrew צָרַעַת (tsara'at); see the note at Leviticus 13:2.

4 See Numbers 12:1–15.

5 Compare Leviticus 19:13 and James 5:4.

6 Compare 2 Kings 14:6 and Ezekiel 18:20.

7 Compare Leviticus 19:9–10 and Ruth 2.

Chapter 25

Deuteronomy 25 limits a flogging to forty strokes, so that a brother is not degraded, and forbids muzzling an ox while it treads out the grain. If a man dies childless, his brother is to marry the widow and raise up a son to carry on the dead man's name; a brother who refuses is shamed before the elders. Weights and measures must be full and honest. Israel is to remember how Amalek attacked the weary stragglers on the way out of Egypt, and when the LORD gives them rest, blot out the memory of Amalek.

1 When there is a dispute between men, they are to go to court, and the judges will decide between them, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty.

2 If the guilty man deserves to be flogged, the judge shall make him lie down and have him flogged in his presence with the number of strokes his crime deserves.

3 He may be given forty strokes, but no more. If he is flogged with more strokes than these, your brother would be degraded in your sight.[1]

4 Do not muzzle an ox when it is treading out grain.[2]

5 If brothers live together and one of them dies without a son, the dead man's widow must not marry outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother is to go in to her and take her as his wife, and do his duty as her brother-in-law.[3]

6 The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother, so that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

7 But if the man does not want to marry his brother's widow, she shall go up to the elders at the town gate and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to keep his brother's name alive in Israel. He will not do his duty as my brother-in-law.'

8 Then the elders of his town shall summon him and speak to him. If he persists and says, 'I do not want to marry her,'

9 his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, pull his sandal off his foot, spit in his face and declare, 'This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.'

10 And his family shall be known in Israel as 'the house of him whose sandal was pulled off'.

11 If two men are fighting and the wife of one comes to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she reaches out and seizes him by his private parts,

12 you shall cut off her hand. Show no pity.

13 Do not keep two different weights in your bag, one heavy and one light.

14 Do not keep two different measures in your house, one large and one small.[4]

15 You must have full and honest weights and full and honest measures, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

16 For everyone who does such things, everyone who deals dishonestly, is detestable to the LORD your God.

17 Keep in mind what the Amalekites did to you on your journey out of Egypt,

18 how they met you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off all the stragglers at your rear; they had no fear of God.[5]

19 So when the LORD your God has given you rest from all the enemies around you in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!

1 Later practice stopped at thirty-nine to be sure of not exceeding the limit (2 Corinthians 11:24).

2 Quoted in 1 Corinthians 9:9 and 1 Timothy 5:18.

3 Hebrew יִבֵּם (yibbem), to perform the duty of a brother-in-law (Latin levir, whence 'levirate marriage'). Compare Genesis 38:8, Ruth 4:5–10 and Matthew 22:24.

4 Hebrew 'an ephah and an ephah'; an ephah was about 22 litres.

5 Compare Exodus 17:8–16 and 1 Samuel 15:2–3.

Chapter 26

Deuteronomy 26 closes the laws with two acts of worship in the land. Bringing a basket of first fruits to the place the LORD chooses, the worshipper recites Israel's story: "My father was a wandering Aramean", who went down to Egypt, was oppressed, and was brought out by the LORD into a land flowing with milk and honey. In the third year, after giving the tithe to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, he declares that he has kept the commandment and prays for the LORD's blessing. Moses ends: today Israel has declared that the LORD is their God, and the LORD has declared that they are His treasured people.

1 When you have come into the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and have taken possession of it and settled in it,

2 take some of the first of all the produce of the soil that you gather from the land the LORD your God is giving you, and put it in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose to make His name dwell there.

3 Go to the priest in office at the time and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'

4 The priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

5 Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: 'My father was a wandering Aramean.[1] He went down to Egypt with only a few people and lived there as a foreigner, and there he became a great nation, mighty and numerous.

6 But the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, and imposed hard labour on us.

7 Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression.

8 And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders.

9 He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 And now, see, I have brought the first of the produce of the soil that You, LORD, have given me.' Then set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God.

11 And you, the Levite and the foreigner among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given you and your household.

12 When you have finished setting aside the full tithe of your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, and have given it to the Levite, the

foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied,

13 then you shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the holy portion from my house and given it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, just as You commanded me. I have not turned aside from Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them.

14 I have not eaten any of it while in mourning, nor removed any of it while unclean, nor offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God; I have done all You commanded me.

15 Look down from heaven, Your holy dwelling place, and bless Israel Your people, and the soil You have given us as You promised our fathers on oath, a land flowing with milk and honey.'

