

# The Book of Deuteronomy

## Introduction

The fifth book written by Moses is called Deuteronomy on account of an erroneous Greek translation of Chapter 17:18. The words "a copy of this law" were translated by mistake "a second law." Deuteronomy means "second law." The Hebrews call it *\_haddeborim*, which means "the words."

This book does not contain a second law, as suggested by the word Deuteronomy; nor is the book a mere repetition of the law previously given in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. The analysis and annotations as given in this work show that such is not the case. Dr. Martin Luther remarks on this book: "Deuteronomy is a compendium and summary of the whole law and wisdom of the people of Israel, wherein those things which relate to the priests and Levites are omitted, and only such things included as the people generally are required to know." This is a correct view. It is "a hortatory description, explanation, and enforcement of the most essential contents of the covenant revelation and covenant laws, with emphatic prominence given to the spiritual principle of the law and its fulfilment; and with a further development of the ecclesiastical, judicial, political and civil organization which was intended as a permanent foundation for the life and well-being of the people in the land of Canaan. There is not the slightest trace, throughout the whole book, of any intention whatever to give a new or second law."

The book of Deuteronomy is the book which demands obedience. Obedience is the keynote of almost every chapter. It is the great lesson of the book. Obedience in the spirit of love, flowing from a blessed and enjoyed relationship with Jehovah, is the demand made of His people. Over and over again in this final portion of the Pentateuch the people Israel are reminded of the great goodness and faithfulness of Jehovah. How He redeemed them out of the house of bondage, carried them through the wilderness, guided them, gave them food, sustained them is repeatedly stated. And He, who chose Israel and dealt thus with them has a perfect claim on their love; that love is to be expressed by obedience. There are some misguided believers who pass by this magnificent book as if there were no lessons to be learned here. To do this is a very serious mistake. No book in the Bible must be ignored. Each bears its own peculiar character and message. We do well to look under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the spiritual lessons which are written for us here.

Is the principle of the book of Deuteronomy, obedience to Jehovah and His Word in the spirit of love and godly fear, abandoned in the New Testament? We answer, it is as prominent there as it is in this fifth book of Moses. New Testament believers, forming the body of Christ, are brought into the highest possible relationship with the Lord. They possess a position which Israel never possessed and of which even their greatest prophets were ignorant. Christian believers are one with the Lord Jesus Christ. Everywhere in the Gospels and in the Epistles this relationship into which the grace of God has brought believers forms the basis of exhortation to love the Lord and to obey His Word; to live unto Him. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.... If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him. He that

loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings, and the Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's, who sent Me" (John 14:21, 23, 24). "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10). May God's people everywhere be reminded, in the days of laxity and worldliness, that the Lord who has redeemed us and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, claims our love and obedience. This fact makes the book of Deuteronomy, if carefully studied in a spiritual way, of great importance to every child of God. If read it is bound to produce a response from every heart indwelt by His Spirit and a closer walk with God and more childlike obedience will be the result. It is deeply interesting at the same time to study this old book. This book, three thousand years old, having power to touch the heart and the life of all who receive its message, is an evidence in itself of its divine origin. Well has it been said: "Take any human writing of the same date as the book of Deuteronomy; if you should lay your hand on some volume written three thousand years ago, what would you find? A curious relic of antiquity--something to be placed in the British Museum, side by side with an Egyptian mummy, having no application whatever to us or to our time--a musty document--a piece of obsolete writing, practically useless to us, referring only to a state of society and to a condition of things long since passed away and buried in oblivion."

### **Higher Criticism and Deuteronomy**

On account of the sublime character of this book, Deuteronomy has been the object of the special attacks by the critics. These boasting "scholars" have left nothing unattacked, but have defiled with their foolish theories and inventions the perfect Word of God. Throughout our studies in the preceding books, we have touched repeatedly upon their arguments and repudiated their claims. It is quite impossible to follow here the history and development of the criticism of Deuteronomy. There is a reason, which we hope to state later, why this book has been the special object of these satanic attacks, to rob it of its authority. And we wish to add, that nowhere else in their criticism are the critics so at sea and often contradicting each other, as in their attacks upon Deuteronomy. All deny, of course, the Mosaic authorship. The dates are placed many centuries after Moses. To show how these "learned" gentlemen agree, we give a few names of professors and others and what they say about the date of the book. Oettli and others assume that it was composed during the earlier, but post-Solomonic, time of the kings. Vatinger and Koenig claim it was written under Hezekiah. Ewald, Riehm, Smith, Kautsch, etc., teach it was composed under Manasseh's reign. De Wette, Bleck, Welshausen, Reuss, Dillman, etc., believe it was written when Josiah was king. Gesenius and a host of modern critics put the composition of Deuteronomy during or even after the Babylonian captivity. Here is harmony!

If Deuteronomy was not written by Moses immediately before his death, then the book has no claim whatever upon our confidence. It must be rejected as a colossal fraud. And if this book was not written by Moses and therefore must be classed as a forgery, then the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning this book would have to be dismissed as untrustworthy; that would rob Him of His infallibility. Furthermore the entire New Testament teaching would be affected by it, for the New Testament writers in their inspired testimony make constant use of the book of Deuteronomy.

### **Higher Criticism is Infidelity**

Higher criticism is infidelity and that of the most dangerous kind, because it comes in the garb of an angel of light and often claims to be a friend and a helper, to lead people into the

truth. All the prominent infidels (and most of them, if not all, immoral men) ridiculed the idea that Moses wrote Deuteronomy.

We quote from that well-known infidel, who lived more than a hundred years ago, Thomas Paine:

"In Deuteronomy the style and manner of writing marks more evidently than the former books that Moses is not the writer." "Though it is impossible for us to know identically who the writer of Deuteronomy was, it is not difficult to discover him professionally, that he was some Jewish priest who lived, as I shall show in the course of this work, at least 850 years after Moses."

Recently an official of high standing in the Methodist Episcopal Church wrote a book in which he followed closely in the tracks of German infidel critics. He made the following assertions:

"It is clear, say our modern authorities, that he (Moses) could not have been the author of this book (Deuteronomy). For reasons equally convincing, it is evident that the book must be the product of a period or periods far later than that of Moses." "The date of its origin is probably not far from the middle of the sixth century B.C."

Is there any difference between the statements of the infidel Thomas Paine and the Methodist preacher of prominent standing? Both speak the same language. Doubly sad it is, when the men, who adopt this destructive criticism, are destitute of any scholarship whatever. They are but weak echo-men of others.

### **Our Lord and Deuteronomy**

Our Lord Jesus Christ put special honor upon this book. It is this book which He quoted exclusively when Satan came to Him with his vile temptations. Three times He took His answers from that one book, quoting chapter 6:13, 16; 8:3; 10:20. This certainly is highly significant. He, who knew the Word so well, might have gone to any other portion and used it with equal effect. But He chose to take refuge behind this book and draw the weapon from it to defeat Satan, who now tries, by his instruments, to destroy the trustworthiness of the book in which the Lord Jesus Christ so firmly believed as the very Word of God. And our Lord no doubt foresaw all this modern day infidel criticism. Did He know anything of the authorship of Deuteronomy? Would He have quoted from this book if it had been a forgery? if these words are not truly the Word of God, though claiming to be that, then they are falsehoods. How could Satan have been defeated by falsehoods? Alas! these critics go so far in their blasphemy, that they charge Christ with ignorance, or that He acquiesced in a popular error of His times! The testimony our Lord has given to this book is sufficient to establish its divinity as well as the Mosaic authorship.

But there is another reason why He selected Deuteronomy in answering the Devil. As we have seen Deuteronomy tells of obedience. Hence the One who had come to be obedient, yea obedient unto death, the death of the cross, went to that book, which speaks of obedience, to show how He submitted to the will of His Father and to defeat Satan thereby. Our Lord therefore bore witness also to the very character of the book itself.

## **In the New Testament**

Equally striking it is that the Lord in many other instances made use of Deuteronomy. And the Holy Spirit in almost every portion of the New Testament connects His testimony with this great book. We earnestly request our readers to study the following passages and turn to these references. This not only shows how Deuteronomy is made use of in the New Testament, but it will help in understanding the book. Deut. 1:16, 17; 16:19 and John 7:24; James 2:1. Deut. 4:2; 12:32 and Matt. 5:18; Rev. 22:18-19. Deut 4:7 and James 4:8. Deut. 4:29-31; 31:6 and Hebrews 11:6; 8:8. Deut. 5:5 and Gal. 3:19. Deut. 7:8 and 1 John 4:10. Deut. 9:7, 24; 10:16 and Acts 7:51. Deut. 9:15, 19 and Heb. 12:18. Deut. 10:17 and Acts 10:34 and 1 Tim. 6:15. Deut. 13:14 and 2 Cor. 6:15. Deut. 4:2; 26:19; 28:9 and 1 Peter 2:9. Deut. 15:11 and Matt. 26:11; John 12:8. Deut. 16:20 and 1 Tim. 6:11. Deut. 17:6; 19:15 and Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; Heb. 10:28. Deut. 18:15 and Acts 3:22; 7:37; John 1:21; 6:14; Matt. 17:5. Deut. 18:16 and Heb. 12:19. Deut. 18:19 and Luke 10:16; John 12:48; Acts 3:23. Deut. 18:18 and John 12:49. Deut. 19:19; 17:7 and 1 Cor. 5:13. Deut. 19:21 and Matt. 5:38. Deut. 21:6 and Matt. 27:24. Deut. 21:23 and Gal. 3:13. Deut. 22:22 and John 8:4. Deut. 23:25 and Matt. 12:1. Deut. 14:1 and Matt. 5:31; 19:3. Deut. 24:14 and James 5:4. Deut. 25:3 and 2 Cor. 11:24. Deut. 25:4 and 1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18. Deut. 25:5 and Matt. 22:24. Deut. 27:26 and Gal. 3:10. Deut. 29:3 and Rom 11:8. Deut. 29:18 and Heb. 12:15. Deut. 30:6 and Rom. 2:29. Deut. 30:11 and Rom. 10:6-8. Deut. 31:26 and Rom. 3:19. Deut. 32:21 and Rom. 10:19. Deut. 32:35 and Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30. Deut. 32:43 and Rom. 15:10.

And if Deuteronomy were not true, not the Word of God, what then? Every part of the New Testament would collapse.

## **Interesting Prophecy**

But Deuteronomy is also a book of prophecy. Moses is called in it a prophet. He exercises His office in this final book he wrote. From Pisgah he beheld the land in all its beauty. But before he had that vision, he had seen the future of the people, who had been his charge during the weary years through the desert sands. How wonderful it is that he, their appointed leader, who knew the people so well, uttered prophecies, which cover the past, present and future history of Israel. How minutely curses, which were to come upon the people, are predicted in this book! How minutely they were fulfilled and are still in course of fulfillment.

His great song (chapter 32) is wholly prophetic. It is, if rightly understood, a key to the entire prophetic Word. What is yet to come upon the nation, both in judgment and in blessing, was beheld by Moses.

His last message was the blessing. The man, the faithful servant of Jehovah, to whom was given the ministry of the law (which can do nothing but curse), ends his earthly testimony by uttering a blessing. That blessing will yet come upon the sons of Jacob and all nations will rejoice in coming days, when His people is brought back and all His promises are fulfilled. May it please God to make the study of this book a great blessing to all His people.

