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## **Deuteronomy**

From Commentary on the Old Testament

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

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## Deuteronomy - Keil and Delitzsch

### Contents

Introduction.....	4
Deuteronomy 1.....	8
Deuteronomy 2.....	18
Deuteronomy 3.....	21
Deuteronomy 4.....	28
Deuteronomy 5.....	34
Deuteronomy 6.....	36
Deuteronomy 7.....	39
Deuteronomy 8.....	41
Deuteronomy 9.....	44
Deuteronomy 10.....	48
Deuteronomy 11.....	51
Deuteronomy 12.....	54
Deuteronomy 13.....	61
Deuteronomy 14.....	63
Deuteronomy 15.....	65
Deuteronomy 16.....	68
Deuteronomy 17.....	72
Deuteronomy 18.....	76
Deuteronomy 19.....	82
Deuteronomy 20.....	84
Deuteronomy 21.....	86
Deuteronomy 22.....	89
Deuteronomy 23.....	92
Deuteronomy 24.....	94
Deuteronomy 25.....	97
Deuteronomy 26.....	99
Deuteronomy 27.....	102
Deuteronomy 28.....	106
Deuteronomy 29.....	113
Deuteronomy 30.....	116
Deuteronomy 31.....	118
Deuteronomy 32.....	123
Deuteronomy 33.....	141
Deuteronomy 34.....	154
Concluding Remarks on the Composition of the Pentateuch.....	156

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DEUTERONOMY	Page 4
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

## Introduction

### Contents, Arrangement, and Character of Deuteronomy

The fifth book of Moses, which is headed אלה הדברים, or briefly דברים, in the Hebrew Bibles, from the opening words of the book, is called משנה התורה (*repetition legis*), or merely משנה by the Hellenistic Jews and some of the Rabbins, with special reference to its contents as described in Deuteronomy 17:18.

The rabbinical explanation of the latter given in *Münster* and *Fagius* is זכרון דראשונים, “*memoria rerum priorum, quae in aliis scribuntur libris.*” By some of the Rabbins the book is also called ספר תוכחות, *liber redargutionum*.

The first of these titles has become current in the Christian Church through the rendering given by the LXX and Vulgate, Δευτερονόμιον, *Deuteronomium*; and although it has arisen from an incorrect rendering of Deuteronomy 17:18 (see the exposition of the passage), it is so far a suitable one, that it describes quite correctly the leading contents of the book itself.

The book of Deuteronomy contains not so much “a recapitulation of the things commanded and done, as related in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers” (*Theod.*), as “a compendium and summary of the whole law and wisdom of the people of Israel, wherein those things which related to the priests and Levites are omitted, and only such things included as the people generally required to know” (*Luther*).

Consequently it is not merely a repetition and summary of the most important laws and events contained in the previous books, still less a mere “summons to the law and testimony,” or a “fresh and independent lawgiving standing side by side with the earlier one,” a “transformation of the old law to suit the altered circumstances,” or “merely a second book of the law, intended for the people that knew not the law” (*Ewald, Riehm*, etc.); but 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-bring 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.

Whilst the laws as well as the divine promises and threatenings in the three middle books of the Pentateuch are all introduced as words of Jehovah to Moses, which he was to make known to the people, and even where the announcement passes over into the form of an address,—as, for example, in Ex. 23:20ff., Lev. 26,—are not spoken by Moses in his own name, but spoken by Jehovah to Israel through Moses; the book of Deuteronomy, with the exception of Deuteronomy 31–34, contains nothing but words addressed by Moses to the people, with the intention, as he expressly affirms in Deuteronomy 1:5, of explaining (באר) the law to the people.

Accordingly he does not quote those laws, which were given before and are merely repeated here, nor the further precepts and arrangements that were added to them, such as those concerning the one site for the worship of God, the prophetic and regal qualifications, the administration of justice and carrying on of war, in the categorical language of law; but clothes them, as well as the other commandments, in the hortatory form of a paternal address, full of solemn and affectionate admonition, with the addition of such reminiscences and motives as seemed best adapted to impress their observance upon the hearts of the people.

As the repetition not only of the decalogue, which God addressed to the people directly from Sinai, but also of many other laws, which He gave through Moses at Sinai and during the journey through the desert, had no other object than this, to make the contents of the covenant

DEUTERONOMY	Page 5
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

legislation intelligible to all the people, and to impress them upon their hearts; so those laws which are peculiar to our book are not additions made to this legislation for the purpose of completing it, but simply furnish such explanations and illustrations of its meaning as were rendered necessary by the peculiar relations and forms of the religious, social, and political life of the nation in the promised land of Canaan.

Throughout the whole book, the law, with its commandments, statutes, and judgments, which Moses laid "this day" before the people, is never described as either new or altered; on the contrary, it is only the law of the covenant, which Jehovah had concluded with His people at Horeb (Deuteronomy 5:1ff.); and the commandments, statutes, and judgments of this law Moses had received from the Lord upon the Mount (Sinai), that he might teach Israel to keep them (Deuteronomy 5:31ff.; comp. Deuteronomy 6:20–25). The details of the book also bear this out.

The *first* part of the book, which embraces by far the greater portion of it, viz., Deuteronomy 1–30, consists of three long addresses, which Moses delivered to all Israel, according to the heading of Deuteronomy 1:1–4, in the land of Moab, on the first of the eleventh month, in the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt.

The *first* of these addresses (Deuteronomy 1:6–4:40) is intended to prepare the way for the exposition and enforcement of the law, which follow afterwards.

Moses calls to their recollection the most important facts connected with the history of their forty years' wandering in the desert, under the protection and merciful guidance of the Lord (Deuteronomy 1:6–3:29); and to this he attaches the exhortation not to forget the revelation of the Lord, which they had seen at Horeb, or the words of the covenant which they had heard, but to bear in mind at all times, that Jehovah alone was God in heaven and on earth, and to keep His commandments and rights, that they might enjoy long life and prosperity in the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 4:1–40).

This is followed by the statement in Deuteronomy 4:41–43, that Moses set apart three cities of refuge in the land to the east of the Jordan for unintentional manslayers.

The *second* address (Deuteronomy 5–26) is described in the heading in Deuteronomy 4:44–49 as the law, which Moses set before the children of Israel, and consists of two parts, the one general and the other particular.

In the *general* part (Deuteronomy 5–11), Moses repeats the ten words of the covenant, which Jehovah spoke to Israel from Sinai out of the midst of the fire, together with the circumstances which attended their promulgation (Deuteronomy 5), and then expounds the contents of the first two commandments of the decalogue, that Jehovah alone is the true and absolute God, and requires love from His people with all their heart and all their soul, and therefore will not tolerate the worship of any other god beside Himself (Deuteronomy 6).

For this reason the Israelites were not only to form no alliance with the Canaanites after conquering them, and taking possession of the promised land, but to exterminate them without quarter, and destroy their altars and idols, because the Lord had chosen them to be His holy nation from love to their forefathers, and would keep the covenant of His grace, and bestow the richest blessings upon them, if they observed His commandments (Deuteronomy 7); but when in possession and enjoyment of the riches of this blessed land, they were to remain for ever mindful of the temptation, humiliation, and fatherly chastisement which they had experienced at the hand of their God in the wilderness, that they might not forget the Lord and His manifestations of mercy in their self-exaltation (Deuteronomy 8), but might constantly remember that they owed their conquest and possession of Canaan not to their own righteousness, but solely to the compassion and covenant faithfulness of the Lord, whom they had repeatedly provoked to anger in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 9:1–10:11), and might earnestly strive to serve the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 6
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

Lord in true fear and love, and to keep His commandments, that they might inherit the promised blessing, and not be exposed to the curse which would fall upon transgressors and the worshippers of idols (Deuteronomy 10:12–11:32).

To this there is added in the more *special* part (Deuteronomy 12–26), an account of the most important laws which all Israel was to observe in the land of its inheritance, viz.: (1.) Directions for the behaviour of Israel towards the Lord God, e.g., as to the presentation of sacrificial offerings and celebration of sacrificial meals at no other place than the one chosen by God for the revelation of His name (Deuteronomy 12); as to the destruction of all seducers to idolatry, whether prophets who rose up with signs and wonders, or the closest blood-relations, and such towns in the land as should fall away to idolatry (Deuteronomy 13); as to abstinence from the mourning ceremonies of the heathen, and from unclean food, and the setting apart of tithes for sacrificial meals and for the poor (Deuteronomy 14); as to the observance of the year of remission, the emancipation of Hebrew slaves in the seventh year, and the dedication of the first-born of oxen and sheep (Deuteronomy 15), and as to the celebration of the feast of Passover, of Weeks, and of Tabernacles, by sacrificial meals at the sanctuary (Deuteronomy 16:1–17).

(2.) Laws concerning the organization of the theocratic state, and especially as to the appointment of judges and official persons in every town, and the trial of idolaters and evil-doers in both the lower and higher forms (Deuteronomy 16:18–17:13); concerning the choice of a king in the future, and his duties (Deuteronomy 17:14–20); concerning the rights of priests and Levites (Deuteronomy 18:1–8); and concerning false and true prophets (vv. 9–22).

(3.) Regulations bearing upon the sanctification of human life: viz., legal instructions as to the establishment of cities of refuge for unintentional manslaughter (Deuteronomy 19:1–13); as to the maintenance of the sanctity of the

boundaries of landed property, and abstinence from false charges against a neighbour (vv. 14–21); as to the conduct of war, with special reference to the duty of sparing their own fighting men, and also defenceless enemies and their towns (Deuteronomy 20); as to the expiation of inexplicable murders (Deuteronomy 21:1–9); as to the mild treatment of women taken in war (vv. 10–14); the just use of paternal authority (vv. 15–21); and the burial of criminals that had been executed (vv. 22, 23).

(4.) The duty of paying affectionate regard to the property of a neighbour, and cherishing a sacred dread of violating the moral and natural order of the world (Deuteronomy 22:1–12), with various precepts for the sanctification of the marriage bond (Deuteronomy 22:13–23:1), of the theocratic union as a congregation (Deuteronomy 23:2–26), and also of domestic and social life, in all its manifold relations (chs. 24 and 25); and lastly, the appointment of prayers of thanksgiving on the presentation of the first-fruits and tenths of the fruits of the field (Deuteronomy 26:1–15); together with a closing admonition (vv. 16–19) to observe all these laws and rights with all the heart.

The *third* address (Deuteronomy 27–30) has reference to the renewal of the covenant.

This solemn act is introduced with a command to write the law upon large stones when Canaan should be conquered, and to set up these stones upon Mount Ebal, to build an altar there; and after presenting burnt-offerings and slain-offerings, to proclaim in the most solemn manner both the blessing and curse of the law, the former upon Gerizim, and the latter upon Ebal (Deuteronomy 27).

Moses takes occasion from this command to declare most fully what blessings and curses would come upon the people, according as they should or should not hearken to the voice of the Lord (Deuteronomy 28).

Then follows the renewal of the covenant, which consisted in the fact that Moses recited once more, in a solemn address to the whole of the national assembly, all that the Lord had

DEUTERONOMY	Page 7
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

done for them and to them; and after pointing again to the blessings and curses of the law, called upon them and adjured them to enter into the covenant of Jehovah their God, which He had that day concluded with them, and having before them blessing and cursing, life and death, to make the choice of life.—The *second* and much shorter portion of the book (Deuteronomy 31–34) contains the close of Moses' life and labours: (*a*) the appointment of Joshua to be the leader of Israel into Canaan, and the handing over of the book of the law, when completed, to the priests, for them to keep and read to the people at the feast of Tabernacles in the year of jubilee (Deuteronomy 31); (*b*) the song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1–47), and the announcement of his death (vv. 48–52); (*c*) the blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33); and (*d*) the account of his death (Deuteronomy 34).

From this general survey of the contents, it is sufficiently evident that the exposition of the commandments, statutes, and rights of the law had no other object than this, to pledge the nation in the most solemn manner to an inviolable observance, in the land of Canaan, of the covenant which Jehovah had made with Israel at Horeb (Deuteronomy 28:69).

To this end Moses not only repeats the fundamental law of this covenant, the decalogue, but many of the separate commandments, statutes, and rights of the more expanded Sinaitic law.

These are rarely given *in extenso* (e.g., the laws of food in Deuteronomy 14), but for the most part simply in brief hints, bringing out by way of example a few of the more important rules, for the purpose of linking on some further explanations of the law in its application to the peculiar circumstances of the land of Canaan.

And throughout, as *F. W. Schultz* correctly observes, the intention of the book is, "by means of certain supplementary and auxiliary rules, to ensure the realization of the laws or institutions of the earlier books, the full validity of which it presupposes; and that not merely in some fashion or other, but in its true essence,

and according to its higher object and idea, notwithstanding all the difficulties that might present themselves in Canaan or elsewhere." Not only are the instructions relating to the building of the sanctuary, the service of the priests and Levites, and the laws of sacrifice and purification, passed over without mention as being already known; but of the festivals and festive celebrations, only the three annual feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles are referred to, and that but briefly, for the purpose of commanding the observance of the sacrificial meals which were to be held at the sanctuary in connection with these feasts (Deuteronomy 16).

The tithes and first-fruits are noticed several times, but only so far as they were to be applied to common sacrificial meals before the Lord.

The appointment of judges is commanded in all the towns of the land, and rules are given by which the judicial form of procedure is determined more minutely; but no rule is laid down as to the election of the judges, simply because this had been done before.

On the other hand, instructions are given concerning the king whom the people would one day desire to set over themselves; concerning the prophets whom the Lord would raise up; and also concerning any wars that might be waged with other nations than the Canaanites, the extermination of the latter being enforced once more; and several things besides.—And if this selection of materials indicates an intention, not so much to complete the legislation of the earlier books by the addition of new laws, as to promote its observance and introduction into the national life, and secure its permanent force; this intention becomes still more apparent when we consider how Moses, after repeating the decalogue, not only sums up the essential contents of all the commandments, statutes, and rights which Jehovah has commanded, in the one command to love God with all the heart, etc., and sets forth this commandment as the sum of the whole law, but in all his expositions of the law, all his exhortations to obedience,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 8
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

and all threats and promises, aims ever at this one object, to awaken in the hearts of the people a proper state of mind for the observance of the commandments of God, viz., a feeling of humility and love and willing obedience, and to destroy that love for merely outward legality and pharisaic self-righteousness which is inherent in the natural man, that the people may circumcise the foreskin of their heart, and enter heartily into the covenant of their God, and maintain that covenant with true fidelity.

It is in this peculiar characteristic and design of the legislative addresses which the book contains, and not in the purpose attributed to it, of appending a general law for the nation to the legislation of the previous books, which had reference chiefly to the priests and Levites,<sup>1</sup> that we are to seek for that completion of the law which the book of *Deuteronomy* supplies.

And in this we may find the strongest proof of the Mosaic origin of this concluding part of the *Thorah*.

What the heading distinctly states (Deuteronomy 1:1–4),—viz., that Moses delivered this address to all Israel a short time before his death in the land of Moab, on the other side of the Jordan, and therefore on the threshold of the promised land,—is confirmed by both the form and contents of the book.

As *Hengstenberg* has well observed (*Ev. K. Z.* 1862, No. 5, pp. 49ff.), “the address of Moses is in perfect harmony with his situation.

He speaks like a dying father to his children. The words are earnest, inspired, impressive. He looks back over the whole of the forty years of their wandering in the desert, reminds the people of all the blessings they have received, of the ingratitude with which they have so often repaid them, and of the judgments of God, and the love that continually broke forth behind them; he explains the laws again and again, and adds what is necessary to complete them, and is never weary or urging obedience to them in the warmest and most emphatic words, because the very life of the nation was bound up with this; he surveys all the storms and conflicts

which they have passed through, and, beholding the future in the past, takes a survey also of the future history of the nation, and sees, with mingled sorrow and joy, how the three great features of the past—viz., apostasy, punishment, and pardon—continue to repeat themselves in the future also.—The situation throughout is the time when Israel was standing on the border of the promised land, and preparing to cross the Jordan; and there is never any allusion to what formed the centre of the national life in future times—to Jerusalem and its temple, or to the Davidic monarchy.

The approaching conquest of the land is merely taken for granted as a whole; the land is dressed throughout in all the charms of a desired good, and no reference is ever made to the special circumstances of Israel in the land about to be conquered.” To this there is to be added what makes its appearance on every hand—the most lively remembrance of Egypt, and the condition of the people when living there (cf. Deuteronomy 5:15; 7:15; 11:10; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18; 28:27, 35, 60), and an accurate acquaintance with the very earliest circumstances of the different nations with which the Israelites came into either friendly or hostile contact in the Mosaic age (Deuteronomy 2); together with many other things that were entirely changed a short time after the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites.

And just as these addresses, which complete the giving of the law and bring it to a close, form an integral part of the *Thorah*, so the historical account of the finishing of the book of the law, and its being handed over to the priests, together with the song and blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 31–33), form a fitting conclusion to the work of Moses, the lawgiver and mediator of the old covenant; and to this the account of his death, with which the Pentateuch closes (Deuteronomy 34), is very appropriately appended.

## Deuteronomy 1

**Deuteronomy 1:1–5.** Verses 1–4 contain the heading to the whole book; and to this the introduction to the first address is appended in



DEUTERONOMY	Page 9
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

v. 5. By the expression, "*These be the words,*" etc., Deuteronomy is attached to the previous books; the word "*these,*" which refers to the addresses that follow, connects what follows with what goes before, just as in Gen. 2:4; 6:9, etc.

The geographical data in v. 1 present no little difficulty; for whilst the general statement as to the place where Moses delivered the addresses in this book, viz., *beyond Jordan*, is particularized in the introduction to the second address (Deuteronomy 4:46), as "*in the valley over against Beth-Peor,*" here it is described as "*in the wilderness, in the Arabah,*" etc.

This contrast between the verse before us and Deuteronomy 4:45, 46, and still more the introduction of the very general and loose expression, "*in the desert,*" which is so little adapted for a geographical definition of the locality, that it has to be defined itself by the additional words "*in the Arabah,*" suggest the conclusion that the particular names introduced are not intended to furnish as exact a geographical account as possible of the spot where Moses explained the law to all Israel, but to call up to view the scene of the addresses which follow, and point out the situation of all Israel at that time.

Israel was "*in the desert,*" not yet in Canaan the promised inheritance, and in fact "*in the Arabah.*" This is the name given to the deep low-lying plain on both sides of the Jordan, which runs from the Lake of Gennesaret to the Dead Sea, and stretches southwards from the Dead Sea to *Aila*, at the northern extremity of the Red Sea, as we may see very clearly from Deuteronomy 2:8, where the way which the Israelites took past Edom to *Aila* is called the "*way of the Arabah,*" and also from the fact that the Dead Sea is called "*the sea of the Arabah*" in Deuteronomy 3:17 and 4:49.

At present the name *Arabah* is simply attached to the southern half of this valley, between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea; whilst the northern part, between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, is called *el Ghor*; though *Abulfeda*, *Ibn Haukal*, and other Arabic geographers, extend

the name *Ghor* from the Lake of Gennesaret to *Aila* (cf. *Ges. thes.* p. 1166; *Hengstenberg*, *Balaam*, p. 520; *Robinson*, Pal. ii. p. 596).— מוֹל

הַיָּם, "*over against Suph*" (מוֹל for מוֹל,

Deuteronomy 2:19; 3:29, etc., for the sake of euphony, to avoid the close connection of the two *8*-sounds).

*Suph* is probably a contraction of יַם־סוּף, "*the Red Sea*" (see at Ex. 10:19). This name is given not only to the Gulf of *Suez* (Ex. 13:18; 15:4, 22, etc.), but to that of *Akabah* also (Num. 14:25; 21:4, etc.).

There is no other *Suph* that would be at all suitable here. The LXX have rendered it πλήσιον τῆς ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης; and *Onkelos* and others adopt the same rendering.

This description cannot serve as a more precise definition of the *Arabah*, in which case אֲרָבָה

(which) would have to be supplied before מוֹל, since "*the Arabah actually touches the Red Sea.*" Nor does it point out the particular spot in the Arabah where the addresses were delivered, as *Knobel* supposes; or indicate the connection between the *Arboth Moab* and the continuation of the Arabah on the other side of the Dead Sea, and point out the Arabah in all this extent as the heart of the country over which the Israelites had moved during the whole of their forty years' wandering (*Hengstenberg*).

For although the Israelites passed twice through the Arabah (see p. 824), it formed by no means the heart of the country in which they continued for forty years.

The words "*opposite to Suph,*" when taken in connection with the following names, cannot have any other object than to define with greater exactness the desert in which the Israelites had moved during the forty years.

Moses spoke to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan, when it was still in the desert, in the Arabah, still opposite to the Red Sea, after crossing which it had entered the wilderness (Ex. 15:22), "*between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Di-Sahab.*" *Paran* is at all events not the desert of this name in all its

DEUTERONOMY	Page 10
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

extent (see pp. 358, 359), but the place of encampment in the “desert of *Paran*” (Num. 10:12; 12:16), i.e., the district of *Kadesh* in the desert of *Zin* (Num. 13:21, 26); and *Hazereth* is most probably the place of encampment of that name mentioned in Num. 11:35; 12:16, from which Israel entered the desert of *Paran*.

Both places had been very eventful to the Israelites. At *Hazereth*, Miriam the prophetess and Aaron the high priest had stumbled through rebellion against Moses (Num. 12). In the desert of *Paran* by *Kadesh* the older generation had been rejected, and sentenced to die in the wilderness on account of its repeated rebellion against the Lord (Num. 14); and when the younger generation that had grown up in the wilderness assembled once more in *Kadesh* to set out for Canaan, even Moses and Aaron, the two heads of the nation, sinned there at the water of strife, so that they two were not permitted to enter Canaan, whilst Miriam died there at that time (Num. 20). But if *Paran* and *Hazereth* are mentioned on account of the tragical events connected with these places, it is natural to conclude that there were similar reasons for mentioning the other three names as well.

*Tophel* is supposed by *Hengstenberg* (*Balaam*, p. 517) and *Robinson* (Pal. ii. p. 570) and all the more modern writers, to be the large village of *Tafyleh*, with six hundred inhabitants, the chief place in *Jebal*, on the western side of the Edomitish mountains, in a well-watered valley of the wady of the same name, with large plantations of fruit-trees (*Burckhardt*, *Syr.* pp. 677, 678).

The Israelites may have come upon this place in the neighbourhood of *Oboth* (Num. 21:10, 11); and as its inhabitants, according to *Burckhardt*, p. 680, supply the Syrian caravans with a considerable quantity of provisions, which they sell to them in the castle of *el Ahsa*, *Schultz* conjectures that it may have been here that the people of Israel purchased food and drink of the Edomites for money (Deuteronomy 2:29), and that *Tafyleh* is mentioned as a place of refreshment, where the Israelites partook for

the first time of different food from the desert supply.

There is a great deal to be said in favour of this conjecture: for even if the Israelites did not obtain different food for the first time at this place, the situation of *Tophel* does warrant the supposition that it was here that they passed for the first time from the wilderness to an inhabited land; on which account the place was so memorable for them, that it might very well be mentioned as being the extreme east of their wanderings in the desert, as the opposite point to the encampment at *Paran*, where they first arrived on the western side of their wandering, at the southern border of Canaan.

*Laban* is generally identified with *Libnah*, the second place of encampment on the return journey from *Kadesh* (Num. 33:22), and may perhaps have been the place referred to in Num. 16, but not more precisely defined, where the rebellion of the company of *Korah* occurred.

Lastly, *Di-Sahab* has been identified by modern commentators with *Mersa Dahab* or *Mina Dahab*, i.e., gold-harbour, a place upon a tongue of land in the Elanitic Gulf, about the same latitude as Sinai, where there is nothing to be seen now except a quantity of date-trees, a few sand-hills, and about a dozen heaps of stones piled up irregularly, but all showing signs of having once been joined together (cf. *Burckhardt*, pp. 847–8; and *Ritter*, *Erdk.* xiv. pp. 226ff.).

But this is hardly correct. As *Roediger* has observed (on *Wellsted's Reisen*, ii. p. 127), “the conjecture has been based exclusively upon the similarity of name, and there is not the slightest exegetical tradition to favour it.” But similarity of names cannot prove anything by itself, as the number of places of the same name, but in different localities, that we meet with in the Bible, is very considerable.

Moreover, the further assumption which is founded upon this conjecture, namely, that the Israelites went from Sinai past *Dahab*, not only appears untenable for the reasons given above (p. 811), but is actually rendered impossible by the locality itself.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 11
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

The approach to this tongue of land, which projects between two steep lines of coast, with lofty mountain ranges of from 800 to 2000 feet in height on both north and south, leads from Sinai through far too narrow and impracticable a valley for the Israelites to be able to march thither and fix an encampment there.<sup>2</sup> And if Israel cannot have touched *Dahab* on its march, every probability vanishes that Moses should have mentioned this place here, and the name *Di-Sahab* remains at present undeterminable.

But in spite of our ignorance of this place, and notwithstanding the fact that even the conjecture expressed with regard to *Laban* is very uncertain, there can be no well-founded doubt that the words “*between Paran and Tophel*” are to be understood as embracing the whole period of the thirty-seven years of mourning, at the commencement of which Israel was in Paran, whilst at the end they sought to enter Canaan by *Tophel* (the Edomitish *Tafyleh*), and that the expression “*opposite to Suph*” points back to their first entrance into the desert.—Looking from the steppes of Moab over the ground that the Israelites had traversed, *Suph*, where they first entered the desert of Arabia, would lie between *Paran*, where the congregation arrived at the borders of Canaan towards the west, and *Tophel*, where they first ended their desert wanderings thirty-seven years later on the east.

**Deuteronomy 1:2.** In v. 2 also the retrospective glance at the guidance through the desert is unmistakeable. “*Eleven days is the way from Horeb to the mountains of Seir as far as Kadesh-Barnea.*” With these words, which were unquestionably intended to be something more than a geographical notice of the distance of Horeb from Kadesh-Barnea, Moses reminded the people that they had completed the journey from Horeb, the scene of the establishment of the covenant, to Kadesh, the border of the promised land, in eleven days (see pp. 824, 825), that he might lead them to lay to heart the events which took place at Kadesh itself.

The “way of the mountains of Seir” is not the way along the side of these mountains, i.e., the

way through the Arabah, which is bounded by the mountains of Seir on the east, but the way which leads to the mountains of Seir, just as in Deuteronomy 2:1 the way of the Red Sea is the way that leads to this sea.

From these words, therefore, it by no means follows that *Kadesh-Barnea* is to be sought for in the Arabah, and that Israel passed through the Arabah from Horeb to Kadesh.

According to v. 19, they departed from Horeb, went through the great and terrible wilderness by the way to the mountains of the Amorites, and came to Kadesh-Barnea.

Hence the way to the mountains of the Amorites, i.e., the southern part of what were afterwards the mountains of Judah (see at Num. 13:17), is the same as the way to the mountains of Seir; consequently the *Seir* referred to here is not the range on the eastern side of the Arabah, but *Seir* by *Hormah* (v. 44), i.e., the border plateau by Wady *Murreh*, opposite to the mountains of the Amorites (Josh. 11:17; 12:7: see at Num. 34:3).

**Deuteronomy 1:3, 4.** To the description of the ground to which the following addresses refer, there is appended an allusion to the not less significant time when Moses delivered them, viz., “*on the first of the eleventh month in the fortieth year,*” consequently towards the end of his life, after the conclusion of the divine lawgiving; so that he was able to speak “*according to all that Jehovah had given him in commandment unto them*” (the Israelites), namely, in the legislation of the former books, which is always referred to in this way (Deuteronomy 4:5, 23; 5:29, 30; 6:1). The time was also significant, from the fact that Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, had then been slain. By giving a victory over these mighty kings, the Lord had begun to fulfil His promises (see Deuteronomy 2:25), and had thereby laid Israel under the obligation to love, gratitude, and obedience (see Num. 21:21–35). The suffix in הַכְּתוֹ refers to Moses, who had smitten the Amorites at the command and by the power of Jehovah. According to Josh. 12:4; 13:12, 31; *Edrei* was the second capital of Og,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 12
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

and it is as such that it is mentioned, and not as the place where Og was defeated (Deuteronomy 3:1; Num. 21:33). The omission of the copula ו before בְּאַדְרָעִי is to be accounted for from the oratorical character of the introduction to the addresses which follow. *Edrei* is the present *Draà* (see at Num. 21:33).—In v. 5, the description of the locality is again resumed in the words “*beyond the Jordan*,” and still further defined by the expression “*in the land of Moab*,” and the address itself is introduced by the clause, “*Moses took in hand to expound this law*,” which explains more fully the דִּבֶּר (spake) of v. 3. “In the land of Moab” is a rhetorical and general expression for “in the Arboth Moab.” הוֹאִיל does not mean to begin, but to undertake, to take in hand, with the subordinate idea sometimes of venturing, or daring (Gen. 18:27), sometimes of a bold resolution: here it denotes an undertaking prompted by internal impulse. Instead of being construed with the infinitive, it is construed rhetorically here with the finite verb without the copula (cf. *Ges.* § 143, 3, *b*). בָּאֵר probably signified to dig in the *Kal*; but this is not used. In the *Piel* it means to *explain* (διασαφῆσαι, *explanare*, LXX, *Vulg.*), never to engrave, or stamp, not even here nor in Deuteronomy 27:8 and Hab. 2:2. Here it signifies “to expound this law clearly,” although the exposition was connected with an earnest admonition to preserve and obey it. “This” no doubt refers to the law expounded in what follows; but substantially it is no other than the law already given in the earlier books. “Substantially there is throughout but one law” (*Schultz*). That the book of Deuteronomy was not intended to furnish a new or second law, is as evident as possible from the word בָּאֵר.

The First Preparatory Address. **Ch. 1:6–4:40.**

**Deuteronomy 1:6–4:40.** For the purpose of enforcing upon the people the obligation to true fidelity to the covenant, Moses commenced his address with a retrospective glance at the events that had taken place during the forty years of their journey from Sinai to the steppes

of Moab, and showed in striking outlines how, when the Lord had called upon the Israelites in Horeb to arise and take possession of the land of Canaan, that had been promised to the patriarchs for their descendants (Deuteronomy 1:6–8), they had greatly increased, and were well organized by chiefs and judges (vv. 9–18); how they had proceeded to Kadesh-Barnea on the border of this land (v. 19), and there refused to enter in, notwithstanding the report of the spies who were sent out as to the goodness of the land (vv. 20–25), but were alarmed at the might and strength of the Canaanites from a want of confidence in the assistance of the Lord, and had rebelled against their God, and been shut out in consequence from the promised land (vv. 26–46).

It was true that at the expiration of this period of punishment the Lord had not permitted them to make war upon Edom and Moab, and drive out these nations from the possessions which they had received from God; but after they had gone round the mountains of Edom and the land of Moab (Deuteronomy 2:1–23), He had given Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, into the power of the Israelites, that they might take possession of their kingdoms in Gilead and Bashan (Deuteronomy 2:24–3:17); and after the conquest of these, He had imposed upon the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, who received the conquered land for their inheritance, the obligation to go with their brethren across the Jordan and help them to conquer Canaan, and had also appointed Joshua as their commander, who would divide the land among them, since he (Moses) himself was not to be allowed to cross the Jordan with them because of the anger of God which he had drawn upon himself on their account (Deuteronomy 3:18–29).

He therefore appealed to Israel to hearken to the commandments of the Lord, to preserve and fulfil them without addition or diminution; to continue mindful of the covenant which the Lord had made with them; to make themselves no image or likeness of Jehovah, that they might not draw His wrath upon themselves and be

DEUTERONOMY	Page 13
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

scattered among the heathen, but might ever remain in the land, of which they were now about to take possession (Deuteronomy 4).—In this address, therefore, Moses reminded the whole congregation how the Lord had fulfilled His promise from Horeb to the steppes of Moab, but how they had sinned against their God through unbelief and rebellion, and had brought upon themselves their long wanderings in the desert, that he might append to this the pressing warning not to forfeit the permanent possession of the land they were about to conquer, through a continued and fresh transgression of the covenant.—Certainly a very fitting preparation for the exposition of the law which follows.

Review of the Divine Guidance of Israel from Horeb to Kadesh.—Ch. 1:6–46.

**Deuteronomy 1:6–18.** Moses commenced with the summons issued by the Lord to Israel at Horeb, to rise and go to Canaan.

**Deuteronomy 1:6.** As the epithet applied to God, “*Jehovah our God*,” presupposes the reception of Israel into covenant with Jehovah, which took place at Sinai, so the words, “*ye have dwelt long enough at this mountain*,” imply that the purpose for which Israel was taken to Horeb had been answered, i.e., that they had been furnished with the laws and ordinances requisite for the fulfilment of the covenant, and could now remove to Canaan to take possession of the promised land.

The word of Jehovah mentioned here is not found in this form in the previous history; but as a matter of fact it is contained in the divine instructions that were preparatory to their removal (Num. 1–4 and 9:15–10:10), and the rising of the cloud from the tabernacle, which followed immediately afterwards (Num. 10:11). The fixed use of the name *Horeb* to designate the mountain group in general, instead of the special name *Sinai*, which is given to the particular mountain upon which the law was given (see p. 379), is in keeping with the rhetorical style of the book.

**Deuteronomy 1:7.** “*Go to the mount of the Amorites, and to all who dwell near.*” The mount

of the Amorites is the mountainous country inhabited by this tribe, the leading feature in the land of Canaan, and is synonymous with the “land of the Canaanites” which follows; the Amorites being mentioned *instar omnium* as being the most powerful of all the tribes in Canaan, just as in Gen. 15:16 (see at Gen. 10:16).

שְׂכֵנָיו, “*those who dwell by it*,” are the inhabitants of the whole of Canaan, as is shown by the enumeration of the different parts of the land, which follows immediately afterwards. Canaan was naturally divided, according to the character of the ground, into the *Arabah*, the modern *Ghor* (see at v. 1); the *mountain*, the subsequent mountains of Judah and Ephraim (see at Num. 13:17); the *lowland* (*shephelah*), i.e., the low flat country lying between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean Sea, and stretching from the promontory of Carmel down to Gaza, which is intersected by only small undulations and ranges of hills, and generally includes the hill country which formed the transition from the mountains to the plain, though the two are distinguished in Josh. 10:40 and 12:8 (see at Josh. 15:33ff.); the *south land* (*negeb*: see at Num. 13:17); and the *sea-shore*, i.e., the generally narrow strip of coast running along by the Mediterranean Sea from Joppa to the Tyrian ladders, or *Râs el Abiad*, just below Tyre (vid., v. *Raumer*, Pal. p. 49).—

The special mention of *Lebanon* in connection with the land of the Canaanites, and the enumeration of the separate parts of the land, as well as the extension of the eastern frontier as far as the Euphrates (see at Gen. 15:18), are to be attributed to the rhetorical fulness of the style. The reference, however, is not to Antilibanus, but to Lebanon proper, which was within the northern border of the land of Israel, as fixed in Num. 34:7–9.

**Deuteronomy 1:8.** This land the Lord had placed at the disposal of the Israelites for them to take possession of, as He had sworn to the fathers (patriarchs) that He would give it to

DEUTERONOMY	Page 14
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

their posterity (cf. Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:18ff, etc.).

The “swearing” on the part of God points back to Gen. 22:16. The expression “*to them and to their seed*” is the same as “to thee and to thy seed” in Gen. 13:15; 17:8, and is not to be understood as signifying that the patriarchs themselves ought to have taken actual possession of Canaan; but “*to their seed*” is in apposition, and also a more precise definition (comp. Gen. 15:7 with v. 18, where the simple statement “to thee” is explained by the fuller statement “to thy seed”). הָאֵלֹהִים has grown into an interjection = הִנֵּה לְפָנַי: to give before a person, equivalent to give up to a person, or place at his free disposal (for the use of the word in this sense, see Gen. 13:9; 34:10).

Jehovah (this is the idea of vv. 6–8), when He concluded the covenant with the Israelites at Horeb, had intended to fulfil at once the promise which He gave to the patriarchs, and to put them into possession of the promised land; and Moses had also done what was required on his part, as he explained in vv. 9–18, to bring the people safely to Canaan (cf. Ex. 18:23).

As the nation had multiplied as the stars of heaven, in accordance with the promise of the Lord, and he felt unable to bear the burden alone and settle all disputes, he had placed over them at that time wise and intelligent men from the heads of the tribes to act as judges, and had instructed them to adjudicate upon the smaller matters of dispute righteously and without respect of person.

For further particulars concerning the appointment of the judges, see at Ex. 18:13–26, where it is related how Moses adopted this plan at the advice of Jethro, even before the giving of the law at Sinai. The expression “*at that time*,” in v. 9, is not at variance with this.

The imperfect וְאָמַר with *vav rel.*, expresses the order of thought and not of time. For Moses did not intend to recall the different circumstances to the recollection of the people in their chronological order, but arranged them

according to their relative importance in connection with the main object of his address.

And this required that he should begin with what God had done for the fulfilment of His promise, and then proceed afterwards to notice what he, the servant of God, had done in his office, as an altogether subordinate matter. So far as this object was concerned, it was also perfectly indifferent who had advised him to adopt this plan, whilst it was very important to allude to the fact that it was the great increase in the number of the Israelites which had rendered it necessary, that he might remind the congregation how the Lord, even at that time, had fulfilled the promise which He gave to the patriarchs, and in that fulfilment had given a practical guarantee of the certain fulfilment of the other promises as well.

Moses accomplished this by describing the increase of the nation in such a way that his hearers should be involuntarily reminded of the covenant promise in Gen. 15:5ff. (cf. Gen. 12:2; 18:18; 22:17; 26:4).

**Deuteronomy 1:11.** But in order to guard against any misinterpretation of his words, “I cannot bear you myself alone,” Moses added, “May the Lord fulfil the promise of numerous increase to the nation a thousand-fold.” “*Jehovah, the God of your fathers* (i.e., who manifested Himself as God to your fathers), *add to you a thousand times*, כְּכֹכְבֵּי שָׁמַיִם, *as many as ye are, and bless you as He has said.*” The “blessing” after “multiplying” points back to Gen. 12:2. Consequently, it is not to be restricted to “strengthening, rendering fruitful, and multiplying,” but must be understood as including the spiritual blessing promised to Abraham.

**Deuteronomy 1:12.** “*How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?*” The burden and cumbrance of the nation are the nation itself, with all its affairs and transactions, which pressed upon the shoulders of Moses.

**Deuteronomy 1:13ff.** הָבֹי לָכֶם, give here, provide for yourselves. The congregation was

DEUTERONOMY	Page 15
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

to nominate, according to its tribes, wise, intelligent, and well-known men, whom Moses would appoint as heads, i.e., as judges, over the nation.

At their installation he gave them the requisite instructions (v. 16): *"Ye shall hear between your brethren,"* i.e., hear both parties as mediators, *"and judge righteously, without respect of person."* הַכִּיר פָּנִים, to look at the face, equivalent to נָשָׂא פָּנִים (Lev. 19:15), i.e., to act partially (cf. Ex. 23:2, 3). *"The judgment is God's,"* i.e., appointed by God, and to be administered in the name of God, or in accordance with His justice; hence the expression "to bring before God" (Ex. 21:6; 22:7, etc.). On the difficult cases which the judges were to bring before Moses, see at Ex. 18:26.

**Deuteronomy 1:19–46.** Everything had been done on the part of God and Moses to bring Israel speedily and safely to Canaan. The reason for their being compelled to remain in the desert for forty years was to be found exclusively in their resistance to the commandments of God.

The discontent of the people with the guidance of God was manifested at the very first places of encampment in the desert (Num. 11 and 12); but Moses passed over this, and simply reminded them of the rebellion at Kadesh (Num. 13 and 14), because it was this which was followed by the condemnation of the rebellious generation to die out in the wilderness.

**Deuteronomy 1:19.** *"When we departed from Horeb, we passed through the great and dreadful wilderness, which ye have seen,"* i.e., become acquainted with, viz., the desert of *et Tih* (see pp. 688, 689), *"of the way to the mountains of the Amorites, and came to Kadesh-Barnea"* (see at Num. 12:16). הָלַךְ, with an accusative, to pass through a country (cf. Deuteronomy 2:7; Isa. 50:10, etc.).

Moses had there explained to the Israelites, that they had reached the mountainous country of the Amorites, which Jehovah was about to give them; that the land lay before them, and they

might take possession of it without fear (vv. 20, 21).

But they proposed to send out men to survey the land, with its towns, and the way into it. Moses approved of this proposal, and sent out twelve men, one from each tribe, who went through the land, etc. (as is more fully related in Num. 13, and has been expounded in connection with that passage, vv. 22–25). Moses' summons to them to take the land (vv. 20, 21) is not expressly mentioned there, but it is contained *implicite* in the fact that spies were sent out; as the only possible reason for doing this must have been, that they might force a way into the land, and take possession of it. In v. 25, Moses simply mentions so much of the report of the spies as had reference to the nature of the land, viz., that it was good, that he may place in immediate contrast with this the refusal of the people to enter in.

**Deuteronomy 1:26, 27.** *"But ye would not go up, and were rebellious against the mouth (i.e., the express will) of Jehovah our God, and murmured in your tents, and said, Because Jehovah hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us."* שָׁנְאָה, either an infinitive with a feminine termination, or a verbal noun construed with an accusative (see Ges. § 133; Ewald, § 238, a.).—By the allusion to the murmuring in the tents, Moses points them to Num. 14:1, and then proceeds to describe the rebellion of the congregation related there (vv. 2–4), in such a manner that the state of mind manifested on that occasion presents the appearance of the basest ingratitude, inasmuch as the people declared the greatest blessing conferred upon them by God, viz., their deliverance from Egypt, to have been an act of hatred on His part.

At the same time, by addressing the existing members of the nation, as if they themselves had spoken so, whereas the whole congregation that rebelled at Kadesh had fallen in the desert, and a fresh generation was now gathered round him, Moses points to the fact, that the sinful corruption which broke out at that time, and

DEUTERONOMY	Page 16
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

bore such bitter fruit, had not died out with the older generation, but was germinating still in the existing Israel, and even though it might be deeply hidden in their hearts, would be sure to break forth again.

**Deuteronomy 1:28.** *"Whither shall we go up? Our brethren (the spies) have quite discouraged our heart"* (הָמָס, lit., to cause to flow away; cf. Josh. 2:9), viz., through their report (Num. 13:28, 29, 31–33), the substance of which is repeated here. The expression בְּשָׁמַיִם, *"in heaven,"* towering up into heaven, which is added to *"towns great and fortified,"* is not an exaggeration, but, as Moses also uses it in Deuteronomy 9:1, a rhetorical description of the impression actually received with regard to the size of the towns.<sup>3</sup> *"The sons of the Anakims:"* see at Num. 13:22.

**Deuteronomy 1:29–31.** The attempt made by Moses to inspire the despondent people with courage, when they were ready to despair of ever conquering the Canaanites, by pointing them to the help of the Lord, which they had experienced in so mighty and visible a manner in Egypt and the desert, and to urge them to renewed confidence in this their almighty Helper and Guide, was altogether without success.

And just because the appeal of Moses was unsuccessful, it is passed over in the historical account in Num. 13; all that is mentioned there (vv. 6–9) being the effort made by Joshua and Caleb to stir up the people, and that on account of the effects which followed the courageous bearing of these two men, so far as their own future history was concerned. The words *"goeth before you,"* in v. 30, are resumed in v. 33, and carried out still further. *"Jehovah, ... He shall fight for you according to all (כָּכֹל) that,"* i.e., in exactly the same manner, as, *"He did for you in Egypt,"* especially at the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14), *"and in the wilderness, which thou hast seen (רָאִיתָ, as in v. 19), where (אֲשֶׁר) without בּוֹ in a loose connection; see Ewald, § 331, c. and 333, a.) Jehovah thy God bore thee as a man beareth his son;"* i.e., supported, tended, and provided

for thee in the most fatherly way (see the similar figure in Num. 11:12, and expanded still more fully in Ps. 23).

**Deuteronomy 1:32, 33.** *"And even at this word ye remained unbelieving towards the Lord;"* i.e., notwithstanding the fact that I reminded you of all the gracious help that he had experienced from your God, ye persisted in your unbelief.

The participle אֵינְכֶם מֵאֱמִינִים, *"ye were not believing,"* is intended to describe their unbelief as a permanent condition. This unbelief was all the more grievous a sin, because the Lord their God went before them all the way in the pillar of cloud and fire, to guide and to defend them.

On the fact itself, comp. Num. 9:15ff., 10:33, with Ex. 13:21, 22.

**Deuteronomy 1:34–36.** Jehovah was angry, therefore, when He heard these loud words, and swore that He would not let any one of those men, that evil generation, enter the promised land, with the exception of Caleb, because he had followed the Lord faithfully (cf. Num. 14:21–24). The *hod* in הוֹלֵתִי is the antiquated connecting vowel of the construct state.

But in order that he might impress upon the people the judgment of the holy God in all its stern severity, Moses added in v. 37: *"also Jehovah was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither;"* and he did this before mentioning Joshua, who was excepted from the judgment as well as Caleb, because his ultimate intention was to impress also upon the minds of the people the fact, that even in wrath the Lord had been mindful of His covenant, and when pronouncing the sentence upon His servant Moses, had given the people a leader in the person of Joshua, who was to bring them into the promised inheritance.

We are not to infer from the close connection in which this event, which did not take place according to Num. 20:1–13 till the second arrival of the congregation at Kadesh, is placed with the earlier judgment of God at Kadesh, that the two were contemporaneous, and so supply, after *"the Lord as angry with me,"* the words



DEUTERONOMY	Page 17
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

“on that occasion.” For Moses did not intend to teach the people history and chronology, but to set before them the holiness of the judgments of the Lord.

By using the expression “for your sakes,” Moses did not wish to free himself from guilt. Even in this book his sin at the water of strife is not passed over in silence (cf. Deuteronomy 32:51). But on the present occasion, if he had given prominence to his own fault, he would have weakened the object for which he referred to this event, viz., to stimulate the consciences of the people, and instil into them a wholesome dread of sin, by holding up before them the magnitude of their guilt.

But in order that he might give no encouragement to false security respecting their own sin, on the ground that even highly gifted men of God fall into sin as well, Moses simply pointed out the fact, that the quarrelling of the people with him occasioned the wrath of God to fall upon him also.

**Deuteronomy 1:38.** “*Who standeth before thee,*” equivalent to “in thy service” (Ex. 24:13; 33:11: for this meaning, see Deuteronomy 10:8; 18:7; 1 Kings 1:28). “*Strengthen him:*” comp. Deuteronomy 31:7; and with regard to the installation of Joshua as the leader of Israel, see Num. 27:18, 19. The suffix in יְהוֹשֻׁעַ points back to הָאָדָם in v. 35. Joshua would divide the land among the Israelites for an inheritance, viz., (v. 39) among the young Israelites, the children of the condemned generation, whom Moses, when making a further communication of the judicial sentence of God (Num. 14:31), had described as having no share in the sins of their parents, by adding, “who know not to-day what is good and evil.” This expression is used to denote a condition of spiritual infancy and moral responsibility (Isa. 7:15, 16). It is different in 2 Sam. 19:36.—In vv. 40–45 he proceeds to describe still further, according to Num. 14:39–45, how the people, by resisting the command of God to go back into the desert (v. 41, compared with Num. 14:25), had simply brought still greater calamities upon themselves, and had had to atone for the

presumptuous attempt to force a way into Canaan, in opposition to the express will of the Lord, by enduring a miserable defeat. Instead of “they acted presumptuously to go up” (Num. 14:44), Moses says here, in v. 41, “*ye acted frivolously to go up;*” and in v. 43, “*ye acted rashly, and went up.*” הָיָה from זָוַד, to boil, or boil over (Gen. 25:29), signifies to act thoughtlessly, haughtily, or rashly. On the particular fact mentioned in v. 44, see at Num. 14, 45.

**Deuteronomy 1:45, 46.** “*Then ye returned and wept before Jehovah,*” i.e., before the sanctuary; “*but Jehovah did not hearken to your voice.*” שָׁמַע does not refer to the return to Kadesh, but to an inward turning, not indeed true conversion to repentance, but simply the giving up of their rash enterprise, which they had undertaken in opposition to the commandment of God,—the return from a defiant attitude to unbelieving complaining on account of the misfortune that had come upon them. Such complaining God never hears. “*And ye sat (remained) in Kadesh many days, that ye remained,*” i.e., not “as many days as ye had been there already before the return of the spies,” or “as long as ye remained in all the other stations together, viz., the half of thirty-eight years” (as *Seder Olam* and many of the Rabbins interpret); but “just as long as ye did remain there,” as we may see from a comparison of Deuteronomy 9:25. It seemed superfluous to mention more precisely the time they spent in Kadesh, because that was well known to the people, whom Moses was addressing. He therefore contented himself with fixing it by simply referring to its duration, which was known to them all. It is no doubt impossible for us to determine the time they remained in Kadesh, because the expression “many days” is imply a relative one, and may signify many years, just as well as many months or weeks. But it by no means warrants the assumption of *Fires* and others, that no absolute departure of the whole of the people from Kadesh ever took place. Such an assumption is at variance with Deuteronomy 2:1. The change of subjects, “ye sat,” etc. (v. 46), and “we turned and removed” (Deuteronomy 2:1), by no means

DEUTERONOMY	Page 18
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

proves that Moses only went away with that part of the congregation which attached itself to him, whilst the other portion, which was most thoroughly estranged from him, or rather from the Lord, remained there still. The change of subject is rather to be explained from the fact that Moses was passing from the consideration of the events in Kadesh, which he held up before the people as a warning, to a description of the further guidance of Israel. The reference to those events had led him involuntarily, from v. 22 onwards, to distinguish between himself and the people, and to address his words to them for the purpose of bringing out their rebellion against God. And now that he had finished with this, he returned to the communicative mode of address with which he set out in v. 6, but which he had suspended again until v. 19.