16 This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. Be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul.

17 Today you have declared that the LORD is your God, and that you will walk in His ways, keep His statutes, His commandments and His rules, and obey His voice.

18 And today the LORD has declared that you are His people, His own treasure, as He promised you, and that you are to keep all His commandments,

19 and that He will set you high above all the nations He has made, for praise, for fame and for honour, and that you will be a people holy to the LORD your God, as He promised."

1 Jacob, who lived in Aram for twenty years (Genesis 29–31). Or 'an Aramean about to perish'.

Chapter 27

Deuteronomy 27 tells Israel what to do once they have crossed the Jordan: set up large stones coated with plaster on Mount Ebal and write on them all the words of this law, and build an altar of uncut stones for burnt offerings and peace offerings. Today Israel has become the people of the LORD. Six tribes are to stand on Mount Gerizim to bless and six on Mount Ebal for the curse, and the Levites are to proclaim twelve curses on hidden sins, from idolatry to bribery, with all the people answering "Amen".

1 Then Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people: "Keep the whole commandment that I am giving you today.

2 On the day you cross the Jordan into the land the LORD your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster.

3 Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

4 And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I am commanding you today, and coat them with plaster.

5 Build there an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; do not use any iron tool on them.

6 Build the altar of the LORD your God with whole, uncut stones, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God.

7 Sacrifice peace offerings there and eat them, and rejoice before the LORD your God.

8 On those stones you are to write out every word of this law, clearly and carefully."[1]

9 Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel: "Be silent, Israel, and listen! This day you have become the people of the LORD your God.

10 So obey the LORD your God and do His commandments and His statutes, which I am giving you today."

11 That same day Moses commanded the people:

12 "When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin.

13 And for the curse, these are to take their stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

14 The Levites shall proclaim in a loud voice to all the men of Israel:

15 'Cursed is the man who makes a carved or cast image, something detestable to the LORD, the work of a craftsman's hands, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer, 'Amen.'[2]

16 'Cursed is anyone who treats his father or his mother with contempt.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

17 ‘Cursed is anyone who moves his neighbour’s boundary stone.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

18 ‘Cursed is anyone who leads a blind man astray on the road.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

19 ‘Cursed is anyone who denies justice to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

20 ‘Cursed is anyone who lies with his father’s wife, for he has uncovered his father’s covering.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

21 ‘Cursed is anyone who lies with any animal.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

22 ‘Cursed is anyone who lies with his sister, his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

23 ‘Cursed is anyone who lies with his mother-in-law.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

24 ‘Cursed is anyone who strikes down his neighbour in secret.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

25 ‘Cursed is anyone who takes a bribe to kill an innocent person.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

26 ‘Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’”[3]

1 See Joshua 8:30–35.

2 Hebrew אָמֵן (amen), ‘so be it’; see the note at Numbers 5:22.

3 Quoted in Galatians 3:10, following the Greek: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not keep on doing everything written in the book of the law.’

Chapter 28

Deuteronomy 28 sets out the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience. If Israel listens to the LORD, they will be blessed in town and country, in children, crops and herds, in coming in and going out; their enemies will flee, the rain will come in season, and they will be the head and not the tail. If they will not listen, every curse will overtake them: disease, drought, defeat, madness and oppression; others will enjoy their homes, vineyards and children. A distant, merciless nation will besiege their towns until in their hunger they eat their own children. Finally the LORD will scatter them among the nations, where they will find no rest, and send them back to Egypt in ships.

1 “If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God, and are careful to do all His commandments that I am giving you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

2 All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you, if you listen to the voice of the LORD your God:

3 Blessed will you be in the town, and blessed will you be in the country.

4 Blessed will be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the young of your livestock, the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

5 Blessed will be your basket and your kneading trough.

6 Blessed will you be when you come in, and blessed will you be when you go out.

7 The LORD will cause the enemies who rise against you to be beaten before you. They will come out against you by one road and flee before you by seven.

8 The LORD will command His blessing on you in your barns and in all you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

9 The LORD will establish you as a people holy to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.

10 Then all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you.

11 The LORD will give you abundant prosperity in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the produce of your soil, in the land the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