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4. The Death of Moses (34:1-12)

### **Analysis and Annotations**

#### **I. THE FIRST DISCOURSE OF MOSES AND RETROSPECT**

##### **1. The Introduction**

#### **CHAPTER 1:1-5**

The people were still on this side of Jordan in the wilderness. The second verse, containing a parenthetical statement, gives the story of their unbelief, as recorded in the Book of Numbers. "There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea." They might have reached the place they occupied now, facing Jordan and the land, in eleven days. It took them almost forty years. Unbelief had kept them back. It was towards the end of

the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, that Moses began his wonderful addresses. In the first month of that memorable year Miriam had died (Num. 20:1). His brother Aaron had died in the fifth month (Num. 33:38). Moses was soon to follow him at the close of the fortieth year, at the ripe age of one hundred and twenty. Forty years were spent by Moses in the palaces of Egypt; forty years he was a shepherd in the land of Midian and forty years he was the leader of God's people through the wilderness. Before he went to the top of Pisgah to behold the land and to die, he pours out his heart in the presence of all Israel. His words were "according unto all that the Lord had given him." All he had received from the Lord, he passed on faithfully to the Lord's people. "Moses verily was faithful in all God's house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things, which were to be spoken afterward" (Heb. 3:5). Once more, therefore, he placed the words of the Lord before their hearts. This is the blessed object of ministry, to make known what God has revealed. True ministry is to deliver the message received. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received" (1 Cor. 15:3). Moses declared the Law unto them (verse 5). The Hebrew word "declare" means "to make plain." it is used in Habakkuk 2:2.

## **2. From Horeb to Kadesh**

1. The command to go in and to possess the land (1:6-8)
2. The appointment of judges reviewed (1:9-18)
3. The failure to possess the land (1:19-33)
4. The judgment of God (1:34-46)

In the beginning of our annotations we must guard once more against the misleading conception, that the book of Deuteronomy is nothing but a rehearsal of previous history. On account of this wrong estimate, the book has not received the close study it deserves and God's people have missed the blessing, which results from such a study. It is true, Deuteronomy contains much that is retrospective, but it is far from being mere repetition. Spiritual lessons are found here, which are very much needed at the present time.

God had spoken at Horeb, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount." This communication is not found in the book of Numbers, though the opening chapters of that book presuppose such a command. Not a word is said here of the cloud and the trumpets, the twofold means by which Jehovah guided and directed His people. We therefore learn, that the Lord also spoke in direct words to them. He had watched their dwelling at Horeb; the purpose He had with them at that mountain was accomplished and now they had been instructed to move. It reveals the loving interest the Lord took in His people and in their movements. And He is still the same, who controls the tarrying and the journeying of His people. Every word in verses 7 and 8 reveals the divine purpose to lead His people at once into the land, which He had sworn unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 22:16). The land was set before them; all they needed was to go forward in faith and possess it. They failed miserably.

The nation had greatly multiplied and Moses was not able to bear them alone (Exodus 18:17-18; Num. 11:14). To guard against any misunderstanding of his word: "I am not able to bear you myself" Moses added the gracious wish "the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are and bless you, as He hath promised you!" These

beautiful words still breathe the warmth of the loving heart of Moses and they are also expressing his faith in the promise of Jehovah. Provision was made for the relief of Moses. There is no discrepancy here with the statements in Exodus and Numbers on this matter. Moses in his address does not give a repetition of the historical-chronological facts, and circumstances, but simply mentions them incidentally as leading up to the main object of his address. It was failure on his part, when he complained of his burden. We learned this in our annotations of Numbers 11. May we think here of the great burden-bearer, our Lord, who never fails His people and who never complains. We can cast our burdens and cares upon Him and shall ever find that He careth for us.

The sending out of the spies is next mentioned. Here we find the hidden things uncovered and the motives are given, which prompted the people to ask for the spies. They asked for the spies themselves. So we learn that the wish did not come from the Lord, nor from Moses. When Jehovah saw the desire of their hearts and heard their request, He commanded the sending out of the spies. He knew in what it would result. Moses was ignorant of that, therefore, the saying pleased him well. If the people had faith in God they would have been obedient at once and gone up to possess the land. The story of their unbelief and rebellion follows. Fearful was the accusation, which came from their lips. "Because the Lord hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us." What ingratitude and blindness! The Lord, who had so graciously delivered them out of Egypt, who had overthrown the hosts of Egypt, who had given them the bread from heaven and water out of the rock, Him they accused of hatred.

The words of Moses to inspire the murmuring people with new courage (verses 29-31) do not appear in the book of Numbers. Deuteronomy is clearly not a mere rehearsal of what took place. Moses honored the Lord by the words he spoke. He did not share the unbelief of the people. The concluding paragraph of the first chapter shows the judgment, which fell upon that unbelieving generation. The opening words of Moses in this book are of a solemn character. Unbelief and disobedience had brought judgment upon the people. God's demands here and throughout this book are faith and obedience as the expression of faith. Confidence in Him and obedience, unswerving obedience He asks of us; He can never dispense with these. We find these demands of Jehovah everywhere. Obedience is the way to blessing and the enjoyment of what Jehovah is, while disobedience plunges into darkness and despair. And how significant are the burning exhortations to obedience from the lips of the servant of God, whose failure by being disobedient and self-willed had deprived him from entering into the land!

### **3. After the Forty Years and From Conflict to Conquest**

#### **CHAPTER 2**

1. From Kadesh to the land of the Amorites (2:1-23)
2. The command to possess (2:24-25)
3. The conquest of Sihon (2:26-37)

The many days in the first verse are the thirty-eight years. We must notice the little word "we." "We turned and took our journey into the wilderness." Moses, Aaron, his sons, Joshua, Caleb and the faithful Levites turned back with the unfaithful, murmuring Israelites. Moses and



all who had not shared in the unbelief of the people submitted to the sovereign will of the Lord. How strange it would have been if they had complained in sharing in the judgment of the mass of the people. This is true obedience and humility. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble; submit yourselves, therefore, to God" (James 4:6-7). The faithful ones shared the trials, the sorrows, the hardships of the murmuring multitudes. And Jehovah was with them and in gracious tenderness. Can there be anything more beautiful than the testimony of Moses he gives in verse 7! "For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God has been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing." Well may we ponder over it. The people, who had accused Him, insulted Him, disbelieved His word, this people He carried through the great wilderness so that they lacked nothing. May we take courage. Our failures, our short-comings, our unbelief do not arrest the gracious tenderness of His loving heart.

Intensely interesting is the divine injunction not to molest Edom, Moab and Ammon. The great principle which goes through Deuteronomy is very outstanding in this command of Jehovah. He guided them, gave His instructions and they were to depend on Him and be obedient to His will. They might have coveted to possess the plains of Moab or Mount Seir and the lands of Ammon. The Lord forbade them to do so. Disobedience would have been disastrous. Though Edom had harassed Israel greatly and displayed an arrogant pride, yet Jehovah would not give Edom's possession to Israel. He remembered His word "I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession" (Gen. 32:3; 36:6-8; Josh. 24:4). They were, therefore, not to seek what the Lord had not given to them. And this is obedience and a lesson of faith. What happy contentment there would be among God's people, if this rule were followed.

The same command not to distress the Moabites and Ammonites (blood relations to Israel) is given. The races of giants are mentioned, which occupied the territories of Moab, Ammon and Edom. They had different names as stated in the text. Emim means "the terrible ones;" Zamzumim has the meaning "to murmur and meditate." This may have some reference to demon possession as seen in some of the present day mediums of spiritism. They were powerful and extremely vicious beings, given up to the control and service of Satan.

Then Jehovah called to action. "Rise up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon, behold I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, King of Heshbon, and his land, begin to possess it and contend with him in battle." (In verse 13, "Now rise up, *said I*"--the words in italics "said I" must be omitted. Not Moses, but Jehovah gave the command.)

Obedience is again the demand. While the statement in verse 25 "I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven" has been taken as hyperbolical, it also has a prophetic meaning. The Gentiles fear the Jews and the nations stand in dread of them. Some day the Jewish race will be the head of the nations of the world. Sihon's measure of wickedness and cruelty was full. His spirit was hardened like Pharaoh's and Israel completely overthrew him and his kingdom. "The LORD our God delivered all unto us" (verse 36). Read Psalm 136:19-26. It was His mercy. And His mercy endureth forever and is blessedly on our side. May we walk in obedience and find His mercy acting in our behalf.

## CHAPTER 3

1. The conquest of Og (3:1-11)
2. The land possessed (3:12-20)
3. Joshua in the place of Moses (3:21-29)

In obedience to the word of the Lord, they went to battle against Og, the king of Bashan. Obedience to the Lord and its results and blessing are the marks of the second and third chapters of Deuteronomy, while the first chapter shows disobedience and its fruit.

The kingdom of Og in Bashan was a powerful kingdom. The cities had high walls with gates and bars. Their number was sixty. Archaeological research has proven the existence of strong and fortified cities in that territory, the ruins of which may still be seen. The oldest dwellings and ruined towers of Hauran (Bashan) are described by C. Von Raumer in the following words: "Simple, built of heavy blocks of basalt, roughly hewn, and as hard as iron, with very thick walls, very strong stone gates and doors, many of which were about eighteen inches thick, and were formerly fastened with immense bolts, of which traces still remain; such houses as these may have been the work of the old giant tribe of Rephaim, whose king, Og, was defeated by the Israelites 3,000 years ago." King Og was a giant, belonging to the remnant of the giant tribe of Rephaim. His iron bedstead is mentioned by Moses. There is nothing exaggerated about it. The bed was about twelve feet long and six feet broad, which does not mean that Og was as tall as that. Moses must have mentioned the bedstead of the slain giant, to remind the people of the great victory which the Lord had given them and to inspire them with confidence in the possession of the land. The Lord, who overthrew Og would certainly not fail them when they entered the land and met the enemies there.

They utterly destroyed men, women and children of every city. Many an infidel has sneered at this statement and blasphemed God, charging Him with cruelty and injustice for allowing such an extermination of human beings. God is righteous. These people were steeped in all kinds of vices and wickedness, similar to the depravity and vilest corruption of the Canaanites. God had to deal in judgment with them. He could not permit them to exist, and as the sovereign God He dealt with them in His righteous government.

"Now, the question is, Are we competent to understand these ways of God in government? Is it any part of our business to sit in judgment upon them? Are we capable of unraveling the profound and awful mysteries of divine providences? Can we--are we called upon to--account for the tremendous fact of helpless babes involved in the judgment of their guilty parents? Impious infidelity may sneer at these things; morbid sentimentality may stumble over them; but the true believer, the pious Christian, the reverent student of holy Scripture, will meet them all with this one simple but safe and solid question, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'

"This, we may rest assured, is the only true way in which to meet such questions. If man is to sit in judgment upon the actings of God in government--if he can take upon himself to decide as to what is and what is not worthy of God to do, then, verily, we have lost the true sense of God altogether. And this is just what the devil is aiming at. He wants to lead the heart away from God; and to this end, he leads men to reason and question and speculate in a region which lies as far beyond their ken as heaven is above the earth. Can we comprehend God? If we could, we

should ourselves be God" (C.H. Mackintosh).

This is a good answer to the infidel scoffer and should satisfy every Christian as well. The time is coming when the Lord will deal again in righteousness with this earth and then the slain of the Lord will be many.

The goodness and faithfulness of the Lord is thus unfolded by Moses in his address; it was meant for an encouragement to their faith and obedience. Next he speaks to them of the land, which the tribe of Reuben, Gad and half Manasseh received. We learned in our study of the book of Numbers that it was in self-will that they made the request. They were disobedient. Their failure is here completely overlooked by Moses. How beautifully this illustrates the grace of God!

He also reminded them of Joshua's call to be his successor; it took place at that time, after the conquest of the land on the east of the Jordan. He had seen what the Lord had done and that was an assurance of what the Lord would do in the future. All is worded so as to encourage confidence in the Lord and obedience to His command. And is it not even so throughout His entire Word? Everything in His Word urges us on to trust in Him with fullest confidence. Happy are we if we do so and manifest that confidence by a loving obedience.

Then we find a prayer of Moses, which is unmentioned in Numbers. It is a beautiful prayer. He pleaded with the Lord to let him go over to see the good land. It could not be, on account of his sin at the waters of Meribah. Meekly he tells out the story of failure in the presence of the people and gives the Lord's answer to him. Divine government had to shut him out from the land, but grace took him to the top of Pisgah to see, in company with the Lord, the land of promise.