## Deuteronomy 2

*Review of the Divine Guidance of Israel Round Edom and Moab to the Frontier of the Amorites, and of the Gracious Assistance Afforded by the Lord in the Conquest of the Kingdoms of Sihon and Og.—Ch. 2 and 3.*

**Deuteronomy 2:1–23.** March from Kadesh to the Frontier of the Amorites.—V. 1. After a long stay in Kadesh, they commenced their return into the desert. The words, “*We departed ... by the way to the Red Sea,*” point back to Num. 14:25. This departure is expressly designated as an act of obedience to the divine command recorded there, by the expression “*as Jehovah spake to me.*” Consequently Moses is not speaking here of the second departure of the congregation from Kadesh to go to Mount Hor (Num. 20:22), but of the first departure after the condemnation of the generation that came out of Egypt. “*And we went round Mount Seir many days.*” This going round Mount Seir includes the thirty-eight years’ wanderings, though we are not therefore to picture it as “going backwards and forwards, and then entering the Arabah again” (Schultz). Just as Moses passed over the reassembling of the congregation at Kadesh (Num. 20:1), so he also overlooked the going to and fro in the desert,

and fixed his eye more closely upon the last journey from Kadesh to Mount Hor, that he might recall to the memory of the congregation how the Lord had led them to the end of all their wandering.

**Deuteronomy 2:2ff.** When they had gone through the Arabah to the southern extremity, the Lord commanded them to turn northwards, i.e., to go round the southern end of Mount Seir, and proceed northwards on the eastern side of it (see at Num. 21:10), without going to war with the Edomites (הַתְּגֵרָה, to stir oneself up against a person to conflict, מִלְחָמָה), as He would not give them a foot-breadth of their land; for He had given Esau (the Edomites) Mount Seir for a possession. For this reason they were to buy victuals and water of them for money (כָּרָה, to dig, to dig water, i.e., procure water, as it was often necessary to dig wells, and not merely to draw it, Gen. 26:25. The verb כָּרָה does not signify to buy).

**Deuteronomy 2:7.** And this they were able to do, because the Lord had blessed them in all the work of their hand, i.e., not merely in the rearing of flocks and herds, which they had carried on in the desert (Ex. 19:13; 34:3; Num. 20:19; 32:1ff.), but in all that they did for a living; whether, for example, when stopping for a long time in the same place of encampment, they sowed in suitable spots and reaped, or whether they sold the produce of their toil and skill to the Arabs of the desert. “*He hath observed thy going through this great desert*” (יָדַע, to know, then to trouble oneself, Gen. 39:6; to observe carefully, Prov. 27:23, Ps. 1:6); and He has not suffered thee to want anything for forty years, but as often as want has occurred, He has miraculously provided for every necessity.

**Deuteronomy 2:8.** In accordance with this divine command, they went past the Edomites by the side of their mountains, “*from the way of the Arabah, from Elath* (see at Gen. 14:6) *and Eziongeber*” (see at Num. 33:35), sc., into the steppes of Moab, where they were encamped at that time.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 19
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

God commanded them to behave in the same manner towards the Moabites, when they approached their frontier (v. 9). They were not to touch their land, because the Lord had given *Ar* to the descendants of Lot for a possession. In v. 9 the Moabites are mentioned, and in v. 19 the Amorites also. The Moabites are designated as “sons of Lot,” for the same reason for which the Edomites are called “brethren of Israel” in v. 4. The Israelites were to uphold the bond of blood-relationship with these tribes in the most sacred manner. *Ar*, the capital of Moabitis (see at Num. 21:15), is used here for the land itself, which was named after the capital, and governed by it.

**Deuteronomy 2:11, 12.** To confirm the fact that the Moabites and also the Edomites had received from God the land which they inhabited as a possession, Moses interpolates into the words of Jehovah certain ethnographical notices concerning the earlier inhabitants of these lands, from which it is obvious that Edom and Moab had not destroyed them by their own power, but that Jehovah had destroyed them before them, as is expressly stated in vv. 21, 22. “*The Emim dwelt formerly therein*,” sc., in *Ar* and its territory, in Moabitis, “*a high (i.e., strong) and numerous people, of gigantic stature, which were also reckoned among the Rephaites, like the Enakites (Anakim).*” *Emim*, i.e., frightful, terrible, was the name given to them by the Moabites. Whether this earlier or original population of Moabitis was of Hamitic or Semitic descent cannot be determined, any more than the connection between the *Emim* and the *Rephaim* can be ascertained. On the *Rephaim*, see p. 130; and on the Anakites, at Num. 13:22.

**Deuteronomy 2:12.** The origin of the *Horites* (i.e., the dwellers in caves) of Mount *Seir*, who were driven out of their possessions by the descendants of Esau, and completely exterminated (see at Gen. 14:6, and 36:20), is altogether involved in obscurity. The words, “*as Israel has done to the land of his possession, which Jehovah has given them*,” do not presuppose the conquest of the land of Canaan

or a post-Mosaic authorship; but “*the land of his possession*” is the land to the east of the Jordan (Gilead and Bashan), which was conquered by the Israelites under Moses, and divided among the two tribes and a half, and which is also described in Deuteronomy 3:20 as the “possession” which Jehovah had given to these tribes.

**Deuteronomy 2:13–15.** For this reason Israel was to remove from the desert of Moab (i.e., the desert which bounded Moabitis on the east), and to cross over the brook *Zered*, to advance against the country of the Amorites (see at Num. 21:12, 13). This occurred thirty-eight years after the condemnation of the people at Kadesh (Num. 14:23, 29), when the generation rejected by God had entirely died out (תָּמָּם, to be all gone, to disappear), so that not one of them saw the promised land. They did not all die a natural death, however, but “*the hand of the Lord was against them to destroy them*” (הָמָה, lit., to throw into confusion, then used with special reference to the terrors with which Jehovah destroyed His enemies; Ex. 14:24; 23:27, etc.), sc., by extraordinary judgments (as in Num. 16:35; 17:14; 21:6; 25:9).

**Deuteronomy 2:16–19.** When this generation had quite died out, the Lord made known to Moses, and through him to the people, that they were to cross over the boundary of Moab (i.e., the Arnon, v. 24; see at Num. 21:13), *the land of Ar* (see at v. 9), “*to come nigh over against the children of Ammon*,” i.e., to advance into the neighbourhood of the Ammonites, who lived to the east of Moab; but they were not to meddle with these descendants of Lot, because He would give them nothing of the land that was given them for a possession (v. 19, as at vv. 5 and 9).—To confirm this, ethnographical notices are introduced again in vv. 20–22 into the words of God (as in vv. 10, 11), concerning the earlier population of the country of the Ammonites. Ammonitis was also regarded as a land of the Rephaites, because Rephaites dwelt therein, whom the Ammonites called *Zamzummim*. “*Zamzummim*,” from זָמַם, to hum,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 20
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

then to muse, equivalent to the humming or roaring people, probably the same people as the *Zuzim* mentioned in Gen. 14:5. This giant tribe Jehovah had destroyed before the Ammonites (v. 22), just as He had done for the sons of Esau dwelling upon Mount Seir, namely, destroyed the Horites before them, so that the Edomites “dwelt in their stead, even unto this day.”

**Deuteronomy 2:23.** As the Horites had been exterminated by the Edomites, so were the *Avvaeans* (*Avvim*), who dwelt in farms (villages) at the south-west corner of Canaan, as far as Gaza, driven out of their possessions and exterminated by the *Caphtorites*, who sprang from *Caphtor* (see at Gen. 10:14), although, according to Josh. 13:3, some remnants of them were to be found among the Philistines even at that time. This notice appears to be attached to the foregoing remarks simply on account of the substantial analogy between them, without there being any intention to imply that the Israelites were to assume the same attitude towards the Caphtorites, who afterwards rose up in the persons of the Philistines, as towards the descendants of Esau and Lot.

**Deuteronomy 2:24–37.** The Help of God in the Conquest of the Kingdom of Sihon.—Vv. 24ff. Whereas the Israelites were not to make war upon the kindred tribes of Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, or drive them out of the possessions given to them by God; the Lord had given the Amorites, who had forced as way into Gilead and Bashan, into their hands.

**Deuteronomy 2:24, 25.** While they were encamped on the Arnon, the border of the Amoritish king of Sihon, He directed them to cross this frontier and take possession of the land of Sihon, and promised that He would give this king with all his territory into their hands, and that henceforward (“*this day*,” the day on which Israel crossed the Arnon) He would put fear and terror of Israel upon all nations under the whole heaven, so that as soon as they heard the report of Israel they would tremble and writhe before them. הָחֵל רָשׁ, “*begin, take*,” an oratorical expression for “begin to take” (רָשׁ in

pause for רָשׁ, Deuteronomy 1:21). The expression, “*all nations under the whole heaven*,” is hyperbolic; it is not to be restricted, however, to the Canaanites and other neighbouring tribes, but, according to what follows, to be understood as referring to all nations to whom the report of the great deeds of the Lord upon and on behalf of Israel should reach (cf. Deuteronomy 11:25 and Ex. 23:27). אָשָׁר, *so that* (as in Gen. 11:7; 13:16; 22:14). וְחָלִי, with the accent upon the last syllable, on account of the ו consec. (*Ewald*, § 234, a.), from חָלַל, to twist, or writhe with pain, here with anxiety.

**Deuteronomy 2:26–29.** If Moses, notwithstanding this, sent messengers to king Sihon with words of peace (vv. 26ff.; cf. Num. 21:21ff.), this was done to show the king of the Amorites, that it was through his own fault that his kingdom and lands and life were lost. The wish to pass through his land in a peaceable manner was quite seriously expressed; although Moses foresaw, in consequence of the divine communication, that he would reject his proposal, and meet Israel with hostilities. For Sihon’s kingdom did not form part of the land of Canaan, which God had promised to the patriarchs for their descendants; and the divine foreknowledge of the hardness of Sihon no more destroyed the freedom of his will to resolve, or the freedom of his actions, than the circumstance that in v. 30 the unwillingness of Sihon is described as the effect of his being hardened by God Himself. The hardening was quite as much the production of human freedom and guilt, as the consequence of the divine decree; just as in the case of Pharaoh (see the discussion on pp. 294ff.). On *Kedemoth*, see p. 749. בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ, equivalent to “upon the way, and always upon the way,” i.e., upon the high road alone, as in Num. 20:19. On the behaviour of the Edomites towards Israel, mentioned in v. 29, see p. 747. In the same way the Moabites also supplied Israel with provisions for money. This statement is not at variance with the unbrotherly conduct for

DEUTERONOMY	Page 21
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

which the Moabites are blamed in Deuteronomy 23:4, viz., that they did not meet the Israelites with bread and water. For קָדַם, to meet and anticipate, signifies a hospitable reception, and the offering of food and drink without reward, which is essentially different from selling for money. “*In Ar*” (v. 29), as in v. 18. The suffix in בּוֹ (v. 30) refers to the king, who is mentioned as the lord of the land, in the place of the land itself, just as in Num. 20:18.

**Deuteronomy 2:31.** The refusal of Sihon was suspended over him by God as a judgment of hardening, which led to his destruction. “*As this day*,” an abbreviation of “as it has happened this day,” i.e., as experience has now shown (cf. Deuteronomy 4:20, etc.).

**Deuteronomy 2:32–37.** Defeat of Sihon, as already described in the main in Num. 21:23–26. The war was a war of extermination, in which all the towns were laid under the ban (see Lev. 27:29), i.e., the whole of the population of men, women, and children were put to death, and only the flocks and herds and material possessions were taken by the conquerors as prey.

**Deuteronomy 2:34.** עִיר מְאֻמָּה (city of men) is the town population of men.

**Deuteronomy 2:36.** They proceeded this way with the whole of the kingdom of Sihon. “*From Aroër on the edge of the Arnon valley* (see at Num. 32:34), and, in fact, from the city which is in the valley,” i.e., Ar, or Areopolis (see at Num. 21:15),—Aroër being mentioned as the inclusive *terminus a quo* of the land that was taken, and the Moabitish capital Ar as the exclusive *terminus*, as in Josh. 13:9 and 16; “*and as far as Gilead*,” which rises on the north, near the Jabbok (or Zerka, see at Deuteronomy 3:4), “*there was no town too high for us*,” i.e., so strong that we could not take it.

**Deuteronomy 2:37.** Only along the land of the Ammonites the Israelites did not come, namely, along the whole of the side of the brook Jabbok, or the country of the Ammonites, which was situated upon the eastern side of the upper Jabbok, and the towns of the mountain, i.e., of

the Ammonitish highlands, and “*to all that the Lord had commanded*,” sc., commanded them not to remove. The statement, in Josh. 13:25, that the half of the country of the Ammonites was given to the tribe of Gad, is not at variance with this; for the allusion there is to that portion of the land of the Ammonites which was between the Arnon and the Jabbok, and which had already been taken from the Ammonites by the Amorites under Sihon (cf. Judg. 11:13ff.).

### Deuteronomy 3

**Deuteronomy 3:1–11.** The Help of God in the Conquest of the Kingdom of Og of Bashan.—Vv. 1ff. After the defeat of king Sihon and the conquest of his land, the Israelites were able to advance to the Jordan. But as the powerful Amoritish king Og still held the northern half of Gilead and all Bashan, they proceeded northwards at once and took the road to Bashan, that they might also defeat this king, whom the Lord had likewise given into their hand, and conquer his country (cf. Num. 21:33, 34). They smote him at *Edrei*, the modern *Draâ* (see p. 756), without leaving him even a remnant; and took all his towns, i.e., as is here more fully stated in vv. 4ff., “*sixty towns, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan*.” These three definitions refer to one and the same country. The whole region of *Argob* included the sixty towns which formed the kingdom of Og in Bashan, i.e., all the towns of the land of Bashan, viz., (according to v. 5) all the fortified towns, besides the unfortified and open country towns of Bashan. חֶבְלֵי, the chain for measuring, then the land or country measured with the chain. The name “*region of Argob*,” which is given to the country of Bashan here, and in vv. 4, 13, 14, and also in 1 Kings 4:13, is probably derived from רְגֹב, stone-heaps, related to רָגַב, a clump or clod of earth (Job 21:33; 38:38). The Targumists have rendered it correctly טְרַחֲוֵנָא (*Trachona*), from τραχών, a rough, uneven, stony district, so called from the basaltic hills of Hauran; just as the plain to the east of Jebel Hauran, which

DEUTERONOMY	Page 22
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

resembles Hauran itself, is sometimes called *Tellul*, from its tells or hills (*Burckhardt*, Syr. p. 173).<sup>4</sup> This district has also received the name of *Bashan*, from the character of its soil; for בָּשָׁן signifies a soft and level soil. From the name given to it by the Arabic translators, the Greek name Βαταναία *Batanaea*, and possibly also the modern name of the country on the north-eastern slope of Hauran at the back of Mount Hauran, viz., *Bethenije*, are derived.

The name *Argob* probably originated in the north-eastern part of the country of Bashan, viz., the modern *Leja*, with its stony soil covered with heaps of large blocks of stone (*Burckhardt*, p. 196), or rather in the extensive volcanic region to the east of Hauran, which was first of all brought to distinct notice in *Wetzstein's* travels, and of which he says that the "southern portion, bearing the name *Harra*, is thickly covered with loose volcanic stones, with a few conical hills among them, that have been evidently caused by eruptions" (*Wetzstein*, p. 6). The central point of the whole is *Safa*, "a mountain nearly seven hours' journey in length and about the same in breadth," in which "the black mass streaming from the craters piled itself up wave upon wave, so that the centre attained to the height of a mountain, without acquiring the smoothness of form observable in mountains generally,"—"the black flood of lava being full of innumerable streams of stony waves, often of a bright red colour, bridged over with thin arches, which rolled down the slopes out of the craters and across the high plateau" (*Wetzstein*, pp. 6 and 7). At a later period this name was transferred to the whole of the district of Hauran (= Bashan), because not only is the Jebel Hauran entirely of volcanic formation, but the plain consists throughout of a reddish brown soil produced by the action of the weather upon volcanic stones, and even "the *Leja* plain has been poured out from the craters of the Hauran mountains" (*Wetzstein*, p. 23). Through this volcanic character of the soil, Hauran differs essentially from Balka, Jebel *Ajlun*, and the plain of *Jaulan*, which is situated between the Sea of Galilee and the upper Jordan

on the one side, and the plain of Hauran on the other, and reaches up to the southern slope of the Hermon. In these districts the limestone and chalk formations prevail, which present the same contrast to the basaltic formation of the Hauran as white does to black (cf. v. *Raumer*, Pal. pp. 75ff.).—The land of the limestone and chalk formation abounds in caves, which are not altogether wanting indeed in Hauran (as v. *Raumer* supposes), though they are only found in eastern and south-eastern Hauran, where most of the volcanic elevations have been perforated by troglodytes (see *Wetzstein*, pp. 92 and 44ff.). But the true land of caves on the east of the Jordan is northern Gilead, viz., *Erbed* and *Suêt* (*Wetzst.* p. 92). Here the troglodyte dwellings predominate, whereas in Hauran you find for the most part towns and villages with houses of one or more stories built above the surface of the ground, although even on the eastern slope of the Hauran mountains there are hamlets to be seen, in which the style of building forms a transition from actual caves to dwellings built upon the ground. An excavation is first of all made in the rocky plateau, of the breadth and depth of a room, and this is afterwards arched over with a solid stone roof. The dwellings made in this manner have all the appearance of cellars or tunnels. This style of building, such as *Wetzstein* found in *Hibbiki* for example, belongs to the most remote antiquity. In some cases, hamlets of this kind were even surrounded by a wall. Those villages of Hauran which are built above the surface of the ground, attract the eye and stimulate the imagination, when seen from a distance, in various ways. "In the first place, the black colour of the building materials present the greatest contrast to the green around them, and to the transparent atmosphere also. In the second place, the height of the walls and the compactness of the houses, which always form a connected whole, are very imposing. In the third place, they are surmounted by strong towers. And in the fourth place, they are in such a good state of preservation, that you involuntarily yield to the delusion that they must of necessity be inhabited, and expect to see people going out

DEUTERONOMY	Page 23
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

and in" (*Wetzstein*, p. 49). The larger towns are surrounded by walls; but the smaller ones as a rule have none: "the backs of the houses might serve as walls." The material of which the houses are built is a grey dolerite, impregnated with glittering particles of olivine. "The stones are rarely cemented, but the fine and for the most part large squares lie one upon another as if they were fused together." "Most of the doors of the houses which lead into the streets or open fields are so low, that it is impossible to enter them without stooping; but the large buildings and the ends of the streets have lofty gateways, which are always tastefully constructed, and often decorated with sculptures and Greek inscriptions." The "larger gates have either simple or (what are most common) double doors. They consist of a slab of dolerite. There are certainly no doors of any other kind." These stone doors turn upon pegs, deeply inserted into the threshold and lintel. "Even a man can only shut and open doors of this kind, by pressing with the back or feet against the wall, and pushing the door with both hands" (*Wetzstein*, pp. 50ff.; compare with this the testimony of *Buckingham*, *Burckhardt*, *Seetzen*, and others, in *v. Raumer's Palestine*, pp. 78ff.).

Now, even if the existing ruins of Hauran date for the most part from a later period, and are probably of a Nabataean origin belonging to the times of Trajan and the Antonines, yet considering the stability of the East, and the peculiar nature of the soil of Hauran, they give a tolerably correct idea of the sixty towns of the kingdom of Og of Bashan, all of which were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, or, as it is stated in 1 Kings 4:13, "with walls and brazen bars."<sup>5</sup> The brazen bars were no doubt, like the gates themselves, of basalt or dolerite, which might easily be mistaken for brass. Besides the sixty fortified towns, the Israelites took a very large number of עָרֵי הַפְּרָזִי, "towns of the inhabitants of the flat country," i.e., unfortified open hamlets and villages in Bashan, and put them under the ban, like the towns of king Sihon (vv. 6, 7; cf. Deuteronomy 2:34, 35).

The infinitive, הִתְחַרֵּם, is to be construed as a gerund (cf. *Ges.* § 131, 2; *Ewald*, § 280, a.). The expression, "kingdom of Og in Bashan," implies that the kingdom of Og was not limited to the land of Bashan, but included the northern half of Gilead as well. In vv. 8–11, Moses takes a retrospective view of the whole of the land that had been taken on the other side of the Jordan; first of all (v. 9) in its whole extent from the Arnon to Hermon, then (v. 10) in its separate parts, to bring out in all its grandeur what the Lord had done for Israel. The notices of the different names of Hermon (v. 9), and of the bed of king Og (v. 11), are also subservient to this end. *Hermon* is the southernmost spur of Antilibanus, the present *Jebel es Sheikh*, or *Jebel et Telj*. The Hebrew name is not connected with חֶרֶם, *anathema*, as *Hengstenberg* supposes (*Diss.* pp. 197–8); nor was it first given by the Israelites to this mountain, which formed part of the northern boundary of the land which they had taken; but it is to be traced to an Arabic word signifying *prominens montis vertex*, and was a name which had long been current at that time, for which the Israelites used the Hebrew name שִׁיֹּן (שִׁיֹּן = *Sion*, the high, eminent: Deuteronomy 4:48), though this name did not supplant the traditional name of *Hermon*. The Sidonians called it *Siron*, a modified form of שִׁרְיֹן (1 Sam. 17:5), or סְרִיֹן (Jer. 46:4), a "coat of mail;" the Amorites called it *Senir*, probably a word with the same meaning. In Ps. 29:6, *Sirion* is used poetically for *Hermon*; and Ezekiel (Ezek. 27:4) uses *Senir*, in a mournful dirge over Tyre, as synonymous with *Lebanon*; whilst *Senir* is mentioned in 1 Chron. 5:23, and *Shenir* in Cant. 4:8, in connection with Hermon, as a part of Antilibanus, as it might very naturally happen that the Amoritish name continued attached to one or other of the peaks of the mountain, just as we find that even Arabian geographers, such as *Abulfeda* and *Maraszid*, call that portion of Antilibanus which stretches from Baalbek to Emesa (Homs, Heliopolis) by the name of *Sanir*.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 24
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 3:10.** The different portions of the conquered land were the following: הַמִּישֹׁר, *the plain*, i.e., the Amoritish table-land, stretching from the Arnon to Heshbon, and in a north-easterly direction nearly as far as Rabbath-Ammon, with the towns of *Heshbon*, *Bezer*, *Medeba*, *Jahza*, and *Dibon* (Deuteronomy 4:43; Josh. 13:9, 16, 17, 21; 20:8; Jer. 48:21ff.), which originally belonged to the Moabites, and is therefore called “the field of Moab” in Num. 21:20 (see p. 751). “*The whole of Gilead*,” i.e., the mountainous region on the southern and northern sides of the Jabbok, which was divided into two halves by this river. The southern half, which reached to Heshbon, belonged to the kingdom of Sihon (Josh. 12:2), and was assigned by Moses to the Reubenites and Gadites (v. 12); whilst the northern half, which is called “the rest of Gilead” in v. 13, the modern *Jebel Ajlun*, extending as far as the land of Bashan (Hauran and Jaulan), belonged to the kingdom of Og (Josh. 12:5), and was assigned to the Manassite family of Machir (v. 15, and Josh. 13:31; cf. v. *Raumer*, Pal. pp. 229, 230). “*And all Bashan unto Salcah and Edrei*.” All Bashan included not only the country of Hauran (the plan and mountain), but unquestionably also the district of *Jedur* and *Jaulan*, to the west of the sea of Galilee and the upper Jordan, or the ancient *Gaulonitis* (Jos. Ant. xviii. 4, 6, etc.), as the kingdom of Og extended to the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi (see at v. 14). Og had not conquered the whole of the land of Hauran, however, but only the greater part of it. His territory extended eastwards to *Salcah*, i.e., the present *Szalchat* or *Szarchad*, about six hours to the east of *Bozrah*, south of *Jebel Hauran*, a town with 800 houses, and a castle upon a basaltic rock, but uninhabited (cf. v. *Raumer*, Pal. p. 255); and northwards to *Edrei*, i.e., the northern *Edrei* (see at Num. 21:33), a considerable ruin on the northwest of *Bozrah*, three or four English miles in extent, in the old buildings of which there are 200 families living at present (Turks, Druses, and Christians). By the Arabian geographers (*Abulfeda*, *Ibn Batuta*) it is called *Sora*, by modern travellers *Adra* or *Edra* (v. *Richter*), or *Oezraa* (*Seetzen*), or *Ezra*

(*Burckhardt*), and *Edhra* (*Robinson*, App. 155). Consequently nearly the whole of *Jebel Hauran*, and the northern portion of the plain, viz., the *Leja*, were outside the kingdom of Og and the land of Bashan, of which the Israelites took possession, although *Burckhardt* reckons *Ezra* as part of the *Leja*.

**Deuteronomy 3:11.** Even in Abraham’s time, the giant tribe of *Rephaim* was living in Bashan (Gen. 14:5). But out of the remnant of these, king Og, whom the Israelites defeated and slew, was the only one left. For the purpose of recalling the greatness of the grace of God that had been manifested in that victory, and not merely to establish the credibility of the statements concerning the size of Og (“just as things belonging to an age that has long passed away are shown to be credible by their remains,” *Spinoza*, etc.), Moses points to the iron bed of this king, which was still in Rabbath-Ammon, and was nine cubits long and four broad, “after the cubit of a man,” i.e., the ordinary cubit in common use (see the analogous expression, “a man’s pen,” Isa. 8:1). הַלֵּא, for הַלֵּא, synonymous with הַלֵּא. There is nothing to amaze is in the size of the bed or bedstead given here. The ordinary Hebrew cubit was only a foot and a half, probably only eighteen Dresden inches (see my *Archäologie*, ii. p. 126, Anm. 4). Now a bed is always larger than the man who sleeps in it. But in this case *Clericus* fancies that Og “intentionally exceeded the necessary size, in order that posterity might be led to draw more magnificent conclusions from the size of the bed, as to the stature of the man who was accustomed to sleep in it.” He also refers to the analogous case of Alexander the Great, of whom *Diod. Sic.* (xvii. 95) affirms, that whenever he was obliged to halt on his march to India, he made colossal arrangements of all kinds, causing, among other things, two couches to be prepared in the tents for every foot-soldier, each five cubits long, and two stalls for every horseman, twice as large as the ordinary size, “to represent a camp of heroes, and leave striking memorials behind for the inhabitants of the land, of gigantic men and



DEUTERONOMY	Page 25
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

their supernatural strength.” With a similar intention Og may also have left behind him a gigantic bed as a memorial of his superhuman greatness, on the occasion of some expedition of his against the Ammonites; and this bed may have been preserved in their capital as a proof of the greatness of their foe.<sup>6</sup> Moses might then refer to this gigantic bed of Og, which was known to the Israelites; and there is no reason for resorting to the improbable conjecture, that the Ammonites had taken possession of a bed of king Og upon some expedition against the Amorites, and had carried it off as a trophy to their capital.<sup>7</sup> “*Rabbath* of the sons of Ammon,” or briefly *Rabbah*, i.e., the great (Josh. 13:25; 2 Sam. 11:1), was the capital of the Ammonites, afterwards called *Philadelphia*, probably from Ptolemaeus Philadelphus; by *Polybius*, Παββατάμωνα; by *Abulfeda*, *Ammân*, which is the name still given to the uninhabited ruins on the *Nahr Ammân*, i.e., the upper Jabbok (see *Burckhardt*, pp. 612ff. and *v. Raumer*, Pal. p. 268).

**Deuteronomy 3:12–20.** Review of the Distribution of the Conquered Land.—The land which the Israelites had taken belonging to these two kingdoms was given by Moses to the two tribes and a half for their possession, viz., the southern portion from Aroer in the Arnon valley (see at Num. 32:34), and half Gilead (as far as the Jabbok: see at v. 10) with its towns, which are enumerated in Josh. 13:15–20 and 24–28, to the Reubenites and Gadites; and the northern half of Gilead, with the whole of Bashan (i.e., all the region of Argob: see at v. 4, and Num. 32:33), to the half-tribe of Manasseh. לְכָל־הַבָּשָׁן, “as for all Bashan,” is in apposition to “all the region of Argob,” and the לְ simply serves to connect it; for “all the region of Argob” was not merely one portion of Bashan, but was identical with “all Bashan,” so far as it belonged to the kingdom of Og (see at v. 4). All this region passed for a land of giants. הַקְּרָא, to be called, i.e., to be, and to be recognised as being.

**Deuteronomy 3:14.** The region of Argob, or the country of Bashan, was given to *Jair* (see

Num. 32:41), as far as the territory of the Geshurites and Maachathites (cf. Josh. 12:5; 13:11). “*Unto*,” as far as, is to be understood as inclusive. This is evident from the statement in Josh. 13:13: “*The children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites nor the Maachathites; but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.*” Consequently Moses allotted the territory of these two tribes to the Manassites, because it formed part of the kingdom of Og. “*Geshuri and Maachathi*” are the inhabitants of *Geshur* and *Maachah*, two provinces which formed small independent kingdoms even in David’s time (2 Sam. 3:3; 13:37, and 10:6). *Geshur* bordered on Aram. The Geshurites and Aramaeans afterwards took from the Israelites the *Jair*-towns and *Kenath*, with their daughter towns (1 Chron. 2:23). In David’s time *Geshur* had a king *Thalmi*, whose daughter David married. This daughter was the mother of Absalom; and it was in Geshur that Absalom lived for a time in exile (2 Sam. 3:3; 13:37; 14:23; 15:8). The exact situation of *Geshur* has not yet been determined. It was certainly somewhere near Hermon, on the eastern side of the upper Jordan, and by a bridge over the Jordan, as *Geshur* signifies bridge in all the Semitic dialects. *Maachah*, which is referred to in 1 Chron. 19:6 as a kingdom under the name of *Aram-Maachah* (Eng. V. Syria-Maachah), is probably to be sought for to the north-east of *Geshur*. According to the *Onomast.* (s. v. Μαχαθί), it was in the neighbourhood of the Hermon. “*And he called them* (the towns of the region of Argob) *after his own name; Bashan* (sc., he called) *Havvoth Jair unto this day*” (cf. Num. 32:41). The word הַוּוֹת (*Havvoth*), which only occurs in connection with the *Jair*-towns, does not mean towns or camps of a particular kind, viz., tent villages, as some suppose, but is the plural of הַוָּה, life (*Leben*, a common German termination, e.g., *Eisleben*), for which afterwards the word הַיָּה was used (comp. 2 Sam. 23:13 with 1 Chron. 11:15). It applies to any kind of dwelling-place, being used in the passages just mentioned to denote even a warlike encampment. The *Jair*’s-

DEUTERONOMY	Page 26
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

*lives (Jairsleben)* were not a particular class of towns, therefore, in the district of Argob, but *Jair* gave this collective name to all the sixty fortified towns, as is perfectly evident from the verse before us when compared with v. 5 and Num. 32:41, and expressly confirmed by Josh. 13:30 and 1 Kings 4:13, where the sixty fortified towns of the district of Argob are called *Havvoth Jair*.—The statement in 1 Chron. 2:22, 23, that “*Jair had twenty-three towns in Gilead* (which is used here as in Deuteronomy 34:1, Josh. 22:9; 13:15, Judg. 5:17; 20:1, to denote the whole of Palestine to the east of the Jordan), and *Geshur and Aram took the Havvoth Jair from them, (and) Kenath and its daughters, sixty towns* (sc., in all),” is by no means at variance with this, but, on the contrary, in the most perfect harmony with it. For it is evident from this passage, that the twenty-three *Havvoth Jair*, with *Kenath* and its daughters, formed sixty towns altogether. The distinction between the twenty-three *Havvoth Jair* and the other thirty-seven towns, viz., *Kenath* and its daughters, is to be explained from the simple fact that, according to Num. 32:42, *Nobah*, no doubt a family of sons of Machir related to *Jair*, conquered *Kenath* and its daughters, and called the conquered towns by his name, namely, when they had been allotted to him by Moses. Consequently Bashan, or the region of Argob, with its sixty fortified towns, was divided between two of the leading families of Machir the Manassite, viz., the families of *Jair* and *Nobah*, each family receiving the districts which it had conquered, together with their towns; namely, the family of *Nobah*, *Kenath* and its daughter towns, or the eastern portion of Bashan; and the family of *Jair*, twenty-three towns in the west, which are called *Havvoth Jair* in 1 Chron. 2:23, in harmony with Num. 32:41, where *Jair* is said to have given this name to the towns which were conquered by him. In the address before us, however, in which Moses had no intention to enter into historical details, all the (sixty) towns of the whole district of Argob, or the whole of Bashan, are comprehended under the name of *Havvoth Jair*, probably because *Nobah* was a subordinate

branch of the family of *Jair*, and the towns conquered by him were under the supremacy of *Jair*. The expression “unto this day” certainly does not point to a later period than the Mosaic age. This definition of time is simply a relative one. It does not necessarily presuppose a very long duration, and here it merely serves to bring out the marvellous change which was due to the divine grace, viz., that the sixty fortified towns of the giant king Og of Bashan had now become *Jair’s* lives.<sup>8</sup>

**Deuteronomy 3:15.** Machir received Gilead (see Num. 32:40).—In vv. 16 and 17 the possession of the tribes of Reuben and Gad is described more fully according to its boundaries. They received the land of Gilead (to the south of the Jabbok) as far as the brook Arnon, the middle of the valley and its territory. נַחֲלֵי אֲרָנוֹן is a more precise definition of נַחֲלֵי הַיַּבְבֹּק, expressive of the fact that the territory of these tribes was not to reach merely to the northern edge of the Arnon valley, but into the middle of it, viz., to the river Arnon, which flowed through the middle of the valley; and וְגִבּוֹל (and the border) is an explanatory apposition to what goes before, as in Num. 34:6, signifying, “viz., the border of the Arnon valley as far as the river.” On the east, “even unto Jabbok the brook, the (western) border of the Ammonites” (i.e., as far as the upper Jabbok, the *Nahr Ammân*: see at Num. 21:24); and on the west “The Arabah (the Ghor: see Deuteronomy 1:1) and the Jordan with territory” (i.e., with its eastern bank), “from Chinnereth” (i.e., the town from which the Sea of Galilee received the name of Sea of Chinnereth: Num. 34:11; see at Josh. 19:35) “to the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea under the slopes of Pisgah (see at Num. 21:15 and 27:12) eastward” (i.e., merely the eastern side of the Arabah and Jordan).—In vv. 18–20 Moses reminds them of the conditions upon which he had given the two tribes and a half the land referred to for their inheritance (cf. Num. 32:20–32).

**Deuteronomy 3:21–29.** Nomination of Joshua as his Successor.—This reminiscence also recalls the goodness of God in the appointment of Joshua (Num. 27:12ff.), which took place “at

DEUTERONOMY	Page 27
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

*that time,*” i.e., after the conquest of the land on the east of the Jordan. In accordance with the object of his address, which was to hold up to view what the Lord had done for Israel, he here relates how, at the very outset, he pointed Joshua to the things which he had seen with his eyes (עֵינָיָהּ הָרְאָתָהּ, thine eyes were seeing; cf.

*Ewald*, § 335, *b.*), namely, to the defeat of the two kings of the Amorites, in which the pledge was contained, that the faithful covenant God would complete the work He had begun, and would do the same to all kingdoms whither Joshua would go over (i.e., across the Jordan).

**Deuteronomy 3:22.** For this reason they were not to be afraid; for Jehovah Himself would fight for them. “*He*” is emphatic, and adds force to the subject.

**Deuteronomy 3:23ff.** Moses then describes how, notwithstanding his prayer, the Lord had refused him permission to cross over into Canaan and see the glorious land. This prayer is not mentioned in the historical account given in the fourth book; but it must have preceded the prayer for the appointment of a shepherd over the congregation in Num. 27:16, as the Lord directs him in His reply (v. 28) to appoint Joshua as the leader of the people. In his prayer, Moses appealed to the manifestations of divine grace which he had already received. As the Lord had already begun to show him His greatness and His mighty hand, so might He also show him the completion of His work. The expression, “begun to show Thy greatness,” relates not so much to the mighty acts of the Lord in Egypt and at the Red Sea (as in Ex. 32:11, 12, and Num. 14:13ff.), as to the manifestation of the divine omnipotence in the defeat of the Amorites, by which the Lord had begun to bring His people into the possession of the promised land, and had made Himself known as God, to whom there was no equal in heaven or on earth. אֲשֶׁר before מִי אֵל (v. 24) is an explanatory and causal relative: because (*quod, quia*), or for. “*For what God is there in heaven and on earth,*” etc. These words recall Ex. 15:11, and are echoed in many of the Psalms—in Ps. 86:8 almost *verbatim*. The

contrast drawn between Jehovah and other gods does not involve the reality of the heathen deities, but simply presupposes a belief in the existence of other gods, without deciding as to the truth of that belief. גְּבוּרָתוֹ, manifestations of גְּבוּרָה, mighty deeds.

**Deuteronomy 3:25.** “*I pray Thee, let me go over.*” אֶעֱבְרָה־נָא, a form of desire, used as a petition, as in Deuteronomy 2:27, Num. 21:22, etc. “*That goodly mountain*” is not one particular portion of the land of Canaan, such as the mountains of Judah, or the temple mountain (according to Ex. 15:17), but the whole of Canaan regarded as a mountainous country, Lebanon being specially mentioned as the boundary wall towards the north. As Moses stood on the lower level of the Arabah, the promised land presented itself not only to his eyes, but also to his soul, as a long mountain range; and that no merely as suggestive of the lower contrast, that “whereas the plains in the East are for the most part sterile, on account of the want of springs or rain, the mountainous regions, which are well watered by springs and streams, are very fertile and pleasant” (*Rosenmüller*), but also on a much higher ground, viz., as a high and lofty land, which would stand by the side of Horeb, “where he had spent the best and holiest days of his life, and where he had seen the commencement of the covenant between God and His people” (*Schultz*).

**Deuteronomy 3:26.** But the Lord would not grant his request. “*Let it suffice thee*’ (*satis sit tibi*, as in Deuteronomy 1:6), substantially equivalent to 2 Cor. 12:8, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (*Schultz*). דִּבֶּר בּ, to speak *about* a thing (as in Deuteronomy 6:7; 11:19, etc.).

**Deuteronomy 3:27.** V. 27 is a rhetorical paraphrase of Num. 27:12, where the mountains of *Abarim* are mentioned in the place of *Pisgah*, which was the northern portion of Abarim. (On v. 28, cf. Deuteronomy 1:38 and Num. 27:23.)

**Deuteronomy 3:29.** “*So we abode in the valley over against Beth-Peor,*” i.e., in the Arboth Moab

DEUTERONOMY	Page 28
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

(Num. 22:1), sc., where we still are. The pret. וַיִּשָּׁב is used, because Moses fixes his eye upon the past, and looks back upon the events already described in Num. 28–34 as having taken place there. On *Beth-Peor*, see at Num. 23:28.

#### Deuteronomy 4

*Exhortation to a Faithful Observance of the Law.—Ch. 4:1–40.*

**Deuteronomy 4.** With the word וְעַתָּה, “and now,” Moses passes from a contemplation of what the Lord had done for Israel, to an exhortation to keep the law of the Lord. The divine manifestations of grace laid Israel under the obligation to a conscientious observance of the law, that they might continue to enjoy the blessings of the covenant. The exhortation commences with the appeal, to hear and keep the commandments and rights of the Lord, without adding to them or taking from them; for not only were life and death suspended upon their observance, but it was in this that the wisdom and greatness of Israel before all the nations consisted (vv. 1–8). It then proceeds to a warning, not to forget the events at Horeb (vv. 9–14) and so fall into idolatry, the worship of images or idol deities (vv. 15–24); and it closes with a threat of dispersion among the heathen as the punishment of apostasy, and with a promise of restoration as the consequence of repentance and sincere conversion (vv. 25–31), and also with a reason for this threat and promise drawn from the history of the immediate past (vv. 32–34), for the purpose of fortifying the nation in its fidelity to its God, the sole author of its salvation (vv. 35–40).

**Deuteronomy 4:1–8.** The Israelites were to hearken to the laws and rights which Moses taught to do (that they were to do), that they might live and attain to the possession of the land which the Lord would give them. “Hearkening” involves laying to heart and observing. The words “*statutes and judgments*” (as in Lev. 19:37) denote the whole of the law of the covenant in its two leading features. חֻקִּים,

*statutes*, includes the moral commandments and statutory covenant laws, for which חֻק and חֻקִּה are mostly used in the earlier books; that is to say, all that the people were bound to observe; מִשְׁפָּטִים, *rights*, all that was due to them, whether in relation to God or to their fellow-men (cf. Deuteronomy 26:17).

Sometimes הַמִּצְוָה, the *commandment*, is connected with it, either placed first in the singular, as a general comprehensive notion (Deuteronomy 5:28; 6:1; 7:11), or in the plural (Deuteronomy 8:11; 11:1; 30:16); or הָעֵדוּת, the *testimonies*, the commandments as a manifestation of the will of God (v. 45, 6:17, 20).—Life itself depended upon the fulfilment or long life in the promised land (Ex. 20:12), as Moses repeatedly impressed upon them (cf. v. 40, Deuteronomy 5:30; 6:2; 8:1; 11:21; 16:20; 25:15; 30:6, 15ff., 32:47). יְרֻשָּׁתָם, for יְרֻשָּׁתָם (as in v. 22, Josh. 1:16; cf. Ges. § 44, 2, *Anm.* 2).

**Deuteronomy 4:2.** The observance of the law, however, required that it should be kept as it was given, that nothing should be added to it or taken from it, but that men should submit to it as to the inviolable word of God. Not by omissions only, but by additions also, was the commandment weakened, and the word of God turned into ordinances of men, as Pharisaism sufficiently proved. This precept is repeated in Deuteronomy 13:1; it is then revived by the prophets (Jer. 26:2; Prov. 30:6), and enforced again at the close of the whole revelation (Rev. 22:18, 19). In the same sense Christ also said that He had not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil (Matt. 5:17); and the old covenant was not abrogated, but only glorified and perfected, by the new.

**Deuteronomy 4:3, 4.** The Israelites had just experienced how a faithful observance of the law gave life, in what the Lord had done on account of Baal-Peor, when He destroyed those who worshipped this idol (Num. 25:3, 9), whereas the faithful followers of the Lord still remained alive. דָּבַק בְּ, to cleave to any one, to hold fast to him. This example was adduced by

DEUTERONOMY	Page 29
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

Moses, because the congregation had passed through all this only a very short time before; and the results of faithfulness towards the Lord on the one hand, and of the unfaithfulness of apostasy from Him on the other, had been made thoroughly apparent to it. *"Your eyes the seeing,"* as in Deuteronomy 3:21.

**Deuteronomy 4:5, 6.** But the laws which Moses taught were commandments of the Lord. Keeping and doing them were to be the wisdom and understanding of Israel in the eyes of the nations, who, when they heard all these laws, would say, *"Certainly (רק, only, no other than) a wise and understanding people is this great nation."* History has confirmed this. Not only did the wisdom of a Solomon astonish the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:4ff.), but the divine truth which Israel possessed in the law of Moses attracted all the more earnest minds of the heathen world to seek the satisfaction of the inmost necessities of their heart and the salvation of their souls in Israel's knowledge of God, when, after a short period of bloom, the inward self-dissolution of the heathen religions had set in; and at last, in Christianity, it has brought one heathen nation after another to the knowledge of the true God, and to eternal salvation, notwithstanding the fact that the divine truth was and still is regarded as folly by the proud philosophers and self-righteous Epicureans and Stoics of ancient and modern times.

**Deuteronomy 4:7, 8.** This mighty and attractive force of the wisdom of Israel consisted in the fact, that in Jehovah they possessed a God who was at hand with His help when they called upon Him (cf. Deuteronomy 33:29; Ps. 34:19; 145:18; 1 Kings 2:7), as none of the gods of the other nations had ever been; and that in the law of God they possessed such statutes and rights as the heathen never had. True right has its roots in God; and with the obscuration of the knowledge of God, law and right, with their divinely established foundations, are also shaken and obscured (cf. Rom. 1:26-32).

**Deuteronomy 4:9-14.** Israel was therefore not to forget the things which it had seen at Horeb with its own eyes.

**Deuteronomy 4:9.** *"Only beware and take care of thyself."* To "keep the soul," i.e., to take care of the soul as the seat of life, to defend one's life from danger and injury (Prov. 13:3; 19:16). *"That thou do not forget אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים (the facts described in Ex. 19-24), and that they do not depart from thy heart all the days of thy life,"* i.e., are not forgotten as long as thou livest, *"and thou makest them known to thy children and thy children's children."* These acts of God formed the foundation of the true religion, the real basis of the covenant legislation, and the firm guarantee of the objective truth and divinity of all the laws and ordinances which Moses gave to the people. And it was this which constituted the essential distinction between the religion of the Old Testament and all heathen religions, whose founders, it is true, professed to derive their doctrines and statutes from divine inspiration, but without giving any practical guarantee that their origin was truly divine.

**Deuteronomy 4:10-12.** In the words, *"The day (הַיּוֹם, adverbial accusative) "that thou stoodest before Jehovah thy God at Horeb,"* etc., Moses reminds the people of the leading features of those grand events: first of all of the fact that God directed him to gather the people together, that He might make known His words to them (Ex. 19:9ff.), that they were to learn to fear Him all their life long, and to teach their children also (יְרָאָה, inf., like שָׁנָאָה, Deuteronomy 1:27); and secondly (v. 11), that they came near to the mountain which burned in fire (cf. Ex. 19:17ff.). The expression, burning in fire *"even to the heart of heaven,"* i.e., quite into the sky, is a rhetorical description of the awful majesty of the pillar of fire, in which the glory of the Lord appeared upon Sinai, intended to impress deeply upon the minds of the people the remembrance of this manifestation of God. And the expression, *"darkness, clouds, and thick darkness,"* which is equivalent to the smoking of the great mountain (Ex. 19:18), is employed

DEUTERONOMY	Page 30
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

with the same object. And lastly (vv. 12, 13), he reminds them that the Lord spoke out of the midst of the fire, and adds this important remark, to prepare the way for what is to follow, *"Ye heard the sound of the words, but ye did not see a shape,"* which not only agrees most fully with Ex. 24, where it is stated that the sight of the glory of Jehovah upon the mountain appeared to the people as they stood at the foot of the mountain "like devouring fire" (v. 17), and that even the elders who "saw God" upon the mountain at the conclusion of the covenant saw no form of God (v. 11), but also with Ex. 33:20, 23, according to which no man can see the face (פָּנִים) of God. Even the similitude (*Temunah*) of Jehovah, which Moses saw when the Lord spoke to him mouth to mouth (Num. 12:8), was not the form of the essential being of God which was visible to his bodily eyes, but simply a manifestation of the glory of God answering to his own intuition and perceptive faculty, which is not to be regarded as a form of God which was an adequate representation of the divine nature. The true God has no such form which is visible to the human eye.

**Deuteronomy 4:13.** The Israelites, therefore, could not see a form of God, but could only hear the voice of His words, when the Lord proclaimed His covenant to them, and gave utterance to the ten words, which He afterwards gave to Moses written upon two tables of stone (Ex. 20:1-14 [17], and 31:18, compared with Deuteronomy 24:12). On the "tables of stone," see at Ex. 34:1.

**Deuteronomy 4:14.** When the Lord Himself had made known to the people in the ten words the covenant which He commanded them to do, He directed Moses to teach them laws and rights which they were to observe in Canaan, viz., the rights and statutes of the Sinaitic legislation, from Ex. 21 onwards.

**Deuteronomy 4:15-24.** As the Israelites had seen no shape of God at Horeb, they were to beware for their souls' sake (for their lives) of acting corruptly, and making to themselves any kind of image of Jehovah their God, namely, as the context shows, to worship God in it. (On

*pesel*, see at Ex. 20:4.) The words which follow, viz., *"a form of any kind of sculpture,"* and *"a representation of male or female"* (for *tabnith*, see at Ex. 25:9), are in apposition to "graven image," and serve to explain and emphasize the prohibition.

**Deuteronomy 4:17, 18.** They were also not to make an image of any kind of beast; a caution against imitating the animal worship of Egypt.

**Deuteronomy 4:19.** They were not to allow themselves to be torn away (נִדָּח) to worship the stars of heaven, namely, by the seductive influence exerted upon the senses by the sight of the heavenly bodies as they shone in their glorious splendour. The reason for this prohibition is given in the relative clause, *"which Jehovah thy God hath allotted to all nations under the whole heaven."* The thought is not, "God has given the heathen the sun, moon, and stars for service, i.e., to serve them with their light," as *Onkelos*, the *Rabbins*, *Jerome*, and others, suppose, but He has allotted them to them for worship, i.e., permitted them to choose them as the objects of their worship, which is the view adopted by *Justin Martyr*, *Clemens Alex.*, and others. According to the scriptural view, even the idolatry of the heathen existed by divine permission and arrangement. God gave up the heathen to idolatry and shameful lusts, because, although they knew Him from His works, they did not praise Him as God (Rom. 1:21, 24, 26).