12 The LORD will open for you His rich storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow.

13 The LORD will make you the head and not the
tail; you will always be at the top and never at the
bottom, if you listen to the commandments of the
LORD your God that I am giving you today, and
are careful to do them,
14 and do not turn aside from any of the words I
am commanding you today, to the right or to the
left, to go after other gods and serve them.
15 But if you will not listen to the voice of the
LORD your God, and are not careful to do all His
commandments and His statutes that I am giving
you today, all these curses will come upon you and
overtake you:
16 Cursed will you be in the town, and cursed will
you be in the country.
17 Cursed will be your basket and your kneading
trough.
18 Cursed will be the fruit of your womb and the
produce of your soil, the calves of your herds and
the lambs of your flocks.
19 Cursed will you be when you come in, and
cursed will you be when you go out.
20 The LORD will send on you curse, confusion and
rebuke in all you put your hand to, until you are
destroyed and quickly perish because of the evil of
your deeds, because you have forsaken Me.
21 The LORD will make plague cling to you until He
has wiped you out from the land you are entering
to possess.
22 The LORD will strike you with wasting disease,
with fever and inflammation, with fiery heat and
drought,[1] with blight and mildew. They will pursue
you until you perish.
23 The sky over your head will be bronze, and the
ground beneath you iron.
24 Instead of rain the LORD will send powder and
dust on your land; down from the sky it will fall on
you until you are destroyed.
25 The LORD will cause you to be beaten before
your enemies. You will go out against them by one
road and flee before them by seven, and you will
become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms of
the earth.
26 Your corpses will be food for all the birds of the
sky and the beasts of the earth, and there will be
no one to scare them away.
27 The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt,
with tumours,[2] scabs and itch, from which you
cannot be healed.
28 The LORD will strike you with madness,
blindness and confusion of mind.
29 At noon you will grope about as a blind man
gropes in the dark. You will not prosper in
anything you do; you will only be oppressed and
robbed continually, with no one to save you.
30 You will become engaged to a woman, but
another man will ravish her. You will build a
house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a
vineyard, but you will not enjoy its fruit.
31 Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes,
but you will eat none of it. Your donkey will be
taken from you by force and not given back. Your
sheep will be given to your enemies, and there will
be no one to save you.
32 Your sons and daughters will be given to another
people, while your eyes look on and fail with
longing for them all day long, and your hand will
be powerless.
33 A people you have not known will eat up the
produce of your land and all your labour, and you
will be nothing but oppressed and crushed
continually.
34 The sights your eyes see will drive you mad.
35 The LORD will strike your knees and legs with
painful boils that cannot be healed, spreading
from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.
36 The LORD will bring you and the king you set
over you to a nation that neither you nor your
fathers have known, and there you will serve other
gods, of wood and stone.
37 You will become an object of horror, a byword
and a mockery among all the peoples where the
LORD will drive you.
38 You will take much seed out to the field and
gather little in, for the locust will devour it.
39 You will plant vineyards and tend them, but you
will not drink the wine or gather the grapes, for
the worm will eat them.
40 Olive trees will grow all over your land, yet you
will have no oil to anoint yourself, for the fruit will
fall before it ripens.
41 Sons and daughters will be born to you, yet you
will not keep them, for they will be carried off as
captives.
42 Swarms of locusts will take over all your trees
and the produce of your soil.
43 The foreigner living among you will rise above
you higher and higher, while you sink lower and

lower.

44 He will be the lender and you the borrower; he will be the head and you the tail.

45 All these curses will come upon you, pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not listen to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes that He commanded you.

46 They will be a sign and a wonder against you and your offspring for ever.

47 Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart when you had plenty of everything,

48 you will serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and in want of everything. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you.

49 The LORD will bring against you a nation from far away, from the end of the earth, swooping down like an eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand,

50 a hard-faced nation with no respect for the old and no pity for the young.

51 It will devour the young of your livestock and the produce of your soil until you are destroyed. It will leave you no grain, new wine or oil, no calves of your herds or lambs of your flocks, until it has brought you to ruin.

52 It will besiege you in all your towns until the high, fortified walls you trusted in come down throughout your land. It will besiege you in all your towns throughout the land the LORD your God has given you.

53 Then, in the siege and the distress your enemy will bring on you, you will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters the LORD your God has given you.

54 Even the most gentle and refined man among you will look grudgingly at his brother, at the wife he embraces and at the children he has left,

55 and will not give any of them a share of the flesh of his children that he is eating, because he has nothing else left in the siege and the distress your enemy will bring on you in all your towns.

56 The most gentle and refined woman among you, so delicate and refined that she would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground, will look grudgingly at the husband she embraces and at her son and her daughter,

57 and at the afterbirth that comes from between her legs and the children she bears, for she will eat them secretly for lack of anything else, in the siege and the distress your enemy will bring on you in your towns.[3]

58 If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, to fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God,

59 then the LORD will strike you and your offspring with extraordinary plagues, plagues severe and lasting, and diseases grievous and lasting.

60 Every disease of Egypt that you so feared He will bring back on you, and it will cling to you.

61 The LORD will also bring on you every sickness and every plague not written in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed.

62 Though you were as many as the stars in the sky, you will be left few in number, because you did not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.