### **3. Hearken, O Israel!**

## **CHAPTER 4**

1. Obedience demanded (4:1-8)
2. The covenant to be observed (4:9-14)
3. Take heed unto yourselves lest ye forget (4:15-24)
4. The warning (4:25-31)
5. Israel, the chosen nation (4:32-40)

"Now therefore hearken, O Israel" marks the beginning of the exhortation to keep the law of the Lord. First he had shown the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord and upon that Moses admonishes them to be true to Jehovah and to the covenant. The same order is followed in our great New Testament Epistles. What the Lord has done for us, His grace and faithfulness, always occupies the first place; this is followed by our responsibilities to walk worthy of the Lord. The first great discourse of Moses in its two main features, the retrospect of what Jehovah had done and Israel's obligation to keep the law to enjoy the blessings of the covenant, is the key to the entire book.

They were to hearken and to do. Hearing and doing stand in the foreground of this section. The result of obedience is life and possession of the land. "That ye may live" does not mean the possession of eternal life, but a long earthly life in the promised land. See chapters 5:33; 6:2; 8:1; 11:21; 16:20; 25:15; 30:6, 16; 32:47. Nothing was to be added to the law and nothing to be taken from it. Alas! this warning has not been heeded. The elders with their traditions and commandments of men, added to the law and put the word of man above the Word of God, while later the Sadducees took away from the law and reduced the Word of God to the level of the word of man. The same is done today in ritualistic and rationalistic Christendom.

His voice had spoken to them; they had heard His words. They were privileged above all other nations. "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes, and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" Therefore, they had great responsibility. Three times Moses told them to take heed (verses 9, 15 and 23). He warned them to beware of idolatry. They were to serve only Jehovah for He had brought them forth out of the iron furnace, to be unto Him a people of inheritance. He had delivered them and made them His own people, therefore, they were to obey Him. Solemnly Moses said, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed." Moses in speaking these words had the first prophetic glimpse of their coming history of idolatry, followed by national ruin. This vision widens and he beheld them scattered among the nations.

Verses 30 and 31 refer not only to past history, but they are yet to find a fulfilment in the latter days. It is the first prophetic note we hear in Deuteronomy from the lips of Moses. More fully he speaks of it towards the end of his farewell message to the people he loved so well.

Especially beautiful are the closing verses of this section (verses 33-40). What a display of what Jehovah had done for them, how He had revealed Himself and His power in their behalf! Therefore, He was entitled to a wholehearted obedience from His people. "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else." And what greater works He has made unto us His people, that great salvation in His blessed Son, our Lord! He has the right to claim our full obedience. May we consider constantly, who He is and what He has done for us and we shall yield to Him the obedience He looks for in His people.

#### **4. The Three Cities of Refuge**

### **CHAPTER 4:41-43**

1. The cities set apart (4:41-42)

2. The cities named (4:43)

The first address being ended, an action of Moses takes place. To detect here the hand of an editor, who added these verses, as critics claim, cannot be sustained. The cities of refuge were mentioned in Numbers. Here the three on this side of Jordan are given. Then there were three more on the other side of which we read in chapter 19 and in the book of Joshua. As stated in our annotations in Numbers, the cities of refuge are typical of Christ, who is our shelter from

the avenger. Scattered through the land for the gracious purpose of sheltering the slayer, they also bear a prophetic testimony. They speak of Israel's hope.

"These cities of refuge, set at intervals through the land of Israel, are a garrison for it from God, which even still, in ruin, as the land is, watch over it, as ministers of unchanging grace, and prophets of now near-coming glory. This people of God, separated to Him in the wonderful way attested by their annals,--What, after all, has been their condition for many and long centuries of subjection to hostile races? They have been strangers and wanderers, Cain-like, and indestructible as Cain,--a nation surviving even in death, but as if to perpetuate only the memory of the doom under which they lie,--the doom of an awful fratricide. Such is, in fact, their conditions condition hopeless to most yet, though it may be now with a streak of gray dawn widening upon it. But these cities of refuge have all the time been watch-towers set to face eastward, ramparts round prostrate Zion, upon which the watchmen hold not their peace, and give Him no rest, till He establish it again,-- yea, till He make it a praise upon earth (Isa. 62:6, 7).

"They are His pledge, in view of what has in fact come to pass, that what He has foreseen cannot thwart His purposes, nor their sin His long-foreshown grace. Preach they may in sackcloth, but it is good tidings that they preach, of a place of security even for homicides,--for those for whom His plea shall yet avail, 'They know not what they do.'"--F.W. Grant, Notes on Deuteronomy

The meaning of the three names are of equal interest. "Bezer" means "defence," a fortified place. Such Christ is for all who trust in Him. In Him we have our shelter and blessing as well. "Ramoth" means "heights." Our Lord occupies the exalted, the preeminent place and shelter in Him, we share His place as we read in the second chapter of Ephesians. "Golan" means "joy" or "their rejoicing." Even so we have in Him, who is our refuge, our joy and He has His joy in us.

## **II. THE EXPOSITION OF THE LAW, EXHORTATIONS AND WARNINGS, BLESSING AND CURSE**

### **1. The Proclamation of the Decalogue**

#### **CHAPTERS 4:44-5:33**

1. The introductory words (4:44-49)
2. The law proclaimed (5:1-21)
3. Moses, the mediator (5:22-33)

First a general announcement is given of the discourse on the law. The fact is emphasized, that it was set before them after they came forth out of Egypt. Then the victories over Sihon and Og are mentioned once more and that they now possessed their land. Why this repetition? It was to remind them of the goodness and faithfulness of Jehovah, whose law they were about to hear expounded. It was to be a helpful encouragement to them and stimulate their obedience, while it also was the pledge of greater victories and blessings to come. Jehovah would keep His promise.

All Israel is gathered about Moses. The aged servant, so soon to leave their midst, now

solemnly begins to utter the main discourse, which composes this book. The first verse of the fifth chapter contains the four words, which are found so often in this book of moral responsibility and practical obedience. These words are "hear" (over thirty times); "learn" (seven times); "keep" (thirty-nine times); "do" (almost one hundred times). These are therefore characteristic words of this great book. They were to hear, and hearing to learn, and learning to keep, and keeping to do. And this is still Jehovah's demand of us His people. All who have a spiritual nature love to have it so. What is more delightful and blessed, than to hear Him speak, to learn of Him, to keep His Word and to do what He tells us!

Jehovah had made a covenant with them, not with their fathers, the patriarchs. The law covenant was made 430 years after Abraham. Moses then speaks in their hearing the words of the Decalogue. The words differ somewhat from the twentieth chapter in Exodus, showing again that Deuteronomy is not a mechanical repetition of previous history. Higher criticism with its confused and confusing theories has made the best of this difference. Upon this difference critics claim that Moses could not have been the author of both. Says a critic: "Indeed he could not have written either in its present form, because that in Exodus is Jehovistic, and older than the record in Deuteronomy" (Dr. Davidson). Such an assertion simply shows the blindness of these men of supposed learning and scholarship. Anyone can see that the records in Exodus and Deuteronomy differ. We do not need scholarship for that. The mysterious person, whom the critics call "Deuteronomist" certainly possessed the record in Exodus and could have easily copied the exact words. But why is there a difference? Exodus gives the history; Deuteronomy does not repeat that history, but in restating the Decalogue, Moses makes such comments which are in perfect keeping with the object of Deuteronomy. If Deuteronomy claimed to be a literal repetition of the history recorded in Exodus and Numbers, then one might speak of discrepancy.

"Deuteronomy proves that we have here a grave and instructive reference to the commandments formally given in the second book of Moses. Such moral motives as are added are therefore as appropriate in Deuteronomy as they could not, ought not to, be in Exodus. The remembrance of their own estate as slaves in Egypt till delivered by Jehovah is most suitable in verse 15; but it is certain that this is an appeal to their hearts, not the ground stated by God in promulgating the fourth commandment. All is perfect in its own place, and the imputation of self contradiction as baseless as it is malicious and irreverent. But one must only expect this from men whose aim is to reduce the inspired writers to their own level, and who think that piety can co-exist with fraud, yea, with fraudulent falsehood about God."

Moses left out purposely certain statements he uttered when the law was given through him in Exodus; and he added by way of comment other words in fullest keeping with the moral purpose of his message to the people. This is most evident in connection with the commandment to keep the Sabbath-day holy. In Exodus 20 we find the words "for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it." This reference to creation is omitted now by Moses, but he adds another spiritual motive to keep that day. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; therefore, the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day" (verse 15). We see at once that the characteristic of Deuteronomy is maintained. The people are reminded of the faithfulness and goodness of Jehovah, His gracious dealing with them, and that is made the ground of their responsibility to obey His Word. See in connection with the Sabbath Exodus 31:12-17. It was a sign between

Jehovah and Israel. We refer the reader to our remarks on the Sabbath in the analysis of Exodus.

Moses then confirms the record in Exodus. "And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me." They possessed them. Moses was also appointed as mediator, the type of Him, who is mediator between God and man, our Lord Jesus Christ. And He has done more than Moses did; He made atonement. The people had recognized their sinful distance from God as well as their merited condemnation (that which is the purpose of the law), and therefore had asked for the mediator. Note verse 29: Jehovah speaks, the One who searches the heart and knows what is in man. Absolute obedience is again demanded in the closing verses of this chapter.

## **2. The First Commandment and What It Involves**

### **CHAPTER 6**

1. Hear, therefore, O Israel! (6:1-3)
2. The first commandment (6:4-5)
3. The remembrance of these words and practical obedience (6:6-25)

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God is one LORD." Much has been made of this verse by orthodox Jews, who reverence it greatly. They call it the "Shema" after the first word "Hear." It is often used by Jews and Unitarians to deny the three persons of the Godhead. The Hebrew word "echod" (one), however, excludes forever such a denial, for it means a compound unity. The Hebrew has another word which expresses exactly what Jews and Unitarians, who reject the three persons in the Godhead, believe. It is the word "yochid"; this has the meaning of a single one.

"Jehovah, our Elohim is one Jehovah," thus the name of God is used in this verse. The verse states that to Him alone the name of Jehovah (the Self-existing One) rightfully belongs, He is the one who is absolutely God. It is the testimony against the polytheism (many and different gods) of the Gentiles, which surrounded Israel on all sides. And therefore, because He is the one God, and none beside Him, He must be loved with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the might. The heart with all its affections and energies must belong to Him. To believe on Him and to know Him must ever result in giving Him the heart. Spirit, soul and body must be devoted to Him. This is the first and the great commandment (Matthew 22:38; Mark 12:29-30). And we know this Jehovah as our Redeemer, who came and died in our stead. The New Testament fully reveals the claims He has on those, for whose redemption He paid the price with His own blood. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). "And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (verse 21). "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3). "For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

Verses 6-9 are literally carried out by orthodox Jews. They write these words on parchment and put them in little boxes, which they bind with strips of leather to their foreheads and upon the hand. These are the phylacteries. They also put them in tin-boxes and nail them on the doors of their houses. All His words are worthy to be constantly remembered. The Word must be hid in the heart. It is to be in the family. It is never to be forgotten, whether we sit in the house, or

walk, or rest, or rise up. Such a true spiritual remembrance of His words will increase and constantly produce devotion and obedience to the Lord. How solemn the warning not to forget Jehovah in the days of blessing and prosperity! (verses 10-15) How often they did forget Jehovah in the days of peace and earthly blessing.

Verse 16 is of deep interest. "Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted Him in Massah." The tempting of the Lord at Massah was questioning His presence among them (Exodus 17:7). Our Lord made use of this word when the devil demanded that He should cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. Satan then quoted Scripture in His presence. The enemy knows how to do that; but he either leaves something out from the Word or he adds something to it. In quoting from Psalm 91, he omitted seven words, "to keep thee in all thy ways." Satan knew the obedience of Christ and he tried to make our Lord act in obedience to the Word by testing God's Word. But such was not God's way; it was not according to His command to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. If He had done it, it would have been an act of self-will and therefore disobedience. And that is why Satan left out those seven words. But what did our Lord do? He did not call Satan to task for mutilating the Scriptures, but quoted another Scripture to show His unswerving obedience. "Again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God." He would not tempt God. He quoted the book of Deuteronomy, because it is the book of obedience, and He had come not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. He also quoted the words in 8:3 and 10:20. How this fact confirms the inspiration and genuineness of Deuteronomy, we have already mentioned in our introduction.