**Deuteronomy 4:20.** The Israelites were not to imitate the heathen in this respect, because Jehovah, who brought them out of the iron furnace of Egypt, had taken them (לָקַח) to Himself, i.e., had drawn them out or separated them from the rest of the nations, to be a people of inheritance. They were therefore not to seek God and pray to Him in any kind of creature, but to worship Him without image and form, in a manner corresponding to His own nature, which had been manifested in no form, and therefore could not be imitated. בּוֹר בְּרִזָּה, an iron furnace, or furnace for smelting iron, is a significant figure descriptive of the terrible

DEUTERONOMY	Page 31
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

sufferings endured by Israel in Egypt. עַם נַחֲלָה (a people of inheritance) is synonymous with עַם סְגֻלָּה (a special people, Deuteronomy 7:6: see at Ex. 19:5, “a peculiar treasure”). “*This day*,” as in Deuteronomy 2:30.

**Deuteronomy 4:21ff.** The bringing of Israel out of Egypt reminds Moses of the end, viz., Canaan, and leads him to mention again how the Lord had refused him permission to enter into this good land; and to this he adds the renewed warning not to forget the covenant or make any image of God, since Jehovah, as a jealous God, would never tolerate this. The swearing attributed to God in v. 21 is neither mentioned in Num. 20 nor at the announcement of Moses’ death in Num. 27:12ff.; but it is not to be called in question on that account, as *Knobel* supposes. It is perfectly obvious from Deuteronomy 3:23ff. that all the details are not given in the historical account of the event referred to. פֶּסֶל תְּמוּנַת כָּל, “*image of a form of all that Jehovah has commanded*,” sc., not to be made (vv. 16–18). “*A consuming fire*” (v. 24): this epithet is applied to God with special reference to the manifestation of His glory in burning fire (Ex. 24:17). On the symbolical meaning of this mode of revelation, see at Ex. 3:2 (pp. 284, 285). “*A jealous God*,” see at Ex. 20:5.

**Deuteronomy 4:25–31.** To give emphasis to this warning, Moses holds up the future dispersion of the nation among the heathen as the punishment of apostasy from the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 4:25, 26.** If the Israelites should beget children and children’s children, and grow old in the land, and then should make images of God, and do that which was displeasing to God to provoke Him; in that case Moses called upon heaven and earth as witnesses against them, that they should be quickly destroyed out of the land. “*Growing old in the land*” involved forgetfulness of the former manifestations of grace on the part of the Lord, but not necessarily becoming voluptuous through the enjoyment of the riches of the land, although this might also lead to forgetfulness of

God and the manifestations of His grace (cf. Deuteronomy 6:10ff., 32:15). The apodosis commences with v. 26. הָעֵיד, with אֵל and the accusative, to take or summon as a witness against a person. Heaven and earth do not stand here for the rational beings dwelling in them, but are personified, represented as living, and capable of sensation and speech, and mentioned as witnesses who would raise up against Israel, not to proclaim its guilt, but to bear witness that God, the Lord of heaven and earth, had warned the people, and, as it is described in the parallel passage in Deuteronomy 30:19, had set before them the choice of life and death, and therefore was just in punishing them for their unfaithfulness (cf. Ps. 50:6; 51:6). “*Prolong days*,” as in Ex. 20:12.

**Deuteronomy 4:27.** Jehovah would scatter them among the nations, where they would perish through want and suffering, and only a few (מִתֵּי מִסְפָּר, Gen. 34:30) would be left.

“*Whither*” refers to the nations whose land is thought of (cf. Deuteronomy 12:29; 30:3). For the thing intended, see Lev. 26:33, 36, 38, 39, and Deuteronomy 28:64ff., from which it is evident that the author had not “the fate of the nation in the time of the Assyrians in his mind” (*Knobel*), but rather all the dispersions which would come upon the rebellious nation in future times, even down to the dispersion under the Romans, which continues still; so that Moses contemplated the punishment in its fullest extent.

**Deuteronomy 4:28.** There among the heathen they would be obliged to serve gods that were the work of men’s hands, gods of wood and stone, that could neither hear, nor eat, nor smell, i.e., possessed no senses, showed no sign of life. What Moses threatens here, follows from the eternal laws of the divine government. The more refined idolatry of image-worship leads to coarser and coarser forms, in which the whole nature of idol-worship is manifested in all its pitiableness. “When once the God of revelation is forsaken, the God of reason and imagination must also soon be given up and make way for still lower powers, that perfectly accord with

<b>DEUTERONOMY</b>	<b>Page 32</b>
<b>By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch</b>	a Grace Notes study

the *I* exalted upon the throne, and in the time of pretended 'illumination' to atheism and materialism also" (*Schultz*).

**Deuteronomy 4:29.** From thence Israel would come to itself again in the time of deepest misery, like the prodigal son in the gospel (Luke 15:17), would seek the Lord its God, and would also find Him if it sought with all its heart and soul (cf. Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12).

**Deuteronomy 4:30.** *"In tribulation to thee (in thy trouble), all these things (the threatened punishments and sufferings) will befall thee; at the end of the days (see at Gen. 49:1) thou wilt turn to Jehovah thy God, and hearken to His voice."* With this comprehensive thought Moses brings his picture of the future to a close. (On the subject-matter, vid., Lev. 26:39, 40.) Returning to the Lord and hearkening to His voice presuppose that the Lord will be found by those who earnestly seek Him; *"for (v. 31) He is a merciful God, who does not let His people go, nor destroy them, and who does not forget the covenant with the fathers"* (cf. Lev. 26:42 and 45). הִרְפָּה, to let loose, to withdraw the hand from a person (Josh. 10:6).

**Deuteronomy 4:32–40.** But in order to accomplish something more than merely preserving the people from apostasy by the threat of punishment, namely, to secure a more faithful attachment and continued obedience to His commands by awakening the feeling of cordial love, Moses reminds them again of the glorious miracles of divine grace performed in connection with the election and deliverance of Israel, such as had never been heard of from the beginning of the world; and with this strong practical proof of the love of the true God, he brings his first address to a close. This closing thought in v. 32 is connected by כִּי (*for*) with the leading idea in v. 31. "Jehovah thy God is a merciful God," to show that the sole ground for the election and redemption of Israel was the compassion of God towards the human race. *"For ask now of the days that are past, from the day that God created man upon the earth, and from one end of the heaven unto the other, whether so great a thing has ever happened, or*

*anything of the kind has been heard of:"* i.e., the history of all times since the creation of man, and of all places under the whole heaven, can relate no such events as those which have happened to Israel, viz., at Sinai (v. 33; cf. v. 12). From this awfully glorious manifestation of God, Moses goes back in v. 34 to the miracles with which God effected the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. *"Or has a god attempted (made the attempt) to come and take to himself people from people* (i.e., to fetch the people of Israel out of the midst of the Egyptian nation), *with temptations* (the events in Egypt by which Pharaoh's relation to the Lord was put to the test; cf. Deuteronomy 6:22 and 7:18, 19), *with signs and wonders* (the Egyptian plagues, see Ex. 7:3), *and with conflict* (at the Red Sea: Ex. 14:14; 15:3), *and with a strong hand and outstretched arm* (see Ex. 6:6), *and with great terrors?"* In the three points mentioned last, all the acts of God in Egypt are comprehended, according to both cause and effect. They were revelations of the omnipotence of the Lord, and produced great terrors (cf. Ex. 12:30–36).

**Deuteronomy 4:35.** Israel was made to see all this, that it might know that Jehovah was God (הָאֱלֹהִים, *the God*, to whom the name of *elohim* rightfully belonged), and there was none else beside Him (cf. v. 39, 32:39; Isa. 45:5, 6).

**Deuteronomy 4:36.** But the Lord had spoken to Israel chiefly down from heaven (cf. Ex. 20:19 [22]), and that out of the great fire, in which He had come down upon Sinai, to chastise it. יָסַר does not mean "to instruct the people with regard to His truth and sovereignty," as *Schultz* thinks, but "to take them under holy discipline" (*Knobel*), to inspire them with a salutary fear of the holiness of His ways and of His judgments by the awful phenomena which accompanied His descent, and shadowed forth the sublime and holy majesty of His nature.

**Deuteronomy 4:37–40.** All this He did from love to the fathers of Israel (the patriarchs): *"and indeed because He loved thy fathers, He chose his seed* (the seed of Abraham, the first of the patriarchs) *after him, and brought thee*



DEUTERONOMY	Page 33
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

(Israel) *out of Egypt by His face with great power, to drive out ... and to bring thee, to give thee their land ... so that thou mightest know and take to heart ... and keep His laws,*” etc. With regard to the construction of these verses, the clause וְתָחַת כִּי (and because) in v. 37 is not to be regarded as dependent upon what precedes, as *Schultz* supposes; nor are vv. 37 and 38 to be taken as the protasis, and vv. 39, 40 as the apodosis (as *Knobel* maintains). Both forms of construction are forced and unnatural. The verses form an independent thought; and the most important point, which was to bind Israel to faithfulness towards Jehovah, is given as the sum and substance of the whole address, and placed as a protasis at the head of the period. The only thing that admits of dispute, is whether the apodosis commences with וַיִּבְחַר (“He chose,” v. 37), or only with וַיּוֹצֵאֲךָ (“brought thee out”). Either is possible; and it makes no difference, so far as the main thought is concerned, whether we regard the choice of Israel, or simply the deliverance from Egypt, in which that choice was carried into practical effect, as the consequence of the love of Jehovah to the patriarchs.—The copula ו before תָּחַת is specially emphatic, “and truly,” and indicates that the sum and substance of the whole discourse is about to follow, or the one thought in which the whole appeal culminates. It was the love of God to the fathers, not the righteousness of Israel (Deuteronomy 9:5), which lay at the foundation of the election of their posterity to be the nation of Jehovah’s possession, and also of all the miracles of grace which were performed in connection with their deliverance out of Egypt. Moses returns to this thought again at Deuteronomy 10:15, for the purpose of impressing it upon the minds of the people as the one motive which laid them under the strongest obligation to circumcise the foreskin of their heart, and walk in the fear and love of the Lord their God (Deuteronomy 10:12ff.).—The singular suffixes in זֶרְעוֹ (his seed) and אַחֲרָיו (after him) refer to Abraham, whom Moses had especially in his mind when

speaking of “thy fathers,” because he was pre-eminently the lover of God (Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7), and also the beloved or friend of God (Jas. 2:23; cf. Gen. 18:17ff.). “By His face” points back to Ex. 33:14. The face of Jehovah was Jehovah in His personal presence, in His won person, who brought Israel out of Egypt, to root out great and mighty nations before it, and give it their land for an inheritance. “As this day” (clearly shows), viz., by the destruction of Sihon and Og, which gave to the Israelites a practical pledge that the Canaanites in like manner would be rooted out before them. The expression “as this day” does not imply, therefore, that the Canaanites were already rooted out from their land.

**Deuteronomy 4:39, 40.** By this the Israelites were to know and lay it to heart, that Jehovah alone was God in heaven and on earth, and were to keep His commandments, in order that (אֲשֶׁר) it might be well with them and their descendants, and they might have long life in Canaan. כָּל-הַיָּמִים, “all time,” for all the future (cf. Ex. 20:12).

**Deuteronomy 4:41–43.** Selection of Three Cities of Refuge for Unintentional Manslayers on the East of the Jordan.—The account of this appointment of the cities of refuge in the conquered land on the east of the Jordan is inserted between the first and second addresses of Moses, in all probability for no other reason than because Moses set apart the cities at that time according to the command of God in Num. 35:6, 14, not only to give the land on that side its full consecration, and thoroughly confirm the possession of the two Amoritic kingdoms on the other side of the Jordan, but also to give the people in this punctual observance of the duty devolving upon it an example for their imitation in the conscientious observance of the commandments of the Lord, which he was now about to lay before the nation. The assertion that this section neither stood after Num. 34–36, nor really belongs there, has a little foundation as the statement that its contents are at variance with the precepts in

DEUTERONOMY	Page 34
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

Deuteronomy 19. "Toward the sunrising" is introduced as a more precise definition; עֵבֶר הַיָּרְדֵּן, like מִזְרְחָהּ in Num. 32:19 and 34:15. On the contents of v. 42, comp. Num. 35:15ff. The three towns that were set apart were *Bezer*, *Ramoth*, and *Golan*. "*Bezer in the steppe*, (namely) *in the land of the level*" (The Amoritish table-land: Deuteronomy 3:10). The situation of this Levitical town and city of refuge, which is only mentioned again in Josh. 20:8; 21:36, and 1 Chron. 6:63, has not yet been discovered. *Bezer* was probably the same as *Bosor* (1 Macc. 5:36), and is possibly to be seen in the *Berza* mentioned by Robinson (Pal. App. p. 170). *Ramoth* in Gilead, i.e., *Ramoth-Mizpeh* (comp. Josh. 20:8 with 13:26), was situated, according to the *Onom.*, fifteen Roman miles, or six hours, to the west of *Philadelphia* (*Rabbath-Ammon*); probably, therefore, on the site of the modern *Salt*, which is six hours' journey from *Ammân* (cf. v. *Raumer*, Pal. pp. 265, 266).—*Golan*, in *Bashan*, according to *Eusebius* (s. v. *Gaulon* or *Golan*), was still a very large village in Batanaea even in his day, from which the district generally received the name of *Gaulonitis* or *Joan*; but it has not yet been discovered again.

## II. Second Address, or Exposition of the Law. Ch. 4:44–26:19.

**Deuteronomy 4:44–26:19.** This address, which is described in the heading as the law which Moses set before the Israelites, commences with a repetition of the decalogue, and a notice of the powerful impression which was made, through the proclamation of it by God Himself, upon the people who were assembled round Him at Horeb (Deuteronomy 5). In the first and more general part, it shows that the true essence of the law, and of that righteousness which the Israelites were to strive after, consisted in loving Jehovah their God with all their heart (Deuteronomy 6); that the people were bound, by virtue of their election as the Lord's people of Possession, to exterminate the Canaanites with their idolatrous worship, in order to rejoice in the blessing of God (Deuteronomy 7); but more

especially that, having regard on the one hand to the divine chastisement and humiliation which they had experienced in the desert (Deuteronomy 8), and on the other hand to the frequency with which they had rebelled against their God (Deuteronomy 9:1–10:11), they were to beware of self-exaltation and self-righteousness, that in the land of Canaan, of which they were about to take possession, they might not forget their God when enjoying the rich productions of the land, but might retain the blessings of their God for ever by a faithful observance of the covenant (Deuteronomy 10:12–11:32). Then after this there follows an exposition of the different commandments of the law (Deuteronomy 12–26).

**Deuteronomy 4:44–49.** Announcement of the Discourse upon the Law.—First of all, in v. 44, we have the general notice in the form of a heading: "*This is the Torah which Moses set before the children of Israel;*" and then, in vv. 45, 46, a fuller description of the *Thorah* according to its leading features, "*testimonies, statutes, and rights*" (see at v. 1), together with a notice of the place and time at which Moses delivered this address. "*On their coming out of Egypt,*" i.e., not "after they had come out," but during the march, before they had reached the goal of their journeyings, viz., (v. 46) when they were still on the other side of the Jordan. "*In the valley,*" as in Deuteronomy 3:29. "*In the land of Sihon,*" and therefore already upon ground which the Lord had given them for a possession. The importance of this possession as the first-fruit and pledge of the fulfilment of the further promises of God, led Moses to mention again, though briefly, the defeat of the two kings of the Amorites, together with the conquest of their land, just as he had done before in Deuteronomy 2:32–36 and 3:1–17. On v. 48, cf. Deuteronomy 3:9, 12–17. *Sion*, for Hermon (see at Deuteronomy 3:9).

## Deuteronomy 5

The True Essence of the Law and Its Fulfilment. Exposition of the Decalogue, and Its Promulgation.—Ch. 5.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 35
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 5.** The exposition of the law commences with a repetition of the ten words of the covenant, which were spoken to all Israel directly by the Lord Himself.

**Deuteronomy 5:1–5.** Vv. 1–5 form the introduction, and point out the importance and great significance of the exposition which follows. Hence, instead of the simple sentence “*And Moses said,*” we have the more formal statement “*And Moses called all Israel, and said to them.*” The great significance of the laws and rights about to be set before them, consisted in the fact that they contained the covenant of Jehovah with Israel.

**Deuteronomy 5:2, 3.** “*Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb; not with our fathers, but with ourselves, who are all of us here alive this day.*” The “fathers” are neither those who died in the wilderness, as *Augustine* supposed, nor the forefathers in Egypt, as *Calvin* imagined; but the patriarchs, as in Deuteronomy 4:37. Moses refers to the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, which was essentially distinct from the covenant at Sinai, which was essentially distinct from the covenant made with Abraham (Gen. 15:18), though the latter laid the foundation for the Sinaitic covenant. But Moses passed over this, as it was not his intention to trace the historical development of the covenant relation, but simply to impress upon the hearts of the existing generation the significance of its entrance into covenant with the Lord. The generation, it is true, with which God made the covenant at Horeb, had all died out by that time, with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, and only lived in the children, who, though in part born in Egypt, were all under twenty years of age at the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, and therefore were not among the persons with whom the Lord concluded the covenant. But the covenant was made not with the particular individuals who were then alive, but rather with the nation as an organic whole. Hence Moses could with perfect justice identify those who constituted the nation at that time, with those who had entered into covenant with the Lord at Sinai. The separate pronoun (*we*) is

added to the pronominal suffix for the sake of emphasis, just as in Gen. 4:26, etc.; and אֵלָּה again is so connected with אֲנִיָּהּ, as to include the relative in itself.

**Deuteronomy 5:4.** “*Jehovah talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,*” i.e., He came as near to you as one person to another. פָּנִים בְּפָנִים is not perfectly synonymous with אֵל פָּנִים, which is used in Ex. 33:11 with reference to God’s speaking to Moses (cf. Deuteronomy 34:10, and Gen. 32:31), and expresses the very confidential relation in which the Lord spoke to Moses as one friend to another; whereas the former simply denotes the directness with which Jehovah spoke to the people.—Before repeating the ten words which the Lord addressed directly to the people, Moses introduces the following remark in v. 5—“*I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to announce to you the word of Jehovah; because ye were afraid of the fire, and went not up into the mount*”—for the purpose of showing the mediatorial position which he occupied between the Lord and the people, not so much at the proclamation of the ten words of the covenant, as in connection with the conclusion of the covenant generally, which alone in fact rendered the conclusion of the covenant possible at all, on account of the alarm of the people at the awful manifestation of the majesty of the Lord. The word of Jehovah, which Moses as mediator had to announce to the people, had reference not to the instructions which preceded the promulgation of the decalogue (Ex. 19:11ff.), but, as is evident from vv. 22–31, primarily to the further communications which the Lord was about to address to the nation in connection with the conclusion of the covenant, besides the ten words (viz., Ex. 20:18; 22–23:33), to which in fact the whole of the Sinaitic legislation really belongs, as being the further development of the covenant laws. The alarm of the people at the fire is more fully described in vv. 25ff. The word “*saying*” at the end of v. 5 is dependent

DEUTERONOMY	Page 36
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

upon the word “talked” in v. 4; v. 5 simply containing a parenthetical remark.

**Deuteronomy 5:6–21.** In vv. 6–21, the ten covenant words are repeated from Ex. 20, with only a few variations, which have already been discussed in connection with the exposition of the decalogue at Ex. 20:1–14.—In vv. 22–33, Moses expounds still further the short account in Ex. 20:18–21, viz., that after the people had heard the ten covenant words, in their alarm at the awful phenomena in which the Lord revealed His glory, they entreated him to stand between as mediator, that God Himself might not speak to them any further, and that they might not die, and then promised that they would hearken to all that the Lord should speak to him (vv. 23–31). His purpose in doing so was to link on the exhortation in vv. 32, 33, to keep all the commandments of the Lord and do them, which paves the way for passing to the exposition of the law which follows. “A great voice” (v. 22) is an adverbial accusative, signifying “with a great voice” (cf. *Ges.* § 118, 3). “And He added no more:” as in Num. 11:25. God spoken the ten words directly to the people, and then no more; i.e., everything further He addressed to Moses alone, and through his mediation to the people. As mediator He gave him the two tables of stone, upon which He had written the decalogue (cf. Ex. 31:18). This statement somewhat forestalls the historical course; and in Deuteronomy 9:10, 11, it is repeated again in its proper historical connection.

**Deuteronomy 5:24–27.** Vv. 24–27 contain a rhetorical, and at the same time really a more exact, account of the events described in Ex. 20:18–20 (15–17), and already expounded on p. 402. **וְאָמַרְתָּ** (v. 24), a contraction of **וְאָמַרְתָּהּ**, as in Num. 11:15 (cf. *Ewald*, § 184, a.). Jehovah’s reply to the words of the people (vv. 28–31) is passed over in Ex. 20. God approved of what the people said, because it sprang from a consciousness of the unworthiness of any sinner to come into the presence of the holy God; and He added, “Would that there were always this heart in them to fear Me,” i.e., would

that they were always of the same mind to fear Me and keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and their children for ever. He then directed the people to return to their tents, and appointed Moses as the mediator, to whom He would address all the law, that he might teach it to the people (cf. Deuteronomy 4:5). Having been thus entreated by the people to take the office of mediator, and appointed to that office by the Lord, Moses could very well bring his account of these events to a close (vv. 32, 33), by exhorting them to observe carefully all the commandments of the Lord, and not to turn aside to the right hand or to the left, i.e., not to depart in any way from the mode of life pointed out in the commandments (cf. Deuteronomy 17:11, 20; 28:14; Josh. 1:7, etc.), that it might be well with them, etc. (cf. Deuteronomy 4:40). **וְטוֹב**, perfect with **ו** rel. instead of the imperfect.

## Deuteronomy 6

On Loving Jehovah, the One God, with All the Heart.—Ch. 6.

**Deuteronomy 6:1–3.** Announcement of the commandments which follow, with a statement of the reason for communicating them, and the beneficent results of their observance. **הַמִּצְוָה**, that which is commanded, i.e., the substance of all that Jehovah had commanded, synonymous therefore with the *Thorah* (Deuteronomy 4:44). The words, “the statutes and the rights,” are explanatory of and in apposition to “the commandment.” These commandments Moses was to teach the Israelites to keep in the land which they were preparing to possess (cf. Deuteronomy 4:1).

**Deuteronomy 6:2.** The reason for communicating the law was to awaken the fear of God (cf. Deuteronomy 4:10; 5:26), and, in fact, such fear of Jehovah as would show itself at all times in the observance of every commandment. “Thou and thy son:” this forms the subject to “thou mightest fear,” and is placed at the end for the sake of emphasis. The *Hiphil* **הָאָרִיז** has not the transitive meaning, “to make

DEUTERONOMY	Page 37
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

long,” as in Deuteronomy 5:30, but the intransitive, to *last long*, as in Deuteronomy 5:16, Ex. 20:12, etc.

**Deuteronomy 6:3.** The maintenance of the fear of God would bring prosperity, and the increase of the nation promised to the fathers. In form this thought is not connected with v. 3 as the apodosis, but it is appended to the leading thought in v. 1 by the words “*Hear therefore, O Israel!*” which correspond to the expression “*to teach you*” in v. 1. אָשֶׁר, *that, in order that* (as in Deuteronomy 2:25; 4:10, etc.). The increase of the nation had been promised to the patriarchs from the very first (Gen. 12:1; see p. 123; cf. Lev. 26:9).—On “*milk and honey*,” see at Ex. 3:8.

**Deuteronomy 6:4–9.** With v. 4 the burden of the law commences, which is not a new law added to the ten commandments, but simply the development and unfolding of the covenant laws and rights enclosed as a germ in the decalogue, simply an exposition of the law, as had already been announced in Deuteronomy 1:5. The exposition commences with an explanation and enforcing of the first commandment. There are two things contained in it: (1) that Jehovah is the one absolute God; (2) that He requires love with all the heart, all the soul, and all the strength. “*Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.*”<sup>9</sup> This does not mean Jehovah is one God, Jehovah alone (*Abenezra*), for in that case יהוה לְבַדּוּ would be used instead of יהוה אֶחָד; still less Jehovah our God, namely, Jehovah is one (*J. H. Michaelis*). יהוה אֶחָד together form the predicate of the sentence. The idea is not, Jehovah our God is one (the only) God, but “*one* (or the only) *Jehovah*,” not in this sense, however, that “He has not adopted one mode of revelation or appearance here and another there, but one mode only, viz., the revelation which Israel had received” (*Schultz*); for *Jehovah* never denotes merely a mode in which the true God is revealed or appears, but God as the absolute, unconditioned, or God according to the absolute independence and constancy of His actions (see pp. 45–47). Hence what is predicated here of Jehovah (*Jehovah one*) does

not relate to the unity of God, but simply states that it is to Him alone that the name *Jehovah* rightfully belongs, that He is the one absolute God, to whom no other *Elohim* can be compared. This is also the meaning of the same expression in Zech. 14:9, where the words added, “and His name one,” can only signify that in the future Jehovah would be acknowledged as the one absolute God, as King over all the earth. This clause not merely precludes polytheism, but also syncretism, which reduces the one absolute God to a national deity, a Baal (Hos. 2:18), and in fact every form of theism and deism, which creates for itself a supreme God according to philosophical abstractions and ideas. For Jehovah, although the absolute One, is not an abstract notion like “absolute being” or “the absolute idea,” but the absolutely living God, as He made Himself known in His deeds in Israel for the salvation of the whole world.

**Deuteronomy 6:5.** As the one God, therefore, Israel was to love Jehovah its God with all its heart, with all its soul, and with all its strength. The motive for this is to be found in the words “thy God,” in the fact that Jehovah was Israel’s God, and had manifested Himself to it as one God. The demand “with all the heart” excludes all half-heartedness, all division of the heart in its love. The heart is mentioned first, as the seat of the emotions generally and of love in particular; then follows the soul (*nephesh*) as the centre of personality in man, to depict the love as pervading the entire self-consciousness; and to this is added, “with all the strength,” sc., of body and soul. Loving the Lord with all the heart and soul and strength is placed at the head, as the spiritual principle from which the observance of the commandments was to flow (see also Deuteronomy 11:1; 30:6). It was in love that the fear of the Lord (Deuteronomy 10:12), hearkening to His commandments (Deuteronomy 11:13), and the observance of the whole law (Deuteronomy 11:22), were to be manifested; but love itself was to be shown by walking in all the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 11:22; 19:9; 30:16). Christ therefore calls the command to love God with

DEUTERONOMY	Page 38
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

all the heart “the first and great commandment,” and places on a par with this the commandment contained in Lev. 19:8 to love one’s neighbour as oneself, and then observes that on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:37–40; Mark 12:29–31; Luke 10:27).<sup>10</sup> Even the gospel knows no higher commandment than this. The distinction between the new covenant and the old consists simply in this, that the love of God which the gospel demands of its professors, is more intensive and cordial than that which the law of Moses demanded of the Israelites, according to the gradual unfolding of the love of God Himself, which was displayed in a much grander and more glorious form in the gift of His only begotten Son for our redemption, than in the redemption of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt.

**Deuteronomy 6:6ff.** But for the love of God to be of the right kind, the commandments of God must be laid to heart, and be the constant subject of thought and conversation. “*Upon thine heart:*” i.e., the commandments of God were to be an affair of the heart, and not merely of the memory (cf. Deuteronomy 11:18). They were to be enforced upon the children, talked of at home and by the way, in the evening on lying down and in the morning on rising up, i.e., everywhere and at all times; they were to be bound upon the hand for a sign, and worn as bands (frontlets) between the eyes (see at Ex. 13:16). As these words are figurative, and denote an undeviating observance of the divine commands, so also the commandment which follows, viz., to write the words upon the doorposts of the house, and also upon the gates, are to be understood spiritually; and the literal fulfilment of such a command could only be a praiseworthy custom or well-pleasing to God when resorted to as the means of keeping the commandments of God constantly before the eye. The precept itself, however, presupposes the existence of this custom, which is not only met with in the Mahometan countries of the East at the present day (cf. *A. Russell, Naturgesch. v. Aleppo*, i. p. 36; *Lane, Sitten u. Gebr.* i. pp. 6, 13, ii. p. 71), but was also a

common custom in ancient Egypt (cf. *Wilkinson, Manners and Customs*, vol. ii. p. 102).<sup>11</sup>

**Deuteronomy 6:10–19.** To the positive statement of the command there is attached, in the next place, the negative side, or a warning against the danger to which prosperity and an abundance of earthly goods so certainly exposed, viz., of forgetting the Lord and His manifestations of mercy. The Israelites were all the more exposed to this danger, as their entrance into Canaan brought them into the possession of all the things conducive to well-being, in which the land abounded, without being under the necessity of procuring these things by the labour of their own hands;—into the possession, namely, of great and beautiful towns which they had not built, of houses full of all kinds of good things which they had not filled, of wells ready made which they had not dug, of vineyards and olive-plantations which they had not planted.—The nouns עֲרִים, etc. are formally dependent upon לָךְ, and serve as a detailed description of the land into which the Lord was about to lead His people.

**Deuteronomy 6:12.** “*House of bondage,*” as in Ex. 13:3. “*Not forgetting*” is described from a positive point of view, as fearing God, *serving Him*, and *swearing by His name*. Fear is placed first, as the fundamental characteristic of the Israelitish worship of God; it was no slavish fear, but simply the holy awe of a sinner before the holy God, which includes love rather than excludes it. “Fearing” is a matter of the heart; “serving,” a matter of working and striving; and “swearing in His name,” the practical manifestation of the worship of God in word and conversation. It refers not merely to a solemn oath before a judicial court, but rather to asseverations on oath in the ordinary intercourse of life, by which the religious attitude of a man involuntarily reveals itself.

**Deuteronomy 6:14ff.** The worship of Jehovah not only precludes all idolatry, which the Lord, as a jealous God, will not endure (see at Ex. 20:5), but will punish with destruction from the earth (“the face of the ground,” as in Ex. 32:12); but it also excludes tempting the Lord by an

DEUTERONOMY	Page 39
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

unbelieving murmuring against God, if He does not remove any kind of distress immediately, as the people had already sinned at Massah, i.e., at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1-7).

**Deuteronomy 6:17-19.** They were rather to observe all His commandments diligently, and do what was right and good in His eyes. The infinitive *וְהָדָף וְהָרָץ* contains the further development of *וְהָרָץ וְהָרָץ*: “so that He (Jehovah) thrust out all thine enemies before thee, as He hath spoken” (viz., Ex. 23:27ff., 34:11).

**Deuteronomy 6:20-25.** In vv. 20-25, the teaching to the children, which is only briefly hinted at in v. 7, is more fully explained. The Israelites were to instruct their children and descendants as to the nature, meaning, and object of the commandments of the Lord; and in reply to the inquiries of their sons, to teach them what the Lord had done for the redemption of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, and how He had brought them into the promised land, and thus to awaken in the younger generation love to the Lord and to His commandments. The “great and sore miracles” (v. 22) were the Egyptian plagues, like *מִכַּפְתִּים*, in Deuteronomy 4:34.—“To fear,” etc., i.e., that we might fear the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 6:25.** “And righteousness will be to us, if we observe to do:” i.e., our righteousness will consist in the observance of the law; we shall be regarded and treated by God as righteous, if we are diligent in the observance of the law. “Before Jehovah” refers primarily, no doubt, to the expression, “to do all these commandments;” but, as we may see from Deuteronomy 24:13, this does not prevent the further reference to the “righteousness” also. This righteousness before Jehovah, it is true, is not really the gospel “righteousness of faith;” but there is no opposition between the two, as the righteousness mentioned here is not founded upon the outward (pharisaic) righteousness of works, but upon an earnest striving after the fulfilment of the law, to love

God with all the heart; and this love is altogether impossible without living faith.

## Deuteronomy 7

Command to Destroy the Canaanites and Their Idolatry.—Ch. 7.

**Deuteronomy 7:1-11.** As the Israelites were warned against idolatry in Deuteronomy 6:14, so here are they exhorted to beware of the false tolerance of sparing the Canaanites and enduring their idolatry.—Vv. 1, 5. When the Lord drove out the tribes of Canaan before the Israelites, and gave them up to them and smote them, they were to put them under the ban (see at Lev. 27:28), to make no treaty with them, and to contract no marriage with them. *וְהָרָץ*, to draw out, to cast away, e.g., the sandals (Ex. 3:5); here and v. 22 it signifies to draw out, or drive out a nation from its country and possessions: it occurs in this sense in the *Piel* in 2 Kings 16:6. On the Canaanitish tribes, see at Gen. 10:15ff. and 15:20, 21. There are seven of them mentioned here, as in Josh. 3:10 and 24:11; on the other hand, there are only six in Deuteronomy 20:17, as in Ex. 3:8, 17; 23:23, and 33:2, the Girgashites being omitted. The prohibition against making a covenant, as in Ex. 23:32 and 34:12, and that against marrying, as in Ex. 34:16, where the danger of the Israelites being drawn away to idolatry is mentioned as a still further reason for these commands. *כִּי יִסֶּי*, “for he (the Canaanite) will cause thy son to turn away from behind me,” i.e., tempt him away from following me, “to serve other gods.” Moses says “from following me,” because he is speaking in the name of Jehovah. The consequences of idolatry, as in Deuteronomy 6:15; 4:26, etc.

**Deuteronomy 7:5.** The Israelites were rather to destroy the altars and idols of the Canaanites, according to the command in Ex. 34:13; 23:24.

**Deuteronomy 7:6-8.** They were bound to do this by virtue of their election as a holy nation, the nation of possession, which Jehovah had singled out from all other nations, and brought out of the bondage of Egypt, not because of its

<b>DEUTERONOMY</b>	<b>Page 40</b>
<b>By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch</b>	a Grace Notes study

greatness, but from love to them, and for the sake of the oath given to the fathers. This exalted honour Israel was not to cast away by apostasy from the Lord. It was founded upon the word of the Lord in Ex. 19:5, 6, which Moses brought to the recollection of the people, and expressly and emphatically developed. *"Not because of your multitude before all nations (because ye were more numerous than all other nations) hath Jehovah turned to you in love (חָשַׁק, to bind oneself with, to hang upon a person, out of love), for ye are the littleness of all nations"* (the least numerous). Moses could say this to Israel with reference to its descent from Abraham, whom God chose as the one man out of all the world, whilst nations, states, and kingdoms had already been formed all around (*Baumgarten*). *"But because Jehovah loved you, and kept His oath which He had sworn to the fathers, He hath brought you out,"* etc. Instead of saying, He hath chosen you out of love to your fathers, as in Deuteronomy 4:37, Moses brings out in this place love to the people of Israel as the divine motive, not for choosing Israel, but for leading it out and delivering it from the slave-house of Egypt, by which God had practically carried out the election of the people, that He might thereby allure the Israelites to a reciprocity of love.

**Deuteronomy 7:9–11.** By this was Israel to know that Jehovah their God was the true God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant, showing mercy to those who love Him, even to the thousandth generation, but repaying those who hate Him to the face. This development of the nature of God Moses introduces from Ex. 20:5, 6, as a light warning not to forfeit the mercy of God, or draw upon themselves His holy wrath by falling into idolatry. To this end He emphatically carries out still further the thought of retribution, by adding לְהַאֲבִידוֹ, *"to destroy him"* (the hater), and לֹא יִאָּחַר וְגו', *"He delays not to His hater (sc., to repay him); He will repay him to his face."* *"To the face of every one of them,"* i.e., that they may see and feel that they are smitten by God (*Rosenmüller*).

**Deuteronomy 7:11.** This energy of the grace and holiness of the faithful covenant God was a powerful admonition to keep the divine commandments.

**Deuteronomy 7:12–26.** The observance of these commandments would also bring great blessings (vv. 12–16). *"If ye hearken to these demands of right" (mishpatim)* of the covenant Lord upon His covenant people, and keep them and do them, *"Jehovah will keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which He hath sworn to thy fathers."* In עֲקֵב אֲשֶׁר, for עֲקֵב (Gen. 22:18), there is involved not only the idea of reciprocity, but everywhere also an allusion to reward or punishment (cf. Deuteronomy 8:20; Num. 14:24). חֶסֶד was the favour displayed in the promises given to the patriarchs on oath (Gen. 22:16).

**Deuteronomy 7:13.** This mercy flowed from the love of God to Israel, and the love was manifested in blessing and multiplying the people. The blessing is then particularized, by a further expansion of Ex. 23:25–27, as a blessing upon the fruit of the body, the fruits of the field and soil, and the rearing of cattle. שָׁגַר, see Ex.

13:12. עֲשֶׂתֶּרֶת צֹאן only occurs again in Deuteronomy 28:4, 18, 51, and certainly signifies the young increase of the flocks. It is probably a Canaanitish word, derived from Ashtoreth (Astharte), the female deity of the Canaanites, which was regarded as the conceiving and birth-giving principle of nature, literally *Veneres*, i.e., *amores gregis*, hence *soboles* (*Ges.*); just as the Latin poets employ the name *Ceres* to signify the corn, *Venus* for love and sexual intercourse, and *Lucina* for birth. On vv. 14 and 15, see Ex. 23:26. In v. 15, the promise of the preservation of Israel from all diseases (Ex. 15:26, and 23:25) is strengthened by the addition of the clause, *"all the evil diseases of Egypt,"* by which, according to Deuteronomy 28:27, we are probably to understand chiefly the malignant species of leprosy called elephantiasis, and possibly also the plague and other malignant forms of disease. In Egypt, diseases for the most part



<b>DEUTERONOMY</b>	<b>Page 41</b>
<b>By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch</b>	a Grace Notes study

readily assume a very dangerous character. *Pliny* (*h. n.* xxvi. 1) calls Egypt the *genitrix* of contagious pestilence, and modern naturalists have confirmed this (see *Hengstenberg*, *Egypt and the Books of Moses*, p. 215; and *Pruner, Krankheiten des Orients*, pp. 460ff.). Diseases of this kind the Lord would rather bring upon the enemies of Israel. The Israelites, on the other hand, should be so strong and vigorous, that they would devour, i.e., exterminate, all the nations which their God would give into their hands (cf. Num. 14:9). With this thought Moses reverts with emphasis to the command to root out the Canaanites without reserve, and not to serve their gods, because they would become a snare to them (see Ex. 10:7); and then in vv. 17–26 he carries out still further the promise in Ex. 23:27–30 of the successful subjugation of the Canaanites through the assistance of the Lord, and sweeps away all the objections that a weak faith might raise to the execution of the divine command.

**Deuteronomy 7:17–26.** To suppress the thought that was rising up in their heart, how could it be possible for them to destroy these nations which were more numerous than they, the Israelites were to remember what the Lord had done in Egypt and to Pharaoh, namely, the great temptations, signs, and wonders connected with their deliverance from Egypt (cf. Deuteronomy 4:34 and 6:22). He would do just the same to the Canaanites.

**Deuteronomy 7:20.** He would also send hornets against them, as He had already promised in Ex. 23:28 (see the passage), until all that were left and had hidden themselves should have utterly perished.

**Deuteronomy 7:21ff.** Israel had no need to be afraid of them, as Jehovah was in the midst of it a mighty God and terrible. He would drive out the nations, but only gradually, as He had already declared to Moses in Ex. 23:30, 31, and would smite them with great confusion, till they were destroyed, as was the case for example at Gibeon (Josh. 10:10; cf. Ex. 23:27, where the form *הָמָם* is used instead of *הָיוּם*), and would also deliver their kings into the hand of Israel, so

that their names should vanish under the heaven (cf. Deuteronomy 9:14; 25:19; and for the fulfilment, Josh. 10:22ff., 11:12; 12:7–24). No one would be able to stand before Israel.

**Deuteronomy 7:24.** “*To stand before thee:*” lit., to put oneself in the face of a person, so as to withstand him. *הַשְׁמִיד* for *הָשְׁמִיד*, as in Lev. 14:43, etc.

**Deuteronomy 7:25, 26.** Trusting to this promise, the Israelites were to burn up the idols of the Canaanites, and not to desire the silver and gold upon them (with which the statues were overlaid: see p. 466), or take it to themselves, lest they should be snared in it, i.e., lest the silver and gold should become a snare to them. It would become so, not from any danger lest they should practise idolatry with it, but because silver and gold which had been used in connection with idolatrous worship was an abomination to Jehovah, which the Israelites were not to bring into their houses, lest they themselves should fall under the ban, to which all the objects connected with idolatry were devoted, as the history of Achan in Josh. 7 clearly proves. For this reason, any such abomination was to be abhorred, and destroyed by burning or grinding to powder (cf. Ex. 32:20; 2 Kings 23:4, 5; 2 Chron. 15:16).

### Deuteronomy 8

Review of the Guidance of God, and Their Humiliation in the Desert, as a Warning Against Highmindedness and Forgetfulness of God.—Ch. 8.

**Deuteronomy 8:1–6.** In addition to the danger of being drawn aside to transgress the covenant, by sparing the Canaanites and their idols out of pusillanimous compassion and false tolerance, the Israelites would be especially in danger, after their settlement in Canaan, of falling into pride and forgetfulness of God, when enjoying the abundant productions of that land. To guard against this danger, Moses set before them how the Lord had sought to lead and train them to obedience by temptations and humiliations during their journey through the desert. In order that his

DEUTERONOMY	Page 42
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

purpose in doing this might be clearly seen, he commenced (v. 1) with the renewed admonition to keep the whole law which he commanded them that day, that they might live and multiply and attain to the possession of the promised land (cf. Deuteronomy 4:1; 6:3).

**Deuteronomy 8:2.** To this end they were to remember the forty years' guidance through the wilderness (Deuteronomy 1:31; 2:7), by which God desired to humble them, and to prove the state of their heart and their obedience. Humiliation was the way to prove their attitude towards God. *עָנָה*, to *humble*, i.e., to bring them by means of distress and privations to feel their need of help and their dependence upon God. *נִסָּה*, to *prove*, by placing them in such positions in life as would drive them to reveal what was in their heart, viz., whether they believed in the omnipotence, love, and righteousness of God, or not.

**Deuteronomy 8:3.** The humiliation in the desert consisted not merely in the fact that God let the people hunger, i.e., be in want of bread and their ordinary food, but also in the fact that He fed them with manna, which was unknown to them and their fathers (cf. Ex. 16:16ff.). Feeding with manna is called a humiliation, inasmuch as God intended to show to the people through this food, which had previously been altogether unknown to them, that man does not live by bread alone, that the power to sustain life does not rest upon bread only (Isa. 38:16; Gen. 27:40), or belong simply to it, but to all that goeth forth out of the mouth of Jehovah. That which "*proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah*" is not the word of the law, as the Rabbins suppose, but, as the word *כָּל* (all, every) shows, "*the word*" generally, the revealed will of God to preserve the life of man in whatever way (*Schultz*): hence all means designed and appointed by the Lord for the sustenance of life. In this sense Christ quotes these words in reply to the tempter (Matt. 4:4), not to say to him, The Messiah lives not by (material) bread only, but by the fulfilment of the will of God (*Usteri, Ullmann*), or by trusting

in the sustaining word of God (*Olshausen*); but that He left it to God to care for the sustenance of His life, as God could sustain His life in extraordinary ways, even without the common supplies of food, by the power of His almighty word and will.

**Deuteronomy 8:4.** As the Lord provided for their nourishment, so did He also in a marvellous way for the clothing of His people during these forty years. "*Thy garment did not fall of thee through age, and thy foot did not swell.*" *בִּלְהָ* with *מִן*, to fall off from age. *קָצַב* only occurs again in Neh. 9:21, where this passage is repeated. The meaning is doubtful. The word is certainly connected with *קָצַב* (dough), and probably signifies to become soft or to swell, although *קָצַב* is also used for unleavened dough. The Septuagint rendering here is ἐτυλώθησαν, to get hard skin; on the other hand, in Neh. 9:21, we find the rendering ὑποδήματα αὐτῶν οὐ διεζῶν ἦσαν, "their sandals were not worn out," from the parallel passage in Deuteronomy 29:5. These words affirm something more than "clothes and shoes never failed you," inasmuch as ye always had wool, hides, leather, and other kinds of material in sufficient quantities for clothes and shoes, as not only *J. D. Michaelis* and others suppose, but *Calmet*, and even *Kurtz*. *Knobel* is quite correct in observing, that "this would be altogether too trivial a matter by the side of the miraculous supply of manna, and moreover that it is not involved in the expression itself, which rather affirms that their clothes did not wear out upon them, or fall in tatters from their backs, because God gave them a miraculous durability" (*Luther, Calvin, Baumgarten, Schultz*, etc.). At the same time, there is no necessity to follow some of the *Rabbins* and *Justin Martyr* (*dial. c. Tryph. c. 131*), who so magnify the miracle of divine providence, as to maintain not only that the clothes of the Israelites did not get old, but that as the younger generation grew up their clothes also grew upon their backs, like the shells of snails. Nor is it necessary to shut out the different natural resources which the people had at their command for providing clothes and

DEUTERONOMY	Page 43
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

sandals, any more than the gift of manna precluded the use of such ordinary provisions as they were able to procure.

**Deuteronomy 8:5.** In this way Jehovah humbled and tempted His people, that they might learn in their heart, i.e., convince themselves by experience, that their God was educating them as a father does his son. יִסֶּה, to admonish, chasten, educate; like παιδεύειν. "It includes everything belonging to a proper education" (*Calvin*).

**Deuteronomy 8:6.** The design of this education was to train them to keep His commandments, that they might walk in His ways and fear Him (Deuteronomy 6:24).

**Deuteronomy 8:7–20.** The Israelites were to continue mindful of this paternal discipline on the part of their God, when the Lord should bring them into the good land of Canaan. This land Moses describes in vv. 8, 9, in contrast with the dry unfruitful desert, as a well-watered and very fruitful land, which yielded abundance of support to its inhabitants; a land of water-brooks, fountains, and floods (תְּהוֹמוֹת, see Gen. 1:2), which had their source (took their rise) in valleys and on mountains; a land of wheat and barley, of the vine, fig, and pomegranate, and full of oil and honey (see at Ex. 3:8); lastly, a land "in which thou shalt not eat (support thyself) in scarcity, and shalt not be in want of anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose mountains thou hewest brass." The stones are iron, i.e., ferruginous. This statement is confirmed by modern travellers, although the Israelites did not carry on mining, and do not appear to have obtained either iron or brass from their own land. The iron and brass of which David collected such quantities for the building of the temple (1 Chron. 22:3, 14), he procured from *Betach* and *Berotai* (2 Sam. 8:8), or *Tibchat* and *Kun* (1 Chron. 18:8), towns of Hadadezer, that is to say, from Syria. According to Ezek. 27:19, however, the Danites brought iron-work to the market of Tyre. Not only do the springs near Tiberias contain iron (v. *Schubert*, R. iii. p. 239), whilst

the soil at Hasbeya and the springs in the neighbourhood are also strongly impregnated with iron (*Burckhardt, Syrien*, p. 83), but in the southern mountains as well there are probably strata of iron between Jerusalem and Jericho (*Russegger*, R. iii. p. 250). But Lebanon especially abounds in iron-stone; iron mines and smelting furnaces being found there in many places (*Volney, Travels; Burckhardt*, p. 73; *Seetzen*, i. pp. 145, 187ff., 237ff.). The basalt also, which occurs in great masses in northern Canaan by the side of the limestone, from the plain of Jezreel onwards (*Robinson*, iii. p. 313), and is very predominant in Bashan, is a ferruginous stone. Traces of extinct copper-works are also found upon Lebanon (*Volney, Travels; Ritter's Erdkunde*, xvii. p. 1063).

**Deuteronomy 8:10–18.** But if the Israelites were to eat there and be satisfied, i.e., to live in the midst of plenty, they were to beware of forgetting their God; that when their prosperity—their possessions, in the form of lofty houses, cattle, gold and silver, and other good things—increased, their heart might not be lifted up, i.e., they might not become proud, and, forgetting their deliverance from Egypt and their miraculous preservation and guidance in the desert, ascribe the property they had acquired to their own strength and the work of their own hands. To keep the people from this danger of forgetting God, which follows so easily from the pride of wealth, Moses once more enumerates in vv. 14b–16 the manifestations of divine grace, their deliverance from Egypt the slave-house, their being led through the great and terrible desert, whose terrors he depicts by mentioning a series of noxious and even fatal things, such as snakes, burning snakes (*saraph*, see at Num. 21; 6), scorpions, and the thirsty land where there was no water. The words from שָׁנָה, onwards, are attached rhetorically to what precedes by simple apposition, without any logically connecting particle; though it will not do to overlook entirely the rhetorical form of the enumeration, and supply the preposition בְּ before שָׁנָה and the words which follow, to say

DEUTERONOMY	Page 44
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

nothing of the fact that it would be quite out of character before these nouns in the singular, as a whole people could not go through one serpent, etc. In this parched land the Lord brought he people water out of the flinty rock, the hardest stone, and fed them with manna, to humble them and tempt them (cf. v. 2), in order (this was the ultimate intention of all the humiliation and trial) *“to do thee good at thy latter end.”* The “latter end” of any one is “the time which follows some distinct point in his life, particularly an important epoch-making point, and which may be regarded as the end by contrast, the time before that epoch being considered as the beginning” (*Schultz*). In this instance Moses refers to the period of their life in Canaan, in contrast with which the period of their sojourn in Egypt and their wandering in the desert is recorded as the beginning; consequently the expression does not relate to death as the end of life, as in Num. 23:10, although this allusion is not to be altogether excluded, as a blessed death is only the completion of a blessed life.—Like all the guidance of Israel by the Lord, what is stated here is applicable to all believers. It is through humiliations and trials that the Lord leads His people to blessedness. Through the desert of tribulation, anxiety, distress, and merciful interposition, He conducts them to Canaan, into the land of rest, where they are refreshed and satisfied in the full enjoyment of the blessings of His grace and salvation; but those alone who continue humble, not attributing the good fortune and prosperity to which they attain at last, to their own exertion, strength, perseverance, and wisdom, but gratefully enjoying this good as a gift of the grace of God. עָשָׂה חַיִּל, to create property, to prosper in wealth (as in Num. 24:18). God gave strength for this (v. 18), not because of Israel’s merit and worthiness, but to fulfil His promises which He had made on oath to the patriarchs. *“As this day,”* as was quite evident then, when the establishment of the covenant had already commenced, and Israel had come through the desert to the border of Canaan (see Deuteronomy 4:20).