63 Just as the LORD delighted to do you good and to multiply you, so the LORD will delight to bring you to ruin and destroy you. You will be torn from the land you are entering to possess.

64 The LORD will scatter you among all the peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you will serve other gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known.

65 Among those nations you will find no peace, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes and a despairing soul.

66 Your life will hang in doubt before you. You will be in dread night and day, never sure of your life.

67 In the morning you will say, ‘If only it were evening!’ and in the evening you will say, ‘If only it were morning!’ because of the dread that fills your heart and the sights your eyes will see.

68 The LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships, by a way I told you you would never see again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.”

1 So the Hebrew; some manuscripts read ‘with the sword’.

2 So the traditional reading; the written Hebrew has a word for ‘swellings’ that may refer to haemorrhoids (compare 1 Samuel 5:6).

3 Compare 2 Kings 6:28–29 and Lamentations 4:10.

Chapter 29

Deuteronomy 29 records the covenant made in the land of Moab, besides the one made at Horeb. Moses reminds Israel of the wonders they saw in Egypt and the forty years in the wilderness, though the LORD has not yet given them a heart to understand. All of them, from leaders to woodcutters and water-carriers, stand before the LORD to enter His covenant, which is also for generations not yet born. Anyone who turns to other gods while assuring himself he is safe will bring on himself every curse written in this book, and the land will be laid waste like Sodom and Gomorrah. The secret things belong to the LORD, but what is revealed belongs to Israel, to do.

1 These are the words of the covenant that the LORD commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in the land of Moab, besides the covenant He had made with them at Horeb.[1]

2 Moses called all Israel together and said to them: “With your own eyes you saw everything the LORD did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to his whole country:

3 the great trials your eyes saw, those great signs and wonders.

4 But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear.[2]

5 I led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes did not wear out on you, and the sandals on your feet did not wear out.

6 You ate no bread and drank no wine or strong drink, so that you might know that I am the LORD your God.

7 When you reached this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out to fight against us, but we defeated them.

8 We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

9 Be careful, then, to keep the terms of this covenant, so that you may succeed in everything you undertake.

10 You are standing today, all of you, before the LORD your God: your leaders, your tribes, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel,

11 your little ones, your wives, and the foreigner in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water,

12 so that you may enter into the covenant of the LORD your God, and into the oath He is making with you today,

13 so that today He may make you His own people and be your God, as He told you, and as He promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, your fathers.

14 It is not with you alone that I am making this covenant and this oath,

15 but also with all who stand here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God, and with those who are not yet here among us.

16 You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we passed through the nations on our way here.

17 You saw their detestable things and their idols of wood and stone, silver and gold.

18 Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Make sure there is no root among you bearing poison and wormwood.[3]

19 When such a person hears the words of this oath, he may bless himself in his heart and think, ‘I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’ That would bring disaster on the watered land and the dry alike.[4]

20 The LORD will not be willing to forgive him. Instead the LORD’s anger and jealousy will smoke against that man, and every curse written in this book will settle on him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.

21 The LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for disaster, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law.

22 The generation to come, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, will see the plagues of that land and the diseases the LORD has inflicted on it:

23 the whole land a burning waste of sulphur and salt, nothing sown, nothing sprouting, no plant growing in it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger and wrath.

24 All the nations will ask, 'Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce and burning anger?'

25 And the answer will come, 'Because they turned their backs on the covenant the LORD, their fathers' God, made with them when He led them out of Egypt.

26 They went and served other gods and bowed down to them, gods they had not known and that He had not given them.

27 So the LORD's anger burned against this land, to bring on it every curse written in this book.

28 In anger, in fury and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and threw them into another land, as it is today.'

29 What is hidden belongs to the LORD our God, but what has been made known belongs to us and to our children for all time,[5] so that we may carry out every word of this law.

1 In Hebrew this verse is 28:69, and 29:2–29 are 29:1–28.

2 Compare Romans 11:8, which joins this verse to Isaiah 29:10.

3 Compare Hebrews 12:15. Wormwood is a bitter plant.

4 Hebrew 'to sweep away the watered with the thirsty'; the meaning is uncertain.

5 In the Hebrew the words 'to us and to our children' are marked with dots above the letters, a scribal sign of uncertainty.

Chapter 30

Deuteronomy 30 looks beyond the curses to Israel's return. When in exile they take these things to heart and return to the LORD with all their heart, He will restore their fortunes, gather them from the ends of the earth and circumcise their hearts to love Him. The commandment is not too hard or far away, not in heaven or beyond the sea; the word is very near, in their mouth and in their heart. Moses sets before them life and good, death and evil, and calls heaven and earth to witness: "Choose life", by loving the LORD and holding fast to Him, for He is their life.