### **3. The Possession of the Land and Their Separation**

#### **CHAPTER 7**

1. The command to destroy the Canaanites (7:14)
2. The command to destroy their idolatry (7:5-11)
3. The promise of blessing and help (7:12-26)

Seven nations are mentioned as occupying the land, which God gave to Israel. These nations were steeped in the most awful licentiousness and practised the vilest abominations. There are different reasons to believe that Satan possessed them in a peculiar manner. God had tolerated these nations for many centuries. He waited in His mercy before the sword of justice was unsheathed. The measure of their wickedness was now full, the time for judgment had come. The Lord called Israel to be the executioner of that awful judgment. And whenever they carried out the divine judgment, not sparing any one, they had an object lesson of the holiness and righteousness of God. Their sons and daughters were not to marry any members of these doomed nations. That would result in apostasy from Him and in idolatry. All their altars, their images and their groves they were to destroy. They were a holy people. But the Lord did not choose them because they were more in number than other nations. Jehovah loved them. Solemnly they are once more told that the Jehovah who hath set His love on them is a faithful, a covenant keeping God. He keeps His covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments. But He also repays them that hate Him. Promises of blessings follow. If they are obedient, if they hear, keep and do (verse 12) the Lord would bless them. It is refreshing to read all these gracious promises. May they encourage us to trust in Him and walk



in obedience. In Christ even greater blessings than these are put on our side. We know from subsequent history, how completely Israel failed to carry out all these instructions. They practised the vile abominations of the nations they were commanded to destroy. God had to deal with them in judgment. Instead of the blessings enumerated in verses 12-24, the curse was visited upon them. God's gifts and calling are without repentance; in a future day the remnant of Israel will inherit these things through the grace of God.

#### **4. Thou Shalt Remember! Provision and Warning**

### **CHAPTER 8**

1. Remember the forty years and Jehovah's care (8:1-6)
2. The gracious provision in the land (8:7-10)
3. Warning against forgetting Jehovah (8:11-20)

Admonition to obedience begins this chapter. Disobedience and what will result from it closes it. Between the first and last verses we find extremely precious words. They are called upon to remember the experiences of the wilderness. It was Jehovah, who led them and watched over them. The wilderness experience was made a blessing to them. It taught them the blessed lessons of humility and brought out all that was in their hearts. And this corresponds to our own experiences. Jehovah's care over them had been manifested. They had to learn in the wilderness the lessons of dependence upon God. He supplied their need. They were fed with manna. Their raiment waxed not old. Their feet did not even swell (Chapter 29:5; Neh. 9:20-21). "As a man chasteneth a son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." And thus He still deals with His people, whom He loves and whom He has redeemed in His Son, the people He is leading home to Himself through the wilderness. Oh, that we may trust Him fully and yield ourselves to Him in obedience!

"How wonderful to think of God's patient grace and painstaking love with His people in the wilderness! What precious instruction for us! With what intense interest and spiritual delight we can hang over the record of the divine dealings with Israel in all their desert-wanderings! How much we can learn from the marvelous history! We, too, have to be humbled and proved, and made to know what is in our hearts. It is very profitable and morally wholesome."

Verse 3 was quoted by our Lord, when Satan asked Him to turn stones into bread. His perfect obedience to God was again revealed, when our Lord defeated Satan by quoting this verse.

He also gives them a glimpse of the good land. There would be abundance of water, no scarcity of food, wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, oil and honey. Then there were the hidden treasures in the mountains. These things speak typically of our blessings, the spiritual blessings, with which we are blessed in Christ Jesus, to which we are fully entitled, but which we can only enjoy if we walk in faith and obedience to His Word. Another solemn warning is given to them by their loving leader. The warning is against highmindedness and forgetting the Lord, who has done all these things. The warning was not heeded and what Moses testified against them overtook them in their national history. May we also remember here the warning God has given to Gentile Christendom, not to be highminded, but to fear (Romans 11:17-24).

## **5. Warning Against Self-Righteousness and Their Previous Failures**

### **CHAPTERS 9:1-10:11**

1. The warning (9:1-6)
2. The failures of the past (9:7-24)
3. The intercession of Moses (9:25-29)
4. The results of the intercession (10:1-11)

This chapter and the first eleven verses of the tenth are aimed against the spirit of self righteousness. First there is the warning. This is followed by their shameful history of the past, which showed that a boast of being righteous, or having any righteousness had to be positively excluded in their case. They had been rebels and they owed their existence wholly to the mercy of God and that was secured by the intercession of Moses. They were, therefore, to understand that the good land was not given to them for their righteousness; they were a stiffnecked people. How humbling the recital of their failures, their rebellion and murmuring against Jehovah, must have been! And Moses added to it, which must have cut them to the very heart. "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you" (verse 24). Mercy alone had saved them and had effected their restoration. How easy it is for our poor hearts, not different from theirs, to forget all we were and that we owe all we are to the grace of God. Self righteousness is an abomination in God's sight. True faith and obedience means a true humility.

The chronological order is not followed by Moses in the first part of the tenth chapter. That is known by the historical account. Verses 6 and 7 are a parenthesis. The beginning of verse 8, "At that time," does therefore not stand in connection with the death of Aaron, but it refers to the time when the broken covenant was restored. Higher critics have made much of this as a glaring contradiction. There is no such contradiction here and the apparent difficulty is easily solved by understanding the parenthetical character of verses 6 and 7. But why should such an historical statement be here introduced by Moses by way of a parenthesis? The answer is not difficult to find. Moses describes the gracious results of the intercession. Not only was the covenant restored, but also the institution and maintenance of the priesthood. Moses reminds the people of this gracious gift on the part of their God, by recalling to their memory the time when Aaron died and his son Eleazar was invested with the high priesthood in his stead.

## **6. Jehovah's Love and His Requirements of His People**

### **CHAPTER 10:12-22**

1. Jehovah's delight and love (10:12-15)
2. Admonition to fear and serve Jehovah (10:16-22)

This section is especially precious. Jehovah speaks through Moses and reminds His people of Himself and His Love and what He requires of them. "Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is Jehovah's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is." What a marvellous call to fear and serve such a Lord! What He required of them was a loving obedience, to fear Him, to

walk in all His ways, to love Him and to serve Him. They were to be followers of Jehovah their God. He is God of gods, Lord of lords, great, mighty, terrible. His goodness again is revealed by Moses as an incentive to love and to obey Him. He cares for the fatherless and loveth the stranger; for this reason they were to love the stranger. Yet far greater is our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood and made us priests and kings unto God His Father. And this carries with it a higher obligation to serve Him, to love Him and to walk in obedience, than Israel's obligation.

"Well then, let us ever bear in mind--yea, let us have it deep, deep down in our hearts, that according to our privileges are our obligations. Let us not refuse the wholesome word 'obligation,' as though it had a legal ring about it. Far from it! It would be utterly impossible to conceive any thing further removed from all thought of legality than the obligations which flow out of the Christian's position. It is a very serious mistake to be continually raising the cry of 'Legal! legal!' whenever the holy responsibilities of our position are pressed upon us" (C.H. Mackintosh).

## **7. Israel's Responsibility, the Blessing and the Curse**

### **CHAPTER 11**

1. Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God (11:1-9)
2. If ye hearken unto my commandments (11:10-21) 3. The blessing and the curse (11:22-32)

The great characteristic teaching of this book, obedience springing from love to Jehovah, is still further developed in this chapter. It begins with a "therefore." The last verse of the previous chapter shows that Jehovah had kept the promise made to the fathers of the nation. Then once more the mighty acts of Jehovah are reviewed. His miracles and acts done in Egypt; what He did at the Red Sea and what He did unto them in the wilderness--therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God. They were also to love Him and keep His words in view of the land they were about to possess. What He had done and what He was going to do for them, called for the love and obedience of His people. May we heed the same call. The result of obedience in loving and serving the Lord would be the first and the latter rain, fruitful fields and abundant harvests. Jehovah would also drive out the enemies and give them the land. Blessing and curse are solemnly set before the people by their leader. Of the mount of blessing, Gerizim, and the mount of curse, Ebal, we shall hear more fully later (chapter 17).

(The foolish theory that "latter rain" means a spiritual revival and is a special "outpouring of the Holy Spirit" has no foundation at all in the Word of God. Such "spiritualizing" leads and has led into confusion.)

## **8. The Place of Worship**

### **CHAPTER 12**

1. The overthrow of false worship (12:1-4)
2. The true place of worship (12:5-14)

### 3. Concerning eating and the blood (12:15-28)

### 4. Warning against the abominations of idolatry (12:29-32)

The law, and love as the fulfilment of that law, was the main subject of the words of Moses up to the close of the eleventh chapter. The chapters which follow also contain expositions of the different statutes, as well as exhortations to obedience and warnings against departure from Jehovah. How significant that worship occupies the prominent place! A false worship must be completely extirpated, for it would lead their hearts away from the one Jehovah. All images and pillars were to be destroyed. True worship is ever linked with obedience to and love for Jehovah. False worship is apostasy.

The one place is mentioned repeatedly, the place, which Jehovah has appointed for worship (verses 5, 11, 14, 18, 21 and 26). What disobedience if they left that one place and turned somewhere else to worship! The subsequent history of God's ancient people teaches the awful results of such a course. We have in the New Testament also commandments to worship. Our worship is in spirit and in truth. It is not connected with an earthly place, an earthly altar, but we worship in the power of the Spirit in heaven itself, where our forerunner is. But Christendom has a false worship which apes after the ritualistic Jewish worship. In that worship we find also images, holy places, etc., and that is in the sight of God as great an abomination as the Canaanite worship, which Israel found in the promised land.

We do not touch here again upon the eating of flesh, the sanctity of the blood, etc. All this we have had in Leviticus to which we refer the reader. Nor do we enter into the alleged contradictions, which the modern day infidels, in the camp of Christendom, claim exist here. It is but blindness (we fear often wilful blindness), which can bring such criticism and accusations against the Word of God.

## **9. Warnings Against False Prophets and Their Punishment**

### **CHAPTER 13**

#### 1. The first case: The false prophet and dreamer (13:1-5)

#### 2. The second case: Temptation to idolatry from blood-relations (13:6-11)

#### 3. The third case: The apostasy of a city (13:12-18)

Three cases are mentioned. The false prophet or a dreamer of dreams, who confirms his claims by a sign or a miracle, yet whose aim is to seduce to idolatry, is to be put to death. False teaching, which leads from God, is an abomination. It results finally in the most awful moral corruption. A false prophet may do signs and wonders to prove thereby that what he teaches is truth. Signs and miracles are therefore no evidence of the truth. Spiritualism and Christian Science claim to be the truth and they often refer to the evidences of supernatural manifestation and miraculous hearings which take place in their cults. Satan can work signs and miracles. He does so in these delusive systems of the last days and God permits it to prove thereby His people. In the light of Matthew 24:23-25, 2 Thess. 2:8-12 and Rev. 13:12-14 the first five verses of the chapter we study are of great interest. The false prophet to come, the personal and final Antichrist will do lying wonders and the many who received not the love of the truth will be

permitted to believe the lie. One does well to be on the guard whenever teachers claim some special power or signs. The second warning is against a more subtle snare, when the deception worketh secretly, emanating from a blood relation. If it is the dearest one, no pity is to be shown to him. The third case is that, when a whole city has departed from the Lord and serves other gods and practices the abominations of idolatry. It was to be completely destroyed and the city burned with fire. Such will be some day the awful fate of apostate Christendom, having rejected God's Son and the gospel.