**Deuteronomy 8:19, 20.** To strengthen his admonition, Moses pointed again in conclusion, as he had already done in Deuteronomy 6:14 (cf. Deuteronomy 4:25ff.), to the destruction which would come upon Israel through apostasy from its God.

### Deuteronomy 9

Warning Against Self-Righteousness, Founded Upon the Recital of Their Previous Sins.—Ch. 9–10:11.

**Deuteronomy 9.** Besides the more vulgar pride which entirely forgets God, and attributes success and prosperity to its own power and exertion, there is one of a more refined character, which very easily spreads—namely, pride which acknowledges the blessings of God; but instead of receiving them gratefully, as unmerited gifts of the grace of the Lord, sees in them nothing but proofs of its own righteousness and virtue. Moses therefore warned the Israelites more particularly of this dangerous enemy of the soul, by first of all declaring without reserve, that the Lord was not about to give them Canaan because of their own righteousness, but that He would exterminate the Canaanites for their own wickedness (vv. 1–6); and then showing them for their humiliation, by proofs drawn from the immediate past, how they had brought upon themselves the anger of the Lord, by their apostasy and rebellion against their God, directly after the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai; and that in such a way, that it was only by his earnest intercession that he had been able to prevent the destruction of the people (vv. 7–24), and to secure a further renewal of the pledges of the covenant (vv. 25–Deuteronomy 10:11).

**Deuteronomy 9:1–6.** Warning against a conceit of righteousness, with the occasion for the warning. As the Israelites were now about to cross over the Jordan (“this day,” to indicate that the time was close at hand), to take possession of nations that were superior to them in size and strength (the tribes of Canaan mentioned in Deuteronomy 7:1), and great fortified cities reaching to the heavens (cf.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 45
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

Deuteronomy 1:28), namely, the great and tall nation of the Enakites (Deuteronomy 1:28), before which, as was well known, no one could stand (הִתְיַצֵּב, as in Deuteronomy 7:24); and as they also knew that Jehovah their God was going before them to destroy and humble these nations, they were not to say in their heart, when this was done, For my righteousness Jehovah hath brought me in to possess this land. In v. 3, וַיִּדְעָה הַיּוֹם is not to be taken in an imperative sense, but as expressive of the actual fact, and corresponding to v. 1, “thou art to pass.” Israel now knew for certain—namely, by the fact, which spoke so powerfully, of its having been successful against foes which it could never have conquered by itself, especially against Sihon and Og—that the Lord was going before it, as the leader and captain of His people (*Schultz*: see Deuteronomy 1:30). The threefold repetition of הוּא in v. 3 is peculiarly emphatic.

“A consuming fire:” as in Deuteronomy 4:24. הוּא is more particularly defined by וְהוּא יִשְׁמְדֵם, which follows: not, however, as implying that הִשְׁמִיד does not signify complete destruction in this passage, but rather as explaining how the destruction would take place. Jehovah would destroy the Canaanites, by bring them down, humbling them before Israel, so that they would be able to drive them out and destroy them quickly “מֶהֱרָ, quickly, is no more opposed to Deuteronomy 7:22, ‘thou mayest not destroy them quickly,’ than God’s not delaying to requite (Deuteronomy 7:10) is opposed to His long-suffering” (*Schultz*). So far as the almighty assistance of God was concerned, the Israelites would quickly overthrow the Canaanites; but for the sake of the well-being of Israel, the destruction would only take place by degrees. “As Jehovah hath said unto thee:” viz., Ex. 23:23, 27ff., and at the beginning of the conflict, Deuteronomy 2:24ff.

**Deuteronomy 9:4.** When therefore Jehovah thrust out these nations before them (הִדָּר, as in Deuteronomy 6:19), the Israelites were not to say within themselves, “By (for, on account of)

my righteousness Jehovah hath brought me (led me hither) to possess this land.” The following word, וְכִבְרִישָׁעָה, is adversative: “but because of the wickedness of these nations,” etc.—To impress this truth deeply upon the people, Moses repeats the thought once more in v. 5. At the same time he mentions, in addition to righteousness, straightness or uprightness of heart, to indicate briefly that outward works do not constitute true righteousness, but that an upright state of heart is indispensable, and then enters more fully into the positive reasons. The wickedness of the Canaanites was no doubt a sufficient reason for destroying them, but not for giving their land to the people of Israel, since they could lay no claim to it on account of their own righteousness. The reason for giving Canaan to the Israelites was simply the promise of God, the word which the Lord had spoken to the patriarchs on oath (cf. Deuteronomy 7:8), and therefore nothing but the free grace of God,—not any merit on the part of the Israelites who were then living, for they were a people “of a hard neck,” i.e., a stubborn, untractable generation. With these words, which the Lord Himself had applied to Israel in Ex. 32:9; 33:3, 5, Moses prepares the way for passing to the reasons for his warning against self-righteous pride, namely, the grievous sins of the Israelites against the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 9:7–24.** He reminded the people how they had provoked the Lord in the desert, and had shown themselves rebellious against God, from the day of their departure from Egypt till their arrival in the steppes of Moab. אֶת־אֲשֶׁר, for אֲשֶׁר, is the object to תִּשְׁכַּח (*Ewald*, § 333, a.): “how thou hast provoked.” הִמְכַּרָה, generally with אֶת־פִּי (cf. Deuteronomy 1:26), to be rebellious against the commandment of the Lord: here with עִם, construed with a person, to deal rebelliously with God, to act rebelliously in relation to Him (cf. Deuteronomy 31:27). The words “from the day that thou camest out,” etc., are not to be pressed. It is to be observed, however, that the rebellion against the guidance of God commenced before they

DEUTERONOMY	Page 46
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

passed through the Red Sea (Ex. 14:11). This general statement Moses then followed up with facts, first of all describing the worship of the calf at Horeb, according to its leading features (vv. 8–21), and then briefly pointing to the other rebellions of the people in the desert (vv. 22, 23).

**Deuteronomy 9:8.** *“And indeed even in Horeb ye provoked Jehovah to wrath.”* By the *vav explic.* this sin is brought into prominence, as having been a specially grievous one. It was so because of the circumstances under which it was committed.

**Deuteronomy 9:9–12.** When Moses went up the mountain, and stayed there forty days, entirely occupied with the holiest things, so that he neither ate nor drank, having gone up to receive the tables of the law, upon which the words were written with the finger of God, just as the Lord had spoken them directly to the people out of the midst of the fire,—at a time, therefore, when the Israelites should also have been meditating deeply upon the words of the Lord which they had but just heard,—they acted so corruptly, as to depart at once from the way that had been pointed out, and make themselves a molten image (comp. Ex. 31:18–32:6, with chs. 24:12–31:17). *“The day of the assembly,”* i.e., the day on which Moses gathered the people together before God (Deuteronomy 4:10), calling them out of the camp, and bringing them to the Lord to the foot of Sinai (Ex. 19:17). The construction of the sentence is this: the apodosis to *“when I was gone up”* commences with *“the Lord delivered unto me,”* in v. 10; and the clause, *“then I abode,”* etc., in v. 9, is a parenthesis.—The words of God in vv. 12–14 are taken almost word for word from Ex. 32:7–10. הִרְפָּה (v. 14), the imperative Hiphil of רָפָה, desist from me, that I may destroy them, for הִנֵּיתִיָּה לִי, in Ex. 32:10. But notwithstanding the apostasy of the people, the Lord gave Moses the tables of the covenant, not only that they might be a testimony of His holiness before the faithless nation, but still more as a testimony that, in spite of His resolution to destroy the

rebellious nation, without leaving a trace behind, He would still uphold His covenant, and make of Moses a greater people. There is nothing at all to favour the opinion, that handing over the tables (v. 11) was the first beginning of the manifestations of divine wrath (*Schultz*); and this is also at variance with the preterite, הָיָה, in v. 11, from which it is very evident that the Lord had already given the tables to Moses, when He commanded him to go down quickly, not only to declare to the people the holiness of God, but to stop the apostasy, and by his mediatorial intervention to avert from the people the execution of the divine purpose. It is true, that when Moses came down and saw the idolatrous conduct of the people, he threw the two tables from his hands, and broke them in pieces before the eyes of the people (vv. 15–17; comp. with Ex. 32:15–19), as a practical declaration that the covenant of the Lord was broken by their apostasy. But this act of Moses furnishes no proof that the Lord had given him the tables to declare His holy wrath in the sight of the people. And even if the tables of the covenant were “in a certain sense the indictments in Moses’ hands, accusing them of a capital crime” (*Schultz*), this was not the purpose for which God had given them to him. For if it had been, Moses would not have broken them in pieces, destroying, as it were, the indictments themselves, before the people had been tried. Moses passed over the fact, that even before coming down from the mountain he endeavoured to mitigate the wrath of the Lord by his intercession (Ex. 32:11–14), and simply mentioned (in vv. 15–17) how, as soon as he came down, he charged the people with their great sin; and then, in vv. 18, 19, how he spent another forty days upon the mountain fasting before God, on account of this sin, until he had averted the destructive wrath of the Lord from Israel, through his earnest intercession. The forty days that Moses spent upon the mountain, *“as at the first,”* in prayer before the Lord, are the days mentioned in Ex. 34:28 as having been passed upon Sinai for the perfect restoration of the covenant, and for the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 47
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

purpose of procuring the second tables (cf. Deuteronomy 10:1ff.).

**Deuteronomy 9:20.** It was not from the people only, but from Aaron also, that Moses averted the wrath of God through his intercession, when it was about to destroy him. In the historical account in Ex. 32, there is no special reference to this intercession, as it is included in the intercession for the whole nation. On the present occasion, however, Moses gave especial prominence to this particular feature, not only that he might make the people thoroughly aware that at that time Israel could not even boast of the righteousness of its eminent men (cf. Isa. 43:27), but also to bring out the fact, which is described still more fully in Deuteronomy 10:6ff., that Aaron's investiture with the priesthood, and the maintenance of this institution, was purely a work of divine grace. It is true that at that time Aaron was not yet high priest; but he had been placed at the head of the nation in connection with *Hur*, as the representative of Moses (Ex. 24:14), and was already designated by God for the high-priesthood (Ex. 28:1). The fact, however, that Aaron had drawn upon himself the wrath of God in a very high degree, was intimated plainly enough in what Moses told him in Ex. 32:21.—In v. 21, Moses mentions again how he destroyed that manifested sin of the nation, namely, the molten calf (see at Ex. 32:20).

**Deuteronomy 9:22–24.** And it was not on this occasion only, viz., at Horeb, that Israel aroused the anger of the Lord its God by its sin, but it did so again and again at other places: at Taberah, by discontent at the guidance of God (Num. 11:1–3); at Massah, by murmuring on account of the want of water (Ex. 17:1ff.); at the graves of lust, by longing for flesh (Num. 11:4ff.); and at Kadesh-Barnea by unbelief, of which they had already been reminded at Deuteronomy 1:26ff. The list is not arranged chronologically, but advances gradually from the smaller to the more serious forms of guilt. For Moses was seeking to sharpen the consciences of the people, and to impress upon them the fact that they had been rebellious

against the Lord (see at v. 7) from the very beginning, “from the day that I knew you.”

**Deuteronomy 9:25–29.** After vindicating in this way the thought expressed in v. 7, by enumerating the principal rebellions of the people against their God, Moses returns in vv. 25ff. to the apostasy at Sinai, for the purpose of showing still further how Israel had no righteousness or ground for boasting before God, and owed its preservation, with all the saving blessings of the covenant, solely to the mercy of God and His covenant faithfulness. To this end he repeats in vv. 26–29 the essential points in his intercession for the people after their sin at Sinai, and then proceeds to explain still further, in Deuteronomy 10:1–11, how the Lord had not only renewed the tables of the covenant in consequence of this intercession (vv. 1–5), but had also established the gracious institution of the priesthood for the time to come by appointing Eleazar in Aaron's stead as soon as his father died, and setting apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant and attend to the holy service, and had commanded them to continue their march to Canaan, and take possession of the land promised to the fathers (vv. 6–11). With the words “thus I fell down,” in v. 25, Moses returns to the intercession already briefly mentioned in v. 18, and recalls to the recollection of the people the essential features of his plea at the time. For the words “*the forty days and nights that I fell down*,” see at Deuteronomy 1:46. The substance of the intercession in vv. 26–29 is essentially the same as that in Ex. 32:11–13; but given with such freedom as any other than Moses would hardly have allowed himself (*Schultz*), and in such a manner as to bring it into the most obvious relation to the words of God in vv. 12, 13, אֲלֵהֶם, “*Destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance*,” says Moses, with reference to the words of the Lord to him: “*thy people have corrupted themselves*” (v. 12). Israel was not Moses' nation, but the nation and inheritance of Jehovah; it was not Moses, but Jehovah, who had brought it out of Egypt. True, the people were stiffnecked (cf. v. 13); but let

DEUTERONOMY	Page 48
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the Lord remember the fathers, the oath given to Abraham, which is expressly mentioned in Ex. 32:13 (see at Deuteronomy 7:8), and not turn to the stiffneckedness of the people (קָשָׁה עֲרָף equivalent to קָשָׁה עֲרָף, vv. 13 and 6), and to their wickedness and sin (i.e., not regard them and punish them). The honour of the Lord before the nations was concerned in this (v. 28). The land whence Israel came out ("the land" = the people of the land, as in Gen. 10:25, etc., viz., the Egyptians: the word is construed as a collective with a plural verb) must not have occasion to say, that Jehovah had not led His people into the promised land from incapacity or hatred. מִבְּלִי יָכֻלֶּת recalls Num. 14:16. Just as "inability" would be opposed to the nature of the absolute God, so "hatred" would be opposed to the choice of Israel as the inheritance of Jehovah, which He had brought out of Egypt by His divine and almighty power (cf. Ex. 6:6).

### Deuteronomy 10

**Deuteronomy 10:1-11.** In vv. 1-5 Moses briefly relates the success of his earnest intercession. "At that time," of his intercession, God commanded him to hew out new tables, and prepare an ark in which to keep them (cf. Ex. 34:1ff.). Here again Moses links together such things as were substantially connected, without strictly confining himself to the chronological order, which was already well known from the historical account, inasmuch as this was not required by the general object of his address. God had already given directions for the preparation of the ark of the covenant, before the apostasy of the nation (Ex. 25:10ff.); but it was not made till after the tabernacle had been built, and the tables were only deposited in the ark when the tabernacle was consecrated (Ex. 40:20).

**Deuteronomy 10:6, 7.** And the Israelites owed to the grace of their God, which was turned towards them once more, through the intercession of Moses, not only the restoration of the tables of the covenant as a pledge that the covenant itself was restored, but also the institution and maintenance of the high-

priesthood and priesthood generally for the purpose of mediation between them and the Lord.<sup>12</sup> 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. That he may transport his hearers the more distinctly to the period in question, he lets the history itself speak, and quotes from the account of their journeys the passage which supplied the practical proof of what he desires to say. Instead of saying: And the high-priesthood also, with which Aaron was invested by the grace of God notwithstanding his sin at Sinai, the Lord has still preserved to you; for when Aaron died, He invested his son with the same honour,<sup>13</sup> and also directed you to continue your journey,—he proceeds in the following historical style: *"And the children of Israel took their journey from the wells of the sons of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son became priest in his stead. And from thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of water-brooks."* The allusion to these marches, together with the events which had taken place at Mosera, taught in very few words "not only that Aaron was forgiven at the intercession of Moses, and even honoured with the high-priesthood, the medium of grace and blessing to the people of God (e.g., at the wells of Bene-Jaakan) until the time of his death; but also that through this same intercession the high-priesthood was maintained in perpetuity, so that when Aaron had to die in the wilderness in consequence of a fresh sin (Num. 20:12), it continued notwithstanding, and by no means diminished in strength, as might have been feared, since it led the way from the wells to water-brooks, helped on the journey to Canaan, which was now the object of their immediate aim, and still sustained their courage and their faith" (*Schultz*). The earlier commentators observed the inward connection between the continuation of the high-priesthood and the water-brooks. *J. Gerhard*, for example, observes: "God generally associates material blessings



DEUTERONOMY	Page 49
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

with spiritual; as long as the ministry of the word and the observance of divine worship flourish among us, God will also provide for our temporal necessities." On the places mentioned, see pp. 822, 823.

**Deuteronomy 10:8.** In v. 8, Moses returns to the form of an address again, and refers to the separation of the tribe of Levi for the holy service, as a manifestation of mercy on the part of the Lord towards Israel. The expression "*at that time*" is not to be understood as relating to the time of Aaron's death in the fortieth year of the march, in which *Knobel* finds a contradiction to the other books. It refers quite generally, as in Deuteronomy 9:20 and 10:1, to the time of which Moses is speaking here, viz., the time when the covenant was restored at Sinai. The appointment of the tribe of Levi for service at the sanctuary took place in connection with the election of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood (Ex. 28 and 29), although their call to this service, instead of the first-born of Israel, was not carried out till the numbering and mustering of the people (Num. 1:49ff., 4:17ff., 8:6ff.). Moses is speaking here of the election of the whole of the tribe of Levi, including the priests (Aaron and his sons), as is very evident from the account of their service. It is true that the carrying of the ark upon the march through the desert was the business of the (non-priestly) Levites, viz., the Kohathites (Num. 4:4ff.); but on solemn occasions the priests had to carry it (cf. Josh. 3:3, 6, 8; 6:6; 1 Kings 8:3ff.). "Standing before the Lord, to serve Him, and to bless in His name," was exclusively the business of the priests (cf. Deuteronomy 18:5; 21:5, and Num. 6:23ff.), whereas the Levites were only assistants of the priests in their service (see at Deuteronomy 18:7). This tribe therefore received no share and possession with the other tribes, as was already laid down in Num. 18:20 with reference to the priests, and in v. 24 with regard to all the Levites; to which passages the words "as the Lord thy God promised him" refer.—Lastly, in vv. 10, 11, Moses sums up the result of his intercession in the words, "*And I stood upon the mount as the first days, forty days* (a resumption

of Deuteronomy 9:18 and 25); *and the Lord hearkened to me this time also* (word for word, as in Deuteronomy 9:19). "*Jehovah would not destroy thee* (Israel)." Therefore He commanded Moses to arise to depart before the people, i.e., as leader of the people to command and superintend their removal and march. In form, this command is connected with Ex. 34:1; but Moses refers here not only to that word of the Lord with the limitation added there in v. 2, but to the ultimate, full, and unconditional assurance of God, in which the Lord Himself promised to go with His people and bring them to Canaan (Ex. 34:14ff.).

Admonition to Fear and Love God. The Blessing or Curse Consequent Upon the Fulfilment or Transgression of the Law.—Ch. 10:12–11:32.

**Deuteronomy 10:12–15.** The proof that Israel had no righteousness before God is followed on the positive side by an expansion of the main law laid down in Deuteronomy 6:4ff., to love God with all the heart, which is introduced by the words, "and now Israel," sc., now that thou hast everything without desert or worthiness, purely from forgiving grace. "*What doth the Lord thy God require of thee?*" Nothing further than that thou fearest Him, "to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve Him with all the heart and all the soul." אֵלֶיךָ אֶפְשָׁר, *unless*, or *except that*, presupposes a negative clause (cf. Gen. 39:9), which is implied here in the previous question, or else to be supplied as the answer. The demand for fear, love, and reverence towards the Lord, is no doubt very hard for the natural man to fulfil, and all the harder the deeper it goes into the heart; but after such manifestations of the love and grace of God, it only follows as a matter of course. "Fear, love, and obedience would naturally have taken root of themselves within the heart, if man had not corrupted his own heart." Love, which is the only thing demanded in Deuteronomy 6:5, is here preceded by fear, which is the only thing mentioned in Deuteronomy 5:26 and 6:24.<sup>14</sup> The fear of the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 50
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

Lord, which springs from the knowledge of one's own unholiness in the presence of the holy God, ought to form the one leading emotion in the heart prompting to walk in all the ways of the Lord, and to maintain morality of conduct in its strictest form. This fear, which first enables us to comprehend the mercy of God, awakens love, the fruit of which is manifested in serving God with all the heart and all the soul (see Deuteronomy 6:5). "*For thy good,*" as in Deuteronomy 5:30 and 6:24.

**Deuteronomy 10:14, 15.** This obligation the Lord had laid upon Israel by the love with which He, to whom all the heavens and the earth, with everything upon it, belong, had chosen the patriarchs and their seed out of all nations. By "the heavens of the heavens," the idea of heaven is perfectly exhausted. This God, who might have chosen any other nation as well as Israel, or in fact all nations together, had directed His special love to Israel alone.

**Deuteronomy 10:16–22.** Above all, therefore, they were to circumcise the foreskin of their hearts, i.e., to lay aside all insensibility of heart to impressions from the love of God (cf. Lev. 26:41; and on the spiritual signification of circumcision, see p. 145), and not stiffen their necks any more, i.e., not persist in their obstinacy, or obstinate resistance to God (cf. Deuteronomy 9:6, 13). Without circumcision of heart, true fear of God and true love of God are both impossible. As a reason for this admonition, Moses adduces in vv. 17ff. the nature and acts of God. Jehovah as the absolute God and Lord is mighty and terrible towards all, without respect of person, and at the same time a just Judge and loving Protector of the helpless and oppressed. From this it follows that the true God will not tolerate haughtiness and stiffness of neck either towards Himself or towards other men, but will punish it without reserve. To set forth emphatically the infinite greatness and might of God, Moses describes Jehovah the God of Israel as the "*God of gods,*" i.e., the supreme God, the essence of all that is divine, of all divine power and might (cf. Ps. 136:2),—and as the "*Lord of lords,*" i.e., the

supreme, unrestricted Ruler ("the only Potentate," 1 Tim. 6:15), above all powers in heaven and on earth, "*a great King above all gods*" (Ps. 95:3). Compare Rev. 17:14 and 19:16, where these predicates are transferred to the exalted Son of God, as the Judge and Conqueror of all dominions and powers that are hostile to God. The predicates which follow describe the unfolding of the omnipotence of God in the government of the world, in which Jehovah manifests Himself as the great, mighty, and terrible God (Ps. 89:8), who does not regard the person (cf. Lev. 19:15), or accept presents (cf. Deuteronomy 16:19), like a human judge.

**Deuteronomy 10:18, 19.** As such, Jehovah does justice to the defenceless (orphan and widow), and exercises a loving care towards the stranger in his oppression. For this reason the Israelites were not to close their hearts egotistically against the stranger (cf. Ex. 22:20). This would show whether they possessed any love to God, and had circumcised their hearts (cf. 1 John 3:10, 17).

**Deuteronomy 10:20ff.** After laying down the fundamental condition of a proper relation towards God, Moses describes the fear of God, i.e., true reverence of God, in its threefold manifestation, in deed (serving God), in heart (cleaving to Him; cf. Deuteronomy 4:4), and with the mouth (swearing by His name; cf. Deuteronomy 6:13). Such reverence as this Israel owed to its God; for "*He is thy praise, and He is thy God*" (v. 21). He has given thee strong inducements to praise. By the great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen, He has manifested Himself as God to thee. "*Terrible things*" are those acts of divine omnipotence, which fill men with fear and trembling at the majesty of the Almighty (cf. Ex. 15:11). עָשָׂה לְךָ, "done with thee," i.e., shown to thee (תָּאֵלַם in the sense of practical help).

**Deuteronomy 10:22.** One marvel among these great and terrible acts of the Lord as to be seen in Israel itself, which had gone down to Egypt in the persons of its fathers as a family consisting of seventy souls, and now, notwithstanding the oppression it suffered there, had grown into an

DEUTERONOMY	Page 51
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

innumerable nation. So marvellously had the Lord fulfilled His promise in Gen. 15:5. By referring to this promise, Moses intended no doubt to recall to the recollection of the people the fact that the bondage of Israel in a foreign land for 400 years had also been foretold (Gen. 15:13ff.). On the seventy souls, see at Gen. 46:26, 27.

## Deuteronomy 11

**Deuteronomy 11.** In vv. 1–12 the other feature in the divine requirements (Deuteronomy 10:12), viz., love to the Lord their God, is still more fully developed. Love was to show itself in the distinct perception of what had to be observed towards Jehovah (to “*keep His charge*,” see at Lev. 8:35), i.e., in the perpetual observance of His commandments and rights. The words, “*and His statutes*,” etc., serve to explain the general notion, “His charge.” “*All days*,” as in Deuteronomy 4:10.

**Deuteronomy 11:2ff.** To awaken this love they were now to know, i.e., to ponder and lay to heart, the discipline of the Lord their God. The words from “*for (I speak) not*” to “*have not seen*” are a parenthetical clause, by which Moses would impress his words most strongly upon the hearts of the older generation, which had witnessed the acts of the Lord. The clause is without any verb or predicate, but this can easily be supplied from the sense. The best suggestion is that of *Schultz*, viz., הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, “for it is not with your children that I have to do,” not to them that this admonition applies. Moses refers to the children who had been born in the desert, as distinguished from those who, though not twenty years old when the Israelites came out of Egypt, had nevertheless seen with their own eyes the plagues inflicted upon Egypt, and who were now of mature age, viz., between forty and sixty years old, and formed, as the older and more experienced generation, the stock and kernel of the congregation assembled round him now. To the words, “*which have not known and have not seen*,” it is easy to supply from the context, “what ye have known and seen.” The accusatives from “the chastisement”

onwards belong to the verb of the principal sentence, “know ye this day.” The accusatives which follow show what we are to understand by “the chastisement of the Lord,” viz., the mighty acts of the Lord to Egypt and to Israel in the desert. The object of them all was to *educate* Israel in the fear and love of God. In this sense Moses calls them מוֹסֵר (Eng. Ver. *chastisement*), παιδεία, i.e., not punishment only, but education by the manifestation of love as well as punishment (like יָסַר in Deuteronomy 4:36; cf. Prov. 1:2, 8; 4:1, etc.). “*His greatness*,” etc., as in Deuteronomy 3:24 and 4:34. On the signs and acts in Egypt, see at Deuteronomy 4:34; 6:22; and on those at the Red Sea, at Ex. 14.

אֲשֶׁר הָעֵיף—עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם, “over whose face He made the waters of the Red Sea to flow;” cf. Ex. 14:26ff.—By the acts of God in the desert (v. 5) we are not to understand the chastenings in Num. 11–15 either solely or pre-eminently, but all the manifestations of the omnipotence of God in the guidance of Israel, proofs of love as well as the penal wonders. Of the latter, the miraculous destruction of the company of Korah is specially mentioned in v. 6 (cf. Num. 16:31–33). Here Moses only mentions Dathan and Abiram, the followers of Korah, and not Korah himself, probably from regard to his sons, who were not swallowed up by the earth along with their father, but had lived to perpetuate the family of Korah. “*Everything existing, which was in their following*” (see Ex. 11:8), does not mean their possessions, but their servants, and corresponds to “all the men who belonged to Korah” in Num. 16:32, whereas the possessions mentioned there are included here in the “tents.” הַיְּקוּם is only applied to living beings, as in Gen. 7:4 and 23.—In v. 7 the reason is given for the admonition in v. 2: the elders were to know (discern) the educational purpose of God in those mighty acts of the Lord, because they had seen them with their own eyes.

**Deuteronomy 11:8, 9.** And this knowledge was to impel them to keep the law, that they might be strong, i.e., spiritually strong

DEUTERONOMY	Page 52
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

(Deuteronomy 1:38), and not only go into the promised land, but also live long therein (cf. Deuteronomy 4:26; 6:3).—In vv. 10–12 Moses adduces a fresh motive for his admonition to keep the law with fidelity, founded upon the peculiar nature of the land. Canaan was a land the fertility of which was not dependent, like that of Egypt, upon its being watered by the hand of man, but was kept up by the rain of heaven which was sent down by God the Lord, so that it depended entirely upon the Lord how long its inhabitants should live therein. Egypt is described by Moses as a land which Israel sowed with seed, and watered with its foot like a garden of herbs. In Egypt there is hardly any rain at all (cf. *Herod.* ii. 4, *Diod. Sic.* i. 41, and other evidence in *Hengstenberg's Egypt* and the Books of Moses, pp. 217ff.). The watering of the land, which produces its fertility, is dependent upon the annual overflowing of the Nile, and, as this only lasts for about 100 days, upon the way in which this is made available for the whole year, namely, by the construction of canals and ponds throughout the land, to which the water is conducted from the Nile by forcing machines, or by actually carrying it in vessels up to the fields and plantations.<sup>15</sup> The expression, “with thy foot,” probably refers to the large pumping wheels still in use there, which are worked by the feet, and over which a long endless rope passes with pails attached, for drawing up the water (cf. *Niebuhr, Reise*, i. 149), the identity of which with the ἑλιξ described by *Philo* as ὑδρηλὸν ὄργανον (*de confus. ling.* i. 410) cannot possibly be called in question; provided, that is to say, we do not confound this ἑλιξ with the Archimedean water-screw mentioned by *Diod. Sic.* i. 34, and described more minutely at v. 37, the construction of which was entirely different (see my *Archaeology*, ii. pp. 111–2).—The Egyptians, as genuine heathen, were so thoroughly conscious of this peculiar characteristic of their land, which made its fertility far more dependent upon the labour of human hands than upon the rain of heaven or divine providence, that *Herodotus* (ii. 13) represents them as saying, “The Greeks, with their dependence upon the gods, might be

disappointed in their brightest hopes and suffer dreadfully from famine.” The land of Canaan yielded no support to such godless self-exaltation, for it was “a land of mountains and valleys, and drank water of the rain of heaven” (ל before מָטָר, to denote the external cause; see *Ewald*, § 217, *d.*); i.e., it received its watering, the main condition of all fertility, from the rain, by the way of the rain, and therefore through the providential care of God.

**Deuteronomy 11:12.** It was a land which Jehovah inquired after, i.e., for which He cared (שָׁרָה, as in Prov. 31:13, Job 3:4); His eyes were always directed towards it from the beginning of the year to the end; a land, therefore, which was dependent upon God, and in this dependence upon God peculiarly adapted to Israel, which was to live entirely to its God, and upon His grace alone.

**Deuteronomy 11:13–32.** This peculiarity in the land of Canaan led Moses to close the first part of his discourse on the law, his exhortation to fear and love the Lord, with a reference to the blessing that would follow the faithful fulfilment of the law, and a threat of the curse which would attend apostasy to idolatry.

**Deuteronomy 11:13–15.** If Israel would serve its God in love and faithfulness, He would give the land early and latter rain in its season, and therewith a plentiful supply of food for man and beast (see Lev. 26:3 and 5; and for the further expansion of this blessing, Deuteronomy 28:1–12).

**Deuteronomy 11:16, 17.** But if, on the other hand, their heart was foolish to turn away from the Lord and serve other gods, the wrath of the Lord would burn against them, and God would shut up the heaven, that no rain should fall and the earth should yield no produce, and they would speedily perish (cf. Lev. 26:19, 20, and Deuteronomy 28:23, 24). Let them therefore impress the words now set before them very deeply upon themselves and their children (vv. 18–21, in which there is in part a verbal repetition of Deuteronomy 6:6–9). The words, “as the days of the heaven above the earth,” i.e.,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 53
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

as long as the heaven continues above the earth,—in other words, to all eternity (cf. Ps. 89:30; Job 14:12),—belong to the main sentence, “*that your days may be multiplied*,” etc. (v. 21). “The promise to give the land to Israel for ever was not made unconditionally; an unconditional promise is precluded by the words, ‘that your days may be multiplied’” (*Schultz*). (For further remarks, see at Deuteronomy 30:3–5.) For (vv. 22–25) if they adhered faithfully to the Lord, He would drive out before them all the nations that dwelt in the land, and would give them the land upon which they trod in all its length and breadth, and so fill the Canaanites with fear and terror before them, that no one should be able to stand against them. (On v. 23, cf. Deuteronomy 7:1, 2; 9:1, and 1:28.) The words, “every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours,” are defined more precisely, and restricted to the land of Canaan on both sides of the Jordan by the boundaries which follow: “*from the desert* (of Arabia on the south), *and Lebanon* (on the north), *and from the river Euphrates* (on the east) *to the hinder sea*” (the Mediterranean on the west; see Num. 34:6). The Euphrates is given as the eastern boundary, as in Deuteronomy 1:7, according to the promise in Gen. 15:18. (On v. 25, cf. Deuteronomy 7:24; 2:25, and Ex. 23:27.)

**Deuteronomy 11:26–28.** Concluding summary. “*I set before you this day the blessing and the curse.*” The blessing, if (בְּרָכָה, *bracha*, as in Lev. 4:22) ye hearken to the commandments of your God; the curse, if ye do not give heed to them, but turn aside from the way pointed out to you, to go after other gods. To this there are added instructions in vv. 29 and 30, that when they took possession of the land they should *give* the blessing upon Mount Gerizim and the curse upon Mount Ebal, i.e., should give utterance to them there, and as it were transfer them to the land to be apportioned to its inhabitants according to their attitude towards the Lord their God. (For further comment, see at Deuteronomy 27:14.) The two mountains mentioned were selected for this act, no doubt

because they were opposite to one another, and stood, each about 2500 feet high, in the very centre of the land not only from west to east, but also from north to south. Ebal stands upon the north side, Gerizim upon the south; between the two is *Sichem*, the present *Nabulus*, in a tolerably elevated valley, fertile, attractive, and watered by many springs, which runs from the south-east to the north-west from the foot of Gerizim to that of Ebal, and is about 1600 feet in breadth. The blessing was to be uttered upon Gerizim, and the curse upon Ebal; though not, as the earlier commentators supposed, because the peculiarities of these mountains, viz., the fertility of Gerizim and the barrenness of Ebal, appeared to accord with this arrangement: for when seen from the valley between, “the sides of both these mountains are equally naked and sterile;” and “the only exception in favour of the former is a small ravine coming down, opposite the west end of the town, which is indeed full of foundations and trees” (*Rob. Pal.* iii. 96, 97). The reason for selecting Gerizim for the blessings was probably, as *Schultz* supposes, the fact that it was situated on the south, towards the region of the light. “Light and blessing are essentially one. From the light-giving face of God there come blessing and life (Ps. 16:11).”—In v. 30 the situation of these mountains is more clearly defined: they were “*on the other side of the Jordan*,” i.e., in the land to the west of the Jordan, “*behind the way of the sunset*,” i.e., on the other side of the road of the west, which runs through the land on the west of the Jordan, just as another such road runs through the land on the east (*Knobel*). The reference is to the main road which ran from Upper Asia through Canaan to Egypt, as was shown by the journeys of Abraham and Jacob (Gen. 12:6; 33:17, 18). Even at the present day the main road leads from Beisan to Jerusalem round the east side of Ebal into the valley of Sichem, and then again eastwards from Gerizim through the Mukra valley on towards the south (cf. *Rib.* iii. 94; *Ritter, Erdkunde*, xvi. pp. 658–9). “*In the land of the Canaanite who dwells in the Arabah.*” By the *Arabah*, *Knobel* understands the plain of

DEUTERONOMY	Page 54
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

*Nabulus*, which is not much less than four hours' journey long, and on an average from a half to three-quarters broad, "the largest of all upon the elevated tract of land between the western plain and the valley of the Jordan" (*Rob.* iii. p. 101). This is decidedly wrong, however, as it is opposed to the fixed use of the word, and irreconcilable with the character of this plain, which, *Robinson* says, "is cultivated throughout and covered with the rich green of millet intermingled with the yellow of the ripe corn, which the country people were just reaping" (*Pal.* iii. 93). The *Arabah* is the western portion of the *Ghor* (see at Deuteronomy 1:1), and is mentioned here as that portion of the land on the west of the Jordan which lay stretched out before the eyes of the Israelites who were encamped in the steppes of Moab. "Over against *Gilgal*," i.e., not the southern *Gilgal* between Jericho and the Jordan, which received its name for the first time in Josh. 4:20 and 5:9; but probably the *Gilgal* mentioned in Josh. 9:6; 10:6ff., and very frequently in the history of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, which is only about twelve and a half miles from Gerizim in a southern direction, and has been preserved in the large village of *Jiljilia* to the south-west of Sinjil, and which stands in such an elevated position, "close to the western brow of the high mountain tract," that you "have here a very extensive prospect over the great lower plain, and also over the sea, whilst the mountains of Gilead are seen in the east" (*Rob.* *Pal.* iii. 81). Judging from this description of the situation, Mount Gerizim must be visible from this *Gilgal*, so that Gerizim and Ebal might very well be described as over against *Gilgal*.<sup>16</sup> The last definition, "*beside the terebinths of Moreh*," is intended no doubt to call to mind the consecration of that locality even from the times of the patriarchs (*Schultz*: see at Gen. 12:6, and 35:4).

**Deuteronomy 11:31, 32.** Vv. 31–32 contain the reason for these instructions, founded upon the assurance that the Israelites were going over the Jordan and would take possession of the promised land, and should therefore take

care to keep the commandments of the Lord (cf. Deuteronomy 4:5, 6).

## Deuteronomy 12

B. Exposition of the Principal Laws.—Ch. 12–26.

**Deuteronomy 12–26.** The statutes and rights which follow in the second or special half of this address, and which consist in part of rules having regard to circumstances not contemplated by the Sinaitic laws, and partly of repetitions of laws already given, were designed as a whole to regulate the ecclesiastical, civil, and domestic life of Israel in the land of Canaan, in harmony with its calling to be the holy nation of the Lord. Moses first of all describes the religious and ecclesiastical life of the nation, in its various relations to the Lord (Deuteronomy 12–16:17); and then the political organization of the congregation, or the rights and duties of the civil and spiritual leaders of the nation (Deuteronomy 16:18–18:22); and lastly, seeks to establish upon a permanent basis the civil and domestic well-being of the whole congregation and its individual members, by a multiplicity of precepts, intended to set before the people, as a conscientious obligation on their part, reverence and holy awe in relation to human life, to property, and to personal rights; a pious regard for the fundamental laws of the world; sanctification of domestic life and of the social bond; practical brotherly love towards the poor, the oppressed, and the needy; and righteousness of walk and conversation (Deuteronomy 19–26).—So far as the arrangement of this address is concerned, the first two series of these laws may be easily regarded as expositions, expansions, and completions of the commandments in the decalogue in relation to the Sabbath, and to the duty of honouring parents; and in the third series also there are unquestionably many allusions to the commandments in the second table of the decalogue. But the order in which the different laws and precepts in this last series are arranged, does not follow the order of the decalogue, so as to warrant us in looking there for the leading principle of the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 55
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

arrangement, as *Schultz* has done. Moses allows himself to be guided much more by analogies and the free association of ideas than by any strict regard to the decalogue; although, no doubt, the whole of the book of Deuteronomy may be described, as *Luther* says, as “a very copious and lucid explanation of the decalogue, an acquaintance with which will supply all that is requisite to a full understanding of the ten commandments.”

The One Place for the Worship of God, and the Right Mode of Worshipping Him.—Ch. 12.

**Deuteronomy 12.** The laws relating to the worship of the Israelites commence with a command to destroy and annihilate all places and memorials of the Canaanitish worship (vv. 2–4), and then lay it down as an established rule, that the Israelites were to worship the Lord their God with sacrifices and gifts, only in the place which He Himself should choose (vv. 5–14). On the other hand, in the land of Canaan cattle might be slain for eating and the flesh itself be consumed in any place; though sacrificial meals could only be celebrated in the place of the sanctuary appointed by the Lord (vv. 15–19). Moreover, on the extension of the borders of the land, oxen, and sheep, and goats could be slaughtered for food in any place; but the blood was not to be eaten, and consecrated gifts and votive sacrifices were not to be prepared as meals anywhere, except at the altar of the Lord (vv. 20–28). Lastly, the Israelites were not to be drawn aside by the Canaanites, to imitate them in their worship (vv. 29–31).

**Deuteronomy 12:1–14.** On the heading in v. 1, see chs. 6:1 and 4:1. “*All the days that ye live*” relates to the more distant clause, “which ye shall observe,” etc. (cf. Deuteronomy 4:10).

**Deuteronomy 12:2, 3.** Ye shall destroy all the places where the Canaanites worship their gods, upon the high mountains, upon the hills, and under every green tree (cf. Jer. 2:20; 3:6; 17:2; 2 Kings 16:4; 17:10). The choice of mountains and hills for places of worship by most of the heathen nations, had its origin in

the wide-spread belief, that men were nearer to the Deity and to heaven there. The green trees are connected with the holy groves, of which the heathen nations were so fond, and the shady gloom of which filled the soul with holy awe at the nearness of the Deity. In the absence of groves, they chose green trees with thick foliage (Ezek. 6:13; 20:28), such as the vigorous oak, which attains a great age, the evergreen terebinth (Isa. 1:29, 30; 57:5), and the poplar or osier, which continues green even in the heat of summer (Hos. 4:13), and whose deep shade is adapted to dispose the mind to devotion.

**Deuteronomy 12:3.** Beside the place of worship, they were also to destroy all the idols of the Canaanitish worship, as had already been commanded in Deuteronomy 7:5, and to blot out even their names, i.e., every trace of their existence (cf. Deuteronomy 7:24).

**Deuteronomy 12:4.** “*Ye shall not do so to Jehovah your God,*” i.e., not build altars and offer sacrifices to Him in any place you choose, but (vv. 5ff.) shall only keep yourselves (דָּרַשׁ אֵל) to the place “*which He shall choose out of all the tribes to put His name there for His dwelling.*” Whereas the heathen seeks and worships his nature-gods, wherever he thinks he can discern in nature any trace of Divinity, the true God has not only revealed His eternal power and Godhead in the works of creation, but His personal being, which unfolds itself to the world in love and holiness, in grace and righteousness, He has made known to man, who was created in His image, in the words and works of salvation; and in these testimonies of His saving presence He has fixed for Himself a name, in which He dwells among His people. This name presents His personality, as comprehended in the word *Jehovah*, in a visible sign, the tangible pledge of His essential presence. During the journeying of the Israelites this was effected by the pillar of cloud and fire; and after the erection of the tabernacle, by the cloud in the most holy place, above the ark of the covenant, with the cherubim upon it, in which Jehovah had promised to appear to the high priest as the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 56
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

representative of the covenant nation. Through this, the tabernacle, and afterwards Solomon's temple, which took its place, became the dwelling-place of the name of the Lord. But if the knowledge of the true God rested upon direct manifestations of the divine nature,—and the Lord God had for that very reason made Himself known to His people in words and deeds as their God,—then as a matter of course the mode of His worship could not be dependent upon any appointment of men, but must be determined exclusively by God Himself. The place of His worship depended upon the choice which God Himself should make, and which would be made known by the fact that He “put His name,” i.e., actually manifested His own immediate presence, in one definite spot. By the building of the tabernacle, which the Lord Himself prescribed as the true spot for the revelation of His presence among His people, the place where His name was to dwell among the Israelites was already so far determined, that only the particular town or locality among the tribes of Israel where the tabernacle was to be set up after the conquest of Canaan remained to be decided. At the same time, Moses not only speaks of the Lord choosing the place among all the tribes for the erection of His sanctuary, but also of His choosing the place where He would put His name, that He might dwell there (לִשְׁכְּנוֹ from שָׁכַן, for שָׁכְנוּ from שָׁכַן). For the presence of the Lord was not, and was not intended, to be exclusively confined to the tabernacle (or the temple). As God of the whole earth, wherever it might be necessary, for the preservation and promotion of His kingdom, He could make known His presence, and accept the sacrifices of His people in other places, independently of this sanctuary; and there were times when this was really done. The unity of the worship, therefore, which Moses here enjoined, was not to consist in the fact that the people of Israel brought all their sacrificial offerings to the tabernacle, but in their offering them only in the spot where the Lord made His name (that is to say, His presence) known.

What Moses commanded here, was only an explanation and more emphatic repetition of the divine command in Ex. 20:23, 24 (21 and 22); and to understand “the place which Jehovah would choose” as relating exclusively to Jerusalem or the temple-hill, is a perfectly arbitrary assumption. Shiloh, the place where the tabernacle was set up after the conquest of the land (Josh. 18:1), and where it stood during the whole of the times of the judges, was also chosen by the Lord (cf. Jer. 7:12). It was not till after David had set up a tent for the ark of the covenant upon Zion, in the city of Jerusalem, which he had chosen as the capital of his kingdom, and had erected an altar for sacrifice there (2 Sam. 6:17; 1 Chron. 16), that the will of the Lord was made known to him by the prophet Gad, that he should build an altar upon the threshing-floor of Araunah, where the angel of the Lord had appeared to him; and through this command the place was fixed for the future temple (2 Sam. 24:18; 1 Chron. 21:18). דָּרַשׁ with אֵל, to turn in a certain direction, to inquire or to seek. שׁוּם אֶת־שְׁמוֹ, “to put His name,” i.e., to make known His presence, is still further defined by the following word לִשְׁכְּנוֹ, as signifying that His presence was to be of permanent duration. It is true that this word is separated by an *athnach* from the previous clause; but it certainly cannot be connected with תִּדְרְשׁוּ (*ye shall seek*), not only because of the standing phrase, לִשְׁכֹּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם (“to cause His name to dwell there,” v. 11, Deuteronomy 14:23; 16:2, 6, etc.), but also because this connection would give no fitting sense, as the infinitive שָׁכַן does not mean “a dwelling-place.”

**Deuteronomy 12:6, 7.** Thither they were to take all their sacrificial gifts, and there they were to celebrate their sacrificial meals. The gifts are classified in four pairs: (1) the sacrifices intended for the altar, burnt-offerings and slain-offerings being particularly mentioned as the two principal kinds, with which, according to Num. 15:4ff., meat-offerings and drink-offerings were to be



<b>DEUTERONOMY</b>	<b>Page 57</b>
<b>By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch</b>	a Grace Notes study

associated; (2) “your tithes and every heave-offering of your hand.” By the tithes we are to understand the tithes of field-produce and cattle, commanded in Lev. 27:30–33 and Num. 18:21–24, which were to be brought to the sanctuary because they were to be offered to the Lord, as was the case under Hezekiah (2 Chron. 31:5–7). That the tithes mentioned here should be restricted to vegetable tithes (of corn, new wine, and oil), is neither allowed by the general character of the expression, nor required by the context. For instance, although, according to vv. 7 and 11, 12, as compared with v. 17, a portion of the vegetable tithe was to be applied to the sacrificial meals, there is no ground whatever for supposing that all the sacrifices and consecrated gifts mentioned in v. 6 were offerings of this kind, and either served as sacrificial meals, or had such meals connected with them. Burnt-offerings, for example, were not associated in any way with the sacrificial meals. The difficulty, or as some suppose “the impossibility,” of delivering all the tithes from every part of the land at the place of the sanctuary, does not warrant us in departing from the simple meaning of Moses’ words in the verse before us. The arrangement permitted in Deuteronomy 14:24, 25, with reference to the so-called second tithe,—viz., that if the sanctuary was too far off, the tithe might be sold at home, and whatever was required for the sacrificial meals might be bought at the place of the sanctuary with the money so obtained,—might possibly have been also adopted in the case of the other tithe. At all events, the fact that no reference is made to such cases as these does not warrant us in assuming the opposite. As the institution of tithes generally did not originate with the law of Moses, but is presupposed as a traditional and well-known custom,—all that is done being to define them more precisely, and regulate the way in which they should be applied (cf. p. 645),—Moses does not enter here into any details as to the course to be adopted in delivering them, but merely lays down the law that all the gifts intended for the Lord were to be brought to Him at His sanctuary, and

connects with this the further injunction that the Israelites were to rejoice there before the Lord, that is to say, were to celebrate their sacrificial meals at the place of His presence which He had chosen.—The gifts, from which the sacrificial meals were prepared, are not particularized here, but are supposed to be already known either from the earlier laws or from tradition. From the earlier laws we learn that the whole of the flesh of the burnt-offerings was to be consumed upon the altar, but that the flesh of the slain-offerings, except in the case of the peace-offerings, was to be applied to the sacrificial meals, with the exception of the fat pieces, and the wave-breast and heave-shoulder. With regard to the tithes, it is stated in Num. 18:21–24 that Jehovah had given them to the Levites as their inheritance, and that they were to give the tenth part of them to the priests. In the laws contained in the earlier books, nothing is said about the appropriation of any portion of the tithes to sacrificial meals. Yet in Deuteronomy this is simply assumed as a customary thing, and not introduced as a new commandment, when the law is laid down (in v. 17, Deuteronomy 14:22ff., 26:12ff.), that they were not to eat the tithe of corn, new wine, and oil within their gates (in the towns of the land), any more than the first-born of oxen and sheep, but only at the place of the sanctuary chosen by the Lord; and that if the distance was too great for the whole to be transported thither, they were to sell the tithes and firstlings at home, and then purchase at the sanctuary whatever might be required for the sacrificial meals. From these instructions it is very apparent that sacrificial meals were associated with the delivery of the tithes and firstlings to the Lord, to which a tenth part of the corn, must, and oil was applied, as well as the flesh of the first-born of edible cattle. This tenth formed the so-called second tithe (δευτέραν δεκάτην, Tob. 1:7), which is mentioned here for the first time, but not introduced as a new rule or an appendix to the former laws. It is rather taken for granted as a custom founded upon tradition, and

DEUTERONOMY	Page 58
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

brought into harmony with the law relating to the oneness of the sanctuary and worship.<sup>17</sup> “The heave-offerings of your hand,” which are mentioned again in Mal. 3:8 along with the tithes, are not to be restricted to the first-fruits, as we may see from Ezek. 20:40, where the *terumoth* are mentioned along with the first-fruits. We should rather understand them as being free gifts of love, which were consecrated to the Lord in addition to the legal first-fruits and tithes without being actual sacrifices, and which were then applied to sacrificial meals.—The other gifts were (3) נְדָבוֹת and נְדָרִים (3), sacrifices which were offered partly in consequence of vows and partly of their own free will (see at Lev. 23:38, compared with Lev. 7:16; 22:21, and Num. 15:3; 29:39); and lastly (4), “firstlings of your herds and of your flocks,” viz., those commanded in Ex. 13:2, 12ff., and Num. 18:15ff.