1 When all these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse I have set before you, and you take them to heart among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you,

2 and you and your children turn back to the LORD your God and listen to His voice with your whole heart and your whole soul, doing all that I command you today,

3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you. He will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

4 Even if you have been driven to the ends of the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.

5 The LORD your God will bring you into the land your fathers possessed, and you will possess it. He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers.

6 The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your offspring,[1] so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

7 All these curses the LORD your God will turn on your enemies instead, and on those who hated and hounded you.

8 And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments that I am giving you today.

9 The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hands, in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the produce of your soil. For the LORD will again delight in your good, as He delighted in your fathers,

10 when you obey the voice of the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and statutes written in this Book of the Law, and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

11 For this commandment that I am giving you today is not too hard for you, nor is it far away.

12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will
go up into heaven for us and bring it to us, so that
we may hear it and do it?’
13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say,
‘Who will cross the sea for us and bring it to us, so
that we may hear it and do it?’
14 No, the word is very close to you, in your mouth
and in your heart, so that you can do it.[2]
15 See, I have set before you today life and good,
death and evil.
16 What I command you today is this: love the
LORD your God, walk in His ways, and keep His
commandments, statutes and rules. If you do, you
will live and grow numerous, and the LORD your
God will bless you in the land you are going in to
possess.
17 But if your heart turns away and you will not
listen, and you are drawn away to bow down to
other gods and serve them,
18 I declare to you today that you will surely
perish. You will not live long in the land you are
crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.
19 Today I summon heaven and earth as witnesses
against you: I have put before you life and death,
blessing and curse. Choose life, then, so that you
and your offspring may live,
20 by loving the LORD your God, obeying His voice
and holding fast to Him. For He is your life and
the length of your days, so that you may live in the
land the LORD swore to give your fathers, to
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

1 Compare 10:16, Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 36:26 and Romans 2:29.

2 Romans 10:6–8 applies verses 12–14 to ‘the word of faith’ about Christ.

Chapter 31

Deuteronomy 31 prepares for Moses’ death. At a hundred and twenty he tells Israel that the LORD Himself will go before them, with Joshua at their head, and charges Joshua before them all to be strong and courageous. Moses writes down this law and gives it to the priests and elders, to be read to all Israel every seventh year at the Feast of Booths. At the tent of meeting the LORD warns that after Moses’ death the people will turn to other gods, and tells Moses to write a song that will testify against them. The Book of the Law is placed beside the ark of the covenant as a witness.

1 So Moses went and spoke these words to all
Israel.
2 He said to them, “I am a hundred and twenty
years old today. I can no longer go out and come
in, and the LORD has said to me, ‘You shall not
cross this Jordan.’
3 The LORD your God Himself will cross over
ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before
you, and you will dispossess them. Joshua will
cross over at your head, as the LORD has said.
4 The LORD will do to them what He did to Sihon
and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their
land, when He destroyed them.
5 The LORD will hand them over to you, and you
must do to them all that I have commanded you.
6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or
terrified because of them, for it is the LORD your
God who goes with you. He will not leave you or
abandon you.”[1]
7 Then Moses called Joshua and, with all Israel
looking on, told him, “Be strong and courageous.
You are the one who will go in with this people to
the land the LORD promised their fathers on oath,
and you will give it to them as their inheritance.
8 It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be
with you; He will not leave you or abandon you.
Do not be afraid or dismayed.”
9 Then Moses wrote down this law and gave it to
the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark
of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders
of Israel.
10 Moses commanded them, “At the end of every
seven years, at the appointed time in the year of
release, at the Feast of Booths,
11 when all Israel comes to appear before the
LORD your God at the place He will choose, you
are to read this law aloud before all Israel in their
hearing.
12 Gather the people, men, women and little ones,
and the foreigner within your gates, so that they
may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God,
and be careful to do all the words of this law,
13 and so that their children, who do not know it,
may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as

long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

14 The LORD said to Moses, "The time of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, so that I may give him his charge." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting.

15 And the LORD appeared there in a pillar of cloud, which stood over the doorway of the tent.

16 The LORD said to Moses, "You are about to lie down with your fathers, and this people will rise up and prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake Me and break My covenant that I have made with them.

17 On that day My anger will burn against them; I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be devoured. Many disasters and troubles will come upon them, and on that day they will say, 'Have these disasters not come upon us because our God is not among us?'

18 And I will surely hide My face on that day because of all the evil they have done in turning to other gods.

19 Now write down this song for yourselves and teach it to the Israelites. Put it in their mouths, so that this song may be My witness against the Israelites.