## **10. The Children of God and Their Separation**

### **CHAPTER 14**

1. The declaration of relationship: A holy people (14:1-2)
2. Their food as a separated people (14:3-21)
3. Concerning tithes (14:22-29)

Ye are the children of the Lord your God. Because God had chosen them to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the other nations, they were to be an holy people. To them belongeth still "the adoption" (Rom. 9:4). God called Israel His firstborn son and that nation holds that place, in the divine purpose, among the nations. Sonship, in the New Testament, bestowed upon the individual believer, who is possessed by the Spirit of Sonship (the Holy Spirit) and who is an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, is infinitely higher, than Israel's national and earthly calling. Therefore our responsibility is so much greater. The children of the Lord were not to participate in the sinful customs of the heathen, who have no hope. No disfigurement as mentioned in the first verse was permitted. The Lord whom they served is a Lord of life; they belonged wholly to Him; they were not their own. To sorrow like those who have no hope is also forbidden in the New Testament (1 Thess. 4:13). Then follows once more the reminder concerning the clean and the unclean. See Leviticus 11 and the annotations. The laws concerning the food Israel was to eat and to abstain from were given in Leviticus to Moses and Aaron; in Deuteronomy the whole congregation hears these instructions. A number of animals are also mentioned in Deuteronomy, which we do not find in Leviticus. Thus their separation is once more emphasized. They belonged to a holy Lord and were to be an holy people. We have for our food the living Bread, which came down from heaven. And as we feed on Christ, abiding in Him, we become also like Him. It has been well said "for a Christian to participate in the vanities and follies of a sinful world would be to use a typical phrase, like an Israelite eating that which had died by itself." How sad the condition of the great majority of those who profess Christianity, who run after this present evil age and are conformed to it!

The tithe mentioned in verses 22-29 is peculiar to Deuteronomy and forms one of the supplementary laws. Israel and the land, they were to possess, belong to Jehovah. The tithe gave expression to the fact of the proprietorship of the Lord. And when they came before Jehovah to eat before Him in the spot where He had placed His Name, they owned in His presence all His goodness and mercies and rejoiced in the Lord. Verses 28 and 29 are more fully developed in chapter 26:12-19. Annotations are given there on the happy scene when, at the end of every third year, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow were to eat and be satisfied.

There is a gathering place for His people in the New Testament. "Where two or three are

gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them." And when we remember His love at His table, we rejoice in Him and He rejoices in us. But the gathering of Israel in connection with the tithe also looks forward to the coming days when there will be a gathering for Israel and the nations. See Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:10; Zech. 14:16-17.

## **11. The Year of Release and Liberation of Hebrew Slaves**

### **CHAPTER 15:1-18**

1. The year of release (15:1-11)

2. The liberation of the Hebrew slaves (15:12-18)

The poor and those who have no possession were to be remembered in kindness and have a share in the blessings. Linked with this law are the laws not to force and oppress the poor, the year of release and the liberation of the slaves. The great Sabbatic year, the seventh, brought the release. See Exodus 23:10 and Leviticus 25:2-7. Here we have an enlarged exposition of the previously given law. The debtor not to be pressed then for what he owed and nothing was to be exacted from him. While the land rested all debts and obligations had also to rest. It does therefore not mean a complete remission of all debts forever. And linked with this merciful institution is the promise of blessing. Obedience to these gracious laws would bring to them great blessing. Especially interesting is verse 6. "For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as He promised thee; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee." Even today in their blindness and dispersion this promise is being fulfilled. Who does not know that the Jews are the money lenders of the nations? Kings and princes have borrowed from this wonderful people. Some day when the time of our fulness and blessing comes, this promise will be fully accomplished and Israel will reign over the nations, be the head and no longer the tail.

The poor were also to be treated in great kindness. What grace and love breathes in verses 7-11! Twice we read "thou shalt open thine hand wide." "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient." "For the poor shall never cease out of the land, therefore, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." Throughout the Word of God the poor are mentioned to be remembered in kindness and some most blessed promises are given to those who obey these gracious words. See Proverbs 14:21; 19:17; 22:9; 28:8, 27; Ps. 41:1. Oppression of the poor is a sin, which God specially marks. See Isaiah 3:14, 15; 10:2; Ezek. 18:11-13; Amos 2:6, 4:1; 5:11; James 2:6. When the Lord comes He will remember the poor and deliver them. See Ps. 72:2, 4, 12, 13; 113:7; 132:15; Isaiah 11:4.

The teaching of some, who say that we are not under the law but under grace, and therefore do not need to pay any attention whatever to these gracious words, which Jehovah bound upon the hearts of Israel, is fatally wrong. "Under grace" is often used to cover a selfish life. The grace, which has saved us, which pledges our eternal security in Christ, demands of us that we be followers of God. This is learned from the exhortations of the New Testament. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). "But to do good and communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:16). "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver" because "He

giveth to all and upbraideth not." "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

The liberation of the slave is also stated in Exodus 21, to which we refer the reader. The Hebrew woman is mentioned here. In Exodus 21 only the male slave is spoken of. But why is it given here again? Is it a mere repetition? It is not. The Lord gives through Moses the mode in which this law is to be kept. His loving kindness shines out once more in the gracious addition made here. "And when thou sendest him out free, thou shalt not let him go away empty." This verse and verses 14-15 are not found in Exodus 21. How blessedly He cared for the poor slaves. They were set free, laden down with the riches of the flock, the floor and the winepress. Other lessons connected with this we must leave untouched.

## **12. The Firstlings and the Three Feasts**

### **CHAPTERS 15:19-16:17**

1. Concerning the firstlings (15:19-23)
2. Passover (16:1-8)
3. Feast of weeks (16:9-12)
4. Feast of tabernacles (16:13-17)

What is said in the closing verses of chapter 15 is supplementary to the law given concerning the first-born in Exodus 13:2, 12 and Numbers 18. They were not to be worked or sheared. "Before the Lord thy God shalt thou eat it, year after year, in the place which the Lord shall choose, thou and thy household." Nothing which had a blemish, was lame or blind could be sacrificed. The spotless Lamb of God is here in view once more and the type is given how we are to feed on Him in the presence of God, in the sanctuary.

The feasts were mentioned in Exodus 12; Leviticus 23; Numbers 28-29. Here only the Passover, the feast of weeks and the feast of tabernacles are given. The critics claim that there is contradiction between this chapter and the laws concerning the feasts in the previous books of the Pentateuch. Such contradiction, however, does not exist. That only these three feasts are mentioned here is in full harmony with the character and message of Deuteronomy.

Obedience, as we have repeatedly learned from the study of past chapters, is the demand of Jehovah from His people. The three prominent feasts were absolutely obligatory. Three times in a year all the males were commanded to appear before the Lord to keep these three feasts. No such demand was made in keeping the feast of trumpets and the day of atonement. Because these three feasts were to be obeyed, they are mentioned in Deuteronomy. The objections of the critics spring (as all other objections and criticisms) from the lack of spiritual discernment. The contradiction they see is only another evidence of the perfection of His Word. "The place, which Jehovah thy God will choose" occurs six times in this chapter. This was not mentioned in Exodus, Leviticus or Numbers. This again is characteristic of the book. Over twenty-five times mention is made of the place which Jehovah will choose, the gathering place of His people in His presence, and this demands obedience. What these feasts mean typically and dispensationally may be learned by consulting the annotations of Leviticus 23. The fact is also to be remembered that they came out of Egypt (verses 3 and 12). They are commanded to

rejoice on the feast of weeks (Pentecost) and on the feast of tabernacles (typical of the time of joy and blessing in the coming age); but the statement "thou shalt rejoice" is omitted in connection with Passover. Redemption is typified in that feast. This calls forth gratitude and praise to God. The solemnity of the death of the Lamb of God and the judgment our Lord had to pass through, must be the reason why the command to rejoice is absent.

### **13. Justice and the Choice of a King**

#### **CHAPTERS 16:18-17:20**

1. Appointment of judges and their instruction (16:18-17:1)
2. The higher court at the place He chooses (17:8-13)
3. The choice and right of the king (17:14-20)

This chapter leads us upon new ground. The obligations of the religious life of Israel were stated in the first part of chapter 16 and now the government of the people in the land is commanded. "Just as in its religious worship the Israelitish nation was to show itself to be the holy nation of Jehovah, so was it in its political relations also. This thought forms the link between the laws already given and those which follow. Civil order, that indispensable condition of the stability and prosperity of nations and states, rests upon a conscientious maintenance of right, by means of a well-ordered judicial constitution and an impartial administration of justice" (F. Delitzsch). Judges and officials were to be appointed and a higher judicial court for more difficult cases to be established, the latter at the place of the sanctuary. Idolatry is prominently mentioned again because it is the most serious matter, both individually and nationally, to forsake the one Jehovah. Apostasy from Jehovah and His covenant is wickedness. Chapter 16:21-22 also has reference to idolatry. The idolatrous altars and images were set up under, or, beside green trees. See 1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 17:10; Jeremiah 17:2. Then there is provision made for the choice of a king. The Lord foresaw Samuel's time, when the people would reject Him as their King and desire to be like other nations; and foreseeing their failures He made provision for this emergency.

"And yet the wisdom and grace of God are only the more, not the less, conspicuous in this provision. True, of Saul it was said, 'I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath' (Hosea 13:11). But this only brings out God's real choice--David, 'the beloved,' type of One who is indeed that, and in whom a King is found who reigns forever. He is the One of whom the king that Deuteronomy announces is the shadow. Brought forth when priesthood has failed in Eli, and prophet in Samuel, the true king is God's resource for Israel and the earth. For neither priesthood nor prophecy alone will set right the earth, or bring in the time when it shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. He must come to whom the throne belongs, and who shall bring back judgment to righteousness; He in whom Prophet, Priest, and King are one,--a threefold cord that never shall be broken" (Numerical Bible).

A comparison of verse 16 and 17 with 1 Kings 9-11 is most interesting. What failure man is in himself. And Solomon was the wisest and most influential of all the kings. This fact that Solomon did the very opposite from what the king should do has led the critics to say that this passage was written after Solomon. As if God did not know all this beforehand! But there is not



allusion to Solomon's kingdom at all in the words Moses spoke.

#### **14. The Rights of the Priests and the Levites, the True and the False Prophet**

##### **CHAPTER 18**

1. The rights of the priests and Levites (18:1-8)

2. Forbidden things (18:9-14)

3. The true and the false prophet (18:15-22)

The priests, the Levites, were the servants of Jehovah and had no inheritance with Israel, but Jehovah Himself was their inheritance. How the people were to minister unto them is now commanded by Moses. They were both dependent on the Lord and closely identified with Him. And this is true of us, who are in Christ constituted priests and called to the Levite service.

Of great interest are verses 9-14. The nations who possessed the land practised evil things, through which Satan manifested his awful power to lead astray and to corrupt. His people were to beware of these things. We, too, are warned not to intrude into those things which we have not seen (Col. 2:18). Moses puts together the words which the language contained for the different modes of finding out the future and discovering the will of God. Passing a son or daughter through the fire, the awful Moloch service, is forbidden once more (Lev. 18:21). Then follow all the abominable things. There are seven of them mentioned, which come under the term "divination": 1. Observer of times, predicting good or bad things by observation of the heavens and circumstances; 2. Enchanter. The Hebrew word is *\_menachesh* connected with *\_nachash* the Hebrew word for serpent. It means one who murmurs enchantments; 3. Witch; 4. Charmer; 5. A consulter with familiar spirits; 6. A wizard, who has access to an unlawful wisdom; 7. The necromancer, who asks the dead. These abominations existed then and they exist today. Clairvoyancy, palmistry, astrology, soothsaying, fortune-telling, spiritualistic seances, theosophy, the formulas and treatments of "Christian Science" are a few of the modern names of this ancient demonism. It is awful to see their growth as the end draws near. What is claimed to be "Psychical research," studying "occult phenomena," is nothing less than stepping upon the same territory of evil. And Satan uses these wicked things, his familiar spirits, and asking the dead to prepare the way for the great delusion of the end, with its signs and lying wonders. Spiritualism with its demon-possessed mediums, Psychical research, theosophy, Christian Science, are Satan-cults. They are an abomination to Jehovah and His righteous judgment will soon fall upon them. We add here the solemn warning of another.