According to Ex. 13:15, the Israelites were to sacrifice the firstlings to the Lord; and according to Num. 13:8ff. they belonged to the holy gifts, which the Lord assigned to the priests for their maintenance, with the more precise instructions in vv. 17, 18, that the first-born of oxen, sheep, and goats were not to be redeemed, but being holy were to be burned upon the altar in the same manner as the *shelamim*, and that the flesh was to belong to the priests, like the wave-breast and right leg of the *shelamim*. These last words, it is true, are not to be understood as signifying that the only portions of the flesh of the firstlings which were to be given to the priest were the wave-breast and heave-leg, and that the remainder of the flesh was to be left to the offerer to be applied to a sacrificial meal (*Hengstenberg*); but they state most unequivocally that the priest was to apply the flesh to a sacrificial meal, like the wave-breast and heave-leg of all the peace-offerings, which the priest was not even allowed to consume with his own family at home, like ordinary flesh, but to which the instructions given for all the sacrificial meals were applicable, namely, that “whoever was clean in the priest’s family” might eat of it

(Num. 18:11), and that the flesh was to be eaten on the day when the sacrifice was offered (Lev. 7:15), or at the latest on the following morning, as in the case of the votive offering (Lev. 7:16), and that whatever was left was to be burnt. These instructions concerning the flesh of the firstlings to be offered to the Lord no more prohibit the priest from allowing the persons who presented the firstlings to take part in the sacrificial meals, or handing over to them some portion of the flesh which belonged to himself to hold a sacrificial meal, than any other law does; on the contrary, the duty of doing this was made very plain by the fact that the presentation of firstlings is described as זָבַח לַיהוָה in Ex. 13:15, in the very first of the general instructions for their sanctification, since even in the patriarchal times the זָבַח was always connected with a sacrificial meal in which the offerer participated. Consequently it cannot be shown that there is any contradiction between Deuteronomy and the earlier laws with regard to the appropriation of the first-born. The command to bring the firstlings of the sacrificial animal, like all the rest of the sacrifices, to the place of His sanctuary which the Lord would choose, and to hold sacrificial meals there with the tithes of corn, new wine, and oil, and also with the firstlings of the flocks, and herds, is given not merely to the laity of Israel, but to the whole of the people, including the priests and Levites, without the distinction between the tribe of Levi and the other tribes, established in the earlier laws, being even altered, much less abrogated. The Israelites were to bring all their sacrificial gifts to the place of the sanctuary to be chosen by the Lord, and there, not in all their towns, they were to eat their votive and free-will offerings in sacrificial meals. This, and only this, is what Moses commands the people both here in vv. 7 and 17, 18, and also in Deuteronomy 14:22ff. and 15:19ff.<sup>18</sup> “Rejoice in all that your hand has acquired.” The phrase מִשְׁלַח יָד (cf. v. 18, Deuteronomy 15:10; 23:21; 28:8, 20) signifies that to which the hand is stretched out, that which a man undertakes

DEUTERONOMY	Page 59
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

(synonymous with מַעֲשֵׂה, and also what a man acquires by his activity: hence Isa. 11:14, מַשְׁלוֹחַ יָד, what a man appropriates to himself with his hand, or takes possession of. אֲשֶׁר בִּרְכָךְ is dependent upon מַשְׁלֹחַ יָדָם, and בִּרְכָךְ is construed with a double accusative, as in Gen. 49:25. The reason for these instructions is given in vv. 8, 9, namely, that this had not hitherto taken place, but that up to this day every one had done what he thought right, because they had not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord was about to give them. The phrase, “whatsoever is right in his own eyes,” is applied to actions performed according to a man’s own judgment, rather than according to the standard of objective right and the law of God (cf. Judg. 17:6; 21:25). The reference is probably not so much to open idolatry, which was actually practised, according to Lev. 17:7, Num. 25, Ezek. 20:16, 17, Amos 5:25, 26, as to acts of illegality, for which some excuse might be found in the circumstances in which they were placed when wandering through the desert,—such, for example, as the omission of the daily sacrifice when the tabernacle was not set up, and others of a similar kind.

**Deuteronomy 12:10–14.** But when the Israelites had crossed over the Jordan, and dwelt peaceably in Canaan, secured against their enemies round about, these irregularities were not to occur any more; but all the sacrifices were to be offered at the place chosen by the Lord for the dwelling-place of His name, and there the sacrificial meals were to be held with joy before the Lord. “The choice of your vows,” equivalent to your chosen vows, inasmuch as every vow was something special, as the standing phrase פִּלְאָ נֶדֶר (Lev. 22:21, and Num. 15:3, 8) distinctly shows.—“Rejoicing before the Lord,” which is the phrase applied in Lev. 23:40 to the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles, was to be the distinctive feature of all the sacrificial meals held by the people at the sanctuary, as is repeatedly affirmed (Deuteronomy 14:26; 16:11; 26:11; 27:7). This

holy joy in the participation of the blessing bestowed by the Lord was to be shared not only by sons and daughters, but also by slave (men-servants and maid-servants), that they too might taste the friendliness of their God, and also by “the Levite that is in your gates” (i.e., your towns and hamlets; see at Ex. 20:10). This frequently recurring description of the Levites (cf. v. 18, Deuteronomy 14:27; 16:11, 14; 18:6; 26:12) does not assume that they were homeless, which would be at variance with the allotment of towns for them to dwell in (Num. 35); but simply implies what is frequently added in explanation, that the Levites had “no part nor inheritance,” no share of the land as their hereditary property, and in this respect resembled strangers (Deuteronomy 14:21, 29; 16:11, etc.).<sup>19</sup> And the repeated injunction to invite the Levites to the sacrificial meals is not at variance with Num. 18:21, where the tithes are assigned to the tribe of Levi for their maintenance. For however ample this revenue may have been according to the law, it was so entirely dependent, as we have observed at p. 732, upon the honesty and conscientiousness of the people, that the Levites might very easily be brought into a straitened condition, if indifference towards the Lord and His servants should prevail throughout the nation.—In vv. 13, 14, Moses concludes by once more summing up these instructions in the admonition to beware of offering sacrifices in every place that they might choose, the burnt-offering, as the leading sacrifice, being mentioned *instar omnium*.

**Deuteronomy 12:15–19.** But if these instructions were really to be observed by the people in Canaan, it was necessary that the law which had been given with reference to the journey through the wilderness, viz., that no animal should be slain anywhere else than at the tabernacle in the same manner as a slain-offering (Lev. 17:3–6), should be abolished. This is done in v. 15, where Moses, in direct connection with what goes before, allows the people, as an exception (רַק, only) to the rules laid down in vv. 4–14, to kill and eat flesh for

DEUTERONOMY	Page 60
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

their own food according to all their soul's desire. Flesh that was slaughtered for food could be eaten by both clean and unclean, such for example as the roebuck and the hart, animals which could not be offered in sacrifice, and in which, therefore, the distinction between clean and unclean on the part of the eaters did not come into consideration at all.

**Deuteronomy 12:16.** But blood was forbidden to be eaten (see at Lev. 17:10ff.). The blood was to be poured out upon the earth like water, that it might suck it in, receive it into its bosom (see p. 594).

**Deuteronomy 12:17ff.** Sacrificial meals could only be held at the sanctuary; and the Levite was not to be forgotten or neglected in connection with them (see at vv. 6, 7, and 12). *לֹא תֹכֵל*, "thou must not," as in Deuteronomy 7:22.

**Deuteronomy 12:20–31.** These rules were still to remain in force, even when God should extend the borders of the land in accordance with His promise. This extension relates partly to the gradual but complete extermination of the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 7:22, comp. with Ex. 23:27–33), and partly to the extension of the territory of the Israelites beyond the limits of Canaan Proper, in accordance with the divine promise in Gen. 15:18. The words "as He hath spoken to thee" refer primarily to Ex. 23:27–33. (On v. 20b, see v. 15).—In v. 21a, "if the place ... be too far from thee," supplies the reason for the repeal of the law in Lev. 17:3, which restricted all slaughtering to the place of the sanctuary. The words "kill ... as I have commanded thee" refer back to v. 15.

**Deuteronomy 12:22.** Only the flesh that was slaughtered was to be eaten as the hart and the roebuck (cf. v. 15), i.e., was not to be made into a sacrifice. *יחדו*, together, i.e., the one just the same as the other, as in Isa. 10:8, without the clean necessarily eating along with the unclean.

**Deuteronomy 12:23, 24.** The law relating to the blood, as in v. 16.—"Be strong not to eat the blood," i.e., stedfastly resist the temptation to eat it.

**Deuteronomy 12:25.** On the promise for doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord, see Deuteronomy 6:18.—In vv. 26, 27, the command to offer all the holy gifts at the place chosen by the Lord is enforced once more, as in vv. 6, 11, 17, 18; also to prepare the sacrifices at His altar. *קֹדָשִׁים*, the holy offerings prescribed in the law, as in Num. 18:8; see at Lev. 21:22. The "votive offerings" are mentioned in connection with these, because vows proceeded from a spontaneous impulse. *אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לְךָ*, "which are to thee," are binding upon thee. In v. 27, "the flesh and the blood" are in opposition to "thy burnt-offerings:" "thy burnt-offerings, namely the flesh and blood of them," thou shalt prepare at the altar of Jehovah; i.e., the flesh and blood of the burnt-offerings were to be placed upon and against the altar (see at Lev. 1:5–9). Of the slain-offerings, i.e., the *shelamim*, the blood was to be poured out against the altar (Lev. 3:2, 8, 13); "the flesh thou canst eat" (cf. Lev. 7:11ff.). There is no ground for seeking an antithesis in *וְשִׁפְךָ*, as *Knobel* does, to the *זֶרֶק* in the sacrificial ritual. The indefinite expression may be explained from the retrospective allusion to v. 24 and the purely suggestive character of the whole passage, the thing itself being supposed to be sufficiently known from the previous laws.

**Deuteronomy 12:28.** The closing admonition is a further expansion of v. 25 (see at Deuteronomy 11:21).—In vv. 29–31, the exhortation goes back to the beginning again, viz., to a warning against the Canaanitish idolatry (cf. vv. 2ff.). When the Lord had cut off the nations of Canaan from before the Israelites, they were to take heed that they did not get into the snare behind them, i.e., into the sin of idolatry, which had plunged the Canaanites into destruction (cf. Deuteronomy 7:16, 25). The clause "after they be destroyed from before thee" is not mere tautology, but serves to depict the danger of the snare most vividly before their eyes. The second clause, "that thou inquire not after them" (their gods), etc., explains more fully to the Israelites the danger which threatened them. This danger

DEUTERONOMY	Page 61
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

was so far a pressing one, that the whole of the heathen world was animated with the conviction, that to neglect the gods of a land would be sure to bring misfortune (cf. 2 Kings 17:26).

**Deuteronomy 12:31.** V. 31*a*, like v. 4, with the reason assigned in v. 31*b*: “for the Canaanites prepare (הִשְׁכִּיחוּ, as in v. 27) all kinds of abominations for their gods,” i.e., present offerings to these, which Jehovah hates and abhors; they even burn their children to their idols—for example, to Moloch (see at Lev. 18:21).

### Deuteronomy 13

Punishment of Idolaters, and Tempters to Idolatry.—Ch. 13.

**Deuteronomy 13:1.** (Deuteronomy 12:32). The admonition to observe the whole law, without adding to it or taking from it (cf. Deuteronomy 4:2), is regarded by many commentators as the conclusion of the previous chapter. But it is more correct to understand it as an intermediate link, closing what goes before, and introductory to what follows. Strictly speaking, the warning against inclining to the idolatry of the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 12:29–31) forms a transition from the enforcement of the true mode of worshipping Jehovah to the laws relating to tempters to idolatry and worshippers of idols (Deuteronomy 13). The Israelites were to cut off not only the tempters to idolatry, but those who had been led astray to idolatry also. Three different cases are mentioned.

**Deuteronomy 13:2–6 (1–5).** The *first* case. If a prophet, or one who had dreams, should rise up to summon to the worship of other gods, with signs and wonders which came to pass, the Israelites were not to hearken to his words, but to put him to death. The introduction of חֹלֵם הַלֵּוִי, “a dreamer of dreams,” along with the prophet, answers the two media of divine revelation, the vision and the dream, by which, according to Num. 12:6, God made known His will. With regard to the signs and wonders

(*mopheth*, see at Ex. 4:21) with which such a prophet might seek to accredit his higher mission, it is taken for granted that they come to pass (בִּיָּדָם); yet for all that, the Israelites were to give no heed to such a prophet, to walk after other gods. It follows from this, that the person had not been sent by God, but as a false prophet, and that the signs and wonders which he gave were not wonders effected by God, but σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ψεύδους (“lying signs and wonders,” 2 Thess. 2:9); i.e., not merely seeming miracles, but miracles wrought in the power of the wicked one, Satan, the possibility and reality of which even Christ attests (Matt. 24:24).—The word לֵאמֹר, *saying*, is dependent upon the principal verb of the sentence: “if a prophet rise up ... saying, We will go after other gods.”

**Deuteronomy 13:4.** God permitted false prophets to rise up with such wonders, to try the Israelites, whether they loved Him, the Lord their God, with all their heart. (נִסָּה as in Gen. 22:1.) הֵי־שִׁכְּם אֶהְיֶה, whether ye are loving, i.e., faithfully maintain your love to the Lord. It is evident from this, “that however great the importance attached to signs and wonders, they were not to be regarded among the Israelites, either as the highest test, or as absolutely decisive, but that there was a certainty in Israel, which was so much the more certain and firm than any proof from miracles could be, that it might be most decidedly opposed to it” (*Baumgarten*). This certainty, however, was not “the knowledge of Jehovah,” as *B.* supposes; but as *Luther* correctly observes, “the word of God, which had already been received, and confirmed by its own signs,” and which the Israelites were to preserve and hold fast, without adding or subtracting anything. “In opposition to such a word, no prophets were to be received, although they rained signs and wonders; not even an angel from heaven, as Paul says in Gal. 1:8.” The command to hearken to the prophets whom the Lord would send at a future time (Deuteronomy 18:18ff.), is not at variance with this: for even their

DEUTERONOMY	Page 62
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

announcements were to be judged according to the standard of the fixed word of God that had been already given; and so far as they proclaimed anything new, the fact that what they announced did not occur was to be the criterion that they had not spoken in the name of the Lord, but in that of other gods (Deuteronomy 18:21, 22), so that even there the signs and wonders of the prophets are not made the criteria of their divine mission.

**Deuteronomy 13:5, 6.** Israel was to adhere firmly to the Lord its God (cf. Deuteronomy 4:4), and to put to death the prophet who preached apostasy from Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel out of the slave-house of Egypt. לְהַדְרִיחַ, "to force thee from the way in which Jehovah hath commanded thee to walk." The execution of seducers to idolatry is enjoined upon the people, i.e., the whole community, not upon single individuals, but upon the authorities who had to maintain and administer justice. "So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee." הָרַע is neuter, as we may see from Deuteronomy 17:7, as comp. with v. 2. The formula, "so shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee," which occurs again in Deuteronomy 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 22, 24, and 24:7 (cf. Deuteronomy 19:13, and 21:9), belongs to the hortatory character of Deuteronomy, in accordance with which a reason is given for all the commandments, and the observance of them is urged upon the congregation as a holy affair of the heart, which could not be expected in the objective legislation of the earlier books.

**Deuteronomy 13:7-12 (6-11).** The *second* case was when the temptation to idolatry proceeded from the nearest blood-relations and friends. The clause, "son of thy mother," is not intended to describe the brother as a step-brother, but simply to bring out the closeness of the fraternal relation; like the description of the wife as the wife of thy bosom, who lies in thy bosom, rests upon thy breast (as in Deuteronomy 28:54; Micah 7:5), and of the friend as "thy friend which is as thine own soul," i.e., whom thou lovest as much as thy life

(cf. 1 Sam. 18:1, 3). בְּסֵתֶר belongs to יָסִית: if the temptation occurred in secret, and therefore the fact might be hidden from others. The power of love and relationship, which flesh and blood find it hard to resist, is placed here in contrast with the supposed higher or divine authority of the seducers. As the persuasion was already very seductive, from the fact that it proceeded from the nearest blood-relations and most intimate friends, and was offered in secret, it might become still more so from the fact that it recommended the worship of a deity that had nothing in common with the forbidden idols of Canaan, and the worship of which, therefore, might appear of less consequence, or commend itself by the charm of peculiarity and novelty. To prevent this deceptive influence of sin, it is expressly added in v. 8 (7), "*of the gods nigh unto thee or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth,*" i.e., whatever gods there might be upon the whole circuit of the earth.

**Deuteronomy 13:9 (8)ff.** To such persuasion Israel was not to yield, nor were they to spare the tempters. The accumulation of synonyms (pity, spare, conceal) serves to make the passage more emphatic. כִּסֶּה, to cover, i.e., to keep secret, conceal. They were to put him to death without pity, viz., to stone him (cf. Lev. 20:2). That the execution even in this case was to be carried out by the regular authorities, is evident from the words, "thy hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and the hand of all the people afterwards," which presuppose the judicial procedure prescribed in Deuteronomy 17:7, that the witnesses were to cast the first stones at the person condemned.

**Deuteronomy 13:12.** This was to be done, and all Israel was to hear it and fear, that no such wickedness should be performed any more in the congregation. The fear of punishment, which is given here as the ultimate end of the punishment itself, is not to be regarded as the principle lying at the foundation of the law, but simply, as *Calvin* expresses it, as "the utility and fruit of severity," one reason for carrying out the law, which is not to be confounded with the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 63
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

so-called deterrent theory, i.e., the attempt to deter from crime by the mode of punishing (see my *Archäologie*, ii. p. 262).

**Deuteronomy 13:13–19 (12–18).** The *third* case is that of a town that had been led away to idolatry. “*If thou shalt hear in one of thy cities.*” בְּאַחַת, not *de una*, of one, which שָׁמַע with בְּ never can mean, and does not mean even in Job 26:14. The thought is not that they would hear in one city about another, as though one city had the oversight over another; but there is an inversion in the sentence, “*if thou hear, that in one of thy cities ... worthless men have risen up, and led the inhabitants astray to serve strange gods.*” לְאִמָּר introduces the substance of what is heard, which follows in v. 14. יָצָא merely signifies to rise up, to go forth. מִקִּרְבָּהּ, out of the midst of the people.

**Deuteronomy 13:15 (14).** Upon this report the people as a whole, of course through their rulers, were to examine closely into the affair (הִיטֵב, an adverb, as in Deuteronomy 9:21), whether the word was established as truth, i.e., the thing was founded in truth (cf. Deuteronomy 17:4; 22:20); and if it really were so, they were to smite the inhabitants of that town with the edge of the sword (cf. Gen. 34:26), putting the town and all that was in it under the ban. “*All that is in it*” relates to men, cattle, and the material property of the town, and not to men alone (*Schultz*). The clause from “destroying” to “therein” is a more minute definition of the punishment introduced as a parenthesis; for “the cattle thereof,” which follows, is also governed by “thou shalt smite.” The ban was to be executed in all its severity as upon an idolatrous city: man and beast were to be put to death without reserves; and its booty, i.e., whatever was to be found in it as booty—all material goods, therefore—were to be heaped together in the market, and burned along with the city itself. כָּלִיל לַיהוָה (*Eng. Ver.* “every whit, for the Lord thy God”) signifies “*as a whole offering for the Lord*” (see Lev. 6:15, 16), i.e., it was to be sanctified to Him entirely by being

destroyed. The town was to continue an eternal hill (or heap of ruins), never to be built up again.

**Deuteronomy 13:18 (17).** To enforce this command still more strongly, it is expressly stated, that of all that was burned, nothing whatever was to cleave or remain hanging to the hand of Israel, that the Lord might turn from His wrath and have compassion upon the nation, i.e., not punish the sin of one town upon the nation as a whole, but have mercy upon it and multiply it,—make up the diminution consequent upon the destruction of the inhabitants of that town, and so fulfil the promise given to the fathers of the multiplication of their seed.

**Deuteronomy 13:19 (18).** Jehovah would do this if Israel hearkened to His voice, to do what was right in His eyes. In what way the appropriation of property laid under the ban brought the wrath of God upon the whole congregation, is shown by the example of Achan (Josh. 7).

## Deuteronomy 14

Avoidance of the Mourning Customs of the Heathen, and Unclean Food. Application of the Tithe of Fruits.—Ch. 14.

**Deuteronomy 14:1–21.** The Israelites were not only to suffer no idolatry to rise up in their midst, but in all their walk of life to show themselves as a holy nation of the Lord; and neither to disfigure their bodies by passionate expressions of sorrow for the dead (vv. 1 and 2), nor to defile themselves by unclean food (vv. 3–21). Both of these were opposed to their calling. To bring this to their mind, Moses introduces the laws which follow with the words, “ye are children to the Lord your God.” The divine sonship of Israel was founded upon its election and calling as the holy nation of Jehovah, which is regarded in the Old Testament not as generation by the Spirit of God, but simply as an adoption springing out of the free love of God, as the manifestation of paternal love on the part of Jehovah to Israel, which binds the son to obedience, reverence,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 64
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

and childlike trust towards a Creator and Father, who would train it up into a holy people (see p. 297). The laws in v. 1b are simply a repetition of Lev. 19:28 and 21:5. לָמַת, with reference to, or on account of, a dead person, is more expressive than לְנַפְשׁ (for a soul) in Lev. 19:28. The reason assigned for this command in v. 2 (as in Deuteronomy 7:6) is simply an emphatic elucidation of the first clause of v. 1. (On the substance of the verse, see Ex. 19:5, 6).

**Deuteronomy 14:3–20.** With reference to food, the Israelites were to eat nothing whatever that was abominable. In explanation of this prohibition, the laws of Lev. 11 relating to clean and unclean animals are repeated in all essential points in vv. 4–20 (for the exposition, see at Lev. 11); also in v. 21 the prohibition against eating any animal that had fallen down dead (as in Ex. 32:30 and Lev. 17:15), and against boiling a kid in its mother's milk (as in Ex. 23:19).

**Deuteronomy 14:22–29.** As the Israelites were to sanctify their food, on the one hand, positively by abstinence from everything unclean, so were they, on the other hand, to do so negatively by delivering the tithes and firstlings at the place where the Lord would cause His name to dwell, and by holding festal meals on the occasion, and rejoicing there before Jehovah their God. This law is introduced with the general precept, *"Thou shalt tithe all the produce of thy seed which groweth out of the field"* (אֶפְרָא construes with an accusative, as in Gen. 9:10, etc.) *year by year*" (שָׁנָה שָׁנָה, i.e., every year; cf. Ewald, § 313, a.), which recalls the earlier laws concerning the tithe (Lev. 27:30, and Num. 18:21, 26ff.), without repeating them one by one, for the purpose of linking on the injunction to celebrate sacrificial meals at the sanctuary from the tithes and firstlings. Moses had already directed (Deuteronomy 12:6ff.) that all the sacrificial meals should take place at the sanctuary, and had then alluded to the sacrificial meals to be prepared from the tithes, though only causally, because he intended to

speak of them more fully afterwards. This he does here, and includes the firstlings also, inasmuch as the presentation of them was generally associated with that of the tithes, though only causally, as he intends to revert to the firstlings again, which he does in Deuteronomy 15:19ff. The connection between the tithes of the fruits of the ground and the firstlings of the cattle which were devoted to the sacrificial meals, and the tithes and first-fruits which were to be delivered to the Levites and priests, we have already discussed at Deuteronomy 12 (p. 908). The sacrificial meals were to be held before the Lord, in the place where He caused His name to dwell (see at Deuteronomy 12:5), that Israel might learn to fear Jehovah its God always; not, however, as Schultz supposes, that by the confession of its dependence upon Him it might accustom itself more and more to the feeling of dependence. For the fear of the Lord is not merely a feeling of dependence upon Him, but also includes the notion of divine blessedness, which is the predominant idea here, as the sacrificial meals were to furnish the occasion and object of the rejoicing before the Lord. The true meaning therefore is, that Israel might rejoice with holy reverence in the fellowship of its God.

**Deuteronomy 14:24ff.** In the land of Canaan, however, where the people would be scattered over a great extent of country, there would be many for whom the fulfilment of this command would be very difficult—would, in fact, appear almost impossible. To meet this difficulty, permission was given for those who lived at a great distance from the sanctuary to sell the tithes at home, provided they could not convey them in kind, and then to spend the money so obtained in the purchase of the things required for the sacrificial meals at the place of the sanctuary. כִּי יִרְבֶּה מְאֹד, *"if the way be too great (too far) for thee,"* etc., sc., for the delivery of the tithe. The parenthetical clause, *"if Jehovah thy God shall bless thee,"* hardly means *"if He shall extend thy territory"* (Knobel), but if He shall bless thee by plentiful produce from the field and the cattle.



DEUTERONOMY	Page 65
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 14:25.** “Turn it into money,” lit., “give it up for silver,” sc., the produce of the tithe; “and bind the silver in thy hand,” *const. praegnans* for “bind it in a purse and take it in thy hand ... and give the silver for all that thy soul desireth, for oxen and small cattle, for wine and strong drink,” to hold a joyous meal, to which the Levite was also to be invited (as in Deuteronomy 12:12, 18, and 19).

**Deuteronomy 14:28, 29.** Every third year, on the other hand, they were to separate the whole of the tithe from the year’s produce (“bring forth,” sc., from the granary), and leaven it in their gates (i.e., their towns), and feed the Levites, the strangers, and the widows and orphans with it. They were not to take it to the sanctuary, therefore; but according to Deuteronomy 26:12ff., after bringing it out, were to make confession to the Lord of what they had done, and pray for His blessing. “*At the end of three years:*” i.e., when the third year, namely the civil year, which closed with the harvest (see at Ex. 23:16), had come to an end. This regulation as to the time was founded upon the observance of the sabbatical year, as we may see from Deuteronomy 15:1, where the seventh year is no other than the sabbatical year. Twice, therefore, within the period of a sabbatical year, namely in the third and sixth years, the tithe set apart for a sacrificial meal was not to be eaten at the sanctuary, but to be used in the different towns of the land in providing festal meals for those who had no possessions, viz., the Levites, strangers, widows, and orphans. Consequently this tithe cannot properly be called the “third tithe,” as it is by many of the Rabbins, but rather the “poor tithe,” as it was simply in the way of applying it that it differed from the “second” (see *Hottinger, de decimis, exerc. viii. pp. 182ff.*, and my *Archäol. i. p. 339*). As an encouragement to carry out these instructions, Moses closes in v. 29 with an allusion to the divine blessing which would follow their observance.

## Deuteronomy 15

On the Year of Release, the Emancipation of Hebrew Slaves, and the Sanctification of the First-Born of Cattle.—Ch. 15.

**Deuteronomy 15:1–11.** On the Year of Release.—The first two regulations in this chapter, viz., vv. 1–11 and 12–18, follow simply upon the law concerning the poor tithe in Deuteronomy 14:28, 29. The Israelites were not only to cause those who had no possessions (Levites, strangers, widows, and orphans) to refresh themselves with the produce of their inheritance, but they were not to force and oppress the poor. Debtors especially were not to be deprived of the blessings of the sabbatical year (vv. 1–6). “*At the end of seven years thou shalt make a release.*” The expression, “at the end of seven years,” is to be understood in the same way as the corresponding phrase, “at the end of three years,” in Deuteronomy 14:28. The end of seven years, i.e., of the seven years’ cycle formed by the sabbatical year, is mentioned as the time when debts that had been contracted were usually wiped off or demanded, after the year’s harvest had been gathered in (cf. Deuteronomy 31:10, according to which the feast of Tabernacles occurred at the end of the year). שְׁמִטָּה, from שָׁמַט, to let lie, to let go (cf. Ex. 23:11), does not signify a remission of the debt, the relinquishing of all claim for payment, as *Philo* and the Talmudists affirm, but simply lengthening the term, not pressing for payment. This is the explanation in v. 2: “*This is the manner of the release*” (*shemittah*): cf. Deuteronomy 19:4; 1 Kings 9:15. “*Every owner of a loan of his hand shall release (leave) what he has lent to his neighbour; he shall not press his neighbour, and indeed his brother; for they have proclaimed release for Jehovah.*” As שְׁמִטָּה (release) points unmistakeably back to Ex. 23:11, it must be interpreted in the same manner here as there. And as it is not used there to denote the entire renunciation of a field or possession, so here it cannot mean the entire renunciation of what had been lent, but simply leaving it, i.e., not pressing for it during the seventh year. This is favoured by what

DEUTERONOMY	Page 66
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

follows, *"thou shalt not press thy neighbour,"* which simply forbids an unreserved demand, but does not require that the debt should be remitted or presented to the debtor (see also *Bähr, Symbolik*, ii. pp. 570–1). "The loan of the hand:" what the hand has lent to another. "The master of the loan of the hand:" i.e., the owner of a loan, the lender. "His brother" defines with greater precision the idea of "a neighbour." Calling a release, presupposes that the sabbatical year was publicly proclaimed, like the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:9). קָרָא is impersonal ("they call"), as in Gen. 11:9 and 16:14. *"For Jehovah:"* i.e., in honour of Jehovah, sanctified to Him, as in Ex. 12:42.—This law points back to the institution of the sabbatical year in Ex. 23:10, Lev. 25:2–7, though it is not to be regarded as an appendix to the law of the sabbatical year, or an expansion of it, but simply as an exposition of what was already implied in the main provision of that law, viz., that the cultivation of the land should be suspended in the sabbatical year. If no harvest was gathered in, and even such produce as had grown without sowing was to be left to the poor and the beasts of the field, the landowner could have no income from which to pay his debts. The fact that the *"sabbatical year"* is not expressly mentioned, may be accounted for on the ground, that even in the principal law itself this name does not occur; and it is simply commanded that every seventh year there was to be a sabbath of rest to the land (Lev. 25:4). In the subsequent passages in which it is referred to (v. 9 and Deuteronomy 31:10), it is still not called a sabbatical year, but simply the "year of release," and that not merely with reference to debtors, but also with reference to the release (*Shemittah*) to be allowed to the field (Ex. 23:11).

**Deuteronomy 15:3.** The foreigner thou mayest press, but what thou hast with thy brother shall thy hand let go. נָכְרִי is a stranger of another nation, standing in no inward relation to Israel at all, and is to be distinguished from גֵּר, the foreigner who lived among the Israelites, who had a claim upon their protection and pity. This

rule breathes no hatred of foreigners, but simply allows the Israelites the right of every creditor to demand his debts, and enforce the demand upon foreigners, even in the sabbatical year. There was no severity in this, because foreigners could get their ordinary income in the seventh year as well as in any other.

**Deuteronomy 15:4.** *"Only that there shall be no poor with thee."* יִהְיֶה is jussive, like the foregoing imperfects. The meaning in this connection is, "Thou needest not to remit a debt to foreigners in the seventh year; thou hast only to take care that there is no poor man with or among thee, that thou dost not cause or increase their poverty, by oppressing the brethren who have borrowed of thee." Understood in this way, the sentence is not at all at variance with v. 11, where it is stated that the poor would never cease out of the land. The following clause, "for Jehovah will bless thee," etc., gives a reason for the main thought, that they were not to press the Israelitish debtor. The creditor, therefore, had no need to fear that he would suffer want, if he refrained from exacting his debt from his brother in the seventh year.

**Deuteronomy 15:5, 6.** This blessing would not fail, if the Israelites would only hearken to the voice of the Lord; *"for Jehovah blesseth thee"* (by the perfect בִּרְכֶּךָ, the blessing is represented not as a possible and future one only, but as one already bestowed according to the counsel of God, and, so far as the commencement was concerned, already fulfilled), *"as He hath spoken"* (see at Deuteronomy 1:11). *"And thou wilt lend on pledge to many nations, but thou thyself wilt not borrow upon pledge."* עָבַט, a denom. verb, from עֲבֹט, a pledge, signifies in *Kal* to give a pledge for the purpose of borrowing; in *Hiphil*, to cause a person to give a pledge, or furnish occasion for giving a pledge, i.e., to lend upon pledge. *"And thou wilt rule over many nations,"* etc. Ruling is mentioned here as the result of superiority in wealth (cf. Deuteronomy 28:1: *Schultz*).

**Deuteronomy 15:7–11.** And in general Israel was to be ready to lend to the poor among its

DEUTERONOMY	Page 67
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

brethren, not to harden its heart, to be hard-hearted, but to lend to the poor brother דִּמְקָסָו, “the sufficiency of his need,” whatever he might need to relieve his wants.

**Deuteronomy 15:9, 10.** Thus they were also to beware “*that there was not a word in the heart, worthlessness,*” i.e., that a worthless thought did not arise in their hearts (בְּלִיעַל is the predicate of the sentence, as the more precise definition of the word that was in the heart); so that one should say, “*The seventh year is at hand, the year of release,*” sc., when I shall not be able to demand what I have lent, and “*that thine eye be evil towards thy poor brother,*” i.e., that thou cherishest ill-will towards him (cf. Deuteronomy 28:54, 56), “*and givest him not, and he appeals to Jehovah against thee, and it becomes sin to thee,*” sc., which brings down upon thee the wrath of God.

**Deuteronomy 15:10.** Thou shalt give him, and thy heart shall not become evil, i.e., discontented thereat (cf. 2 Cor. 9:7), for Jehovah will bless thee for it (cf. Prov. 22:9; 28:27; Ps. 41:2; Matt. 6:4).

**Deuteronomy 15:11.** For the poor will never cease in the land, even the land that is richly blessed, because poverty is not only the penalty of sin, but is ordained by God for punishment and discipline.

**Deuteronomy 15:12–18.** These provisions in favour of the poor are followed very naturally by the rules which the Israelites were to be urged to observe with reference to the *manumission of Hebrew slaves*. It is not the reference to the sabbatical year in the foregoing precepts which forms the introduction to the laws which follow respecting the manumission of Hebrews who had become slaves, but the poverty and want which compelled Hebrew men and women to sell themselves as slaves. The seventh year, in which they were to be set free, is not the same as the sabbatical year, therefore, but the seventh year of bondage. Manumission in the seventh year of service had already been commanded in Ex. 21:2–6, in the rights laid down for the nation, with special

reference to the conclusion of the covenant. This command is not repeated here for the purpose of extending the law to Hebrew women, who are not expressly mentioned in Ex. 21; for that would follow as a matter of course, in the case of a law which was quite as applicable to women as to men, and was given without any reserve to the whole congregation. It is rather repeated here as a law which already existed as a right, for the purpose of explaining the true mode of fulfilling it, viz., that it was not sufficient to give a man-servant and maid-servant their liberty after six years of service, which would not be sufficient relief to those who had been obliged to enter into slavery on account of poverty, if they had nothing with which to set up a home of their own; but love to the poor was required to do more than this, namely, to make some provision for the continued prosperity of those who were set at liberty. “*If thou let him go free from thee, thou shalt not let him go (send him away) empty:*” this was the new feature which Moses added here to the previous law. “*Thou shalt load (הֶעָנִיק, lit., put upon the neck) of thy flock, and of thy floor (corn), and of thy press (oil and wine); wherewith thy God hath blessed thee, of that thou shalt give to him.*”

**Deuteronomy 15:15.** They were to be induced to do this by the recollection of their own redemption out of the bondage of Egypt,—the same motive that is urged for the laws and exhortations enjoining compassion towards foreigners, servants, maids, widows, orphans, and the poor, not only in Deuteronomy 5:15; 10:19; 16:12; 24:18, 22, but also in Ex. 22:20; 23:9, and Lev. 19:34.

**Deuteronomy 15:16, 17.** But if the man-servant and the maid-servant should not wish for liberty in the sixth year, because it was well with them in the house of their master, they were not to be compelled to go, but were to be bound to eternal, i.e., lifelong bondage, in the manner prescribed in Ex. 21:5, 6.<sup>20</sup> This is repeated from Ex. 21, to guard against such an application of the law as might be really cruelty under the circumstances rather than love.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 68
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

Manumission was only an act of love, when the person to be set free had some hope of success and of getting a living for himself; and where there was no such prospect, compelling him to accept of freedom might be equivalent to thrusting him away.

**Deuteronomy 15:18.** If, on the other hand, the servant (or maid) wished to be set free, the master was not to think it hard; *“for the double of the wages of a day-labourer he has earned for thee for six years,”* i.e., not “twice the time of a day-labourer, so that he had really deserved twice the wages” (*Vatablius, Ad. Osiander, J. Gerhard*), for it cannot be proved from Isa. 16:14, that a day-labourer generally hired himself out for three years; nor yet, “he has been obliged to work much harder than a day-labourer, very often by night as well as day” (*Clericus, J. H. Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Baumgarten*); but simply, “he has earned and produced so much, that if you had been obliged to keep a day-labourer in his place, it would have cost you twice as much” (*Schultz, Knobel*).

**Deuteronomy 15:19–23.** Application of the First-Born of Cattle.—From the laws respecting the poor and slaves, to which the instructions concerning the tithes (Deuteronomy 14:22–29) had given occasion, Moses returns to appropriation of the first-born of the herd and flock to sacrificial meals, which he had already touched upon in Deuteronomy 12:6, 17, and 14:23, and concludes by an explanation upon this point. The command, which the Lord had given when first they came out of Egypt (Ex. 13:2, 12), that all the first-born of the herd and flock should be sanctified to Him, is repeated here by Moses, with the express injunction that they were not to work with the first-born of cattle (by yoking them to the plough or waggon), and not to shear the first-born of sheep; that is to say, they were not to use the first-born animals which were sanctified to the Lord for their own earthly purposes, but to offer them year by year as sacrifices to the Lord, and consume them in sacrificial meals, in the manner explained at p. 909. To this he adds (vv. 21, 22) that further provision, that first-

born animals, which were blind or lame, or had any other bad fault, were not to be offered in sacrifice to the Lord, but, like ordinary animals used for food, could be eaten in all the towns of the land. Although the first part of this law was involved in the general laws as to the kind of animal that could be offered in sacrifice (Lev. 22:19ff.), it was by no means unimportant to point out distinctly their applicability to the first-born, and add some instructions with regard to the way in which they were to be applied. (On vv. 22 and 23, see Deuteronomy 12:15 and 16.)

### Deuteronomy 16

On the Celebration of the Feasts of Passover, of Pentecost, and of Tabernacles.—Ch. 16:1–17.

**Deuteronomy 16:1–17.** The annual feasts appointed by the law were to be celebrated, like the sacrificial meals, at the place which the Lord would choose for the revelation of His name; and there Israel was to rejoice before the Lord with the presentation of sacrifices. From this point of view Moses discusses the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, assuming the laws previously given concerning these festivals (Ex. 12, Lev. 23, and Num. 28 and 29) as already known, and simply repeating those points which related to the sacrificial meals held at these festivals. This serves to explain the reason why only those three festivals are mentioned, at which Israel had already been commanded to appear before the Lord in Ex. 23:14–17, and 34:18, 24, 25, and not the feast of trumpets or day of atonement: viz., because the people were not required to assemble at the sanctuary out of the whole land on the occasion of these two festivals.<sup>21</sup>

**Deuteronomy 16:1–8.** Israel was to make ready the Passover to the Lord in the earing month (see at Ex. 12:2). The precise day is supposed to be known from Ex. 12, as in Ex. 23:15. עֲשֵׂה פֶסַח (*to prepare the Passover*), which is used primarily to denote the preparation of the paschal lamb for a festal meal, is employed here in a wider signification viz., “*to keep the Passover.*” At this feast they were to slay sheep

DEUTERONOMY	Page 69
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

and oxen to the Lord for a Passover, at the place, etc. In v. 2, as in v. 1, the word "Passover" is employed in a broader sense, and includes not only the paschal lamb, but the paschal sacrifices generally, which the Rabbins embrace under the common name of *chagiga*; not the burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, however, prescribed in Num. 28:19–26, but all the sacrifices that were slain at the feast of the Passover (i.e., during the seven days of the *Mazzoth*, which are included under the name of *pascha*) for the purpose of holding sacrificial meals. This is evident from the expression "*of the flock and the herd*;" as it was expressly laid down, that only a פֶּזֶז, i.e., a yearling animal of the sheep or goats, was to be slain for the paschal meal on the fourteenth of the month in the evening, and an ox was never slaughtered in the place of the lamb. But if any doubt could exist upon this point, it would be completely set aside by v. 3: "*Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it: seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith.*" As the word "*therewith*" cannot possibly refer to anything else than the "Passover" in v. 2, it is distinctly stated that the slaughtering and eating of the Passover was to last seven days, whereas the Passover lamb was to be slain and consumed in the evening of the fourteenth Abib (Ex. 12:10). Moses called the unleavened bread "*the bread of affliction*," because the Israelites had to leave Egypt in anxious flight (Ex. 12:11) and were therefore unable to leaven the dough (Ex. 12:39), for the purpose of reminding the congregation of the oppression endured in Egypt, and to stir them up to gratitude towards the Lord their deliverer, that they might remember that day as long as they lived. (On the meaning of the *Mazzothy*, see at Ex. 12:8 and 15.)—On account of the importance of the unleavened bread as a symbolical shadowing forth of the significance of the Passover, as the feast of the renewal and sanctification of the life of Israel (see p. 333), Moses repeats in v. 4 two of the points in the law of the feast: first of all the one laid down in Ex. 13:7, that no leaven was to be seen in the land during the seven days; and secondly, the one in Ex. 23:18 and 34:25, that none of the

flesh of the paschal lamb was to be left till the next morning, in order that all corruption might be kept at a distance from the paschal food. Leaven, for example, sets the dough in fermentation, from which putrefaction ensues (see p. 330); and in the East, if flesh is kept, it very quickly decomposes. He then once more fixes the time and place for keeping the Passover (the former according to Ex. 12:6 and Lev. 23:5, etc.), and adds in v. 7 the express regulation, that not only the slaughtering and sacrificing, but the roasting (see at Ex. 12:9) and eating of the paschal lamb were to take place at the sanctuary, and that the next morning they could turn and go back home. This rule contains a new feature, which Moses prescribes with reference to the keeping of the Passover in the land of Canaan, and by which he modifies the instructions for the first Passover in Egypt, to suit the altered circumstances. In Egypt, when Israel was not yet raised into the nation of Jehovah, and had as yet no sanctuary and no common altar, the different houses necessarily served as altars. But when this necessity was at an end, the slaying and eating of the Passover in the different houses were to cease, and they were both to take place at the sanctuary before the Lord, as was the case with the feast of Passover at Sinai (Num. 9:1–5). Thus the smearing of the door-posts with the blood was tacitly abolished, since the blood was to be sprinkled upon the altar as sacrificial blood, as it had already been at Sinai (see p. 683).—The expression "*to thy tents*," for going "home," points to the time when Israel was till dwelling in tents, and had not as yet secured any fixed abodes and houses in Canaan, although this expression was retained at a still later time (e.g., 1 Sam. 13:2; 2 Sam. 19:9, etc.). The going home in the morning after the paschal meal, is not to be understood as signifying a return to their homes in the different towns of the land, but simply, as even *Riehm* admits, to their homes or lodgings at the place of the sanctuary. How very far Moses was from intending to release the Israelites from the duty of keeping the feast for seven days, is evident from the fact that in v. 8 he once more

DEUTERONOMY	Page 70
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

enforces the observance of the seven days' feast. The two clauses, "six days thou shalt eat *mazzoth*," and "on the seventh day shall be *azereth* (Eng. Ver. 'a solemn assembly') to the Lord thy God," are not placed in antithesis to each other, so as to imply (in contradiction to vv. 3 and 4; Ex. 12:18, 19; 13:6, 7, Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17) that the feast of Mazzoth was to last only six days instead of seven; but the seventh day is brought into especial prominence as the *azereth* of the feast (see at Lev. 23:36), simply because, in addition to the eating of *mazzoth*, there was to be an entire abstinence from work, and this particular feature might easily have fallen into neglect at the close of the feast. But just as the eating of *mazzoth* for seven days is not abolished by the first clause, so the suspension of work on the first day is not abolished by the second clause, any more than in Ex. 13:6 the first day is represented as a working day by the fact that the seventh day is called "a feast to Jehovah."

**Deuteronomy 16:9–12.** With regard to the Feast of Weeks (see at Ex. 23:16), it is stated that the time for its observance was to be reckoned from the Passover. Seven weeks shall they count "*from the beginning of the sickle to the corn*," i.e., from the time when the sickle began to be applied to the corn, or from the commencement of the corn-harvest. As the corn-harvest was opened with the presentation of the sheaf of first-fruits on the second day of the Passover, this regulation as to time coincides with the rule laid down in Lev. 23:15. "*Thou shalt keep the feast to the Lord thy God according to the measure of the free gift of thy hand, which thou givest as Jehovah thy God blesseth thee.*" The ἀπ. λεγ. תַּסֵּב is the standing rendering in the Chaldee for ִי, sufficiency, need; it probably signifies abundance, from ִסֵּב = ִסֵּב, to flow, to overflow, to derive. The idea is this: Israel was to keep this feast with sacrificial gifts, which every one was able to bring, according to the extent to which the Lord had blessed him, and (v. 11) to rejoice before the Lord at the place where His name dwelt with

sacrificial meals, to which the needy were to be invited (cf. 14:29), in remembrance of the fact that they also were bondmen in Egypt (cf. 15:15). The "*free-will offering of the hand*," which the Israelites were to bring with them to this feast, and with which they were to rejoice before the Lord, belonged to the free-will gifts of burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, drink-offerings, and thank-offerings, which might be offered, according to Num. 29:39 (cf. Lev. 23:38), at every feast, along with the festal sacrifices enjoined upon the congregation. The latter were binding upon the priests and congregation, and are fully described in Num. 28 and 29, so that there was no necessity for Moses to say anything further with reference to them.

**Deuteronomy 16:13–17.** In connection with the Feast of Tabernacles also, he simply enforces the observance of it at the central sanctuary, and exhorts the people to rejoice at this festival, and not only to allow their sons and daughters to participate in this joy, but also the man-servant and maid-servant, and the portionless Levites, strangers, widows, and orphans. After what had already been stated, Moses did not consider it necessary to mention expressly that this festal rejoicing was also to be manifested in joyous sacrificial meals; it was enough for him to point to the blessing which God had bestowed upon their cultivation of the corn, the olive, and the vine, and upon all the works of their hands, i.e., upon their labour generally (vv. 13–15), as there was nothing further to remark after the instructions which had already been given with reference to this feast also (Lev. 23:34–36, 39–43; Num. 29:12–38).

**Deuteronomy 16:16, 17.** In conclusion, the law is repeated, that the men were to appear before the Lord three times a year at the three feasts just mentioned (compare Ex. 23:17 with v. 15, and Deuteronomy 34:23), with the additional clause, "*at the place which the Lord shall choose*," and the following explanation of the words "not empty:" "*every man according to the gift of his hand, according to the blessing of*

DEUTERONOMY	Page 71
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

*Jehovah his God, which He hath given thee,” i.e., with sacrificial gifts, as much as every one could offer, according to the blessing which he had received from God.*

On the Administration of Justice and the Choice of a King.—Ch. 16:18–17:20.

**Deuteronomy 16:18–17:20.** 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.—For the purpose of settling the disputes of the people, Moses had already provided them with judges at Sinai, and had given the judges themselves the necessary instructions for the fulfilment of their duties (Ex. 18). This arrangement might suffice as long as the people were united in one camp and had Moses for a leader, who could lay before God any difficult cases that were brought to him, and give an absolute decision with divine authority. But for future times, when Israel would no longer possess a prophet and mediator like Moses, and after the conquest of Canaan would live scattered about in the towns and villages of the whole land, certain modifications and supplementary additions were necessary to adapt this judicial constitution to the altered circumstances of the people. Moses anticipates this want in the following provisions, in which he *first* of all commands the appointment of judges and officials in every town, and gives certain precise injunctions as to their judicial proceedings (Deuteronomy 16:18–17:7); and *secondly*, appoints a higher judicial court at the place of the sanctuary for the more difficult cases (Deuteronomy 17:8–13); and *thirdly*, gives them a law for the future with reference to the choice of a king (vv. 14–20).