20 Once I have brought them into the land I promised their fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey, and they have eaten all they want and grown fat, they will turn away to other gods and worship them, treating Me with contempt and breaking My covenant.

21 And when many disasters and troubles have come upon them, this song will testify against them as a witness, for it will not be forgotten from the mouths of their offspring. I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land I swore to give them."

22 So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites.

23 Then the LORD gave Joshua son of Nun his charge: "Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I swore to give them, and I will be with you."

24 When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book, to the very end,

25 Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD:

26 "Take this Book of the Law and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, so that it may remain there as a witness against you.

27 For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive with you today, how much more after my death!

28 Assemble all your tribal elders and officials before me, so that I can say these things in their hearing and call heaven and earth as witnesses against them.

29 For I know that after my death you will act very corruptly and turn aside from the way I have commanded you. In the days to come disaster will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger by the work of your hands."

30 Then Moses recited the words of this song from beginning to end in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel:

1 Compare Joshua 1:5 and Hebrews 13:5.

Chapter 32

Deuteronomy 32 is the Song of Moses. Calling heaven and earth to listen, Moses praises the LORD as the Rock, whose work is perfect and whose ways are just, and contrasts Him with His crooked, foolish people. He found Israel in a howling wilderness and cared for them as an eagle cares for its young, but Jeshurun grew fat and forsook the Rock, sacrificing to demons. The LORD will hide His face, make them jealous with those who are no people, and send disaster on them; yet in the end He will judge for His people, take vengeance on His enemies and atone for His land. After urging Israel to take the law to heart, for it is their life, Moses is told to climb Mount Nebo, view the land and die there.

1 "Listen, you heavens, and I will speak; let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

2 Let my teaching fall like rain, my words come down like dew, like showers on new grass, like

gentle rain on green plants.

3 For I will proclaim the name of the LORD;
ascribe greatness to our God!

4 The Rock,[1] His work is perfect, for all His ways
are just. A faithful God who does no wrong,
righteous and upright is He.

5 They have acted corruptly towards Him; to their
shame they are no longer His children,[2] a twisted
and crooked generation.[3]

6 Is this how you repay the LORD, you foolish and
senseless people? Is He not your Father, who
made you, who formed you and established you?

7 Remember the days of old; consider the years of
generations long past. Ask your father, and he will
tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you.

8 When the Most High gave the nations their
inheritance, when He divided the sons of Adam,
He fixed the borders of the peoples according to
the number of the sons of Israel.[4]

9 For the LORD's portion is His people, Jacob His
allotted inheritance.

10 He found him in a desert land, in the empty,
howling wilderness. He surrounded him and cared
for him; He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.

11 Like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers
over its young, He spread out His wings, took him
up and carried him on His pinions.

12 The LORD alone led him; no foreign god was
with him.

13 He made him ride on the heights of the land and
eat the produce of the fields. He nourished him
with honey from the rock and oil from the flinty
crag,

14 with curds from the herd and milk from the
flock, with the fat of lambs and rams, the breed of
Bashan, and goats, with the finest kernels of
wheat; and you drank wine, the blood of the
grape.

15 But Jeshurun[5] grew fat and kicked; you grew fat,
thick and sleek. He abandoned the God who made
him and scorned the Rock of his salvation.

16 They made Him jealous with strange gods; with
detestable things they provoked Him to anger.

17 They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods
they had not known, new gods lately come, whom
your fathers did not dread.[6]

18 You forgot the Rock who fathered you; you put
out of mind the God who gave you birth.

19 The LORD saw it and spurned them, provoked
by His sons and daughters.

20 'I will hide My face from them,' He said, 'and
see how they end. For they are a generation that
twists everything, children with no faithfulness in
them.

21 They made Me jealous with what is no god; they
provoked Me with their worthless idols. So I will
make them jealous with those who are no people; I
will provoke them with a foolish nation.[7]

22 For a fire has been kindled by My anger, and it
burns to the depths of Sheol.[8] It devours the earth
and its harvest, and sets the foundations of the
mountains ablaze.

23 I will heap disasters on them; I will spend My
arrows on them.

24 They will be wasted by hunger, consumed by
burning fever and bitter pestilence. I will send
against them the teeth of wild beasts, with the
venom of things that crawl in the dust.

25 Outside the sword will bereave them, and inside,
terror, young man and young woman alike, the
infant with the grey-haired man.

26 I said I would scatter them and wipe out the
memory of them from mankind,

27 had I not feared the taunts of the enemy, lest
their adversaries misunderstand and say, "Our
hand has triumphed; it was not the LORD who did
all this."'

28 For they are a nation without sense, and there is
no understanding in them.

29 If only they were wise and understood this, and
would consider what their end will be!

30 How could one chase a thousand, or two put ten
thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold
them, unless the LORD had given them up?