I take this opportunity of solemnly warning every soul--more particularly the young--from levity in hankering after that which they do not understand, and very especially in the way of giving up their will to any but the Lord Jesus. This is the essential point of danger. I do not raise the smallest doubt that there are powers in the natural world which lie quite beyond the explanation of men. It is not my wish therefore to excite a kind of hue and cry against that which may not be yet explained. Let us avoid the presumption of supposing that we can account for everything. But in our ignorance (which the wisest most feel and own) this wisdom at least ought to belong to the least of God's children, that they know in whom they believe, and they have His word and His Spirit, and can count on infinite love and power as well as wisdom on their behalf. They can well afford therefore to leave what is beyond themselves or any others in

the hands of God their Father. They with sorrow see others rush in who have nothing higher, who have no God to count on or look to. But above all beware. Whenever any one asks you to give up your mind or will to another--were it but for a moment--there is the evident hand of the devil in it. This is no question of physical powers, or of what is naturally inexplicable. What is behind giving up yourself, your will, to any one but God, is plain enough in its character and consequences; it is too easy to understand it. The divine axiom is that the Lord and He alone has a right to you. Consequently such a demand proves that Satan is taking advantage, it may be of what is natural, but certainly of you (W. Kelly).

The Prophet promised in verse 15 is the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 3:22-23 refers us to this prophecy. Acts 7:37 also confirms the fulfilment of Moses' prediction in the person of Christ.

## **15. Laws for Israel in the Land**

### **CHAPTER 19**

1. Concerning the cities of refuge (19:1-13)
2. Removing a landmark (19:14)
3. The punishment of a false witness (19:15-21)

Here again we have not a repetition of the previous law concerning the cities of refuge (Num. 35:9-34), but an earnest admonition to be obedient to those laws. The three cities on the east of Jordan were named in chapter 4. Here the other three in the midst of the land are in view. They were to be in a place of easy access with a prepared way leading to them. Grace and judgment are illustrated in the case of the slayer, who killed his neighbor ignorantly and he who killed his neighbor purposely. When the slayer reached the city he found a shelter there and lived, for he had done it ignorantly. Grace gave him shelter and he knew he was safe. For the wilful murderer there was no mercy, but judgment. "Thine eyes shall not pity him." Obedience was demanded in all these utterances of Moses.

## **16. Concerning Future Wars**

### **CHAPTER 20**

1. Words of encouragement (20:1-4)
2. The fearful and faint-hearted (20:5-9)
3. Concerning sieges (20:10-20)

In the appointed warfare there was no need to fear the enemies. The priest was commissioned to speak words of encouragement not to fear, nor to tremble, nor to be terrified by the horses and chariots. The divine assurance was threefold: Jehovah goeth with you, to fight for you, to save you. This presupposes their obedience. If they were obedient, they had nothing to fear. Victory was on their side. And we too need to fear nothing in our warfare with the wicked spirits (Eph. 6). The Lord is on our side and if we resist the devil he will flee from us.

But if Israel was disobedient and departed from the Lord, He fought against them and their

enemies overcame them. See also Zech. 14:3 about the time when Jehovah will overcome the nations who gather against Jerusalem at the close of the age. The faint-hearted and the fearful as well as those who might hanker after their possessions and become homesick were not to go into the battlefield. They were unfit for warfare, because they did not wholly trust in Jehovah. There was a most merciful arrangement, which consisted in an offer of peace to a besieged city. (The cities of the Canaanitish nations are not included.) Peace was the first thing proclaimed. If the offer was accepted the lives of the inhabitants were saved. If not and the people resisted the proclamation of peace and therefore showed the wickedness of their hearts, resisting God, the city was besieged. All the males were to be smitten with the sword, but the women and little ones were saved. It was different with the wicked inhabitants of the land. Their utter destruction was demanded. The reason for this is again stated in verse 18. The fruit trees during a siege were not to be cut down, for they sustained life.

## **17. The Expiation of an Uncertain Murder and Various Instructions**

### **CHAPTER 21**

1. The expiation of an unknown murder (21:1-9)
2. Concerning a wife, who had been a prisoner of war (21:10-14)
3. The right of the firstborn (21:15-17)
4. The punishment of a rebellious son (21:18-21)
5. The burial of one who hanged on a tree (21:22-23)

The expiation of an unknown murder seems to find an interesting application in the case of the nation itself. Bloodguiltiness is upon them for they cried "His blood be upon us and upon our children." And the nation has suffered as the result of it. But there is a full expiation coming through Him who prayed for them on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." He died for them as the heifer (the type of Christ) died in the rough valley (the type of His deep humiliation) for the unknown murder. Then the prayer in verse 8 will be graciously answered, when Israel turns to the Lord in the day of His manifestation. "Be merciful, O LORD, unto Thy people Israel, whom Thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto Thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them."

The woman captive desired by an Israelite for a wife could not be one of the Canaanitish races for they were to be all slain; but other Gentiles are meant. She was to be mercifully protected. Polygamy is taken in consideration in verses 15-17 and a law is given in view of it to guard against an abuse in favor of a beloved wife. The son of the hated wife, if he is the firstborn, cannot be defrauded of his birthright; he must receive the double portion. If we look deeper we shall find here too the dispensational lesson concerning Israel's relation to Jehovah. Israel has been the unfaithful wife, but she will be reinstated in due time and receive the blessing promised unto her.

The stubborn and rebellious son, who is to be stoned to death, is but another type of the finally disobedient in Israel. While in the future the penitent and believing remnant of Israel will be reinstated in Jehovah's favor and inherit the glorious things promised to them, the apostate

part of that nation, going on in self-will and rebellion, will be cut off in judgment. The prophetic Word predicts such a stubborn and rebellious condition among the great mass of that people before the Lord comes. But the same judgment also falls upon the rebellious, disobedient among the Gentiles, those who profess to be children of God, but their disobedience shows that they are not.

The close of this remarkable chapter plainly refers to our blessed Lord and His work on the cross. Galatians 3:13 quotes verse 23 and applies it to the Lord Jesus.

## **18. Against Inhumanity and Different Violations, False Testimony and Sins of Adultery**

### **CHAPTER 22**

1. Laws against inhumanity (22:1-12)
2. Concerning false testimony (22:13-21)
3. Sins of adultery (22:22-30)

Laws on the second table are now more fully expounded by Moses. The love to the neighbor is to be expressed by guarding and preserving that which is his property. The strayed and fallen animal belonging to another had to be helped. To leave them in that condition would have been a violation of the law "love thy neighbor as thyself" as well as an act of inhumanity. Another interesting law is the one which forbids woman to wear man's garments (verse 5). "The immediate design of this prohibition was not to prevent licentiousness, or to oppose idolatrous practices; but to maintain the sanctity of that distinction of the sexes, which was established by the creation of man and woman, and in relation to which Israel was not to sin. Every violation or wiping out of this distinction--such as even the emancipation of women--was unnatural, and therefore, an abomination in the sight of God." Yet to-day we find a universal movement in the world for the complete emancipation of women, which ignores and even defies the place which the Creator and the Redeemer has given to woman.

The law concerning the bird's nest manifests the Creator's care and His people are to recognize it. The keeping of this law has the same promise as the commandment relating to obedience to parents. Diverse seeds were forbidden. Spiritually we find a lesson here. There are two seeds, the good and the bad. The good seed stands for the truth. It must not be mixed with error. The truth must be kept unmixed. The opposite is done today as never before in the history of Christendom. They were not to plow with an ass and an ox together. They were not to wear a mixed garment. And we are exhorted not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, but be separated in our habits, in life and walk, unto the Lord. The concluding part of the chapter reveals the heart of man in its deceitfulness and corruption.

## **19. The Congregation of Jehovah and Its Constitution and Holiness**

### **CHAPTER 23**

1. The constitution of the congregation of Jehovah (23:1-8)
2. The cleanness of the camp in time of war (23:9-14)

3. Concerning the escaped slave and the harlot (23:15-18)

4. Usury forbidden (23:19-20)

5. Concerning vows (23:21-23)

6. The neighbor's vineyard and field (23:24-25)

The congregation of Israel is called in this chapter "the congregation of Jehovah." And because it was the congregation of Jehovah, all that is unclean and which defiles had to be kept out of it. The same principle applies to the New Testament assembly, which is called the Church of God. Only those who are born again and therefore clean have a right to belong to the church.

The following interesting typical meaning of verses 1-8 is a paragraph taken from the Numerical Bible:

First, then, we have the assembly in its refusal of all discordant elements; and here the exclusion of the unsexed male is based on the need of maintaining the integrity of the creature. Mutilation was a reproach to God; and thus the whole spirit of asceticism is condemned and excluded both for Israel and for us today. The word of "bastard," "one born of corruption," only occurs once beside in Zech. 9:6, is explained by the Rabbins, and received by commentators in general as meaning "one born of incest or adultery." Typically, one corruptly born is not the mere child of nature; but rather one corruptly introduced among the people of God. "Baptismal regeneration," as the ritualist holds it, is such a birth; and the Moabite and the Ammonite following here emphasizes this thought, though it be true that they are not distinctly reprobated for their birth, but for their enmity to the true people of God, and their employment of Balaam to curse. But even thus does the false professor, like an Ammonite or a Moabite, show his birth today. The Edomite is the simple natural man, and for him there is more hope, and the Egyptian is classed with him, though only in the third generation (dead and risen with Christ) could they enter the congregation of the Lord.

Cleanness and purity had to be preserved in Israel's camp. They were constantly to remember "Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp ... therefore shall thy camp be holy; that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee." All uncleanness and uncleanliness of the body was considered for this reason an evil thing. The Lord gave even such instructions as these, because He wanted His people to be clean and separated unto Himself. And how it behooves us to take heed to all these things. Jehovah is not alone with us, in the midst of His people, but God the Holy Spirit has made our bodies His temples. "What! Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom ye have from God, and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

And how beautiful it is that the poor, escaped slave found in the congregation of Jehovah a refuge! He was not to be oppressed. But the Israelites, who practised the abominable things of the flesh under a religious garb (verse 17) were an abomination unto the Lord.

Verses 24 and 25 prove that Jehovah is the owner of the land and He invited the hungry one to satisfy his hunger, to be His guest, so to speak. But the right of the tenant of the land was also

respected. See on plucking the ears of corn (Matthew 12:1; Luke 6:1).

## **20. Concerning Divorce and Laws of Mercy**

### **CHAPTER 24**

1. Concerning divorce (24:1-5)
2. Concerning pledge and slavery (24:6-7)
3. Concerning leprosy (24:8-9)
4. Concerning the oppression of the poor (24:10-15)
5. Concerning injustice (24:16-18)
6. The stranger, the fatherless and the widow remembered (24:19-22)

Matthew 19:1-9 must be studied with the words of Moses on divorce. The Pharisees asked the Lord "why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" But they erred when they called Moses' word a commandment. It was only something which Moses allowed. Adultery according to the law was punishable with death. "He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery."

No part of the handmill, the millstone, was to be taken as a pledge, for that would have deprived the person of the necessary instrument in the preparation of food. Manstealing was forbidden under penalty of death (Ex. 21:16).

Merciful are the laws found in verses 10-15. If these laws were obeyed how many questions would be solved and how much injustice would be abolished. See also James 5:4. Mercy was to be shown to the poor in remembrance of their former condition in Egypt.

## **21. Various Laws and Responsibilities**

### **CHAPTER 25**

1. Corporal punishment (25:1-3)
2. Thou shalt not muzzle the ox (25:4)
3. The brother-in-law's marriage (25:5-10)
4. Concerning a sinful freedom (25:11-12)
5. Concerning divers weights and measures (25:13-16)

## 6. Concerning the conquest of Amalek (25:17-19)

Corporal punishment is mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter. But this also was tempered with mercy. Not more than forty stripes were to be administered in the presence of the judge. The rabbinical instructions put the limit at thirty-nine--"forty save one." Five times our blessed apostle Paul was punished in this manner, for we read, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one" (2 Cor. 11:24).