**Deuteronomy 16:18–17:7.** Appointment and Instruction of the Judges.—V. 18. “*Judges and*

*officers thou shalt appoint thee in all thy gates* (place, see at Ex. 20:10), *which Jehovah thy God shall give thee, according to thy tribes.*” The nation is addressed as a whole, and directed to appoint for itself judges and officers, i.e., to choose them, and have them appointed by its rulers, just as was done at Sinai, where the people chose the judges, and Moses inducted into office the persons so chosen (cf. Deuteronomy 1:12–18). That the same course was to be adopted in future, is evident from the expression, “throughout thy tribes,” i.e., according to thy tribes, which points back to Deuteronomy 1:13. Election by majorities was unknown to the Mosaic law. The *shoterim*, officers (lit., writers, see at Ex. 5:6), who were associated with the judges, according to Deuteronomy 1:15, even under the previous arrangement, were not merely messengers and servants of the courts, but secretaries and advisers of the judges, who derived their title from the fact that they had to draw up and keep the genealogical lists, and who are mentioned as already existing in Egypt as overseers of the people and of their work (see at Ex. 5:6; and for the different opinions concerning their official position, see *Selden, de Synedriis*, i. pp. 342–3). The new features, which Moses introduces here, consist simply in the fact that every place was to have its own judges and officers, whereas hitherto they had only been appointed for the larger and smaller divisions of the nation, according to their genealogical organization. Moses lays down no rule as to the number of judges and *shoterim* to be appointed in each place, because this would depend upon the number of the inhabitants; and the existing arrangement of judges over tens, hundreds, etc. (Ex. 18:21), would still furnish the necessary standard. The statements made by *Josephus* and the *Rabbins* with regard to the number of judges in each place are contradictory, or at all events are founded upon the circumstances of much later times (see my *Archäologie*, ii. pp. 257–8).—These judges were to judge the people with just judgment. The admonition in v. 19 corresponds to the instructions in Ex. 23:6 and 8. “Respect persons:” as in Deuteronomy

DEUTERONOMY	Page 72
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

1:17. To this there is added, in v. 20, an emphatic admonition to strive zealously to maintain justice. The repetition of the word justice is emphatic: justice, and nothing but justice, as in Gen. 14:10, etc. But in order to give the people and the judges appointed by them a brief practical admonition, as to the things they were more especially to observe in their administration of justice, Moses notices by way of example a few crimes that were deserving of punishment (vv. 21, 22, and Deuteronomy 17:1), and then proceeds in Deuteronomy 17:2–7 to describe more fully the judicial proceedings in the case of idolaters.

**Deuteronomy 16:21.** *“Thou shalt not plant thee as asherah any wood beside the altar of Jehovah.”* נָטַע, to plant, used figuratively, to plant up or erect, as in Eccles. 12:11, Dan. 11:25; cf. Isa. 51:16. *Asherah*, the symbol of *Astarte* (see at Ex. 34:13), cannot mean either a green tree or a grove (as *Movers, Relig. der Phönizier*, p. 572, supposes), for the simple reason that in other passages we find the words עָשָׂה, make (1 Kings 14:15; 16:33; 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3; 2 Chron. 33:3), or הִצִּיב, set up (2 Kings 17:10), הִעָמִיד, stand up (2 Chron. 33:19), and בָּנָה, build (1 Kings 14:23), used to denote the erection of an *asherah*, not one of which is at all suitable to a tree or grove. But what is quite decisive is the fact that in 1 Kings 14:23, 2 Kings 17:10, Jer. 17:2, the *asherah* is spoken of as being set up under, or by the side of, the green tree. This idol generally consisted of a wooden column; and a favourite place for setting it up was by the side of the altars of Baal.

**Deuteronomy 16:22.** They were also to abstain from setting up any *mazzebah*, i.e., any memorial stone, or stone pillar dedicated to Baal (see at Ex. 23:24).

## Deuteronomy 17

**Deuteronomy 17:1.** Not only did the inclination to nature-worship, such as the setting up of the idols of *Ashera* and *Baal*, belong to the crimes which merited

punishment, but also a manifest transgression of the laws concerning the worship of Jehovah, such as the offering of an ox or sheep that had some fault, which was an abomination in the sight of Jehovah (see at Lev. 22:20ff.). *“Any evil thing,”* i.e., any of the faults enumerated in Lev. 22:22–24.

**Deuteronomy 17:2–7.** If such a case should occur, as that a man or woman transgressed the covenant of the Lord and went after other gods and worshipped them; when it was made known, the facts were to be carefully inquired into; and if the charge were substantiated, the criminal was to be led out to the gate and stoned. On the testimony of two or three witnesses, not of one only, he was to be put to death (see at Num. 35:30); and the hand of the witnesses was to be against him first to put him to death, i.e., to throw the first stones at him, and all the people were to follow. With regard to the different kinds of idolatry in v. 3, see Deuteronomy 4:19. (On v. 4, see Deuteronomy 13:15.) *“Bring him out to thy gates,”* i.e., to one of the gates of the town in which the crime was committed. By the gates we are to understand the open space near the gates, where the judicial proceedings took place (cf. Neh. 8:1, 3; Job 29:7), the sentence itself being executed outside the town (cf. Deuteronomy 22:24; Acts 7:58; Heb. 13:12), just as it had been outside the camp during the journey through the wilderness (Lev. 24:14; Num. 15:36), to indicate the exclusion of the criminal from the congregation, and from fellowship with God. The infliction of punishment in vv. 5ff. is like that prescribed in Deuteronomy 13:10, 11, for those who tempted others to idolatry; with this exception, that the testimony of more than one witness was required before the sentence could be executed, and the witnesses were to be the first to lift up their hands against the criminal to stone him, that they might thereby give a practical proof of the truth of their statement, and their own firm conviction that the condemned was deserving of death,—“a rule which would naturally lead to the supposition that no man would come forward as a witness without the fullest certainty or the greatest



DEUTERONOMY	Page 73
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

depravity" (*Schnell, das isr. Recht*).<sup>22</sup> הָמָת (v. 6), the man exposed to death, who was therefore really *ipso facto* already dead. "So shalt thou put the evil away," etc.: cf. Deuteronomy 13:6.

**Deuteronomy 17:8-13.** The Higher Judicial Court at the Place of the Sanctuary.—Just as the judges appointed at Sinai were to bring to Moses whatever cases were too difficult for them to decide, that he might judge them according to the decision of God (Ex. 18:26 and 19); so in the future the judges of the different towns were to bring all difficult cases, which they were unable to decide, before the Levitical priests and judges at the place of the sanctuary, that a final decision might be given there.

**Deuteronomy 17:8ff.** "If there is to thee a matter too marvellous for judgment (אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדָעוּ, too wonderful, incomprehensible, or beyond carrying out, Gen. 18:14, i.e., too difficult to give a judicial decision upon), between blood and blood, plea and plea, stroke and stroke (i.e., too hard for you to decide according to what legal provisions a fatal blow, or dispute on some civil matter, or a bodily injury, is to be settled), disputes in thy gates (a loosely arranged apposition in this sense, dispute of different kinds, such as shall arise in thy towns); arise, and get thee to the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose; and go to the Levitical priest and the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire." Israel is addressed here as a nation, but the words are not to be supposed to be directed "first of all to the local courts (Deuteronomy 16:18), and lastly to the contending parties" (*Knobel*), nor "directly to the parties to the suit" (*Schultz*), but simply to the persons whose duty it was to administer justice in the nation, i.e., to the regular judges in the different towns and districts of the land. This is evident from the general fact, that the Mosaic law never recognises any appeal to higher courts by the different parties to a lawsuit, and that in this case also it is not assumed, since all that is enjoined is, that if the matter should be too difficult for the local judges to decide, they themselves were to carry

it to the superior court. As *Oehler* has quite correctly observed in *Herzog's Cyclopaedia*, "this superior court was not a court of appeal; for it did not adjudicate after the local court had already given a verdict, but in cases in which the latter would not trust itself to give a verdict at all." And this is more especially evident from what is stated in v. 10, with regard to the decisions of the superior court, namely, that they were to do whatever the superior judges taught, without deviating to the right hand or to the left. This is unquestionably far more applicable to the judges of the different towns, who were to carry out exactly the sentence of the higher tribunal, than to the parties to the suit, inasmuch as the latter, at all events those who were condemned for blood (i.e., for murder), could not possibly be in a position to alter the decision of the court at pleasure, since it did not rest with them, but with the authorities of their town, to carry out the sentence.

Moses did not directly institute a superior tribunal at the place of the sanctuary on this occasion, but rather assumed its existence; not however its existence at that time (as *Riehm* and other modern critics suppose), but its establishment and existence in the future. Just as he gives no minute directions concerning the organization of the different local courts, but leaves this to the natural development of the judicial institutions already in existence, so he also restricts himself, so far as the higher court is concerned, to general allusions, which might serve as a guide to the national rulers of a future day, to organize it according to the existing models. He had no disorganized mob before him, but a well-ordered nation, already in possession of civil institutions, with fruitful germs for further expansion and organization. In addition to its civil classification into tribes, families, fathers' houses, and family groups, which possessed at once their rulers in their own heads, the nation had received in the priesthood, with the high priest at the head, and the Levites as their assistants, a spiritual class, which mediated between the congregation and the Lord, and not only kept up the knowledge of

DEUTERONOMY	Page 74
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

right in the people as the guardian of the law, but by virtue of the high priest's office was able to lay the rights of the people before God, and in difficult cases could ask for His decision. Moreover, a leader had already been appointed for the nation, for the time immediately succeeding Moses' death; and in this nomination of Joshua, a pledge had been given that the Lord would never leave it without a supreme ruler of its civil affairs, but, along with the high priest, would also appoint a judge at the place of the central sanctuary, who would administer justice in the highest court in association with the priests. On the ground of these facts, it was enough for the future to mention the Levitical priests and the judge who would be at the place of the sanctuary, as constituting the court by which the difficult questions were to be decided.<sup>23</sup> For instance, the words themselves show distinctly enough, that by "the judge" we are not to understand the high priest, but the temporal judge or president of the superior court; and it is evident from the singular, "*the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord*" (v. 12), that the high priest is included among the priests. The expression "*the priests the Levites*" (Levitical priests), which also occurs in v. 18, Deuteronomy 18:1; 21:5; 24:8; 27:9; 31:9, instead of "sons of Aaron," which we find in the middle books, is quite in harmony with the time and character of the book before us. As long as Aaron was living with his sons, the priesthood consisted only of himself and his sons, that is to say, of one family. Hence all the instructions in the middle books are addressed to them, and for the most part to Aaron personally (vid., Ex. 28 and 29; Lev. 8–10; Num. 18, etc.). This as all changed when Aaron died; henceforth the priesthood consisted simply of the descendants of Aaron and his sons, who were no longer one family, but formed a distinct class in the nation, the legitimacy of which arose from its connection with the tribe of Levi, to which Aaron himself had belonged. It was evidently more appropriate, therefore, to describe them as sons of Levi than as sons of Aaron, which had been the title formerly given to the priests, with

the exception of the high priest, viz., Aaron himself.—In connection with the superior court, however, the priests are introduced rather as knowing and teaching the law (Lev. 10:11), than as actual judges. For this reason appeal was to be made not only to them, but also to the judge, whose duty it was in any case to make the judicial inquiry and pronounce the sentence.—The object of the verb "*inquire*" (v. 9) follows after "they shall show thee," viz., "*the word of right*," the judicial sentence which is sought (2 Chron. 19:6).

**Deuteronomy 17:10, 11.** They shall do "*according to the sound of the word which they utter*" (follow their decision exactly), and that "*according to the sound of the law which they teach*," and "*according to the right which they shall speak*." The sentence was to be founded upon the *Thorah*, upon the law which the priests had to teach.

**Deuteronomy 17:12.** No one was to resist in pride, to refuse to listen to the priest or to the judge. Resistance to the priest took place when any one was dissatisfied with his interpretation of the law; to the judge, when any one was discontented with the sentence that was passed on the basis of the law. Such refractory conduct was to be punished with death, as rebellion against God, in whose name the right had been spoken (Deuteronomy 1:17). (On v. 13, see Deuteronomy 13:12.)

**Deuteronomy 17:14–20.** Choice and Right of the King.—Vv. 14, 15. If Israel, when dwelling in the land which was given it by the Lord for a possession, should wish to appoint a king, like all the nations round about, it was to appoint the man whom Jehovah its God should choose, and that from among its brethren, i.e., from its own people, not a foreigner or non-Israelite. The earthly kingdom in Israel was not opposed to the theocracy, i.e., to the rule of Jehovah as king over the people of His possession, provided no one was made king but the person whom Jehovah should choose. The appointment of a king is not *commanded*, like the institution of judges (Deuteronomy 16:18), because Israel could exist under the government of Jehovah,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 75
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

even without an earthly king; it is simply *permitted*, in case the need should arise for a regal government. There was no necessity to describe more minutely the course to be adopted, as the people possessed the natural provision for the administration of their national affairs in their well-organized tribes, by whom this point could be decided. Moses also omits to state more particularly in what way Jehovah would make known the choice of the king to be appointed. The congregation, no doubt, possessed one means of asking the will of the Lord in the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, provided the Lord did not reveal His will in a different manner, namely through a prophet, as He did in the election of Saul and David (1 Sam. 8, 9, and 16). The commandment not to choose a foreigner, acknowledged the right of the nation to choose. Consequently the choice on the part of the Lord may have consisted simply in His pointing out to the people, in a very evident manner, the person they were to elect, or in His confirming the choice by word and act, as in accordance with His will.

Three rules are laid down for the king himself in vv. 16–20. In the *first* place, he was not to keep many horses, or lead back the people to Egypt, to multiply horses, because Jehovah had forbidden the people to return thither by that way. The notion of modern critics, that there is an allusion in this prohibition to the constitution of the kingdom under Solomon, is so far from having any foundation, that the reason assigned—namely, the fear lest the king should lead back the people to Egypt from his love of horses, “to the end that he should multiply horses”—really precludes the time of Solomon, inasmuch as the time had then long gone by when any thought could have been entertained of leading back the people to Egypt. But such a reason would be quite in its place in Moses’ time, and only then, “when it would not seem impossible to reunite the broken band, and when the people were ready to express their longing, and even their intention, to return to Egypt on the very slightest occasion; whereas the reason assigned for the prohibition

might have furnished Solomon with an excuse for regarding the prohibition itself as merely a temporary one, which was no longer binding” (*Oehler in Herzog’s Cyclopaedia*: vid., Hengstenberg’s Dissertations).<sup>24</sup>

The *second* admonition also, that the king was not to take to himself many wives, and turn away his heart (sc., from the Lord), nor greatly multiply to himself silver and gold, can be explained without the hypothesis that there is an allusion to Solomon’s reign, although this king did transgress both commands (1 Kings 10:14ff. 11:1ff.). A richly furnished harem, and the accumulation of silver and gold, were inseparably connected with the luxury of Oriental monarchs generally; so that the fear was a very natural one, that the future king of Israel might follow the general customs of the heathen in these respects.

**Deuteronomy 17:18ff.** And *thirdly*, instead of hanging his heart upon these earthly things, when he at upon his royal throne he was to have a copy of the law written out by the Levitical priests, that he might keep the law by him, and read therein all the days of his life. כְּתַב־ does not involve writing with his own hand (*Philo*), but simply having it written. מִשְׁנֵה הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת does not mean τὸ δευτερονόμιον τοῦτο (LXX), “this repetition of the law,” as הַזֹּאת cannot stand for הַתּוֹרָה; but a copy of this law, as most of the Rabbins correctly explain it in accordance with the Chaldee version, though they make *mishneh* to signify *duplum*, two copies (see *Hävernicks*, Introduction).—Every copy of a book is really a repetition of it. “*From before the priests*,” i.e., of the law which lies before the priests or is kept by them. The object of the daily reading in the law (vv. 19b and 20) was “*to learn the fear of the Lord, and to keep His commandments*” (cf. 5:25; 6:2; 14:23), that his heart might not be lifted up above his brethren, that he might not become proud (Deuteronomy 8:14), and might not turn aside from the commandments to the right hand or to the left, that he and his descendants might live long upon the throne.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 76
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

## Deuteronomy 18

Rights of the Priests, the Levites, and the Prophets.—Ch. 18.

**Deuteronomy 18.** In addition to the judicial order and the future king, it was necessary that the position of the priests and Levites, whose duties and rights had been regulated by previous laws, should at least be mentioned briefly and finally established (vv. 1–8), and also that the prophetic order should be fully accredited by the side of the other state authorities, and its operations regulated by a definite law (vv. 9–22).

**Deuteronomy 18:1–8.** The Rights of the Priests and Levites.—With reference to these, Moses repeats *verbatim* from Num. 18:20, 23, 24, the essential part of the rule laid down in Num. 18: “*The priests the Levites, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel.*” “All the tribe of Levi” includes the priests and Levites. They were to eat the “firings of Jehovah and His inheritance,” as described in detail in Num. 18. The inheritance of Jehovah consisted of the holy gifts as well as the sacrifices, i.e., the tithes, firstlings, and first-fruits. Moses felt it to be superfluous to enumerate these gifts one by one from the previous laws, and also to describe the mode of their application, or define how much belonged to the priests and how much to the Levites. However true it may be that the author assigns all these gifts to the Levites generally, the conclusion drawn from this, viz., that he was not acquainted with any distinction between priests and Levites, but placed the Levites entirely on a par with the priests, is quite a false one. For, apart from the evident distinction between the priests and Levites in v. 1, where there would be no meaning in the clause, “all the tribe of Levi,” if the Levites were identical with the priests, the distinction is recognised and asserted as clearly as possible in what follows, when a portion of the slain-offerings is allotted to the priests in vv. 3–5, whilst in vv. 6–8 the Levite is allowed to join in eating the altar gifts, if he come to the place of the sanctuary and perform service there. The repetition in v. 2

is an emphatic confirmation: “*As He hath said unto them:*” as in Deuteronomy 10:9.

**Deuteronomy 18:3–5.** “*This shall be the right of the priests on the part of the people, on the part of those who slaughter slain-offerings, whether ox or sheep; he (the offerer) shall give the priest the shoulder, the cheek, and the stomach.*” הֶזְרַעַת, the shoulder, i.e., the front leg; see Num. 6:19. הַקֶּבֶה, the rough stomach, τὸ ἄγνιστρον (LXX), i.e., the fourth stomach of ruminant animals, in which the digestion of the food is completed; Lat. *omasus* or *abomasus*, though the Vulgate has *ventriculus* here. On the choice of these three pieces in particular, *Münster* and *Fagius* observe that “the sheep possesses three principal parts, the head, the feet, and the trunk; and of each of these some portion was to be given to the priest who officiated” (?). “Of each of these three principal parts of the animal,” says *Schultz*, “some valuable piece was to be presented: the shoulder at least, and the stomach, which was regarded as particularly fat, are seen at once to have been especially good.” That this arrangement is not at variance with the command in Lev. 7:32ff., to give the wave-breast and heave-leg of the peace-offerings to the Lord for the priests, but simply enjoins a further gift to the priests on the part of the people, in addition to those portions which were to be given to the Lord for His servants, is sufficiently evident from the context, since the heave-leg and wave-breast belonged to the firings of Jehovah mentioned in v. 1, which the priests had received as an inheritance from the Lord, that is to say, to the *tenuphoth* of the children of Israel, which the priests might eat with their sons and daughters, though only with such members of their house as were levitically clean (Num. 18:11); and also from the words of the present command, viz., that the portions mentioned were to be a right of the priests *on the part of the people*, on the part of those who slaughtered slain-offerings, i.e., to be paid to the priest as a right that was due to him on the part of the people. מִשְׁפָּט was what the priest could justly claim. This right was probably accorded

DEUTERONOMY	Page 77
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

to the priests as a compensation for the falling off which would take place in their incomes in consequence of the repeal of the law that every animal was to be slaughtered at the sanctuary as a sacrifice (Lev. 17; vid., Deuteronomy 12:15ff.).

The only thing that admits of dispute is, whether this gift was to be presented from every animal that was slaughtered at home for private use, or only from those which were slaughtered for sacrificial meals, and therefore at the place of the sanctuary. Against the former view, for which appeal is made to *Philo*, *Josephus* (Ant. iv. 4, 4), and the Talmud, we may adduce not only "the difficulty of carrying out such a plan" (was every Israelite who slaughtered an ox, a sheep, or a goat to carry the pieces mentioned to the priests' town, which might be many miles away, or were the priests to appoint persons to collect them?), but the general use of the words זָבַח זֶבֶח. The noun זֶבֶח always signifies either slaughtering for a sacrificial meal or a slain sacrifice, and the verb זָבַח is never applied to ordinary slaughtering (for which שָׁחַט is the verb used), except in Deuteronomy 12:15 and 21 in connection with the repeal of the law that every slaughtering was to be a זֶבֶח שְׁלָמִים (Lev. 17:5); and there the use of the word זָבַח, instead of שָׁחַט, may be accounted for from the allusion to this particular law. At the same time, the Jewish tradition is probably right, when it understands by the זֶבֶח הַזֶּבַח in this verse, κατ' οἶκον θύειν εὐωχίας ἕνεκα (*Josephus*), or ἔξω τοῦ βωμοῦ θυομένοις ἕνεκα κρεωφαγίας (*Philo*), or, as in the *Mishnah Chol.* (x. 1), refers the gift prescribed in this passage to the חֹלִין, *profana*, and not to the מוקדשין, *consecrata*, that is to say, places it in the same category with the first-fruits, the tithe of tithes, and other less holy gifts, which might be consumed outside the court of the temple and the holy city (compare *Reland, Antiqq. ss.* P. ii. c. 4, § 11, with P. ii. c. 8, § 10). In all probability, the reference is to the slaughtering of oxen, sheep, or goats which

were not intended for *shelamim* in the more limited sense, i.e., for one of the three species of peace-offerings (Lev. 7:15, 16), but for festal meals in the broader sense, which were held in connection with the sacrificial meals prepared from the *shelamim*. For it is evident that the meals held by the people at the annual feasts when they had to appear before the Lord were not all *shelamim* meals, but that other festal meals were held in connection with these, in which the priests and Levites were to share, from the laws laid down with reference to the so-called second tithe, which could not only be turned into money by those who lived at a great distance from the sanctuary, such money to be applied to the purchase of the things required for the sacrificial meals at the place of the sanctuary, but which might also be appropriated every third year to the preparation of love-feasts for the poor in the different towns of the land (Deuteronomy 14:22–29). For in this case the animals were not slaughtered or sacrificed as *shelamim*, at all events not in the latter instance, because the slaughtering did not take place at the sanctuary. If therefore we restrict the gift prescribed here to the slaughtering of oxen and sheep or goats for such sacrificial meals in the wider sense, not only are the difficulties connected with the execution of this command removed, but also the objection, which arises out of the general use of the expression זָבַח זֶבֶח, to the application of this expression to every slaughtering that took place for domestic use. And beside this, the passage in 1 Sam. 2:13–16, to which *Calvin* calls attention, furnishes a historical proof that the priests could claim a portion of the flesh of the slain-offerings in addition to the heave-leg and wave-breast, since it is there charged as a sin on the part of the sons of Eli, not only that they took out of the cauldrons as much of the flesh which was boiling as they could take up with three-pronged forks, but that before the fat was burned upon the altar they asked for the pieces which belonged to the priest, to be given to them not cooked, but raw. From this *Michaelis* has drawn the correct conclusion, that even at that time the priests had a right to claim that, in

DEUTERONOMY	Page 78
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

addition to the portions of the sacrifices appointed by Moses in Lev. 7:34, a further portion of the thank-offerings should be given to them; though he does not regard the passage as referring to the law before us, since he supposes this to relate to every slaughtered animal which was not placed upon the altar.

**Deuteronomy 18:4.** In v. 4, Moses repeats the law concerning the first-fruits in Num. 18:12, 13 (cf. Ex. 22:28), for the purpose of extending it to the first produce of the sheep-shearing.

**Deuteronomy 18:5.** The reason for the right accorded to the priests was the choice of them for the office of standing "to minister in the name of Jehovah," sc., for all the tribes "*In the name of Jehovah*," not merely by the appointment, but also in the power of the Lord, as mediators of His grace. The words "*he and his sons*" point back quite to the Mosaic times, in which Aaron and his sons held the priest's office.

**Deuteronomy 18:6-8.** As the priests were to be remembered for their service on the part of the people (vv. 3-5), so the Levite also, who came from one of the towns of the land with all the desire of his soul to the place of the sanctuary, to minister there in the name of the Lord, was to eat a similar portion to all his Levitical brethren who stood there in service before the Lord. The verb גִּיר (sojourned) does not presuppose that the Levites were houseless, but simply that they had no hereditary possession in the land as the other tribes had, and merely lived like sojourners among the Israelites in the towns which were given up to them by the other tribes (see at Deuteronomy 12:12). "*All his brethren the Levites*" are the priests and those Levites who officiated at the sanctuary as assistants to the priests. It is assumed, therefore, that only a part of the Levites were engaged at the sanctuary, and the others lived in their towns. The apodosis follows in v. 8, "*part like part shall they eat*," sc., the new-comer and those already there. The former was to have the same share to eat as the latter, and to be maintained from the revenues of the sanctuary. These revenues are supposed

to be already apportioned by the previous laws, so that they by no means abolish the distinction between priests and Levites. We are not to think of those portions of the sacrifices and first-fruits only which fell to the lot of the priests, nor of the tithe alone, or of the property which flowed into the sanctuary through vows or free-will offerings, or in any other way, and was kept in the treasury and storehouse, but of tithes, sacrificial portions, and free-will offerings generally, which were not set apart exclusively for the priests. לְבַד מִמְכָּרָיו וגו', "*beside his sold with the fathers*," i.e., independently of what he receives from the sale of his patrimony. מִמְכָּר, the sale, then the thing sold, and the price or produce of what is sold, like מֶכֶר in Num.

20:19. לְבַד is unusual without מֶן, and *Knobel* would read מִמְכָּרָיו, from מִמְכָּר and מֶן, in consequence. עַל בֵּית־אֲבוֹתָם עַל הָאֲבוֹת stands for עַל הָאֲבוֹתָם (see at Ex. 6:25; κατὰ τὴν πατρίαν, LXX), according to or with the fathers' houses, i.e., the produce of the property which he possesses according to his family descent, or which is with his kindred. Whether עַל in this passage signifies "according to the measure of," or "with," in the sense of keeping or administering, cannot be decided. As the law in Lev. 25:33, 34, simply forbids the sale of the pasture grounds belonging to the Levites, but permits the sale of their houses, a Levite who went to the sanctuary might either let his property in the Levitical town, and draw the yearly rent, or sell the house which belonged to him there. In any case, these words furnish a convincing proof that there is no foundation for the assertion that the book of Deuteronomy assumes or affirms that the Levites were absolutely without possessions.

**Deuteronomy 18:9-22.** The Gift of Prophecy.—The Levitical priests, as the stated guardians and promoters of the law, had to conduct all the affairs of Israel with the Lord, not only instructing the people out of the law concerning the will of God, but sustaining and promoting the living fellowship with the Lord

DEUTERONOMY	Page 79
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

both of individuals and of the whole congregation, by the offering of sacrifices and service at the altar. But if the covenant fellowship with Himself and His grace, in which Jehovah had placed Israel as His people of possession, was to be manifested and preserved as a living reality amidst all changes in the political development of the nation and in the circumstances of private life, it would not do for the revelations from God to cease with the giving of the law and the death of Moses. For, as *Schultz* observes, "however the revelation of the law might aim at completeness, and even have regard to the more remote circumstances of the future, as, for example, where the king is referred to; yet in the transition from extraordinary circumstances into a more settled condition, which it foretells in Deuteronomy 17:14, and which actually took place under Samuel when the nation grew older (Deuteronomy 4:25), and in the decline and apostasy which certainly awaited it according to Deuteronomy 31:16-29, when false prophets should arise, by whom they were in danger of being led astray (Deuteronomy 13:2 and 18:20), as well as in the restoration which would follow after the infliction of punishment (Deuteronomy 4:29, 30; 30:1ff.); in all these great changes which awaited Israel from inward necessity, the revelation of the will of the Lord which they possessed in the law would nevertheless be insufficient." The priesthood, with its ordinances, would not suffice for that. As the promise of direct communications from God through the Urim and Thummim of the high priest was restricted to the single circumstance of the right of the whole congregation being endangered, and did not extend to the satisfaction of the religious necessities of individuals, it could afford no godly satisfaction to that desire for supernatural knowledge which arose at times in the hearts of individuals, and for which the heathen oracles made such ample provision in ungodly ways. If Israel therefore was to be preserved in faithfulness towards God, and attain the end of its calling as the congregation of the Lord, it

was necessary that the Lord should make known His counsel and will at the proper time through the medium of prophets, and bestow upon it in sure prophetic words what the heathen nations endeavoured to discover and secure by means of augury and soothsaying. This is the point of view from which Moses promises the sending of prophets in vv. 15-18, and lays down in vv. 19-22 the criteria for distinguishing between true and false prophets, as we may clearly see from the fact that in vv. 9-14 he introduces this promise with a warning against resorting to heathen augury, soothsaying, and witchcraft.

**Deuteronomy 18:9ff.** When Israel came into the land of Canaan, it was "*not to learn to do like the abominations of these nations*" (the Canaanites or heathen). There was not to be found in it any who caused his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, i.e., any worshipper of Moloch (see at Lev. 18:21), or one who practised soothsaying (see at Num. 23:23), or a wizard (see at Lev. 19:26), or a snake-charmer (see at Lev. 19:26), or a conjurer, or one who pronounced a ban (חָבַר, probably referring to the custom of binding or banning by magical knots), a necromancer and wise man (see at Lev. 19:31), or one who asked the dead, i.e., who sought oracles from the dead. Moses groups together all the words which the language contained for the different modes of exploring the future and discovering the will of God, for the purpose of forbidding every description of soothsaying, and places the prohibition of Moloch-worship at the head, to show the inward connection between soothsaying and idolatry, possibly because februation, or passing children through the fire in the worship of Moloch, was more intimately connected with soothsaying and magic than and other description of idolatry.

**Deuteronomy 18:12.** Whoever did this was an abomination to the Lord, and it was because of this abomination that He rooted out the Canaanites before Israel (cf. Lev. 18:24ff.).

DEUTERONOMY	Page 80
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 18:13, 14.** Israel, on the other hand, was to be *blameless* with Jehovah (עָם, in its intercourse with the Lord). Though the heathen whom they exterminated before them hearkened to conjurers and soothsayers, Jehovah their God had not allowed anything of the kind to them. הָאֱלֹהִים is placed first as a nominative absolute, for the sake of emphasis: *"but thou, so far as thou art concerned, not so."* כֵּן, thus, just so, such things (cf. Ex. 10:14). נָתַן, to grant, to allow (as in Gen. 20:6, etc.).

**Deuteronomy 18:15.** *"A prophet out of the midst of thee, out of thy brethren, as I am, will Jehovah thy God raise up to thee; to him shall ye hearken."* When Moses thus attaches to the prohibition against hearkening to soothsayers and practising soothsaying, the promise that Jehovah would raise up a prophet, etc., and contrasts what the Lord would do for His people with what He did not allow, it is perfectly evident from this simple connection alone, apart from the further context of the passage, in which Moses treats of the temporal and spiritual rulers of Israel (Deuteronomy 17 and 18), that the promise neither relates to one particular prophet, nor directly and exclusively to the Messiah, but treats of the sending of prophets generally. And this is also confirmed by what follows with reference to true and false prophets, which presupposes the rise of a plurality of prophets, and shows most incontrovertibly that it is not one prophet only, nor the Messiah exclusively, who is promised here. It by no means follows from the use of the singular, "a prophet," that Moses is speaking of one particular prophet only; but the idea expressed is this, that at any time when the people stood in need of a mediator with God like Moses, God would invariably send a prophet. The words, "out of the midst of thee, of thy brethren," imply that there would be no necessity for Israel to turn to heathen soothsayers or prophets, but that it would find the men within itself who would make known the word of the Lord. The expression, "like unto me," is explained by what follows in vv. 16–18 with regard to the circumstances, under which

the Lord had given the promise that He would send a prophet. It was at Sinai; when the people were filled with mortal alarm, after hearing the ten words which God addressed to them out of the fire, and entreated Moses to act as mediator between the Lord and themselves, that God might not speak directly to them any more. At that time the Lord gave the promise that He would raise up a prophet, and put His words into his mouth, that he might speak to the people all that the Lord commanded (cf. Deuteronomy 5:20ff.). The promised prophet, therefore, was to resemble Moses in this respect, that he would act as mediator between Jehovah and the people, and make known the words or the will of the Lord. Consequently the meaning contained in the expression "like unto me" was not that the future prophet would resemble Moses in all respect,—a meaning which has been introduced into it through an unwarrantable use of Num. 12:6–8, Deuteronomy 34:10, and Heb. 3:2, 5, for the purpose of proving the direct application of the promise to the Messiah alone, to the exclusion of the prophets of the Old Testament. If the resemblance of the future prophet to Moses, expressed in the words "like unto me," be understood as indicating the precise form in which God revealed Himself to Moses, speaking with him mouth to mouth, and not in a dream or vision, a discrepancy is introduced between this expression and the words which follow in v. 18, "I will put My words in his mouth;" since this expresses not the particular mode in which Moses received the revelations from God, in contrast with the rest of the prophets, but simply that form of divine communication or inspiration which was common to all the prophets (vid., Jer. 1:9; 5:14).

But whilst we are obliged to give up the direct and exclusive reference of this promise to the Messiah, which was the prevailing opinion in the early Church, and has been revived by *Kurtz*, *Auberlen*, and *Tholuck*, as not in accordance with the context or the words themselves, we cannot, on the other hand, agree with *v. Hofmann*, *Baur*, and *Knobel*, in restricting the passage to the Old Testament



DEUTERONOMY	Page 81
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

prophets, to the exclusion of the Messiah. There is no warrant for this limitation of the word “prophet,” since the expectation of the Messiah was not unknown to Moses and the Israel of his time, but was actually expressed in the promise of the seed of the woman, and Jacob’s prophecy concerning *Shiloh*; so that *O. v. Gerlach* is perfectly right in observing, that “this is a prediction of Christ as the true Prophet, precisely like that of the seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15.” The occasion, also, on which Moses received the promise of the “prophet” from the Lord, which he here communicated to the people,—namely, when the people desired a mediator between themselves and the Lord at Sinai, and this desire on their part was pleasing to the Lord,—shows that the promise should be understood in the full sense of the words, without any limitation whatever; that is to say, that Christ, in whom the prophetic character culminated and was completed, is to be included. Even *Ewald* admits, that “the prophet like unto Moses, whom God would raise up out of Israel and for Israel, can only be the true prophet generally;” and *Baur* also allows, that “historical exposition will not mistake the anticipatory reference of this expression to Christ, which is involved in the expectation that, in the future completion of the plan of salvation, the prophetic gift would form an essential element.” And lastly, the comparison instituted between the promised prophet and Moses, compels us to regard the words as referring to the Messiah. The words, “like unto me,” “like unto thee,” no more warrant us in excluding the Messiah on the one hand, than in excluding the Old Testament prophets on the other, since it is unquestionably affirmed that the prophet of the future would be as perfectly equal to his calling as Moses was to his,<sup>25</sup>—that He would carry out the mediation between the Lord and the people in the manner and the power of Moses. In this respect not one of the Old Testament prophets was fully equal to Moses, as is distinctly stated in Deuteronomy 34:10. All the prophets of the Old Testament stood within the sphere of the economy of the law, which was founded through the

mediatorial office of Moses; and even in their predictions of the future, they simply continued to build upon the foundation which was laid by Moses, and therefore prophesied of the coming of the servant of the Lord, who, as the Prophet of all prophets, would restore Jacob, and carry out the law and right of the Lord to the nations, even to the end of the world (Isa. 42, 49, 40, 61). This prophecy, therefore, is very properly referred to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, as having been fulfilled in Him. Not only had Philip this passage in his mind when he said to Nathanael, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law did write, Jesus of Nazareth,” whilst Stephen saw the promise of the prophet like unto Moses fulfilled in Christ (Acts 7:37); but Peter also expressly quotes it in Acts 3:22, 23, as referring to Christ; and even the Lord applies it to Himself in John 5:45–47, when He says to the Jews, “Moses, in whom ye trust, will accuse you; for if ye believed Moses, ye would also believe Me: for Moses wrote of Me.” In John 12:48–50, again, the reference to vv. 18 and 19 of this chapter is quite unmistakeable; and in the words, “hear ye Him” which were uttered from the cloud at the transfiguration of Jesus (Matt. 17:5), the expression in v. 15, “unto Him shall ye hearken,” is used *verbatim* with reference to Christ. Even the Samaritans founded their expectation of the Messiah (John 4:25) upon these words of Moses.<sup>26</sup>

**Deuteronomy 18:16–22.** With this assurance the Lord had fully granted the request of the people, “*according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God;*” and Israel, therefore, was all the more bound to hearken to the prophets, whom God would raise up from the midst of itself, and not to resort to heathen soothsayers. (On the fact itself, comp. Deuteronomy 5:20ff. with Ex. 20:15–17.) “*In the day of the assembly,*” as in Deuteronomy 9:10; 10:4.—The instructions as to their behaviour towards the prophets are given by Moses (vv. 19, 20) in the name of the Lord, for the purpose of enforcing obedience with all the greater emphasis. Whoever did not hearken to the words of the prophet who spoke in the name of the Lord, of him the Lord would require it, i.e., visit the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 82
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

disobedience with punishment (cf. Ps. 10:4, 13). On the other hand, the prophet who spoke in the name of the Lord what the Lord had not commanded him, i.e., proclaimed the thoughts of his own heart as divine revelations (cf. Num. 16:28), should die, like the prophet who spoke in the name of other gods. With נָבִיא, the predicate is introduced in the form of an apodosis.

**Deuteronomy 18:21, 22.** The false prophet was to be discovered by the fact, that the word proclaimed by him did not follow or come to pass, i.e., that his prophecy was not fulfilled. Of him they were not to be afraid. By this injunction the occurrence of what had been predicted is made the criterion of true prophecy, and not signs and wonders, which false prophets could also perform (cf. Deuteronomy 13:2ff.).

### Deuteronomy 19

Laws Concerning the Cities of Refuge, the Sacredness of Landmarks, and the Punishment of False Witnesses.—Ch. 19.

**Deuteronomy 19.** After laying down the most important features in the national constitution, Moses glances at the manifold circumstances of civil and family life, and notices in this and the two following chapters the different ways in which the lives of individuals might be endangered, for the purpose of awakening in the minds of the people a holy reverence for human life.

**Deuteronomy 19:1–13.** The laws concerning the Cities of Refuge for Unintentional Manslayers are not a mere repetition of the laws given in Num. 35:9–34, but rather an admonition to carry out those laws, with special reference to the future extension of the boundaries of the land.

**Deuteronomy 19:1–7.** As Moses had already set apart the cities of refuge for the land on the east of the Jordan (Deuteronomy 4:41ff.), he is speaking here simply of the land on the west, which Israel was to take possession of before long; and supplements the instructions in Num. 35:14, with directions to maintain the roads to

the cities of refuge which were to be set apart in Canaan itself, and to divide the land into three parts, viz., for the purpose of setting apart these cities, so that one city might be chosen for the purpose in every third of the land. For further remarks on this point, as well as with regard to the use of these cities (vv. 4–7), see at Num. 35:11ff.—In vv. 8–10 there follow the fresh instructions, that if the Lord should extend the borders of Israel, according to His promise given to the patriarchs, and should give them the whole land from the Nile to the Euphrates, according to Gen. 15:18, they were to add three other cities of refuge to these three, for the purpose of preventing the shedding of innocent blood. The three new cities of refuge cannot be the three appointed in Num. 35:14 for the land on this side of the Jordan, nor the three mentioned in v. 7 on the other side of Jordan, as *Knobel* and others suppose. Nor can we adopt *Hengstenberg's* view, that the three new ones are the same as the three mentioned in vv. 2 and 7, since they are expressly distinguished from “these three.” The meaning is altogether a different one. The circumstances supposed by Moses never existed, since the Israelites did not fulfil the conditions laid down in v. 9, viz., that they should keep the law faithfully, and love the Lord their God (cf. Deuteronomy 4:6; 6:5, etc.). The extension of the power of Israel to the Euphrates under David and Solomon, did not bring the land as far as this river into their actual possession, since the conquered kingdoms of Aram were still inhabited by the Aramaeans, who, though conquered, were only rendered tributary. And the Tyrians and Phoenicians, who belonged to the Canaanitish population, were not even attacked by David.

**Deuteronomy 19:10.** Innocent blood would be shed if the unintentional manslayer was not protected against the avenger of blood, by the erection of cities of refuge in every part of the land. If Israel neglected this duty, it would bring blood-guiltiness upon itself (“*and so blood be upon thee*”), because it had not done what was requisite to prevent the shedding of innocent blood.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 83
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 19:11–13.** But whatever care was to be taken by means of free cities to prevent the shedding of blood, the cities of refuge were not to be asylums for criminals who were deserving of death, nor to afford protection to those who had slain a neighbour out of hatred. If such murderers should flee to the free city, the elders (magistrates) of his own town were to fetch him out, and deliver him up to the avenger of blood, that he might die. The law laid down in Num. 35:16–21 is here still more minutely defined; but this does not transfer to the elders the duty of instituting a judicial inquiry, and deciding the matter, as *Riehm* follows *Vater* and *De Wette* in maintaining, for the purpose of proving that there is a discrepancy between Deuteronomy and the previous legislation. They are simply commanded to perform the duty devolving upon them as magistrates and administrators of local affairs. (On v. 13, see Deuteronomy 8:8 and 5.)

**Deuteronomy 19:14.** The prohibition against Removing a Neighbour's Landmark, which his ancestors had placed, is inserted here, not because landmarks were of special importance in relation to the free cities, and the removal of them might possibly be fatal to the unintentional manslayer (as *Clericus* and *Rosenmüller* assume), for the general terms of the prohibition are at variance with this, viz., "thy neighbour's landmark," and "in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit in the land;" but on account of the close connection in which a man's possession as the means of his support stood to the life of the man himself, "because property by which life is supported participates in the sacredness of life itself, just as in Deuteronomy 20:19, 20, sparing the fruit-trees is mentioned in connection with the men who were to be spared" (*Schultz*). A curse was to be pronounced upon the remover of landmarks, according to Deuteronomy 27:17, just as upon one who cursed his father, who led a blind man astray, or perverted the rights of orphans and widows (cf. Hos. 5:10; Prov. 22:28; 23:10). Landmarks were regarded as sacred among other nations also; by the Romans, for

example, they were held to be so sacred, that whoever removed them was to be put to death.

**Deuteronomy 19:15–21.** The Punishment of a False Witness.—To secure life and property against false accusations, Moses lays down the law in v. 15, that one witness only was not "to rise up against any one with reference to any crime or sin, with every sin that one commits" (i.e., to appear before a court of justice, or be accepted as sufficient), but everything was to be established upon the testimony of two or three witnesses. The rule laid down in Deuteronomy 17:6 and Num. 35:30 for capital crimes, is raised hereby into a law of general application (see at Num. 35:30). קוֹם (in v. 15*b*), to stand, i.e., to acquire legal force.—But as it was not always possible to bring forward two or three witnesses, and the statement of one witness could not well be disregarded, in vv. 16–18 Moses refers accusations of this kind to the higher tribunal at the sanctuary for investigation and decision, and appoints the same punishment for a false witness, which would have fallen upon the person accused, if he had been convicted of the crime with which he was charged. לְעֵנוּת בּוֹ סָרָה, "to testify against his departure," sc., from the law of God, not merely falling away into idolatry (Deuteronomy 13:6), but any kind of crime, as we may gather from v. 19, which would be visited with capital punishment.

**Deuteronomy 19:17.** The two men between whom the dispute lay, the accused and the witness, were to come before Jehovah, viz., before the priests and judges who should be in those days,—namely, at the place of the sanctuary, where Jehovah dwelt among His people (cf. Deuteronomy 17:9), and not before the local courts, as *Knobel* supposes. These judges were to investigate the case most thoroughly (cf. Deuteronomy 13:15); and if the witness had spoken lies, they were to do to him as he thought to do to his brother. The words from "behold" to "his brother" are parenthetical circumstantial clauses: "And, behold, is the witness a false witness, has he spoken a lie

DEUTERONOMY	Page 84
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

against his brother? Ye shall do," etc. זָמַם, generally to meditate evil. On v. 20, see Deuteronomy 13:12.

**Deuteronomy 19:21.** The *lex talionis* was to be applied without reserve (see at Ex. 21:23; Lev. 24:20). According to *Diod. Sic.* (i. 77), the same law existed in Egypt with reference to false accusers.

### Deuteronomy 20

Instructions for Future Wars.—Ch. 20.

**Deuteronomy 20.** The instructions in this chapter have reference to the wars which Israel might wage in future against non-Canaanitish nations (vv. 15ff.), and enjoin it as a duty upon the people of God to spare as much as possible the lives of their own soldiers and also of their enemies. All wars against their enemies, even though they were superior to them in resources, were to be entered upon by them without fear in reliance upon the might of their God; and they were therefore to exempt from military service not only those who had just entered into new social relations, and had not enjoyed the pleasures of them, but also the timid and fainthearted (vv. 1–9). Moreover, whenever they besieged hostile towns, they were to offer peace to their enemies, excepting only the Canaanites; and even if it were not accepted, they were to let the defenceless (viz., women and children) live, and not to destroy the fruit-trees before the fortifications (vv. 10–20).

**Deuteronomy 20:1–9.** Instructions Relating to Military Service.—If the Israelites went out to battle against their foes, and saw horses and chariots, a people more numerous than they were, they were not to be afraid, because Jehovah their God was with them. Horses and chariots constituted the principal strength of the enemies round about Israel; not of the Egyptians only (Ex. 14:7), and of the Canaanites and Philistines (Josh. 17:16; Judg. 4:3, 1 Sam. 13:5), but of the Syrians also (2 Sam. 8:4; 1 Chron. 18:4; 19:18; cf. Ps. 20:8).

**Deuteronomy 20:2–4.** If they were thus drawing near to war, i.e., arranging themselves

for war for the purpose of being mustered and marching in order into the battle (not just as the battle was commencing), the priest was to address the warriors, and infuse courage into them by pointing to the help of the Lord. "*The priest*" is not the high priest, but the priest who accompanied the army, like Phinehas in the war against the Midianites (Num. 31:6; cf. 1 Sam. 4:4, 11, 2 Chron. 13:12), whom the Rabbins call מְשִׁיחַ הַמִּלְחָמָה (the anointed of the battle), and raise to the highest dignity next to the high priest, no doubt simply upon the ground of Num. 31:6 (see *Lundius, jüd. Heiligth.* p. 523).

**Deuteronomy 20:5–9.** Moreover, the *shoterim*, whose duty it was, as the keepers of the genealogical tables, to appoint the men who were bound to serve, were to release such of the men who had been summoned to the war as had entered into domestic relations, which would make it a harder thing for them to be exposed to death than for any of the others: for example, any man who had built a new house and had not yet consecrated it, or had planted a vineyard and not yet eaten any of the fruit of it, or was betrothed to a wife and had not yet married her,—that such persons might not die before they had enjoyed the fruits of what they had done. "*Who is the man, who,*" i.e., whoever, every man who. "*Consecrated the house,*" viz., by taking possession and dwelling in it; entrance into the house was probably connected with a hospitable entertainment. According to *Josephus* (Ant. iv. 8, 41), the enjoyment of them was to last a year (according to the analogy of Deuteronomy 24:5). The Rabbins elaborated special ceremonies, among which *Jonathan* in his Targum describes the fastening of slips with sentences out of the law written upon them to the door-posts, as being the most important (see at Deuteronomy 6:9: for further details, see *Selden, de Synedriis* l. iii. c. 14, 15). *Cerem* is hardly to be restricted to vineyards, but applied to olive-plantations as well (see at Lev. 19:10). חָלַל, to make common, is to be explained from the fact, that when fruit-trees were planted (Lev. 19:23ff.), or vines set (Judg. 19:24), the fruit was not to be eaten for the first three

DEUTERONOMY	Page 85
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

years, and that of the fourth year was to be consecrated to the Lord; and it was only the fruit that was gathered in the fifth year which could be applied by the owner to his own use,—in other words, could be made common. The command to send away from the army to his own home a man who was betrothed but had not yet taken his wife, is extended still further in Deuteronomy 24:5, where it is stated that a newly married man was to be exempt for a whole year from military service and other public burdens. The intention of these instructions was neither to send away all persons who were unwilling to go into the war, and thus avoid the danger of their interfering with the readiness and courage of the rest of the army in prospect of the battle, nor to spare the lives of those persons to whom life was especially dear; but rather to avoid depriving any member of the covenant nation of his enjoyment of the good things of this life bestowed upon him by the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 20:8.** The first intention only existed in the case of the timid (the soft-hearted or despondent). לֹא יָמָס, that the heart of thy brethren “*may not flow away*,” i.e., may not become despondent (as in Gen. 17:15, etc.).

**Deuteronomy 20:9.** When this was finished, the *shoterim* were to appoint captains at the head of the people (of war). בִּקֵּד, to inspect, to muster, then to give the oversight, to set a person over anything (Num. 3:10; 4:27). The meaning “to lead the command” (*Schultz*) cannot be sustained; and if “captains of the armies” were the subject, and reference were made to the commanders in the war, the article would not be omitted. If the *shoterim* had to raise men for the war and organize the army, the division of the men into hosts (*Zebaoth*) and the appointment of the leaders would also form part of the duties of their office.

**Deuteronomy 20:10–20.** Instructions Concerning Sieges.—Vv. 10, 11. On advancing against a town to attack it, they were “*to call to it for peace*,” i.e., to summon it to make a peaceable surrender and submission (cf. Judg. 21:13). “*If it answered peace*,” i.e., returned an

answer conducing to peace, and “*opened*” (sc., its gates), the whole of its inhabitants were to become tributary to Israel, and serve it; consequently even those who were armed were not to be put to death, for Israel was not to shed blood unnecessarily. מָס does not mean feudal service, but a feudal slave (see at Ex. 1:11).