31 For their rock is not like our Rock; even our
enemies concede it.

32 Their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and
from the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are
grapes of poison; their clusters are bitter.

33 Their wine is the venom of serpents, the cruel
poison of cobras.

34 'Have I not kept this in reserve, sealed up and
stored away among My treasures?

35 Vengeance is Mine, and I will repay,[9] in due
time, when their foot slips. For the day of their
disaster is near, and their doom comes swiftly.'

36 For the LORD will judge His people[10] and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free.

37 Then He will ask, ‘Where are their gods now, the rock they ran to for shelter,

38 who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your shelter!

39 See now that I, I am He, and there is no god beside Me. I put to death and I bring to life; I wound and I heal, and no one can deliver out of My hand.

40 I raise My hand towards heaven and swear: As I live for ever,

41 when I sharpen My flashing sword and My hand takes hold of judgement, I will take vengeance on My adversaries and repay those who hate Me.

42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword will devour flesh, with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy.’[11]

43 Rejoice, you nations, with His people,[12] for He will avenge the blood of His servants. He will take vengeance on His adversaries and make atonement for His land and His people.”

44 Moses came with Joshua[13] son of Nun and recited all the words of this song in the hearing of the people.

45 When Moses had finished reciting all these words to all Israel,

46 he said to them, “Take to heart all the words I am solemnly declaring to you today, so that you may command your children to be careful to do all the words of this law.

47 For this is no empty word for you; it is your very life. Through this word you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”

48 That same day the LORD said to Moses,

49 “Go up into the Abarim range, to Mount Nebo in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites as their possession.

50 There on the mountain you climb you will die and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people,

51 because both of you broke faith with Me among the Israelites at the waters of Meribah-kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, and did not treat Me as holy among the Israelites.[14]

52 You will see the land from a distance, but you will not go into the land I am giving to the Israelites.”

1 Hebrew צוּר (tsur), a name for God throughout the song (verses 15, 18, 30, 31); compare 1 Corinthians 10:4.

2 The Hebrew of this line is difficult.

3 Compare Philippians 2:15.

4 So the Hebrew; a Dead Sea Scroll and the Greek read ‘the sons of God’.

5 A poetic name for Israel, ‘the upright one’; also in 33:5, 26 and Isaiah 44:2.

6 Compare 1 Corinthians 10:20.

7 Quoted in Romans 10:19; compare Romans 11:11, 14.

8 Hebrew שְׁאוֹל (she’ol), the place of the dead.

9 Quoted in Romans 12:19 and Hebrews 10:30.

10 Or ‘will vindicate His people’; quoted in Hebrews 10:30.

11 Or ‘from the heads of the enemy’s leaders’.

12 Quoted in Romans 15:10, following the Greek. A Dead Sea Scroll and the Greek have a longer form of this verse; compare Hebrews 1:6.

13 Hebrew ‘Hoshea’, Joshua’s earlier name (Numbers 13:16).

14 See Numbers 20:1–13.

Chapter 33

Deuteronomy 33 is the blessing Moses, the man of God, pronounced on the tribes of Israel before his death. It opens with the LORD coming from Sinai in splendour to give His people the law and be King in Jeshurun. Moses blesses each tribe in turn: Reuben, Judah, Levi with the Thummim and Urim and the duty of teaching the law, Benjamin the beloved, Joseph with the riches of heaven and earth, Zebulun and Issachar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali and Asher. It closes in praise: there is none like the God of Jeshurun, whose everlasting arms are underneath, and blessed is Israel, a people saved by the LORD.

1 Before he died, Moses the man of God pronounced this blessing on the Israelites.

2 He said: “The LORD came from Sinai and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones,[1] with flaming fire at His right hand for them.[2]

3 Truly He loves the peoples; all His holy ones are in Your hand. They sit at Your feet, each receiving Your words,

4 the law that Moses commanded us, the possession of the assembly of Jacob.

5 So He became King in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people assembled and the tribes of Israel gathered as one.”

6 “Let Reuben live and not die, though his men be few.”

7 And this he said of Judah: “Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him to his people. With his own hands he contends for them; be his help against his foes.”

8 Of Levi he said: “Your Thummim and Your Urim[3] belong to Your faithful one, whom You tested at Massah, with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah.

9 He said of his father and mother, ‘I have no regard for them.’ He did not acknowledge his brothers or recognise his own children, for they kept Your word and guarded Your covenant.[4]

10 They teach Your rules to Jacob and Your law to Israel. They put incense before You and whole burnt offerings on Your altar.