In comparison with the cruel beatings and tortures so universally found among the Gentile races the law concerning corporal punishment appears very merciful. The chastisement was not to be severer than it could be endured. It speaks typically also of the chastisement His people have to undergo.

The ox was not to be muzzled when he treaded out the corn.

"Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope" (1 Cor. 9:7-10).

"For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the laborer is worthy of his reward" (1 Tim. 5:18). These are most blessed comments on this verse, which otherwise would be rather obscure. The toiling ox is the type of the servant and his ministry. And this has its rewards.

The commandment given by Moses, that a surviving brother is to marry his brother's widow is seen in its working in the story of Ruth and the kinsman-redeemer. The law itself was founded upon an old traditional custom, which we find already in Genesis 38:8-11. Moses here recognized this custom was not to be considered compulsory.<sup>2</sup>

And Amalek was to be remembered, Amalek, who feared not God. When Israel had rest in the land and all the other enemies were conquered, then the remembrance of Amalek was to be completely blotted out. As we saw from our annotations in Exodus Amalek typifies the flesh, while Egypt is the type of the world. The complete perishing of Amalek is seen in Balaam's parables. When the sceptre rises out of Israel (the second coming of Christ), when He comes that shall have dominion, then Amalek shall perish forever (Num. 24:20). When we are indeed in the land and possess our inheritance, when all our enemies are gone, then the remembrance of Amalek, the old flesh, will be blotted out forever.

## 22. Firstfruits and Prayer

### CHAPTER 26

1. The basket of first-fruits, confession and rejoicing (26:1-11)

2. Obedience yielded and prayer (26:12-15)

### 3. Jehovah acknowledges His people (26:16-19)

The possession of the land is anticipated and a most beautiful ceremony is appointed for confession and worship in the place the Lord chose to place His Name there. The first of all the fruit of the land was to be gathered and put in a basket. This basket was presented unto the priest with the following words: "I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD swore unto our fathers for to give us." The priest then set it down before the altar. It was an acknowledgment of His Grace and His faithfulness in keeping His promise and bringing them into the land. The Lord had brought them in and the basket of fruits witnessed to the fact that they possessed the good things promised unto them. They could truly say, the Lord kept His Word, He promised us this land and now we are in it; it is ours. And we know, as saved by grace and in Christ, that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. We too are brought In and have the right of access into His presence. And this blessed consciousness that we are redeemed and belong to Christ is essential to true worship in spirit and in truth.

Most beautiful is the confession Moses gave to Israel, to be used when the basket of firstfruits was set before Jehovah. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father." Lovely words! They brought to remembrance what they were and the grace which Jehovah manifested, when that Syrian ready to perish was called out. And this is but a picture of what we are by nature, "ready to perish." Then comes the story of Egypt and their deliverance out of the house of bondage. Even so we are delivered. They were to rejoice in every good thing the Lord had given unto them; and we rejoice in the Lord and all His goodness to us. And this joy was practically expressed in giving to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, the widow; they ate and were filled. Thus they could tell Jehovah, "I have not transgressed Thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them." While we rejoice in the Lord, know that we are saved and worship in the spirit, may we also remember that it is written, "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." How often we forget this! Yet it must ever be an outflow from true worship.

## **23. The Memorial of the Law at Mount Ebal; Gerizim and Ebal**

### **CHAPTER 27**

#### 1. The memorial to be set up in the land (27:1-8)

#### 2. Gerizim and Ebal (27:9-26)

Little comment is needed on this chapter. The memorial stones were to be set up on Mount Ebal. Upon that mountain the curses of the law were to be uttered. The blessings were to be pronounced upon Mount Gerizim. However, on Gerizim were no stones with the law written upon it. How strikingly this illustrates the true ministration of the law! It cannot give blessing, but it must curse man. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). Then the tribes are divided to stand upon Gerizim to bless and upon Ebal to curse. But where are there words of blessing in connection with Gerizim? Not one. The law cannot give blessing. But the word "cursed" we find twelve times in this chapter. What a confirmation that the law holds out no blessing for man, but can do nothing but curse. But, blessed be God! upon Mount Ebal there stood not alone the great stones with plaster, with the



words of the law upon them, but there was also an altar unto Jehovah, for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, for rejoicing before the Lord. And this speaks of Christ, who has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

## **24. The Blessing and the Curse**

### **CHAPTER 28**

#### **1. The blessing promised (28:1-14)**

#### **2. The curse announced (28:15-68)**

This is one of the most solemn chapters in the Pentateuch. Orthodox Hebrews read in their synagogues each year through the entire five books of Moses. When they read this chapter, the Rabbi reads in a subdued voice. And well may they read it softly and ponder over it, for here is prewritten the sad and sorrowful history of that wonderful nation. Here thousands of years ago the Spirit of God through Moses outlined the history of the scattered nation, all their suffering and tribulations, as it has been for well nigh two millenniums and as it is still. Here are arguments for the divine, the supernatural origin of this book which no infidel has ever been able to answer; nor will there ever be found an answer.

It would take a great many pages to follow the different predictions and show their literal fulfilment in the nation, which turned away from Jehovah and disobeyed His Word. What a warning this chapter is to Gentile Christendom! "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee" (Rom. 11:21).

Apart from such general predictions as found in verses 64-66 and fulfilled, as everybody knows, in the dispersion of Israel, there are others, which are more minute. The Roman power, which was used to break the Jews, is clearly predicted by Moses, and that in a time when no such power existed. Read verses 49-50. "The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation, whose language thou shalt not understand." The eagle was the standard of the Roman armies; the Jews understood many oriental languages, but were ignorant of Latin. "Which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young." Rome killed the old people and the children. "And he shall beseige thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land" (verse 52). Fulfilled in the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem by the Roman legions. "The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, shall eat their children, for want of all things in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates" (54-57). Fulfilled in the dreadful sieges of Jerusalem, perhaps the most terrible events in the history of blood and tears of this poor earth. Every verse beginning with the fifteenth to the end of this chapter has found its oft repeated fulfilment. It does not surprise us that the enemy hates this book, which bears such a testimony, and would have it classed with legends.

## **25. The Repetition of the Covenant and the Repetition of the Curse**

### **CHAPTER 29**

#### **1. The repetition of the covenant (29:1-15)**

## 2. The repetition of the curse (29:16-29)

The words of the covenant are once more brought to their remembrance. Once more all the goodness of the Lord towards them is unfolded by Moses, how the Lord had dealt with Egypt and how their eyes had seen the signs and great miracles. (Verses 5 and 6 are the direct words of Jehovah, ending with the declaration, "I am the LORD, your God.") Again the forty years are mentioned, during which their clothes and their shoes did not get old. God took care of them and provided for their needs in the wilderness. Bread from heaven was their portion and therefore they had no need of stimulants, such as wine and strong drink (verse 6). But in the midst of these words, calling to remembrance the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord, we find a solemn statement: "Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (verse 4). In all the manifestations they had remained without understanding and their heart was not touched and broken down. Therefore these gracious dealings are here repeated, that they might receive understanding and love and obey the Lord with all their heart. But they were a stiffnecked people, their heart of stone. How fully Israel's history illustrates the words of our Lord, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh!" Later, when Israel went deeper and deeper into apostasy, Isaiah received the message, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed and perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed" (Is. 6:9-10). Judicial blindness came upon them when they rejected the Lord of Glory (Matt. 13:14-15; John 7:40; Acts 28:26-27). See also Stephen's testimony given in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51-52). But a day is coming when there will be for that nation a New Testament (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-11). Then Ezekiel 36:24-31 will be fulfilled. A careful reading of these passages will be helpful.

Here the Lord reminded them of what He had done for them to show them the claim He has on their obedience. "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all ye do."

After an earnest appeal to enter into the covenant, including the little ones, the stranger, the hewer of the wood and the water-carrier (Josh. 9:21, 27), we find the curse mentioned once more as the result of departure from the Lord. Especially interesting are verses 22-24. Such evil is to come upon them and upon the land, that "the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sickness which the LORD has laid upon it ... even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?" Strangers from far lands, tourists and pilgrims, have visited Palestine in fulfilment of this prediction and in view of the deplorable condition of that land have often asked these questions and known their answer. "Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them, when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt."

## **26. The Dispersion, the Return and the Final Appeal**

### **CHAPTER 30**

#### 1. The message of hope (30:1-10)

#### 2. The final appeal (30:11-20)

These things, which Moses spoke into the ears of the people were to come to pass. And they have been fulfilled. The people Israel are scattered among all the nations, and yet they have not been assimilated by the nations. They are kept as a separate people. Connected with the prediction of their dispersion is the message of hope, the prophecy relating to their return. The Lord promises, that if they return unto Him and obey His voice, that He will return unto them. "Then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee" (verse 3). That will come to pass when this present age closes. Then when the greatest trouble, the time of Jacob's trouble is upon them (Matt. 24) they will return. The Lord Himself will return, as announced in the above verse, and gather them from all the nations. He will bring them back into their land; they will possess it once more. Spiritual blessings will also come upon them and upon their children. Earthly blessings will be multiplied unto them and the Lord will rejoice over them, because they are a converted, an obedient people. God's gifts and calling, which are without repentance, will then be fully accomplished in that nation. "Behold I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. And they shall be my people and I will be their God" (Jer. 32:37-38). "For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land" (Ezek. 36:24). Many more passages might be added from other portions of the prophetic Word. Moses, the prophet, speaks of that which all the other prophets after him have restated, confirmed, and enlarged. Israel's present condition, dispersed among the nations of the earth, is not permanent. God will bring them back and keep all the promises of blessing. How wonderful are some of the visions of glory relating to the time, when this will be accomplished. Read Isaiah 24; 60; 61; 62, etc.; these magnificent promises of blessing are not for a spiritual Israel, as people sometimes term the church, but for the literal Israel. Some say, the return predicted by Moses and the other prophets was fulfilled when a remnant of Jews came back from Babylon. This is incorrect for neither were the people scattered among all the nations, nor did the small remnant, which came back from the Babylonian captivity, enjoy the glories and blessings predicted in the prophetic Word. Another return will take place, when their once rejected King comes back. The Old Testament is practically a sealed book to every person who does not believe in a literal restoration of Israel to their land.

The final appeal of Moses as given in the second part of this chapter, has for its leading note "obedience," the characteristic word of this entire book. Notice in the last verse the significant statement, that the Lord, who is to be loved and whose voice is to be obeyed, is their life. "For He is thy life."

### **III. THE FINAL WORDS OF MOSES AND THE VISION OF THE FUTURE**

#### **1. Moses' Final Charge, The Written Law Delivered, and Jehovah's Word to Moses**

##### **CHAPTER 31**

1. The final charge of Moses (31:1-8)
2. The written law delivered (31:9-13)

### 3. Jehovah's word to Moses--Moses to Joshua (31:14-23)

### 4. A prophecy (31:24-30)

The final words of Moses to the people are full of tenderness and affection. There he stood, an hundred and twenty years old, a witness to the grace of His God. His eye was still the eye of youth, for it knew no dimness. And his frame was not bowed down by old age; there was no sign of feebleness about him (34:7). The words "I can no more go out and come in" are not in clash with the statement about his physical condition. He knew that he had to die because the Lord had told him so. He encouraged the people to trust in the Lord and assured them that the Lord would give them victory. "He it is who doth go with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Precious words these! And the same Jehovah is on our side, never to leave nor forsake His people. May we walk in the obedience of faith and find that His promise is true. Then followed an impressive scene. Joshua is called and in the sight of all Israel Moses addressed him. Joshua would bring them into the land. The same words given to Moses by the Lord to address to Joshua were spoken again to Joshua by the Lord Himself (Josh. 1).