**Deuteronomy 20:12, 13.** If the hostile town, however, did not make peace, but prepared for war, the Israelites were to besiege it; and if Jehovah gave it into their hands, they were to slay all the men in it without reserve (“with the edge of the sword,” see at Gen. 34:26); but the women and children and all that was in the city, all its spoil, they were to take as prey for themselves, and to consume (eat) the spoil, i.e., to make use of it for their own maintenance.

**Deuteronomy 20:15–18.** It was in this way that Israel was to act with towns that were far off; but not with the towns of the Canaanites (“*these nations*”), which Jehovah gave them for an inheritance. In these no soul was to be left alive; but these nations were to be laid under the ban, i.e., altogether exterminated, that they might not teach the Israelites their abominations and sins (cf. Deuteronomy 7:1–4; 12:31). כָּל-נְשָׁמָה, lit., every breath, i.e., everything living, by which, however, human beings alone are to be understood (comp. Josh. 10:40; 11:11, with Deuteronomy 11:14).

**Deuteronomy 20:19, 20.** When they besieged a town a long time to conquer it, they were not to destroy its trees, to swing the axe upon them. That we are to understand by עֵץ the fruit-trees in the environs and gardens of the town, is evident from the motive appended: “*for of them* (הֵמָּנָה refers to עֵץ as a collective) *thou eatest, and thou shalt not hew them down*.” The meaning is: thou mayest suppress and destroy the men, but not the trees which supply thee with food. “*For is the tree of the field a man, that it should come into siege before thee?*” This is evidently the only suitable interpretation of the difficult words עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה בִּי הָאָדָם, and the one which has been expressed by all the older commentators, though in different ways. But it

DEUTERONOMY	Page 86
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

is one which can only be sustained grammatically by adopting the view propounded by *Clericus* and others: viz., by pointing the noun הָאֵדָם with ה interrog., instead of הָאֵדָם, and taking אֵדָם as the object, which its position in the sentence fully warrants (cf. *Ewald*, § 324, *b.* and 306, *b.*). The Masoretic punctuation is founded upon the explanation given by *Aben Ezra*, "Man is a tree of the field, i.e., lives upon and is fed by the fruits of the trees," which *Schultz* expresses in this way, "Man is bound up with the tree of the field, i.e., has his life in, or from, the tree of the field,"—an explanation, however, which cannot be defended by appealing to Deuteronomy 24:6, Eccl. 12:13, Ezek. 12:10, as these three passages are of a different kind. In no way whatever can הָאֵדָם be taken as the subject of the sentence, as this would not give any rational meaning. And if it were rendered as the object, in such sense as this, The tree of the field is a thing or affair of man, it would hardly have the article.

**Deuteronomy 20:20.** "Only the trees which thou knowest that they are not trees of eating (i.e., do not bear edible fruits), mayest thou hew down, and build a rampart against the town till it come down," i.e., fall down from its eminence. For יָרַד as applied to the falling or sinking of lofty fortifications, see Deuteronomy 28:52, Isa. 32:19. מְצֹר, compressing or forcing down; hence, as applied to towns, בּוֹא בְּמְצֹר, to come into siege, i.e., to be besieged (v. 19; 2 Kings 24:10; 25:2). In v. 20 it is used to denote the object, viz., the means of hemming in a town, i.e., the besieging rampart (cf. Ezek. 4:2).

### Deuteronomy 21

Expiation of an Uncertain Murder. Treatment of a Wife Who Had Been Taken Captive. Right of the First-Born. Punishment of a Refractory Son. Burial of a Man Who Had Been Hanged.—Ch. 21.

**Deuteronomy 21.** The reason for grouping together these five laws, which are apparently so different from one another, as well as for attaching them to the previous regulations, is to

be found in the desire to bring out distinctly the sacredness of life and of personal rights from every point of view, and impress it upon the covenant nation.

**Deuteronomy 21:1–9.** Expiation of a Murder Committed by an Unknown Hand.—Vv. 1 and 2. If any one was found lying in a field in the land of Israel (נָפַל fallen, then lying, Judg. 3:25; 4:22), having been put to death without its being known who had killed him (לֹא נֹדָע וגו'), a circumstantial clause, attached without a copula, see *Ewald*, § 341, *b.* 3), the elders and judges, sc., of the neighbouring towns,—the former as representatives of the communities, the latter as administrators of right,—were to go out and measure to the towns which lay round about the slain man, i.e., measure the distance of the body from the towns that were lying round about, to ascertain first of all which was the nearest town.

**Deuteronomy 21:3, 4.** This nearest town was then required to expiate the blood-guiltiness, not only because the suspicion of the crime or of participation in the crime fell soonest upon it, but because the guilt connected with the shedding of innocent blood rested as a burden upon it before all others. To this end the elders were to take a heifer (young cow), with which no work had ever been done, and which had not yet drawn in the yoke, i.e., whose vital force had not been diminished by labour (see at Num. 19:2), and bring it down into a brook-valley with water constantly flowing, and there break its neck. The expression, "it shall be that the city," is more fully defined by "the elders of the city shall take." The elders were to perform the act of expiation in the name of the city. As the murderer was not to be found, an animal was to be put to death in his stead, and suffer the punishment of the murderer. The slaying of the animal was not an expiatory sacrifice, and consequently there was no slaughtering and sprinkling of the blood; but, as the mode of death, viz., breaking the neck (vid., Ex. 13:13), clearly shows, it was a symbolical infliction of the punishment that should have been borne by the murderer, upon the animal which was

DEUTERONOMY	Page 87
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

substituted for him. To be able to take the guilt upon itself and bear it, the animal was to be in the full and undiminished possession of its vital powers. The slaying was to take place in a נַחֲלֵי אֵיתָן, a valley with water constantly flowing through it, which was not worked (cultivated) and sown. This regulation as to the locality in which the act of expiation was to be performed was probably founded upon the idea, that the water of the brook-valley would suck in the blood and clean it away, and that the blood sucked in by the earth would not be brought to light again by the ploughing and working of the soil.

**Deuteronomy 21:5.** The priests were to come near during this transaction; i.e., some priests from the nearest Levitical town were to be present at it, not to conduct the affair, but as those whom Jehovah had chosen to serve Him and to bless in His name (cf. Deuteronomy 13:5), and according to whose mouth (words) every dispute and every stroke happened (cf. Deuteronomy 17:8), i.e., simply as those who were authorized by the Lord, and as the representatives of the divine right, to receive the explanation and petition of the elders, and acknowledge the legal validity of the act.

**Deuteronomy 21:6–8.** The elders of the town were to wash their hands over the slain heifer, i.e., to cleanse themselves by this symbolical act from the suspicion of any guilt on the part of the inhabitants of the town in the murder that had been committed (cf. Ps. 26:6; 73:13; Matt. 27:24), and then answer (to the charge involved in what had taken place), and say, *“Our hands have not shed this blood* (on the singular שָׁפַךְ, see Ewald, § 317, a.), *and our eyes have not seen”* (sc., the shedding of blood), i.e., we have neither any part in the crime nor any knowledge of it: *“grant forgiveness* (lit., ‘cover up,’ viz., the blood-guiltiness) *to Thy people ... and give not innocent blood in the midst of Thy people Israel,”* i.e., lay not upon us the innocent blood that has been shed by imputation and punishment. *“And the blood shall be forgiven them,”* i.e., the bloodshed or murder shall not be

imputed to them. On נִכְפָּר, a mixed form from the Niphal and Hithpael, see Ges. § 55, and Ewald, § 132, c.

**Deuteronomy 21:9.** In this way Israel was to wipe away the innocent blood (the bloodshed) from its midst (cf. Num. 35:33). If the murderer were discovered afterwards, of course the punishment of death which had been inflicted vicariously upon the animal, simply because the criminal himself could not be found, would still fall upon him.

**Deuteronomy 21:10–14.** Treatment of a Wife who had been a Prisoner of War.—If an Israelite saw among the captives, who had been brought away in a war against foreign nations, a woman of beautiful figure, and loved her, and took her as his wife, he was to allow her a month’s time in his house, to bewail her separation from her home and kindred, and accustom herself to her new condition of life, before he married her. What is said here does not apply to the wars with the Canaanites, who were to be cut off (vid., Deuteronomy 7:3), but, as a comparison of the introductory words in v. 1 with Deuteronomy 20:1 clearly shows, to the wars which Israel would carry on with surrounding nations after the conquest of Canaan. שְׁבִיָּה and שָׁבִי, the captivity, for the captives.

**Deuteronomy 21:12, 13.** When the woman was taken home to the house of the man who had loved her, she was to shave her head, and make, i.e., cut, her nails (cf. 2 Sam. 19:25),—both customary signs of purification (on this signification of the cutting of the hair, see Lev. 14:8 and Num. 8:7),—as symbols of her passing out of the state of a slave, and of her reception into the fellowship of the covenant nation. This is perfectly obvious in her laying aside her prisoner’s clothes. After putting off the signs of captivity, she was to sit (dwell) in the house, and bewail her father and mother for a month, i.e., console herself for her separation from her parents, whom she had lost, that she might be able to forget her people and her father’s house (Ps. 45:11), and give herself up henceforth in love to her husband with an undivided heart.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 88
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

The intention of these laws was not to protect the woman against any outbreak of rude passion on the part of the man, but rather to give her time and leisure to loosen herself inwardly from the natural fellowship of her nation and kindred, and to acquire affection towards the fellowship of the people of God, into which she had entered against her will, that her heart might cherish love to the God of Israel, who had given her favour in the eyes of her master, and had taken from her the misery and reproach of slavery. But her master becoming her husband, she entered into the rights of a daughter of Israel, who had been sold by her father to a man to be his wife (Ex. 21:7ff.). If after this her husband should find no pleasure in her, he was to let her go לְנַפְשָׁהּ, i.e., at her free will, and not sell her for money (cf. Ex. 21:8). *"Thou shalt not put constraint upon her, because thou hast humbled her."* הִתְעַמְרָה, which only occurs again in Deuteronomy 24:7, probably signifies to throw oneself upon a person, to practise violence towards him (cf. Ges. thes. p. 1046).

**Deuteronomy 21:15–17.** The Right of the First-Born.—Whilst the previous law was intended to protect the slave taken in war against the caprice of her Israelitish master, the law which follows is directed against the abuse of paternal authority in favour of a favourite wife. If a man had two wives, of whom one was beloved and the other hated,—as was the case, for example, with Jacob,—and had sons by both his wives, but the first-born by the wife he hated, he was not, when dividing his property as their inheritance, to make the son of the wife he loved the first-born, i.e., was not to give him the inheritance of the first-born, but was to treat the son of the hated wife, who was really the first-born son, as such, and to give him a double share of all his possession. בְּבֵר, to make or institute as first-born. עַל-פְּנֵי בֶן וְגו', over (by) the face of, i.e., opposite to the first-born son of the hated, when he was present; in other words, "during his lifetime" (cf. Gen. 11:28). יָבִיר, to regard as that which he is, the rightful

first-born. The inheritance of the first-born consisted in *"a mouth of two"* (i.e., a mouthful, portion, share of two) of all that was by him, all that he possessed. Consequently the first-born inherited twice as much as any of the other sons. *"Beginning of his strength"* (as in Gen. 49:3). This right of primogeniture did not originate with Moses, but was simply secured by him against arbitrary invasion. It was founded, no doubt, upon hereditary tradition; just as we find in many other nations, that certain privileges are secured to the first-born sons above those born afterwards.

**Deuteronomy 21:18–21.** Punishment of a Refractory Son.—The laws upon this point aim not only at the defence, but also at the limitation, of parental authority. If any one's son was unmanageable and refractory, not hearkening to the voice of his parents, even when they chastised him, his father and mother were to take him and lead him out to the elders of the town into the gate of the place. The elders are not regarded here as judges in the strict sense of the word, but as magistrates, who had to uphold the parental authority, and administer the local police. The gate of the town was the forum, where the public affairs of the place were discussed (cf. Deuteronomy 22:15; 25:7); as it is in the present day in Syria (*Seetzen*, R. ii. p. 88), and among the Moors (*Höst*, Nachrichten v. Marokkos, p. 239).

**Deuteronomy 21:20.** Here they were to accuse the son as being unmanageable, refractory, disobedient, as "a glutton and a drunkard." These last accusations show the reason for the unmanageableness and refractoriness.

**Deuteronomy 21:21.** In consequence of this accusation, all the men of the town were to stone him, so that he died. By this the right was taken away from the parents of putting an incorrigible son to death (cf. Prov. 19:18), whilst at the same time the parental authority was fully preserved. Nothing is said about any evidence of the charge brought by the parents, or about any judicial inquiry generally. "In such a case the charge was a proof in itself. For if the heart of a father and mother could be brought



DEUTERONOMY	Page 89
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

to such a point as to give up their child to the judge before the community of the nation, everything would have been done that a judge would need to know" (*Schnell, d. isr. Recht*, p. 11).—On v. 21b, cf. Deuteronomy 13:6 and 12.

**Deuteronomy 21:22, 23.** Burial of those who had been Hanged.—If there was a sin upon a man, *מִשְׁפָּט מוֹת*, lit., a right of death, i.e., a capital crime (cf. Deuteronomy 19:6 and 22:26), and he was put to death, and they hanged him upon a tree (wood), his body was not to remain upon the wood over night, but they were to bury him on the same day upon which he as hanged; "*for the hanged man is a curse of God,*" and they were not to defile the land which Jehovah gave for an inheritance. The hanging, not of criminals who were to be put to death, but of those who had been executed with the sword, was an intensification of the punishment of death (see at Num. 25:4), inasmuch as the body was thereby exposed to peculiar kinds of abominations. Moses commanded the burial of those who had been hanged upon the day of their execution,—that is to say, as we may see from the application of this law in Josh. 8:29; 10:26, 27, before sunset,—because the hanged man, being a curse of God, defiled the land. The land was defiled not only by vices and crimes (cf. Lev. 18:24, 28; Num. 35:34), but also by the exposure to view of criminals who had been punished with death, and thus had been smitten by the curse of God, inasmuch as their shameful deeds were thereby publicly exposed to view. We are not to think of any bodily defilement of the land through the decomposition consequent upon death, as *J. D. Mich.* and *Sommer* suppose; so that there is no ground for speaking of any discrepancy between this and the old law.—(On the application of this law to Christ, see Gal. 3:13.)—This regulation is appended very loosely to what precedes. The link of connection is contained in the thought, that with the punishment of the wicked the recollection of their crimes was also to be removed.

## Deuteronomy 22

The Duty to Love One's Neighbour; And Warning Against a Violation of the Natural Order of Things. Instructions to Sanctify the Marriage State.—Ch. 22.

**Deuteronomy 22.** Going deeper and deeper into the manifold relations of the national life, Moses first of all explains in vv. 1–12 the attitude of an Israelite, on the one hand, towards a neighbour; and, on the other hand, towards the natural classification and arrangement of things, and shows how love should rule in the midst of all these relations. The different relations brought under consideration are selected rather by way of examples, and therefore follow one another without any link of connection, for the purpose of exhibiting the truth in certain concrete cases, and showing how the covenant people were to hold all the arrangement of God sacred, whether in nature or in social life.

**Deuteronomy 22:1–12.** In vv. 1–4 Moses shows, by a still further expansion of Ex. 23:4, 5, how the property of a neighbour was to be regarded and preserved. If any man saw an ox or a sheep of his brother's (fellow-countryman) going astray, he was not to draw back from it, but to bring it back to his brother; and if the owner lived at a distance, or was unknown, he was to take it into his own house or farm, till he came to seek it. He was also to do the same with an ass or any other property that another had lost.

**Deuteronomy 22:4.** A fallen animal belonging to another he was also to help up (as in Ex. 23:5: except that in this case, instead of a brother generally, an enemy or hater is mentioned).

**Deuteronomy 22:5.** As the property of a neighbour was to be sacred in the estimation of an Israelite, so also the divine distinction of the sexes, which was kept sacred in civil life by the clothing peculiar to each sex, was to be not less but even more sacredly observed. "*There shall not be man's things upon a woman, and a man shall not put on a woman's clothes.*" *כְּלִי* does not

DEUTERONOMY	Page 90
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

signify clothing merely, nor arms only, but includes every kind of domestic and other utensils (as in Ex. 22:6; Lev. 11:32; 13:49). The immediate design of this prohibition was not to prevent licentiousness, or to oppose idolatrous practices (the proofs which *Spencer* has adduced of the existence of such usages among heathen nations are very far-fetched); 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 even, for example, as the emancipation of a woman—was unnatural, and therefore an abomination in the sight of God.

**Deuteronomy 22:6, 7.** The affectionate relation of parents to their young, which God had established even in the animal world, was also to be kept just as sacred. If any one found a bird's nest by the road upon a tree, or upon the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the mother sitting upon them, he was not to take the mother with the young ones, but to let the mother fly, and only take the young. נָקְרָא for נִקְרָה, as in Ex. 5:3. The command is related to the one in Lev. 22:28 and Ex. 23:19, and is placed upon a par with the commandment relating to parents, by the fact that obedience is urged upon the people by the same promise in both instances (vid., Deuteronomy 5:16; Ex. 20:12).

**Deuteronomy 22:8.** Still less were they to expose human life to danger through carelessness. *"If thou build a new house, make a rim (maakeh)— i.e., a balustrade—to thy roof, that thou bring not blood-guiltiness upon thy house, if any one fall from it."* The roofs of the Israelitish houses were flat, as they mostly are in the East, so that the inhabitants often lived upon them (Josh. 2:6; 2 Sam. 11:2; Matt. 10:27).—In vv. 9–11, there follow several prohibitions against mixing together the things which are separated in God's creation, consisting partly of a verbal repetition of Lev. 19:19 (see the explanation of this passage).—To this there is appended in v. 12 the law concerning the tassels upon the hem of the

upper garment (Num. 15:37ff.), which were to remind the Israelites of their calling, to walk before the Lord in faithful fulfilment of the commandments of God (see the commentary upon this passage).

**Deuteronomy 22:13–29.** Laws of Chastity and Marriage.—Higher and still holier than the order of nature stands the moral order of marriage, upon which the well-being not only of domestic life, but also of the civil commonwealth of nations, depends. Marriage must be founded upon fidelity and chastity on the part of those who are married. To foster this, and secure it against outbreaks of malice and evil lust, was the design and object of the laws which follow. The first (vv. 13–21) relates to the chastity of a woman on entering into the married state, which might be called in question by her husband, either from malice or with justice. The former case is that which Moses treats of first of all. If a man took a wife, and came to her, and hated her, i.e., turned against her after gratifying his carnal desires (like Amnon, for example, 2 Sam. 13:15), and in order to get rid of her again, attributed "deeds or things of words" to her, i.e., things which give occasion for words or talk, and so brought an evil name upon her, saying, that on coming to her he did not find virginity in her. בְּתוּלִים, virginity, here the signs of it, viz., according to v. 17, the marks of a first intercourse upon the bed-clothes or dress.

**Deuteronomy 22:15ff.** In such a case the parents of the young woman (הַנְּעִמָּה for הַנְּעִמָּה, as in Gen. 24:14, 28, according to the earliest usage of the books of Moses, a virgin, then also a young woman, e.g., Ruth 2:6; 4:12) were to bring the matter before the elders of the town into the gate (the judicial forum; see Deuteronomy 21:19), and establish the chastity and innocence of their daughter by spreading the bed-clothes before them. It was not necessary to this end that the parents should have taken possession of the spotted bed-clothes directly after the marriage night, as in customarily done by the Bedouins and the lower classes of the Moslem in Egypt and Syria

DEUTERONOMY	Page 91
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

(cf. Niebuhr, *Beschr. v. Arab.* pp. 35ff.; Arvieux, *merkw. Nachr.* iii. p. 258; Burckhardt, *Beduinen*, p. 214, etc.). It was sufficient that the cloth should be kept, in case such a proof might be required.

**Deuteronomy 22:18ff.** The elders, as the magistrates of the place, were then to send for the man who had so calumniated his young wife, and to chastise him (יָסַר, as in Deuteronomy 21:18, used to denote bodily chastisement, thought the limitation of the number of strokes to forty save one, may have been a later institution of the schools); and in addition to this they were to impose a fine upon him of 100 shekels of silver, which he was to pay to the father of the young wife for his malicious calumnation of an Israelitish maiden,—twice as much as the seducer of a virgin was to pay to her father for the reproach brought upon him by the humiliation of his daughter (v. 29); and lastly, they were to deprive the man of the right of divorce from his wife.

**Deuteronomy 22:20, 21.** In the other case, however, if the man's words were true, and the girl had not been found to be a virgin, the elders were to bring her out before the door of her father's house, and the men of the town were to stone her to death, because she had committed a folly in Israel (cf. Gen. 34:7), to commit fornication in her father's house. The punishment of death was to be inflicted upon her, not so much because she had committed fornication, as because notwithstanding this she had allowed a man to marry her as a spotless virgin, and possibly even after her betrothal had gone with another man (cf. vv. 23, 24). There is no ground for thinking of unnatural wantonness, as *Knobel* does.

**Deuteronomy 22:22.** If any one lay with a married woman, they were both of them to be put to death as adulterers (cf. Lev. 20:10).

**Deuteronomy 22:23–29.** In connection with the seduction of a virgin (נַעֲרָה, *puella*, a marriageable girl; בְּתוּלָה, *virgo immaculata*, a virgin), two, or really three, cases are

distinguished; viz., (1) whether she was betrothed (vv. 23–27), or not betrothed (vv. 28, 29); (2) if she were betrothed, whether it was (a) in the town (vv. 23, 24) or (b) in the open field (vv. 25–27) that she had been violated by a man.

**Deuteronomy 22:23, 24.** If a betrothed virgin had allowed a man to have intercourse with her (i.e., one who was not her bridegroom), they were both of them, the man and the girl, to be led out to the gate of the town, and stoned that they might die: the girl, because she had not cried in the city, i.e., had not called for help, and consequently was to be regarded as consenting to the deed; the man, because he had humbled his neighbour's wife. The betrothed woman was placed in this respect upon a par with a married woman, and in fact is expressly called a wife in v. 24. Betrothal was the first step towards marriage, even if it was not a solemn act attested by witnesses. Written agreements of marriage were not introduced till a later period (Tobit 7:14; *Tr. Ketuboth* i. 2).

**Deuteronomy 22:25–27.** If, on the other hand, a man met a betrothed girl in the field, and laid hold of her and lay with her, the man alone was to die, and nothing was to be done to the girl. "*There is in the damsel no death-sin* (i.e., no sin to be punished with death); *but as when a man riseth against his neighbour and slayeth him, even so is this matter.*" In the open field the girl had called for help, but no one had helped her. It was therefore a forcible rape.

**Deuteronomy 22:28, 29.** The last case: if a virgin was not betrothed, and a man seized her and lay with her, and they were found, i.e., discovered or convicted of their deed, the man was to pay the father of the girl fifty shekels of silver, for the reproach brought upon him and his house, and to marry the girl whom he had humbled, without ever being able to divorce her. This case is similar to the one mentioned in Ex. 22:15, 16. The omission to mention the possibility of the father refusing to give him his daughter for a wife, makes no essential difference. It is assumed as self-evident here, that such a right was possessed by the father.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 92
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 22:30.** (or Deuteronomy 23:1). This verse, in which the prohibition of incest is renewed by a repetition of the first provision in the earlier law (Lev. 18:7, 8), is no doubt much better adapted to form the close of the laws of chastity and marriage, than the introduction to the laws which follow concerning the right of citizenship in the congregation of the Lord.

### Deuteronomy 23

Regulations as to the Right of Citizenship in the Congregation of the Lord.—Ch. 23.

**Deuteronomy 23.** From the sanctification of the house and the domestic relation, to which the laws of marriage and chastity in the previous chapter pointed, Moses proceeds to instructions concerning the sanctification of their union as a congregation: he gives directions as to the exclusion of certain persons from the congregation of the Lord, and the reception of others into it (vv. 1–8); as to the preservation of the purity of the camp in time of war (vv. 9–14); as to the reception of foreign slaves into the land, and the removal of licentious persons out of it (vv. 15–18); and lastly, as to certain duties of citizenship (19–25).

**Deuteronomy 23:1–8.** The Right of Citizenship in the Congregation of the Lord.—V. 1. Into the congregation of the Lord there was not to come, i.e., not to be received, any person who was mutilated in his sexual member. פְּצוּעֵ־דָבָה, literally wounded by crushing, i.e., mutilated in this way; *Vulg. eunuchus attritis vel amputatis testiculis*. Not only animals (see at Lev. 22:24), but men also, were castrated in this way. כְּרוֹת שְׁפָכָה was one whose sexual member was cut off; *Vulg. abscisso veretro*. According to *Mishnah Jebam. vi. 2*, “*contusus דָּבָה est omnis, cujus testiculi vulnerati sunt, vel certe unus eorum; exsectus (כְּרוֹת), cujus membrum virile praecisum est.*” In the modern East, emasculation is generally performed in this way (see *Tournefort, Reise. ii. p. 259*, and *Burckhardt, Nubien*, pp. 450, 451). The reason for the exclusion of emasculated persons from the

congregation of Jehovah, i.e., not merely from office (*officio et publico magistratu, Luth.*) and from marriage with an Israelitish woman (*Fag., C. a Lap.*, and others), but from admission into the covenant fellowship of Israel with the Lord, is to be found in the mutilation of the nature of man as created by God, which was irreconcilable with the character of the people of God. Nature is not destroyed by grace, but sanctified and transformed. This law, however, was one of the ordinances intended for the period of infancy, and has lost its significance with the spread of the kingdom of God over all the nations of the earth (Isa. 56:4).

**Deuteronomy 23:2.** So also with the מְמֻזָּר, i.e., not persons begotten out of wedlock, illegitimate children generally (*LXX, Vulg.*), but, according to the *Talmud* and the *Rabbins*, those who were begotten in incest or adultery (cf. *Ges. thes. p. 781*). The etymology of the word is obscure. The only other place in which it occurs is Zech. 9:6; and it is neither contracted from מוֹזֵר and זָר (according to the *Talmud*, and *Hitzig* on Zech. 9:6), nor from זָר מְעַם (*Geiger Urschr. p. 52*), but in all probability is to be derived from a root מְזָר, synonymous with the Arabic word “to be corrupt, or foul.” The additional clause, “*not even in the tenth generation,*” precludes all possibility of their ever being received. Ten is the number of complete exclusion. In v. 3, therefore, “*for ever*” is added. The reason is the same as in the case of mutilated persons, namely, their springing from a connection opposed to the divine order of the creation.

**Deuteronomy 23:3–6.** Also no Ammonite or Moabite was to be received, not even in the tenth generation; not, however, because their forefathers were begotten in incest (*Gen. 19:30ff.*), as *Knobel* supposes, but on account of the hostility they had manifested to the establishment of the kingdom of God. Not only had they failed to give Israel a hospitable reception on its journey (see at Deuteronomy 2:29), but they (*viz.*, the king of the Moabites) had even hired Balaam to curse Israel. In this way they had brought upon themselves the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 93
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

curse which falls upon all those who curse Israel, according to the infallible word of God (Gen. 12:3), the truth of which even Balaam was obliged to attest in the presence of Balak (Num. 24:9); although out of love to Israel the Lord turned the curse of Balaam into a blessing (cf. Num. 22–24). For this reason Israel was never to seek their welfare and prosperity, i.e., to make this an object of its care (“to seek,” as in Jer. 29:7); not indeed from personal hatred, for the purpose of repaying evil with evil, since this neither induced Moses to publish the prohibition, nor instigated Ezra when he put the law in force, by compelling the separation of all Ammonitish, Moabitish, and Canaanitish wives from the newly established congregation in Jerusalem (Ezra 9:12). How far Moses was from being influenced by such motives of personal or national revenge is evident, apart from the prohibition in Deuteronomy 2:9 and 19 against making war upon the Moabites and Ammonites, from the command which follows in vv. 8 and 9 with reference to the Edomites and Egyptians. These nations had also manifested hostility to the Israelites. Edom had come against them when they desired to march peaceably through his land (Num. 20:18ff.), and the Pharaohs of Egypt had heavily oppressed them. Nevertheless, Israel as to keep the bond of kindred sacred (“he is thy brother”), and not to forget in the case of the Egyptians the benefits derived from their sojourn in their land. Their children might come into the congregation of the Lord in the third generation, i.e., the great-grandchildren of Edomites of Egyptians, who had lived as strangers in Israel (see at Ex. 20:5). Such persons might be incorporated into the covenant nation by circumcision.

**Deuteronomy 23:9–14.** Preservation of the Purity of the Camp in Time of War.—The bodily appearance of the people was also to correspond to the sacredness of Israel as the congregation of the Lord, especially when they gathered in hosts around their God. *“When thou marchest out as a camp against thine enemies, beware of every evil thing.”* What is meant by an

“evil thing” is stated in vv. 10–13, viz., uncleanness, and uncleanness of the body.

**Deuteronomy 23:10, 11.** The person who had become unclean through a nightly occurrence, was to go out of the camp and remain there till he had cleansed himself in the evening. On the journey through the desert, none but those who were affected with uncleanness of a longer duration were to be removed from the camp (Num. 5:2) but when they were encamped, this law was to apply to even lighter defilements.

**Deuteronomy 23:12, 13.** The camp of war was also not to be defiled with the dirt of excrements. Outside the camp there was to be a space or place (דָּר, as in Num. 2:17) for the necessities of nature, and among their implements they were to have a spade, with which they were to dig when they sat down, and then cover it up again. דָּרָה, generally a plug, here a tool for sticking in, i.e., for digging into the ground.

**Deuteronomy 23:14.** For the camp was to be (to be kept) holy, because Jehovah walked in the midst of it, in order that He might not see *“nakedness of a thing,”* i.e., anything to be ashamed of (see at Deuteronomy 24:1) in the people, *“and turn away from thee.”* There was nothing shameful in the excrement itself; but the want of reverence, which the people would display through not removing it, would offend the Lord and drive Him out of the camp of Israel.

**Deuteronomy 23:15–18.** Toleration and Non-Toleration in the Congregation of the Lord.—Vv. 15, 16. A slave who had escaped from his master to Israel was not to be given up, but to be allowed to dwell in the land, wherever he might choose, and not to be oppressed. The reference is to a slave who had fled to them from a foreign country, on account of the harsh treatment which he had received from his heathen master. The plural אֲדָמִים denotes the rule.

**Deuteronomy 23:17, 18.** On the other hand, male and female prostitutes of Israelitish descent were not to be tolerated; i.e., it was not

DEUTERONOMY	Page 94
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

to be allowed, that either a male or female among the Israelites should give himself up to prostitution as an act of religious worship. The exclusion of foreign prostitutes was involved in the command to root out the Canaanites. קְדָשָׁה and קְדָשָׁה were persons who prostituted themselves in the worship of the Canaanitish Astarte (see at Gen. 38:21).—*“The wages of a prostitute and the money of dogs shall not come into the house of the Lord on account of (לְ, for the more remote cause, Ewald, § 217) any vow; for even both these (viz., even the prostitute and dog, not merely their dishonourable gains) are abomination unto the Lord thy God.”* “The hire of a whore” is what the *kedeshah* was paid for giving herself up. “The price of a dog” is not the price paid for the sale of a dog (*Bochart, Spencer, Iken, Baumgarten*, etc.), but is a figurative expression used to denote the gains of the *kadesh*, who was called κίναϊδος by the Greeks, and received his name from the dog-like manner in which the male *kadesh* debased himself (see Rev. 22:15, where the unclean are distinctly called “dogs”).

**Deuteronomy 23:19–25.** Different Theocratic Rights of Citizenship.—Vv. 19, 20. Of his brother (i.e., his countryman), the Israelite was not to take interest for money, food, or anything else that he lent to him; but only of strangers (non-Israelites: cf. Ex. 22:24 and Lev. 25:36, 37).

**Deuteronomy 23:21–23.** Vows vowed to the Lord were to be fulfilled without delay; but omitting to vow was not a sin. (On vows themselves, see at Lev. 27 and Num. 30:2ff.) נָדְבָה is an accusative defining the meaning more fully: in free will, spontaneously.

**Deuteronomy 23:24, 25.** In the vineyard and cornfield of a neighbour they might eat at pleasure to still their hunger, but they were not to put anything into a vessel, or swing a sickle upon another’s corn, that is to say, carry away any store of grapes or ears of corn. כְּנַפְשְׁךָ, according to thy desire, or appetite (cf. Deuteronomy 14:26). “Pluck the ears:” cf. Matt.

12:1; Luke 6:1.—The right of hungry persons, when passing through a field, to pluck ears of corn, and rub out the grains and eat, is still recognised among the Arabs (vid., *Rob. Pal.* ii. 192).

## Deuteronomy 24

On Divorce. Warnings Against Want of Affection or Injustice.—Ch. 24.

**Deuteronomy 24:1–5.** Vv. 1–5 contain two laws concerning the relation of a man to his wife. The first (vv. 1–4) has reference to divorce. In these verses, however, divorce is not established as a right; all that is done is, that in case of a divorce a reunion with the divorced wife is forbidden, if in the meantime she had married another man, even though the second husband had also put her away, or had died. The four verses form a period, in which vv. 1–3 are the clauses of the protasis, which describe the matter treated about; and v. 4 contains the apodosis, with the law concerning the point in question. If a man married a wife, and he put her away with a letter of divorce, because she did not please him any longer, and the divorced woman married another man, and he either put her away in the same manner or died, the first husband could not take her as his wife again. The putting away (divorce) of a wife with a letter of divorce, which the husband gave to the wife whom he put away, is assumed as a custom founded upon tradition. This tradition left the question of divorce entirely at the will of the husband: “if the wife does not find favour in his eyes (i.e., does not please him), because he has found in her something shameful” (Deuteronomy 23:15). עֲרֹוּה, nakedness, shame, disgrace (Isa. 20:4; 1 Sam. 20:30); in connection with דְּבָרָה, the shame of a thing, i.e., a shameful thing (LXX ἄσχημον πράγμα; *Vulg. aliquam faetiditatem*). The meaning of this expression as a ground of divorce was disputed even among the Rabbins. *Hillel’s* school interpret it in the widest and most lax manner possible, according to the explanation of the Pharisees in Matt. 19:3, “for every cause.” They no doubt followed the rendering of *Onkelos*, עֲבִירַת פְּתֻגָּם, the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 95
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

transgression of a thing; but this is contrary to the use of the word עֲרוּהָ, to which the interpretation given by *Shammai* adhered more strictly. His explanation of דְּבַר עֲרוּהָ is “*rem impudicam, libidinem, lasciviam, impudicitiam.*” Adultery, to which some of the Rabbins would restrict the expression, is certainly not to be thought of, because this was to be punished with death.<sup>27</sup> סֵפֶר כְּרִיתָה, βιβλίον ἀποστασίου, a letter of divorce; כְּרִיתָה, hewing off, cutting off, sc., from the man, with whom the wife was to be one flesh (Gen. 2:24). The custom of giving letters of divorce was probably adopted by the Israelites in Egypt, where the practice of writing had already found its way into all the relations of life.<sup>28</sup> The law that the first husband could not take his divorced wife back again, if she had married another husband in the meantime, even supposing that the second husband was dead, would necessarily put a check upon frivolous divorces. Moses could not entirely abolish the traditional custom, if only “because of the hardness of the people’s hearts” (Matt. 19:8). The thought, therefore, of the impossibility of reunion with the first husband, after the wife had contracted a second marriage, would put some restraint upon a frivolous rupture of the marriage tie: it would have this effect, that whilst, on the one hand, the man would reflect when inducements to divorce his wife presented themselves, and would recall a rash act if it had been performed, before the wife he had put away had married another husband; on the other hand, the wife would yield more readily to the will of her husband, and seek to avoid furnishing him with an inducement for divorce. But this effect would be still more readily produced by the reason assigned by Moses, namely, that the divorced woman was defiled (הִטְמָאָה, *Hothpael*, as in Num. 1:47) by her marriage with a second husband. The second marriage of a woman who had been divorced is designated by Moses a defilement of the woman, primarily no doubt with reference to the fact that the *emissio seminis* in sexual intercourse rendered unclean,

though not merely in the sense of such a defilement as was removed in the evening by simple washing, but as a moral defilement, i.e., blemishing, desecration of the sexual communion with was sanctified by marriage, in the same sense in which adultery is called a defilement in Lev. 18:20 and Num. 5:13, 14. Thus the second marriage of a divorced woman was placed *implicite* upon a par with adultery, and some approach made towards the teaching of Christ concerning marriage: “Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery” (Matt. 5:32).—But if the second marriage of a divorced woman was a moral defilement, of course the wife could not marry the first again even after the death of her second husband, not only because such a reunion would lower the dignity of the woman, and the woman would appear too much like property, which could be disposed of at one time and reclaimed at another (*Schultz*), but because the defilement of the wife would be thereby repeated, and even increased, as the moral defilement which the divorced wife acquired through the second marriage was not removed by a divorce from the second husband, nor yet by his death. Such defilement was an abomination before Jehovah, by which they would cause the land to sin, i.e., stain it with sin, as much as by the sins of incest and unnatural licentiousness (Lev. 18:25).

Attached to this law, which is intended to prevent a frivolous severance of the marriage tie, there is another in v. 5, which was of a more positive character, and adapted to fortify the marriage bond. The newly married man was not required to perform military service for a whole year; “*and there shall not come* (anything) *upon him with regard to any matter.*” The meaning of this last clause is to be found in what follows: “*Free shall he be for his house for a year,*” i.e., they shall put no public burdens upon him, that he may devote himself entirely to his newly established domestic relations, and be able to gladden his wife (compare Deuteronomy 20:7).

DEUTERONOMY	Page 96
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 24:6–9. Various Prohibitions.**—V. 6. “No man shall take in pledge the handmill and millstone, for he (who does this) is pawning life.” רָחִים, the handmill; רָכֶב, lit., the runner, i.e., the upper millstone. Neither the whole mill nor the upper millstone was to be asked for as a pledge, by which the mill would be rendered useless, since the handmill was indispensable for preparing the daily food for the house; so that whoever took them away injured life itself, by withdrawing what was indispensable to the preservation of life. The mill is mentioned as one specimen of articles of this kind, like the clothing in Ex. 22:25, 26, which served the poor man as bed-clothes also. Breaches of this commandment are reprov'd in Amos 2:8; Job 22:6; Prov. 20:16; 22:27; 27:13.

**Deuteronomy 24:7.** Repetition of the law against man-stealing (Ex. 21:16).—Vv. 8, 9. The command, “Take heed by the plague of leprosy to observe diligently and to do according to all that the priests teach thee,” etc., does not mean, that when they saw signs of leprosy they were to be upon their guard, to observe everything that the priests directed them, as *Knobel* and many others suppose. For, in the first place, the reference to the punishment of Miriam with leprosy is by no means appropriate to such a thought as this, since Miriam did not act in opposition to the priests after she had been smitten with leprosy, but brought leprosy upon herself as a punishment, by her rebellion against Moses (Num. 12:10ff.). And in the second place, this view cannot be reconciled with הִשָּׁמֵר בְּנֶגַע, since הִשָּׁמֵר with בְּ, either to be upon one’s guard against (before) anything (2 Sam. 20:10), or when taken in connection with בְּנֶפֶשׁ, to beware by the soul, i.e., for the sake of the worth of the soul (Jer. 17:21). The thought here, therefore, is, “Be on thy guard because of the plague of leprosy,” i.e., that thou dost not get it, have to bear it, as the reward for thy rebellion against what the priests teach according to the commandment of the Lord. “Watch diligently, that thou do not incur the plague of leprosy” (*Vulgate*); or, “that thou do

not sin, so as to be punished with leprosy” (*J. H. Michaelis*).

**Deuteronomy 24:10–15. Warning against oppressing the Poor.**—Vv. 10, 11. If a loan of any kind was lent to a neighbour, the lender was not to go into his house to pledge (take) a pledge, but was to let the borrower bring the pledge out. The meaning is, that they were to leave it to the borrower to give a pledge, and not compel him to give up something as a pledge that might be indispensable to him.

**Deuteronomy 24:12, 13.** And if the man was in distress (עָנִי), the lender was not to lie (sleep) upon his pledge, since the poor man had very often nothing but his upper garment, in which he slept, to give as a pledge. This was to be returned to him in the evening. (A repetition of Ex. 22:25, 26.) On the expression, “It shall be righteousness unto thee,” see Deuteronomy 6:25.

**Deuteronomy 24:14, 15.** They were not to oppress a poor and distressed labourer, by withholding his wages. This command is repeated here from Lev. 19:13, with special reference to the distress of the poor man. “And to it (his wages) he lifts up his soul:” i.e., he feels a longing for it. “Lifts up his soul:” as in Ps. 24:4; Hos. 4:8; Jer. 22:27. On v. 15b, see Deuteronomy 15:9 and Jas. 5:4.

**Deuteronomy 24:16–18. Warning against Injustice.**—V. 16. Fathers were not to be put to death upon (along with) their sons, nor sons upon (along with) their fathers, i.e., they were not to suffer the punishment of death with them for crimes in which they had no share; but every one was to be punished simply for his own sin. This command was important, to prevent an unwarrantable and abusive application of the law which is manifest in the movements of divine justice to the criminal jurisprudence of the law (Ex. 20:5), since it was a common thing among the heathen nations—e.g., the Persians, Macedonians, and others—for the children and families of criminals to be also put to death (cf. Esther 9:13, 14; *Herod.* iii. 19; *Ammian Marcell.* xxiii. 6; *Curtius*, vi. 11, 20, etc.). An example of the carrying out of this law is to



DEUTERONOMY	Page 97
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

be found in 2 Kings 14:6, 2 Chron. 25:4. In vv. 17, 18, the law against perverting the right of strangers, orphans, and widows, is repeated from Ex. 22:20, 21, and 23:9; and an addition is made, namely, that they were not to take a widow's raiment in pledge (cf. Lev. 19:33, 34).

**Deuteronomy 24:19–22.** Directions to allow strangers, widows, and orphans to glean in time of harvest (as in Lev. 19:9, 10, and 23:22). The reason is given in v. 22, viz., the same as in v. 18 and Deuteronomy 15:15.

### Deuteronomy 25

Laws Relating to Corporal Punishment; Levirate Marriages; And Just Weights and Measures.—Ch. 25.

**Deuteronomy 25:1–3.** Corporal Punishment.—The rule respecting the corporal punishment to be inflicted upon a guilty man is introduced in v. 1 with the general law, that in a dispute between two men the court was to give right to the man who was right, and to pronounce the guilty man guilty (cf. Ex. 22:8 and 23:7).

**Deuteronomy 25:2.** If the guilty man was sentenced to stripes, he was to receive his punishment in the presence of the judge, and not more than forty stripes, that he might not become contemptible in the eyes of the people. בֶּן־חֲבוֹת, son of stripes, i.e., a man liable to stripes, like son (child) of death, in 1 Sam. 20:31. "According to the need of his crime in number," i.e., as many stripes as his crime deserved.

**Deuteronomy 25:3.** "Forty shall ye beat him, and not add," i.e., at most forty stripes, and not more. The strokes were administered with a stick upon the back (Prov. 10:13; 19:29; 26:3, etc.). This was the Egyptian mode of whipping, as we may see depicted upon the monuments, when the culprits lie flat upon the ground, and being held fast by the hands and feet, receive their strokes in the presence of the judge (vid., Wilkinson, ii. p. 11, and Rosellini, ii. 3, p. 274, 78). The number forty was not to be exceeded, because a larger number of strokes with a stick would not only endanger health and life, but

disgrace the man: "that thy brother do not become contemptible in thine eyes." If he had deserved a severer punishment, he was to be executed. In Turkey the punishments inflicted are much more severe, viz., from fifty to a hundred lashes with a whip; and they are at the same time inhuman (see v. Tornauw, Moslem. Recht, p. 234). The number, forty, was probably chosen with reference to its symbolical significance, which it had derived from Gen. 7:12 onwards, as the full measure of judgment. The Rabbins fixed the number at forty save one (vid., 2 Cor. 11:24), from a scrupulous fear of transgressing the letter of the law, in case a mistake should be made in the counting; yet they felt no conscientious scruples about using a whip of twisted thongs instead of a stick (vid., tract. Macc. iii. 12; Buxtorf, Synag. Jud. pp. 522–3; and Lundius, Jüd. Heiligth. p. 472).

**Deuteronomy 25:4.** The command not to put a muzzle upon the ox when threshing, is no doubt proverbial in its nature, and even in the context before us is not intended to apply merely literally to an ox employed in threshing, but to be understood in the general sense in which the Apostle Paul uses it in 1 Cor. 9:9 and 1 Tim. 5:18, viz., that a labourer was not to be deprived of his wages. As the mode of threshing presupposed here—namely, with oxen yoked together, and driven to and fro over the corn that had been strewn upon the floor, that they might kick out the grains with their hoofs—has been retained to the present day in the East, so has also the custom of leaving the animals employed in threshing without a muzzle (vid., Hoest, Marokos, p. 129; Wellst. Arabien, i. p. 194; Robinson, Pal. ii. pp. 206–7, iii. p. 6), although the Mosaic injunctions are not so strictly observed by the Christians as by the Mohammedans (Robinson, ii. p. 207).

**Deuteronomy 25:5–10.** On Levirate Marriages.—Vv. 5, 6. If brothers lived together, and one of them died childless, the wife of the deceased was not to be married outside (i.e., away from the family) to a strange man (one not belonging to her kindred); her brother-in-law was to come to her and take her for his

DEUTERONOMY	Page 98
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

wife, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her. יָבֵם, *denom.* from יָבֵם, a brother-in-law, husband's brother, lit., to act the brother-in-law, i.e., perform the duty of a brother-in-law, which consisted in his marrying his deceased brother's widow, and begetting a son of children with her, the first-born of whom was "to stand upon the name of his deceased brother," i.e., be placed in the family of the deceased, and be recognised as the heir of his property, that his name (the name of the man who had died childless) might not be wiped out or vanish out of Israel. The provision, "without having a son" (*ben*), has been correctly interpreted by the LXX, *Vulg.*, *Josephus* (Ant. iv. 8, 23), and the *Rabbins*, as signifying childless (having no seed, Matt. 22:25); for if the deceased had simply a daughter, according to Num. 27:4ff., the perpetuation of his house and name was to be ensured through her. The obligation of a brother-in-law's marriage only existed in cases where the brothers had lived together, i.e., in one and the same place, not necessarily in one house or with a common domestic establishment and home (vid., Gen. 13:6; 36:7).—This custom of a brother-in-law's (Levirate) marriage, which is met with in different nations, and as an old traditional custom among the Israelites (see at Gen. 38:8ff.), had its natural roots in the desire inherent in man, who is formed for immortality, and connected with the hitherto undeveloped belief in an eternal life, to secure a continued personal existence for himself and immortality for his name, through the perpetuation of his family and in the life of the son who took his place. This desire was not suppressed in Israel by divine revelation, but rather increased, inasmuch as the promises given to the patriarchs were bound up with the preservation and propagation of their seed and name. The promise given to Abraham for his seed would of necessity not only raise the begetting of children in the religious views of the Israelites into the work desired by God and well-pleasing to Him, but would also give this significance to the traditional custom of preserving the name and family by the

substitution of a marriage of duty, that they would thereby secure to themselves and their family a share in the blessing of promise. Moses therefore recognised this custom as perfectly justifiable; but he sought to restrain it within such limits, that it should not present any impediment to the sanctification of marriage aimed at by the law. He took away the compulsory character, which it hitherto possessed, by prescribing in vv. 7ff., that if the surviving brother refused to marry his widowed sister-in-law, she was to bring the matter into the gate before the elders of the town (vid., Deuteronomy 21:19), i.e., before the magistrates; and if the brother-in-law still persisted in his refusal, she was to take his shoe from off his foot and spit in his face, with these words: "So let it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house."

The taking off of the shoe was an ancient custom in Israel, 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,—a symbol which was also common among the Indians and the ancient Germans (see my *Archäologie*, ii. p. 66). But the custom was an ignominious one in such a case as this, when the shoe was publicly taken off the foot of the brother-in-law by the widow whom he refused to marry. He was thus deprived of the position which he ought to have occupied in relation to her and to his deceased brother, or to his paternal house; and the disgrace involved in this was still further heightened by the fact that his sister-in-law spat in his face. This is the meaning of the words (cf. Num. 12:14), and not merely spit on the ground before his eyes, as *Saalschütz* and others as well as the Talmudists (*tr. Jebam.* xii. 6) render it, for the purpose of diminishing the disgrace. "Build up his brother's house," i.e., lay

DEUTERONOMY	Page 99
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the foundation of a family or posterity for him (cf. Gen. 16:2).—In addition to this, the unwilling brother-in-law was to receive a name of ridicule in Israel: *“House of the shoe taken off”* (חֵלְוֵי הַנֶּעֱלָ, taken off as to his shoe; cf. *Ewald*, § 288, b.), i.e., of the barefooted man, equivalent to “the miserable fellow;” for it was only in miserable circumstances that the Hebrews went barefoot (vid., Isa. 20:2, 3; Mic. 1:8; 2 Sam. 15:30). If the brother-in-law bore this reproach upon himself and his house, he was released from his duty as a brother-in-law. By these regulations the brother-in-law’s marriage was no doubt recognised as a duty of affection towards his deceased brother, but it was not made a command, the neglect of which would involve guilt and punishment. Within these limits the brother-in-law’s marriage might co-exist with the prohibition of the marriage with a brother’s wife; “whereas, if the deceased brother had a son or children, such a marriage was forbidden as prejudicial to the fraternal relation. In cases where the deceased was childless, it was commanded as a duty of affection for the building up of the brother’s house, and the preservation of his family and name. By the former prohibition the house (family) of the brother was kept in its integrity, whilst by the latter command its permanent duration was secured. In both cases the deceased brother was honoured, and the fraternal affection preserved as the moral foundation of his house” (vid., my *Archäologie*, pp. 64, 65).