11 Bless his strength, LORD, and accept the work of his hands. Crush the loins of those who rise against him, of those who hate him, so that they rise no more.”

12 Of Benjamin he said: “The beloved of the LORD dwells in safety by Him. He shields him all day long, and dwells between his shoulders.”[5]

13 Of Joseph he said: “May his land be blessed by the LORD with the choicest gifts of heaven above, with dew, and of the deep that lies beneath,

14 with the choicest fruits the sun brings forth and the finest the months yield,

15 with the best of the ancient mountains and the bounty of the everlasting hills,

16 with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness, and the favour of Him who dwelt in the bush.[6] Let these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.

17 His firstborn bull has majesty, and his horns are the horns of a wild ox. With them he will gore the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth. Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and such the thousands of Manasseh.”

18 Of Zebulun he said: “Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and you, Issachar, in your tents.

19 They will summon peoples to the mountain, and there offer righteous sacrifices. For they will draw on the abundance of the seas and the treasures hidden in the sand.”

20 Of Gad he said: “Blessed is He who enlarges Gad! Gad lies down like a lion and tears off arm and scalp.

21 He chose the best land for himself, for there a leader’s portion was kept. He came with the heads of the people; he carried out the LORD’s justice and His judgements for Israel.”[7]

22 Of Dan he said: “Dan is a lion’s cub, leaping out from Bashan.”

23 Of Naphtali he said: “Naphtali, satisfied with favour and full of the LORD’s blessing, take possession of the west and the south.”

24 Of Asher he said: “Most blessed of sons is Asher; may he be the favourite of his brothers, and may he dip his foot in oil.

25 Your bolts will be iron and bronze, and your strength will last as long as your days.”

26 “There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to help you, and on the clouds in His majesty.

27 The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.[8] He drove

out the enemy before you and said, ‘Destroy!’

28 So Israel lives in safety, the spring of Jacob
alone, in a land of grain and new wine, where the
heavens drop dew.

29 Blessed are you, Israel! Who is like you, a people
saved by the LORD? He is the shield that helps
you and the sword of your triumph. Your enemies
will cringe before you, and you will tread on their
high places.”

1 Or ‘He came from the myriads of holy ones’. Compare Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 2:2.
2 The traditional reading; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Some read ‘a fiery law for them’.
3 The sacred lots in the high priest’s breastpiece; see Exodus 28:30.
4 See Exodus 32:25–29.
5 Perhaps ‘among his hills’, referring to the Temple in Benjamin’s territory near Jerusalem.
6 The burning bush of Exodus 3:2–4.
7 See Numbers 32:1–32 and Joshua 22:1–4.
8 Or ‘The God of old is a refuge, and below are the arms of eternity’.

Chapter 34

Deuteronomy 34 tells of Moses’ death. From the top of Pisgah on Mount Nebo the LORD shows him the whole land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, from Gilead to Dan and from the western sea to Zoar, but he is not to cross into it. Moses, the servant of the LORD, dies there in Moab at a hundred and twenty years, his sight undimmed and his vigour unabated, and the LORD buries him in a place no one knows. Israel mourns him for thirty days. Joshua, filled with the spirit of wisdom, leads them on, but no prophet has since arisen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.

1 Moses climbed from the plains of Moab up Mount
Nebo to the summit of Pisgah, which faces
Jericho, and the LORD let him see the whole land,
from Gilead all the way to Dan,

2 all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh,
all the land of Judah as far as the western sea,

3 the Negev, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho,
the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.

4 And the LORD said to him, “This is the land I
swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, ‘I
will give it to your offspring.’[1] I have let you see it
with your own eyes, but you will not cross over
into it.”

5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in
the land of Moab, as the LORD had said.[2]

6 He was buried in the valley in Moab, facing Beth-
peor, and no one to this day knows where his
grave is.[3]

7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when
he died. His eyesight had not dimmed, nor had his
vigour left him.

8 The Israelites wept for Moses on the plains of
Moab for thirty days, until the days of weeping
and mourning for Moses came to an end.

9 Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit
of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on
him. So the Israelites listened to him and did as
the LORD had commanded Moses.

10 Since then no prophet has arisen in Israel like
Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,[4]

11 none like him for all the signs and wonders the
LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt,
against Pharaoh, all his servants and all his land,

12 and for all the mighty power and all the great
and terrible deeds that Moses did in the sight of
all Israel.

1 Compare Genesis 12:7, 26:3 and 28:13.
2 Hebrew ‘at the mouth of the LORD’; Jewish tradition took it as ‘by the kiss of the LORD’.
3 Hebrew ‘He buried him’, that is, the LORD Himself. Compare Jude 9.
4 Compare Numbers 12:6–8 and 18:15 above.