The law, which Moses had written was next delivered unto the Levites. "Moses wrote this law." Could there be a more emphatic statement than this! And this declaration that Moses wrote this law is confirmed by our Lord, the same Lord who spoke to Moses and whose words and laws Moses committed to writing. The denial of the Mosaic authorship includes the denial of the infallibility of the Son of God. It is infidelity. The infidels of the past ridiculed the teaching that Moses wrote the five books of the law. The infidels of Christendom do now the same. And this law was to be read before all Israel at the feast of tabernacles. They were to be dependent upon the Word of God and learn, fear, and obey by reading and hearing it. Our dependence is the same. Apart from believing and obeying the Word, spiritual life, walking in the Spirit, in fellowship with God, is impossible.

Then the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, when Moses and Joshua presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. The omniscient One, who knows everything from the beginning, announced the failure and apostasy of the nation, with whom He had dealt in such marvellous kindness, and who had been the witnesses of His power and glory. They would break the covenant and apostatize. He would forsake them also, because they turned away from Him to go a whoring after other gods. He would hide His face. All the predicted and threatened evils and troubles would come upon them. And their past, as well as present history, proves the solemn truth of these divine words. And there is one more chapter of their shameful history to be written. "The great tribulation" is still future. It will sweep over them in the days when the apostate nation will accept the false messiah, the Anti-christ, he who comes in his own name.

And Jehovah was to give Moses a song, which he was to teach Israel. The song is found in the chapter which follows. It has for its foundation the words of the Lord in verses 16-21. And Moses was obedient and wrote the same day and taught it to the children of Israel. It was a witness against them. It is so today. How striking that they should read this great final book of the law, read their own curses, their own history, past, present and future, and still abide in unbelief.

The parallel with the church is easy to recognize. Apostasy and failure were predicted for the

latter days of the church on earth; that prediction was made in the very beginning of the church. How abundantly it has found its fulfillment! Compare Moses' words in verse 29 with the words of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, in Acts 20:29-30.

## **2. The Song of Moses**

### **CHAPTER 32:1-43**

1. The introduction and the theme (32:1-4)
2. The foolish people (32:5-6)
3. How Jehovah loved them (32:7-14)
4. Their apostasy (32:15-18)
5. The results of the apostasy (32:19-33)
6. Jehovah's final dealing with Israel (32:34-42)
7. The glorious consummation (32:43)

The song of Moses is a great prophecy. The first great prophetic utterance is found in the parables of Balaam. The second prophetic discourse is this song. The song of Moses embraces the entire history of Israel, past, present and future. It bears in a most remarkable way every mark of being a prophetic testimony from the inspired leader of God's people. The men, who deny this and who boast of literary ability, must be wilfully blind. The critics have denied to a man, that Moses wrote a single word of this song. But they have not informed us who wrote this wonderful ode. "The assertion that the entire ode moves within the epoch of the kings, who lived many centuries after the time of Moses, rests upon a total misapprehension of the nature of prophecy" (Keil).

Moses began his song by calling heaven and earth to hear the words of his mouth. What he was about to say concerned indeed heaven and earth. Isaiah too began his book with the same call (Isa. 1:2). The name of Jehovah is exalted. He is the Rock and His work is perfect. He is a God of truth, just and right. But His people, what are they? Their character is described in verses 5 and 6. How He uncovers the true nature of the people, who had acknowledged Him as Jehovah! Corrupt, perverse, crooked, foolish, unwise, are the terms used to describe their character. The failure they would be, their apostasy and the necessity of disciplinary dealings of Jehovah with them, are thus mentioned in the first stanza of this song.

The third section, verses 7-14, reveals the goodness and the love of the Lord for them. The eighth verse has a deep meaning. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." This verse carries us backward. The boundaries of the nations were made by God with a direct reference to the children of Israel. The name of God used here, "the Most High," is the millennial title, which He will have when His blessed Son our Lord receives His Kingdom. (See Genesis 14:19.) When that time of blessing comes and Israel converted is no

longer the tail but the head of the nations, this divine division will then be fully made known. And how they are reminded again what Jehovah did for them! "He found him, He led him, instructed and kept him." Verses 9-14 are wonderful words. And they apply to us spiritually as they described Jehovah's goodness to Israel.

But how great is the contrast when we reach the fourth section of this prophetic song? (See verses 15-18.) The first step in their apostasy is the forsaking of God and the worshipping of false gods. The next step is, they "lightly esteemed the rock of His salvation." No doubt this latter statement refers to the rejection of the son of God, when He appeared in the midst of His people.

The awful consequences of this rejection are seen prophetically. Here again we have history prewritten. But these predictions were so minutely fulfilled, the unbelieving heart of man refuses to accept these words as being the words of Moses. Here again we have a striking evidence of inspiration. God foretells through Moses the future of an apostate people. Compare verse 21 with Romans 10:19 and 11:10-11. The call of the Gentiles is anticipated in Moses' song; salvation came to us Gentiles by their fall. It seems almost as if they are going to perish completely as a nation. But the song changes suddenly. Jehovah will yet arise in their behalf. It will be in a time when their power is gone, when they are helpless and their enemies press down upon them as never before in their long, dark night of suffering and tears. That will happen in the end of this present age, during the predicted time of great trouble, which is to come upon them. Compare verse 39 with Hosea 5:15-6:3. The judgment, which is announced by Moses in verses 40-42 is the judgment which will fall upon Gentile nations in the day when the Lord appears in His glory. To follow this throughout the entire prophetic Word is as helpful as it is interesting.

The last verse of this song (verse 43) shows the glorious consummation. After the storm of judgment and indignation, peace will come to this earth. The nations will learn war no more; they will learn righteousness. Then the world will be converted. The Lord will be merciful unto His land and to His people. The blessings and glories promised to Israel have come. Therefore the nations will rejoice with His people. The song of Moses is the key to all prophecy.

### **3. The Blessing of Moses**

#### **CHAPTERS 32:44-33:29**

1. Introduction (32:44-52)
2. Jehovah's manifestation (33:1-5)
3. The blessing of Reuben, Judah and Levi (33:6-11)
4. The blessing of Benjamin and Joseph (33:12-17)
5. The blessing of Zebulon and Issachar (33:18- 19)
6. The blessing of Gad, Dan, Nephtali and Asher (33:20-25)

## 7. Happy art thou, O Israel! (33:26-29)

Moses and Joshua (same as Hoshea) spoke the song in the ears of the people. They had to learn it. He exhorts them once more to set their hearts to do all these words. "It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life." But they could not keep the law and therefore could not obtain life and the blessing promised to them. The law cannot bestow life and blessing. It can only curse. But grace gives life. To illustrate this very fact, that the law is for condemnation, the death of Moses is once more announced by Jehovah, as well as his sin at Meribah-Kadesh. He could see the land from afar, but could not enter in. The great man through whom the law was given, the humble Moses, the self-sacrificing, faithful servant of Jehovah, on account of the one transgression, was excluded from the possession of the land.

In the foreground of Moses' prophetic blessing of the tribes stands a description of the manifestation of Jehovah in His glory. This theophany is more than a description of how Jehovah came from Sinai. It is a prophetic picture of how He will come again. Compare this with Habakkuk 3. The blessing of the tribes is different from the blessing which Jacob put upon his sons when they gathered about him (Genesis 49). Jacob foresaw the entire history of his offspring. (The reader is referred to the section on Genesis, where the different periods of the nation are given as indicated in Jacob's prophecy.) The blessing of Moses describes the blessing, which the people Israel will enjoy, when the Lord has been manifested. For this reason it is correct to say (a fact seldom mentioned by exposition), the blessing of Moses is an inspired expansion of the last verse of his song. That verse (32:43) speaks of the Lord's people rejoicing and the Gentiles rejoicing with them.

What Israel will possess and enjoy during the millennium are the contents of these last utterances of Moses. As a closer exposition of these blessings is beyond the scope of these annotations, we confine ourselves to a few hints which will show the way to a deeper study of this remarkable closing section of Deuteronomy. Reuben's, Judah's and Levi's blessings reveal the salvation of the Lord that Israel will enjoy in that coming age of blessing. Benjamin's and Joseph's blessings picture most beautifully the things which the sacred nation will enjoy during the millennium. This section is a most precious one. Zebulun's and Issachar's blessings make known the fact, that the nation will enjoy the abundance of the seas (the Gentiles). The correct translation of verse 19 is "they shall call the peoples (Gentiles) to the mountain." The mountain is Mount Zion and the Lord's house, which will be a house of prayer for all nations. The nations will go there to worship (Isa. 2:14). We have therefore a prophetic description of the blessings which Gentiles receive through a saved Israel. The blessings of Gad, Dan, Naphtali and Asher, speak of the full blessing and supremacy the converted and restored nation will enjoy.

Simeon is left out. We shall not give the different explanations which are offered, nor burden our pages with the unworthy theories of higher criticism.<sup>3</sup>

We quote the beautiful ending of this chapter in a revised metrical version:

There is none like the God of Jeshurun (upright), Who rideth on the heavens for thy help,  
And in His majesty, upon clouds. The eternal God is thy home And underneath, the everlasting  
arms. And He shall drive out the enemy from before thee, And shall say: Destroy! Then Israel  
shall dwell in safety alone, The fountain of Jacob, In a land of corn and new wine, His heavens  
also shall drop down dew. Happy thou, O Israel! Who is like thee, people saved by Jehovah,  
The shield of thy help, And the sword of thy excellency! Surely thine enemies shall crouch

before thee, And thou shalt tread upon their high places.

And the same Jehovah is our Lord. May we know Him more fully as our home, with the everlasting arms underneath and taste the happiness of our salvation, till we shall see Him face to face.

#### **4. The Death of Moses**

### **CHAPTER 34**

1. The death and burial of Moses (34:1-7)

2. The mourning of the people (34:8)

3. The conclusion of the book (34:9-12)

This chapter was not written by Moses, but is an addition by another chosen instrument.

The home-going of this great man of God is beyond description. What a scene it must have been when he ascended Nebo to the top of Pisgah! And the Lord met him there and showed him the land and said: "This is the land, which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." What vision it must have been! What peace and joy must have filled the heart of the servant of God! Then he died. Jewish tradition has woven many stories around this event. One, however, is so beautiful that we must mention it. "At God's command Moses crossed his hands over his breast and closed his eyes; and God took away his soul with a kiss. Then heaven and earth and the starry world began to weep for Moses."

And the Lord buried Moses. How and where is unrevealed. Jude informs us that Michael, the archangel, contended with the devil about the body of Moses. No doubt Satan tried to bring the buried body to light and to seduce Israel to worship the body of their departed leader. What honor Jehovah put after all upon His servant! He is the only one who was buried by the Lord, and he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord. And the beautiful testimony concerning him by the Spirit of God at the end of this book! "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel whom the LORD knew face to face."

May it please God to bless this book and its many lessons to our hearts. May He grant unto us to live and walk dependent upon and obedient to His Word.

1. It has been stated Luke 23:43 is this Old Testament idiom in the New Testament, as if our Lord meant to say: "Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." However, this is positively wrong. It is the argument advanced by the teachers of the soul-sleep. The same hint is made in the Companion Bible. The comma does not belong after "today" but after "thee" as we have it in the English Bible.

2. "The taking off of the shoe was an ancient custom also, adopted, according to Ruth 4:7, in cases of redemption and exchange, for the purpose of confirming commercial transactions. The



usage arose from the fact, that when any one took possession of landed property, he did so by treading upon the soil, and asserting his right of possession by standing upon it in his shoes. In this way the taking off of the shoe and handing it to another became a symbol of the renunciation of a man's position and property."

3. Reuben (behold a son!); Simeon (hearing); Levi (joined); Judah (praise). This is the order of the sons of Jacob according to their birth. It tells out the gospel. In the blessing of Moses the order is: Reuben (behold a son!); Judah (praise); Levi (joined). Simeon (hearing) is left out. When the Lord comes Israel will behold Him as the Son and will break out in praise and worship and become joined to Him. No "hearing" is needed then. We pass this on to our readers for consideration. We have nowhere seen this application.