**Deuteronomy 25:11, 12.** “But in order that the great independence which is here accorded to a childless widow in relation to her brother-in-law, might not be interpreted as a false freedom granted to the female sex” (*Baumgarten*), the law is added immediately afterwards, that a woman whose husband was quarrelling with another, and who should come to his assistance by laying hold of the secret parts of the man who was striking her husband, should have her hand cut off.

**Deuteronomy 25:13–19.** The duty of integrity in trade is once more enforced in vv. 13–16 (as

in Lev. 19:35, 36). *“Stone and stone,”* i.e., two kinds of stones for weighing (cf. Ps. 12:3), viz., large ones for buying and small ones for selling. On the promise in v. 15b, see Deuteronomy 4:26; 5:16; v. 16a, as in Deuteronomy 22:5; 18:12, etc. In the concluding words, v. 16b, *“all that do unrighteously,”* Moses sums up all breaches of the law.

**Deuteronomy 25:17–19.** But whilst the Israelites were to make love the guiding principle of their conduct in their dealings with a neighbour, and even with strangers and foes, this love was not to degenerate into weakness or indifference towards open ungodliness. To impress this truth upon the people, Moses concludes the discourse on the law by reminding them of the crafty enmity manifested towards them by Amalek on their march out of Egypt, and with the command to root out the Amalekites (cf. Ex. 17:9–16). This heathen nation had come against Israel on its journey, viz., at Rephidim in Horeb, and had attacked its rear: *“All the enfeebled behind thee, whilst thou wast faint and weary, without fearing God.”* זָנַב, lit., to tail, hence to attack or destroy the rear of an army or of a travelling people (cf. Josh. 10:19). For this reason, when the Lord should have given Israel rest in the land of its inheritance, it was to root out the remembrance of Amalek under heaven. (On the execution of this command, see 1 Sam. 15.) *“Thou shalt not forget it:”* an emphatic enforcement of the “remember” in v. 17.

## Deuteronomy 26

Thanksgiving and Prayer at the Presentation of First-Fruits and Tithes.—Ch. 26.

**Deuteronomy 26.** To the exposition of the commandments and rights of Israel Moses adds, in closing, another ordinance respecting those gifts, which were most intimately connected with social and domestic life, viz., the first-fruits and second tithes, for the purpose of giving the proper consecration to the attitude of the nation towards its Lord and God.

**Deuteronomy 26:1–11.** Of the first of the fruit of the ground, which was presented from the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 100
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

land received from the Lord, the Israelites was to take a portion (מִרְאשִׁית with מִן partitive), and bring it in a basket to the place of the sanctuary, and give it to the priest who should be there, with the words, “*I have made known to-day to the Lord thy God, that I have come into the land which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us,*” upon which the priest should take the basket and put it down before the altar of Jehovah (vv. 1–4). From the partitive מִרְאשִׁית we cannot infer, as *Schultz* supposes, that the first-fruits were not to be all delivered at the sanctuary, any more than this can be inferred from Ex. 23:19 (see the explanation of this passage). All that is implied is, that, for the purpose described afterwards, it was not necessary to put all the offerings of first-fruits into a basket and set them down before the altar. טָנָא (vv. 2, 4, and Deuteronomy 28:5, 17) is a basket of wicker-work, and not, as *Knobel* maintains, the Deuteronomist’s word for צִנְצָנֶת (Ex. 16:330.

“*The priest*” is not the high priest, but the priest who had to attend to the altar-service and receive the sacrificial gifts.—The words, “*I have to-day made known to the Lord thy God,*” refer to the practical confession which was made by the presentation of the first-fruits. The fruit was the tangible proof that they were in possession of the land, and the presentation of the first of this fruit the practical confession that they were indebted to the Lord for the land. This confession the offerer was also to embody in a prayer of thanksgiving, after the basket had been received by the priest, in which he confessed that he and his people owed their existence and welfare to the grace of God, manifested in the miraculous redemption of Israel out of the oppression of Egypt and their guidance into Canaan.

**Deuteronomy 26:5.** אֶרְמִי אֲבִד אָבִי, “*a lost* (perishing) *Aramaean was my father*” (not the Aramaean, *Laban*, wanted to destroy my father, *Jacob*, as the *Chald.*, *Arab.*, *Luther*, and others render it). אֲבִד signifies not only going astray, wandering, but perishing, in danger of perishing, as in Job 29:13, Prov. 31:6, etc. *Jacob*

is referred to, for it was he who went down to Egypt in few men. He is mentioned as the tribe-father of the nation, because the nation was directly descended from his sons, and also derived its name of *Israel* from him. *Jacob* is called in Aramaean, not only because of his long sojourn in Aramaea (Gen. 29–31), but also because he got his wives and children there (cf. Hos. 12:13); and the relatives of the patriarchs had accompanied Abraham from Chaldaea to Mesopotamia (Aram; see Gen. 11:30). בְּמִתֵּי מְעַט, consisting of few men (בְּ, the so-called *beth essent.*, as in Deuteronomy 10:22, Ex. 6:3, etc.; vid., *Ewald*, § 299, q.). Compare Gen. 34:30, where *Jacob* himself describes his family as “few in number.” On the number in the family that migrated into Egypt, reckoned at seventy souls, see the explanation at Gen. 46:27. On the multiplication in Egypt into a great and strong people, see Ex. 1:7, 9; and on the oppression endured there, Ex. 1:11–22, and 2:23ff.—The guidance out of Egypt amidst great signs (v. 8), as in Deuteronomy 4:34.

**Deuteronomy 26:10.** “*So shalt thou set it down* (the basket with the first-fruits) *before Jehovah.*” These words are not to be understood, as *Clericus*, *Knobel*, and others suppose, in direct opposition to vv. 4 and 5, as implying that the offerer had held the basket in his hand during the prayer, but simply as a remark which closes the instructions.

**Deuteronomy 26:11.** Rejoicing in all the good, etc., points to the joy connected with the sacrificial meal, which followed the act of worship (as in Deuteronomy 12:12). The presentation of the first-fruits took place, no doubt, on their pilgrimages to the sanctuary at the three yearly festivals (Deuteronomy 16); but it is quite without ground that *Riehm* restricts these words to the sacrificial meals to be prepared from the tithes, as if they had been the only sacrificial meals (see at Deuteronomy 18:3).

**Deuteronomy 26:12–15.** The delivery of the tithes, like the presentation of the first-fruits, was also to be sanctified by prayer before the Lord. It is true that only a prayer after taking

DEUTERONOMY	Page 101
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the second tithe in the third year is commanded here; but that is simply because this tithe was appropriated everywhere throughout the land to festal meals for the poor and destitute (Deuteronomy 14:28), when prayer before the Lord would not follow *per analogiam* from the previous injunction concerning the presentation of first-fruits, as it would in the case of the tithes with which sacrificial meals were prepared at the sanctuary (Deuteronomy 14:22ff.). לֶעֱשֹׂר is the infinitive Hiphil for לְהַעֲשֹׂר, as in Neh. 10:39 (on this form, vid., Ges. § 53, 3 Anm. 2 and 7, and Ew. § 131, b. and 244, b.). “Saying before the Lord” does not denote prayer in the sanctuary (at the tabernacle), but, as in Gen. 27:7, simply prayer before God the omnipresent One, who is enthroned in heaven (v. 15), and blesses His people from above from His holy habitation. The declaration of having fulfilled the commandments of God refers primarily to the directions concerning the tithes, and was such a rendering of an account as springs from the consciousness that a man very easily transgresses the commandments of God, and has nothing in common with the blindness of pharisaic self-righteousness “*I have cleaned out the holy out of my house:*” the holy is that which is sanctified to God, that which belongs to the Lord and His servants, as in Lev. 21:22. בָּטָר signifies not only to remove, but to clean out, wipe out. That which was sanctified to God appeared as a debt, which was to be wiped out of a man’s house (Schultz).

**Deuteronomy 26:14.** “*I have not eaten thereof in my sorrow.*” אָנִי, from אָנָּה, tribulation, distress, signifies here in all probability mourning, and judging from what follows, mourning for the dead, equivalent to “in a mourning condition,” i.e., in a state of legal (Levitical) uncleanness; so that אָנִי really corresponded to the בְּטָמָא which follows, except that טָמֵא includes every kind of legal uncleanness. “*I have removed nothing thereof as unclean,*” i.e., while in the state of an unclean person. Not only not eaten of any, but not removed any of it from the house, carried it away in an unclean state, in which they were

forbidden to touch the holy gifts (Lev. 22:3). “*And not given (any) of it on account of the dead.*” This most probably refers to the custom of sending provisions into a house of mourning, to prepare meals for the mourners (2 Sam. 3:25; Jer. 16:7; Hos. 9:4; Tobit 4:17). A house of mourning, with its inhabitants, was regarded as unclean; consequently nothing could be carried into it of that which was sanctified. There is no good ground for thinking of idolatrous customs, or of any special superstition attached to the bread of mourning; nor is there any ground for understanding the words as referring to the later Jewish custom of putting provisions into the grave along with the corpse, to which the Septuagint rendering, οὐκ ἔδωκα ἀπ’ αὐτῶν τῷ τεθνηκότι, points. (On v. 15, see Isa. 63:15.)

**Deuteronomy 26:16–19.** At the close of his discourse, Moses sums up the whole in the earnest admonition that Israel would give the Lord its God occasion to fulfil the promised glorification of His people, by keeping His commandments with all their heart and soul.

**Deuteronomy 26:16.** On this day the Lord commanded Israel to keep these laws and rights with all the heart and all the soul (cf. Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12ff.). There are two important points contained in this (vv. 17ff.). The acceptance of the laws laid before them on the part of the Israelites involved a practical declaration that the nation would accept Jehovah as its God, and walk in His way (v. 17); and the giving of the law on the part of the Lord was a practical confirmation of His promise that Israel should be His people of possession, which He would glorify above all nations (vv. 18, 19). “*Thou hast let the Lord say to-day to be thy God,*” i.e., hast given Him occasion to say to thee that He will be thy God, manifest Himself to thee as thy God. “*And to walk in His ways, and to keep His laws,*” etc., for “and that thou wouldst walk in His ways, and keep His laws.” The acceptance of Jehovah as its God involved *eo ipso* a willingness to walk in His ways.

**Deuteronomy 26:18, 19.** At the same time, Jehovah had caused the people to be told that they were His treasured people of possession,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 102
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

as He had said in Ex. 19:5, 6; and that if they kept all His commandments, He would set them highest above all nations whom He had created, “for praise, and for a name, and for glory,” i.e., make them an object of praise, and renown, and glorification of God, the Lord and Creator of Israel, among all nations (vid., Jer. 33:9 and 13:11; Zeph. 3:19, 20). “*And that it should become a holy people unto the Lord,*” as He had already said in Ex. 19:6. The sanctification of Israel was the design and end of its divine election, and would be accomplished in the glory to which the people of God were to be exalted (see the commentary on Ex. 19:5, 6). The *Hiphil* הִפְחִיל, which is only found here, has no other meaning than this, “to cause a person to say,” or “give him occasion to say;” and this is perfectly appropriate here, whereas the other meaning suggested, “to exalt,” has no tenable support either in the paraphrastic rendering of these verses in the ancient versions, or in the Hithpael in Ps. 94:4, and moreover is altogether unsuitable in v. 17.

### Deuteronomy 27

Third Discourse, or Renewal of the Covenant.  
**Ch. 27–30.**

**Deuteronomy 27–30.** The conclusion of the covenant in the land of Moab, as the last address in this section (Deuteronomy 29 and 30) is called in the heading (Deuteronomy 28:69) and in the introduction (Deuteronomy 29:9ff.), i.e., the renewal of the covenant concluded at Horeb, commences with instructions to set up the law in a solemn manner in the land of Canaan after crossing over the Jordan (Deuteronomy 27). After this there follows an elaborate exposition of the blessings and curses which would come upon the people according to their attitude towards the law (Deuteronomy 28). And lastly, Moses places the whole nation with a solemn address before the face of the Lord, and sets before it once more the blessing and the curse in powerful and alarming words, with the exhortation to choose the blessing and life (Deuteronomy 29 and 30).

On the Setting Up of the Law in the Land of Canaan.—Ch. 27.

**Deuteronomy 27.** The instructions upon this point are divisible into two: viz., (a) to set up large stones covered with lime upon Mount Ebal, after crossing into Canaan, and to build an altar there for the presentation of burnt-offerings and slain-offerings, and to write the law upon these stones (vv. 1–8); and (b) to proclaim the blessing and curse of the law upon Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (vv. 11–26). These two instructions are bound together by the command to observe the law (vv. 9 and 10), in which the internal or essential connection of the two is manifested externally also. The fulfilment of these directions after the entrance of Israel into Canaan is described in Josh. 8:30–35. The act itself had a symbolical meaning. The writing of the law upon stones, which were erected on a mountain in the midst of the land, with the solemn proclamation of blessings and curses, was a practical acknowledgment of the law of the Lord on the part of Israel,—a substantial declaration that they would make the law the rule and standard of their life and conduct in the land which the Lord had given them for an inheritance.

**Deuteronomy 27:1–10.** The command in v. 1 to keep the whole law (שָׁמַר, *inf. abs.* for the imperative, as in Ex. 13:3, etc.), with which the instructions that follow are introduced, indicates at the very outset the purpose for which the law written upon stones was to be set up in Canaan, namely, as a public testimony that the Israelites who were entering into Canaan possessed in the law their rule and source of life. The command itself is given by Moses, together with the elders, because the latter had to see to the execution of it after Moses’ death; on the other hand, the priests are mentioned along with Moses in v. 9, because it was their special duty to superintend the fulfilment of the commands of God.

**Deuteronomy 27:2, 3.** Vv. 2 and 3 contain the general instructions; vv. 4–8, more minute details. In the appointment of the time, “*on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan into the*

DEUTERONOMY	Page 103
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

*land*," etc., the word "*day*" must not be pressed, but is to be understood in a broader sense, as signifying the time when Israel should have entered the land and taken possession of it. The stones to be set up were to be covered with lime, or gypsum (whether *sid* signifies lime or gypsum cannot be determined), and all the words of the law were to be written upon them. The writing, therefore, was not to be cut into the stones and then covered with lime (as *J. D. Mich., Ros.*), but to be inscribed upon the plaistered stones, as was the custom in Egypt, where the walls of buildings, and even monumental stones, which they were about to paint with figures and hieroglyphics, were first of all covered with a coating of lime or gypsum, and then the figures painted upon this (see the testimonies of *Minutoli, Heeren, Prokesch* in *Hengstenberg's* Dissertations, i. 433, and Egypt and the Books of Moses, p. 90). The object of this writing was not to hand down the law in this manner to posterity without alteration, but, as has already been stated, simply to set forth a public acknowledgement of the law on the part of the people, first of all for the sake of the generation which took possession of the land, and for posterity, only so far as this act was recorded in the book of Joshua and thus transmitted to future generations.

**Deuteronomy 27:3.** Upon the stones there were to be written "*all the words of this law*:" obviously, therefore, not only the blessings and curses in vv. 15–26 (as *Josephus, Ant. iv. 8, 44, Masius, Clericus*, and others maintain), nor only Deuteronomy (*J. Gerhard, A. Osiander, Vater*, etc.), since this contained no independent "second law," but the whole of the Mosaic law; not, indeed, the entire Pentateuch, with its historical narratives, its geographical, ethnographical, and other notices, but simply the legal part of it,—the commandments, statutes, and rights of the *Thorah*. But whether all the 613 commandments contained in the Pentateuch, according to the Jewish reckoning (vid., *Bertheau, die 7 Gruppen Mos. Ges.* p. 12), or only the quintessence of them, with the omission of the numerous repetitions of different commands, cannot be decided, and is

of no importance to the matter in hand. The object aimed at would be attained by writing the essential kernel of the whole law; though the possibility of all the commandments being written, of course without the reasons and exhortations connected with them, cannot be denied, since it is not stated how many stones were set up, but simply that large stones were to be taken, which would therefore contain a great deal. In the clause, "*that thou mayest come into the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee*," etc., the coming involves the permanent possession of the land. Not only the treading or conquest of Canaan, but the maintenance of the conquered land as a permanent hereditary possession, was promised to Israel; but it would only permanently rejoice in the fulfilment of this promise, if it set up the law of its God in the land, and observed it.

**Deuteronomy 27:4–8.** In the further expansion of this command, Moses first of all fixes the place where the stones were to be set up, namely, upon Mount Ebal (see at Deuteronomy 11:29),—not upon Gerizim, according to the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch; for since the discussion of the question by *Verschuir (dissertt. phil. exeg. diss. 3)* and *Gesenius (de Pent. Samar. p. 61)*, it may be regarded as an established fact, that this reading is an arbitrary alteration. The following clause, "*thou shalt plaister*," etc., is a repetition in the earliest form of historical writing among the Hebrews. To this there are appended in vv. 5–7 the new and further instructions, that an altar was to be built upon Ebal, and burnt-offerings and slain-offerings to be sacrificed upon it. The notion that this altar was to be built of the stones with the law written upon them, or even with a portion of them, needs no refutation, as it has not the slightest support in the words of the text. For according to these the altar was to be built of unhewn stones (therefore not of the stones covered with cement), in obedience to the law in Ex. 20:22 (see the exposition of this passage, where the reason for this is discussed). The spot selected for the setting up of the stones with the law written upon it, as well as for the altar and the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 104
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

offering of sacrifice, was Ebal, the mountain upon which the curses were to be proclaimed; not Gerizim, which was appointed for the publication of the blessings, for the very same reason for which only the curses to be proclaimed are given in vv. 14ff. and not the blessings,—not, as *Schultz* supposes, because the law in connection with the curse speaks more forcibly to sinful man than in connection with the blessing, or because the curse, which manifests itself on every hand in human life, sounds more credible than the promise; but, as the *Berleburger Bible* expresses it, “to show how the law and economy of the Old Testament would denounce the curse which rests upon the whole human race because of sin, to awaken a desire for the Messiah, who was to take away the curse and bring the true blessing instead.” For however remote the allusion to the Messiah may be here, the truth is unquestionably pointed out in these instructions, that the law primarily and chiefly brings a curse upon man because of the sinfulness of his nature, as Moses himself announces to the people in Deuteronomy 31:16, 17. And for this very reason the book of the law was to be laid by the side of the ark of the covenant as a “testimony against Israel” (Deuteronomy 31:26). But the altar was built for the offering of sacrifices, to mould and consecrate the setting up of the law upon the stones into a renewal of the covenant. In the burnt-offerings Israel gave itself up to the Lord with all its life and labour, and in the sacrificial meal it entered into the enjoyment of the blessings of divine grace, to taste of the blessedness of vital communion with its God. By connecting the sacrificial ceremony with the setting up of the law, Israel gave a practical testimony to the fact that its life and blessedness were founded upon its observance of the law. The sacrifices and the sacrificial meal have the same signification here as at the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 24:11).—In v. 8 the writing of the law upon the stones is commanded once more, and the further injunction is added, “*very plainly*.”—The writing of the law is mentioned last, as being the most important, and not because it was to

take place after the sacrificial ceremony. The different instructions are arranged according to their character, and not in chronological order.

**Deuteronomy 27:9, 10.** The words of Moses which follow in vv. 9 and 10, “*Be silent, and hearken, O Israel; To-day thou hast become the people of the Lord thy God,*” show the significance of the act enjoined; although primarily they simply summon the Israelites to listen attentively to the still further commands. When Israel renewed the covenant with the Lord, by solemnly setting up the law in Canaan, it became thereby the nation of God, and bound itself, at the same time, to hearken to the voice of the Lord and keep His commandments, as it had already done (cf. Deuteronomy 26:17, 18).

**Deuteronomy 27:11–26.** With the solemn erection of the stones with the law written upon them, Israel was to transfer to the land the blessing and curse of the law, as was already commanded in Deuteronomy 11:29; that is to say, according to the more minute explanation of the command which is given here, the people themselves were solemnly to give expression to the blessing and the curse: to the former upon Mount Gerizim, and to the latter upon Ebal. On the situation of these mountains, see at Deuteronomy 11:29. To this end six tribes were to station themselves upon the top or side of Gerizim, and six upon the top or side of Ebal. The blessing was to be uttered by the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin, who sprang from the two wives of Jacob; and the curse by Reuben, with the two sons of Leah’s maid Zilpah, and by Zebulun, with Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Rachel’s maid Bilhah. It was natural that the utterance of the blessing should be assigned to the tribes which sprang from Jacob’s proper wives, since the sons of the wives occupied a higher position than the sons of the maids,—just as the blessing had pre-eminence over the curse. But in order to secure the division into two sixes, it was necessary that two of the eight sons of the wives should be associated with those who pronounced the curses. The choice fell upon Reuben, because he had forfeited his



DEUTERONOMY	Page 105
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

right of primogeniture by his incest (Gen. 49:4), and upon Zebulun, as the youngest son of Leah. *"They shall stand there upon the curse:"* i.e., to pronounce the curse.

**Deuteronomy 27:14.** *"And the Levites shall lift up and speak to all the men of Israel with a high (loud) voice:"* i.e., they shall pronounce the different formularies of blessing and cursing, turning towards the tribes to whom these utterances apply; and all the men of Israel shall answer *"Amen,"* to take to themselves the blessing and the curse, as uttered by them; just as in the case of the priestly blessing in Num. 5:22, and in connection with every oath, in which the person swearing took upon himself the oath that was pronounced, by replying *"Amen."* *"The Levites"* are not all the members of the tribe of Levi, but those "in whom the spiritual character of Levi was most decidedly manifested" (*Baumgarten*), i.e., the levitical priests, as the guardians and teachers of the law, and those who carried the ark of the covenant (Josh. 8:33). From the passage in Joshua, where the fulfilment of the Mosaic injunctions is recorded, we learn that the Levitical priests stationed themselves in the centre between the two mountains, with the ark of the covenant, and that the people took up their position, on both sides, opposite to the ark, viz., six tribes on Gerizim, and six on Ebal. The priests, who stood in the midst, by the ark of the covenant, then pronounced the different formularies of blessing and cursing, to which the six tribes answered *"Amen."* From the expression *"all the men of Israel,"* it is perfectly evident that in this particular ceremony the people were not represented by their elders or heads, but were present in the persons of all their adult men who were over twenty years of age; and with this Josh. 8:33, when rightly interpreted, fully harmonizes.

**Deuteronomy 27:15–26.** In vv. 15–26 there follow *twelve* curses, answering to the number of the tribes of Israel. The *first* is directed against those who make graven or molten images of Jehovah, and set them up in secret, that is to say, against secret breaches of the

second commandment (Ex. 20:4); the *second* against contempt of, or want of reverence towards, parents (Ex. 21:17); the *third* against those who remove boundaries (Deuteronomy 19:14); the *fourth* against the man who leads the blind astray (Lev. 19:14); the *fifth* against those who pervert the right of orphans and widows (Deuteronomy 24:17); the *sixth* against incest with a mother (Deuteronomy 23:1; Lev. 18:8); the *seventh* against unnatural vices (Lev. 18:23); the *eighth* and *ninth* against incest with a sister or a mother-in-law (Lev. 18:9 and 17); the *tenth* against secret murder (Ex. 20:13; Num. 35:16ff.); the *eleventh* against judicial murder ("he that taketh reward to slay a soul, *namely*, innocent blood:" Ex. 23:7, 8); the *twelfth* against the man who does not set up the words of this law to do them, who does not make the laws the model and standard of his life and conduct. From this last curse, which applied to every breach of the law, it evidently follows, that the different sins and transgressions already mentioned were only selected by way of example, and for the most part were such as could easily be concealed from the judicial authorities. At the same time, "the office of the law is shown in this last utterance, the summing up of all the rest, to have been pre-eminently to proclaim condemnation. Every conscious act of transgression subjects the sinner to the curse of God, from which none but He who has become a curse for us can possibly deliver us" (Gal. 3:10, 13. *O. v. Gerlach*).—On the reason why the blessings are not given, see the remarks on v. 4. As the curses against particular transgressions of the law simply mention some peculiarly grievous sins by way of example, it would be easy to single out corresponding blessings from the general contents of the law: e.g., "Blessed be he who faithfully follows the Lord his God, or loves Him with the heart, who honours his father and his mother," etc.; and lastly, all the blessings of the law could be summed up in the words, "Blessed be he who setteth up the words of this law, to do them."

DEUTERONOMY	Page 106
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

## Deuteronomy 28

Blessing and Curse.—Ch. 28:1–68.

**Deuteronomy 28.** For the purpose of impressing upon the hearts of all the people in the most emphatic manner both the blessing which Israel was to proclaim upon Gerizim, and the curse which it was to proclaim upon Ebal, Moses now unfolds the blessing of fidelity to the law and the curse of transgression in a longer address, in which he once more resumes, sums up, and expands still further the promises and threats of the law in Ex. 23:20–33, and Lev. 26.

**Deuteronomy 28:1–14.** The Blessing.—V. 1. If Israel would hearken to the voice of the Lord its God, the Lord would make it the highest of all the nations of the earth. This thought, with which the discourse on the law in Deuteronomy 26:19 terminated, forms the theme, and in a certain sense the heading, of the following description of the blessing, through which the Lord, according to the more distinct declaration in v. 2, would glorify His people above all the nations of the earth. The indispensable condition for obtaining this blessing, was obedience to the word of the Lord, or keeping His commandments. To impress this *condition sine qua non* thoroughly upon the people, Moses not only repeats it at the commencement (v. 2), and in the middle (v. 9), but also at the close (vv. 13, 14), in both a positive and a negative form. In v. 2, “the way in which Israel was to be exalted is pointed out” (*Schultz*); and thus the theme is more precisely indicated, and the elaboration of it is introduced. “All these blessings (those mentioned singly in what follows) will come upon thee and reach thee.” The blessings are represented as actual powers, which follow the footsteps of the nation, and overtake it. In vv. 3–6, the fulness of the blessing of God in all the relations of life is depicted in a sixfold repetition of the word “blessed.” Israel will be blessed in the town and in the field, the two spheres in which its life moves (v. 3); blessed will be the fruit of the body, of the earth, and of the cattle, i.e., in all its productions (v. 4; for each one, see

Deuteronomy 7:13, 14); blessed will be the basket (Deuteronomy 26:2) in which the fruits are kept, and the kneading-trough (Ex. 12:34) in which the daily bread is prepared (v. 5); blessed will the nation be in all its undertakings (“coming in and going out;” vid., Num. 27:17).

**Deuteronomy 28:7–14.** Vv. 7–14 describe the influence and effect of the blessing upon all the circumstances and situations in which the nation might be placed: in vv. 7–10, with reference (a) to the attitude of Israel towards its enemies (v. 7); (b) to its trade and handicraft (v. 8); (c) to its attitude towards all the nations of the earth (vv. 9, 10). The optative forms, יִהְיֶה and יִצְאֶה (in vv. 7 and 8), are worthy of notice.

They show that Moses not only proclaimed the blessing to the people, but desired it for them, because he knew that Israel would not always or perfectly fulfil the condition upon which it was to be bestowed. “*May the Lord be pleased to give thine enemies ... smitten before thee,*” i.e., give them up to thee as smitten (נָתַתָּ לָפְנַי, to give up before a person, to deliver up to him: cf. Deuteronomy 1:8), so that they shall come out against thee by one way, and flee from thee by seven ways, i.e., in wild dispersion (cf. Lev. 26:7, 8).

**Deuteronomy 28:8.** “*May the Lord command the blessing with thee (put it at thy disposal) in thy barns (granaries, store-rooms) and in all thy business*” (“to set the hand;” see Deuteronomy 12:7).

**Deuteronomy 28:9, 10.** “*The Lord will exalt thee for a holy nation to Himself, ... so that all the nations of the earth shall see that the name of Jehovah is named upon thee, and shall fear before thee.*” The Lord had called Israel as a holy nation, when He concluded the covenant with it (Ex. 19:5, 6). This promise, to which the words “as He hath sworn unto thee” point back, and which is called an oath, because it was founded upon the promises given to the patriarchs on oath (Gen. 22:16), and was given *implicite* in them, the Lord would fulfil to His people, and cause the holiness and glory of Israel to be so clearly manifested, that all nations should

DEUTERONOMY	Page 107
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

perceive or see *“that the name of the Lord is named upon Israel.”* The name of the Lord is the revelation of His glorious nature. It is named upon Israel, when Israel is transformed into the glory of the divine nature (cf. Isa. 63:19; Jer. 14:9). It was only in feeble commencements that this blessing was fulfilled upon Israel under the Old Testament; and it is not till the restoration of Israel, which is to take place in the future according to Rom. 11:25ff., that its complete fulfilment will be attained. In vv. 11 and 12, Moses returns to the earthly blessing, for the purpose of unfolding this still further. *“Superabundance will the Lord give thee for good (i.e., for happiness and prosperity; vid., Deuteronomy 30:9), in fruit of thy body,”* etc. (cf. v. 4). He would open His good treasure-house, the heaven, to give rain to the land in its season (cf. Deuteronomy 11:14; Lev. 26:4, 5), and bless the work of the hands, i.e., the cultivation of the soil, so that Israel would be able to lend to many, according to the prospect already set before it in Deuteronomy 15:6.

**Deuteronomy 28:13, 14.** By such blessings He would *“make Israel the head, and not the tail,”*—a figure taken from life (vid., Isa. 9:13), the meaning of which is obvious, and is given literally in the next sentence, *“thou wilt be above only, and not beneath,”* i.e., thou wilt rise more and more, and increase in wealth, power, and dignity. With this the discourse returns to its commencement; and the promise of blessing closes with another emphatic repetition of the condition on which the fulfilment depended (vv. 13b and 14. On v. 14, see Deuteronomy 5:29; 11:28).

**Deuteronomy 28:15–68.** The Curse, in case Israel should not hearken to the voice of its God, to keep His commandments. After the announcement that all these (the following) curses would come upon the disobedient nation (v. 15), the curse is proclaimed in all its extent, as covering all the relations of life, in a sixfold repetition of the word “cursed” (vv. 16–19, as above in vv. 3–6); and the fulfilment of this threat in plagues and diseases, drought and famine, war, devastation of the land, and

captivity of the people, is so depicted, that the infliction of these punishments stands out to view in ever increasing extent and fearfulness. We are not to record this, however, as a gradual heightening of the judgments of God, in proportion to the increasing rebellion of Israel, as in Lev. 26:14ff., although it is obvious that the punishments threatened did not fall upon the nation all at once.

**Deuteronomy 28:16–19.** Vv. 16–19 correspond precisely to vv. 3–6, so as to set forth the curse as the counterpart of the blessing, except that the basket and kneading-trough are mentioned before the fruit of the body.

**Deuteronomy 28:20–26.** The *first* view, in which the bursting of the threatened curse upon the disobedient people is proclaimed in all its forms. First of all, quite generally in v. 20. *“The Lord will send the curse against thee, consternation and threatening in every undertaking of thy hand which thou carriest out (see Deuteronomy 12:7), till thou be destroyed, till thou perish quickly, because of the wickedness of thy doings, because thou hast forsaken Me.”* The three words, מְהוֹמָה, מְאָרָה, and מוֹעֵצָה, are synonymous, and are connected together to strengthen the thought. מְאָרָה, curse or malediction; הִמְהוֹמָה, the consternation produced by the curse of God, namely, the confusion with which God smites His foes (see at Deuteronomy 7:23); הַמּוֹעֵצָה is the threatening word of the divine wrath.—Then vv. 21ff. in detail. *“The Lord will make the pestilence fasten upon (cleave to) thee, till He hath destroyed thee out of the land ... to smite thee with giddiness and fever (cf. Lev. 26:16), inflammation, burning, and sword, blasting of corn, and mildew (of the seed);”* seven diseases therefore (seven as the stamp of the words of God), whilst pestilence in particular is mentioned first, as the most terrible enemy of life. דִּלְקָה, from דָּלַק to burn, and תִּרְחָח, from תָּרַח to glow, signify inflammatory diseases, burning fevers; the distinction between these and קִדְחָת

DEUTERONOMY	Page 108
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

cannot be determined. Instead of חָרֵב, the sword as the instrument of death, used to designate slaughter and death, the *Vulgate*, *Arabic*, and *Samaritan* have adopted the reading חֶרֶב, *aestus*, heat (Gen. 31:40), or drought, according to which there would be four evils mentioned by which human life is attacked, and three which are injurious to the corn. But as the LXX, *Jon.*, *Syr.*, and others read חָרֵב, this alteration is very questionable, especially as the reading can be fully defended in this connection; and one objection to the alteration is, that drought is threatened for the first time in vv. 23, 24. שָׁדֵפוֹן, from שָׁדַף to singe or blacken, and יִרְקֹן, from יָרַק to be yellowish, refer to two diseases which attack the corn: the former to the withering or burning of the ears, caused by the east wind (Gen. 41:23); the other to the effect produced by a warm wind in Arabia, by which the green ears are turned yellow, so that they bear no grains of corn.

**Deuteronomy 28:23, 24.** To this should be added terrible drought, without a drop of rain from heaven (cf. Lev. 26:19). Instead of rain, dust and ashes should fall from heaven. נָתַן construed with a double accusative: to make the rain of the land into dust and ashes, to give it in the form of dust and ashes. When the heat is very great, the air in Palestine is often full of dust and sand, the wind assuming the form of a burning sirocco, so that the air resembles the glowing heat at the mouth of a furnace (*Robinson*, ii. 504).

**Deuteronomy 28:25, 26.** Defeat in battle, the very opposite of the blessing promised in v. 7. Israel should become לִזְעָה, "a moving to and fro," i.e., so to speak, "a ball for all the kingdoms of the earth to play with" (*Schultz*). זָעָה, here and at Ezek. 23:46, is not a transposed and later form of זָעָה, which has a different meaning in Isa. 28:19, but the original uncontracted form, which was afterwards condensed into זָעָה; for this, and not זָעָה, is the way in which the *Chethib* should be read in Jer. 15:4; 24:9; 29:18;

34:17, and 2 Chron. 29:8, where this threat is repeated (vid., *Ewald*, § 53, b.). The corpses of those who were slain by the foe should serve as food for the birds of prey and wild beasts—the greatest ignominy that could fall upon the dead, and therefore frequently held out as a threat against the ungodly (Jer. 7:33; 16:4; 1 Kings 14:11, etc.).

**Deuteronomy 28:27–34.** The *second* view depicts still further the visitation of God both by diseases of body and soul, and also by plunder and oppression on the part of their enemies.—In v. 27 four incurable diseases of the body are threatened: the ulcer of Egypt (see at Ex. 9:9), i.e., the form of leprosy peculiar to Egypt, *elephantiasis* (*Aegypti peculiare malum*: *Plin.* xxvi. c. 1, s. 5), which differed from *lepra tuberosa*, however, or tubercular leprosy (v. 35; cf. Job 2:7), in degree only, and not in its essential characteristics (see *Tobler, mediz. Topogr. v. Jerus.* p. 51). עֲפָלִים, from עָפַל, a swelling, rising, signifies a tumour, and according to the Rabbins a disease of the anus: in men, *tumor in posticis partibus*; in women, *durius quoddam* οἰδῆμα *in utero*. It was with this disease that the Philistines were smitten (1 Sam. 5). גָּרַב (see Lev. 21:20) and חָרַס, to scrape or scratch, also a kind of itch, of which there are several forms in Syria and Egypt.

**Deuteronomy 28:28, 29.** In addition to this, there would come idiocy, blindness, and confusion of mind,—three psychical maladies; for although עָרֹן signifies primarily bodily blindness, the position of the word between idiocy and confusion of heart, i.e., of the understanding, points to mental blindness here.

**Deuteronomy 28:29.** Verse 29 leads to the same conclusion, where it is stated that Israel would grope in the bright noon-day, like a blind man in the dark, and not make his ways prosper, i.e., not hit upon the right road which led to the goal and to salvation, would have no good fortune or success in its undertakings (cf. Ps. 37:7). Being thus smitten in body and soul, it would be *only* (אֶדָּא as in Deuteronomy 16:15), i.e., utterly, oppressed and spoiled evermore.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 109
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

These words introduce the picture of the other calamity, viz., the plundering of the nation and the land by enemies (vv. 30–33). Wife, house, vineyard, ox, ass, and sheep would be taken away by the foe; sons and daughters would be carried away into captivity before the eyes of the people, who would see it and pine after the children, i.e., with sorrow and longing after them; “*and thy hand shall not be to thee towards God,*” i.e., all power and help will fail thee. (On this proverbial expression, see Gen. 31:29; and on חָלַל, in v. 30, see at Deuteronomy 20:6.)—In vv. 33, 34, this threat is summed up in the following manner: the fruit of the field and all their productions would be devoured by a strange nation, and Israel would be only oppressed and crushed to pieces all its days, and become mad on account of what its eyes would be compelled to see.

**Deuteronomy 28:35–46.** The *third* view.—With the words, “*the Lord will smite thee,*” Moses resumes in v. 35 the threat of v. 27, to set forth the calamities already threatened under a new aspect, namely, as signs of the rejection of Israel from covenant fellowship with the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 28:35.** The Lord would smite the people with grievous abscesses in the knees and thighs, that should be incurable, even from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head. שָׁחִין רַע is the so-called joint-leprosy, a form of the *lepra tuberosa* (vid., *Pruner*, p. 167). From the clause, however, “*from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head,*” it is evident that the threat is not to be restricted to this species of leprosy, since “the upper parts of the body often remain in a perfectly normal state in cases of leprosy in the joints; and after the diseased parts have fallen off, the patients recover their previous health to a certain degree” (*Pruner*). Moses mentions this as being a disease of such a nature, that it would render it utterly impossible for those who were afflicted with it either to stand or walk, and then heightens the threat by adding the words, “*from the sole of the foot to the top of the head.*” Leprosy excluded from fellowship with the Lord, and

deprived the nation of the character of a nation of God.

**Deuteronomy 28:36, 37.** The loss of their spiritual character would be followed by the dissolution of the covenant fellowship. This thought connects v. 36 with v. 35, and not the thought that Israel being afflicted with leprosy would be obliged to go into captivity, and in this state would become an object of abhorrence to the heathen (*Schultz*). The Lord would bring the nation and its king to a foreign nation that it did not know, and thrust them into bondage, so that it would be obliged to serve other gods,—wood and stone (vid., Deuteronomy 4:28),—and would become an object of disgust, a proverb, and a byword to all nations whither God should drive it (vid., 1 Kings 9:7; Jer. 24:9).

**Deuteronomy 28:38ff.** Even in their own land the curse would fall upon every kind of labour and enterprise. Much seed would give little to reap, because the locust would devour the seed; the planting and dressing of the vineyard would furnish no wine to drink, because the worm would devour the vine. תּוֹלַעַת is probably the ὕψ or ἴξ of the Greeks, the *convolvulus* of the Romans, our vine-weevil.

**Deuteronomy 28:40.** They would have many olive-trees in the land, but not anoint themselves with oil, because the olive-tree would be rooted out or plundered (יִשָּׁל, Niphal of שָׁלַל, as in Deuteronomy 19:5, not the Kal of נָשַׁל, which cannot be shown to have the intransitive meaning *elabi*).

**Deuteronomy 28:41.** Sons and daughters would they beget, but not keep, because they would have to go into captivity.

**Deuteronomy 28:42.** All the trees and fruits of the land would the buzzer take possession of. צִלְצַל, from צָלַל to *buzz*, a rhetorical epithet applied to *locusts*, not the grasshopper, which does not injure the fruits of the tree or ground sufficiently for the term יָרַשׁ, “to take possession of,” to be applicable to it.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 110
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 28:43.** Israel would be utterly impoverished, and would sink lower and lower, whilst the stranger in the midst of it would, on the contrary, get above it very high; not indeed “because he had no possession, but was dependent upon resources of other kinds” (*Schultz*), but rather because he would be exempted with all his possessions from the curse of God, just as the Israelites had been exempted from the plagues which came upon the Egyptians (Ex. 9:6, 7, 26).

**Deuteronomy 28:44.** The opposite of vv. 12 and 13 would come to pass.—In v. 46 the address returns to its commencement in v. 15, with the terrible threat, “*These curses shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever*,” for the purpose of making a pause, if not of bringing the whole to a close. The curses were for a sign and wonder (מוֹפֵת, that which excites astonishment and terror), inasmuch as their magnitude and terrible character manifested most clearly the supernatural interposition of God (vid., Deuteronomy 29:23). “*For ever*” applies to the generation smitten by the curse, which would remain for ever rejected, though without involving the perpetual rejection of the whole nation, or the impossibility of the conversion and restoration of a remnant, or of a holy seed (Isa. 10:22; 6:13; Rom. 9:27; 11:5).

**Deuteronomy 28:47–57.** The *fourth* view.—Although in what precedes every side of the national life has been brought under the curse, yet love to his people, and the desire to preserve them from the curse, by holding up before them the dreadful severity of the wrath of God, impel the faithful servant of the Lord to go still further, and depict more minutely still the dreadful horrors consequent upon Israel being given up to the power of the heathen, and first of all in vv. 47–57 the horrible calamities which would burst upon Israel on the conquest of the land and its fortresses by its foes.

**Deuteronomy 28:47, 48.** Because it had not served the Lord its God with joy and gladness of heart, “*for the abundance of all*,” i.e., for the abundance of all the blessings bestowed upon it

by its God, it would serve its enemies in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and want of everything, and wear an iron yoke, i.e., be obliged to perform the hardest tributary service till it was destroyed (הַשְׁמִיד for הַשְׁמִיד, as in Deuteronomy 7:24).

**Deuteronomy 28:49, 50.** The Lord would bring against it from afar a barbarous, hardhearted nation, which knew not pity. “*From afar*” is still further strengthened by the addition of the words, “*from the end of the earth*.” The greater the distance off, the more terrible does the foe appear. He flies thence like an eagle, which plunges with violence upon its prey, and carries it off with its claws; and Israel does not understand its language, so as to be able to soften its barbarity, or come to any terms. A people “*firm, hard of face*,” i.e., upon whom nothing makes an impression (vid., Isa. 50:7),—a description of the audacity and shamelessness of its appearance (Dan. 8:23; cf. Prov. 7:13; 21:29), which spares neither old men nor boys. This description no doubt applies to the Chaldeans, who are described as flying eagles in Hab. 1:6ff., Jer. 48:40; 49:22, Ezek. 17:3, 7, as in the verses before us; but it applies to other enemies of Israel beside these, namely to the great imperial powers generally, the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Romans, whom the Lord raised up as the executors of His curse upon His rebellious people. Isaiah therefore depicts the Assyrians in a similar manner, namely, as a people with an unintelligible language (Is. 5:26; 28:11; 33:19), and describes the cruelty of the Medes in Is. 13:17, 18, with an unmistakeable allusion to v. 50 of the present threat.

**Deuteronomy 28:51ff.** This foe would consume all the fruit of the cattle and the land, i.e., everything which the nation had acquired through agriculture and the breeding of stock, without leaving it anything, until it was utterly destroyed (see Deuteronomy 7:13), and would oppress, i.e., besiege it in all its gates (towns, vid., Deuteronomy 12:12), till the lofty and strong walls upon which they relied should fall (יִרַד as in Deuteronomy 20:20).

DEUTERONOMY	Page 111
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 28:53.** It would so distress Israel, that in their distress and siege they would be driven to eat the fruit of their body, and the flesh of their own children (with regard to the fulfilment of this, see the remarks on Lev. 26:29).—This horrible distress is depicted still more fully in vv. 54–57, where the words, “*in the siege and in the straitness,*” etc. (v. 53*b*), are repeated as a *refrain*, with their appalling sound, in vv. 55 and 57.

**Deuteronomy 28:54, 55.** The effeminate and luxurious man would look with ill-favour upon his brother, the wife of his bosom, and his remaining children, “*to give*” (so that he would not give) to one of them of the flesh of his children which he was consuming, because there was nothing left to him in the siege. “*His eye shall be evil,*” i.e., look with envy or ill-favour (cf. Deuteronomy 15:9). מְבַלִּי הָשָׂאִיר, on account of there not being anything left for himself. לֹא with בְּלִי signifies literally “*all not,*” i.e., nothing at all. הָשָׂאִיר, an infinitive, as in Deuteronomy 3:3 (see at v. 48).

**Deuteronomy 28:56, 57.** The delicate and luxurious woman, who had not attempted to put her feet to the ground (had always been carried therefore either upon a litter or an ass: cf. Judg. 5:10, and *Arvieux, Sitten der Beduinen* Ar. p. 143), from tenderness and delicacy—her eye would look with envy upon the husband of her bosom and her children, and that (*vav expl.*) because of (for) her after-birth, which cometh out from between her feet, and because of her children which she bears (sc., during the siege); “*for she will eat them secretly in the want of everything,*” that is to say, first of all attempt to appease her hunger with the after-birth, and then, when there was no more left, with her own children. To such an awful height would the famine rise!

**Deuteronomy 28:58–68.** The *fifth* and last view.—And yet these horrible calamities would not be the end of the distress. The full measure of the divine curse would be poured out upon Israel, when its disobedience had become hardened into disregard of the glorious and

fearful name of the Lord its God. To point this out, Moses describes the resistance of the people in v. 58; not, as in vv. 15 and 45, as not hearkening to the voice of the Lord to keep all His commandments, which he (Moses) had commanded this day, or which Jehovah had commanded (v. 45), but as “not observing to do all the words which are written in this book, to fear the glorified and fearful name,” (viz.) Jehovah its God. “*This book*” is not Deuteronomy, even if we should assume that Moses had not first of all delivered the discourses in this book to the people and then written them down, but had first of all written them down and then read them to the people (see at Deuteronomy 31:9), but the book of the law, i.e., the Pentateuch, so far as it was already written. This is evident from vv. 60, 61, according to which the grievous diseases of Egypt were written in this book of the law, which points to the book of Exodus, where grievous diseases occur among the Egyptian plagues. In fact, Moses could not have thought of merely laying the people under the obligation to keep the laws of the book of Deuteronomy, since this book does not contain all the essential laws of the covenant, and was never intended to form an independent book of the law. The infinitive clause, “*to fear,*” etc., serves to explain the previous clause, “*to do,*” etc., whether we regard the two clauses as co-ordinate, or the second as subordinate to the first. Doing all the commandments of the law must show and prove itself in fearing the revealed name of the Lord. Where this fear is wanting, the outward observance of the commandments can only be a pharisaic work-righteousness, which is equivalent to a transgress of the law. But the object of this fear was not to be a God, according to human ideas of the nature and working of God; it was to be “*this glorified and fearful name,*” i.e., Jehovah the absolute God, as He glories Himself and shows Himself to be fearful in His doings upon earth. “*The name,*” as in Lev. 24:11. נִכְבָּד in a reflective sense, as in Ex. 14:4, 17, 18; Lev. 10:3.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 112
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 28:59.** If Israel should not do this, the Lord would make its strokes and the strokes of its seed wonderful, i.e., would visit the people and their descendants with extraordinary strokes, with great and lasting strokes, and with evil and lasting diseases (v. 60), and would bring all the pestilences of Egypt upon it. הָשִׁיב, to turn back, inasmuch as Israel was set free from them by the deliverance out of Egypt. מַדְוָה is construed with the plural as a collective noun.

**Deuteronomy 28:61.** Also every disease and every stroke that was not written in this book of the law,—not only those that were written in the book of the law, but those also that did not stand therein. The diseases of Egypt that were written in the book of the law include the murrain of cattle, the boils and blains, and the death of the first-born (Ex. 9:1–10; 12:29); and the strokes (מִכָּה) the rest of the plagues, viz., the frogs, gnats, dog-flies, hail, locusts, and darkness (Ex. 8–10). יִעָלֶם, an uncommon and harder form of יָעַל (Judg. 16:3; cf. *Ewald*, § 138, a.).

**Deuteronomy 28:62.** Israel would be almost annihilated thereby. *“Ye will be left in few people (a small number; cf. Deuteronomy 26:5), whereas ye were as numerous as the stars of heaven.”*

**Deuteronomy 28:63ff.** Yea, the Lord would find His pleasure in the destruction and annihilation of Israel, as He had previously rejoiced in blessing and multiplying it. With this bold anthropomorphic expression Moses seeks to remove from the nation the last prop of false confidence in the mercy of God. Greatly as the sin of man troubles God, and little as the pleasure may be which He has in the death of the wicked, yet the holiness of His love demands the punishment and destruction of those who despise the riches of His goodness and long-suffering; so that He displays His glory in the judgment and destruction of the wicked no less than in blessing and prospering the righteous.

**Deuteronomy 28:63b and 64.** Those who had not succumbed to the plagues and strokes of God, would be torn from the land of their inheritance, and scattered among all nations to the end of the earth, and there be compelled to serve other gods, which are wood and stone, which have no life and no sensation, and therefore can hear no prayer, and cannot deliver out of any distress (cf. Deuteronomy 4:27ff.).

**Deuteronomy 28:65, 66.** When banished thus among all nations, Israel would find no ease or rest, not even rest for the sole of its foot, i.e., no place where it could quietly set its foot, and remain and have peace in its heart. To this extreme distress of homeless banishment there would be added *“a trembling heart, failing of the eyes (the light of life), and despair of soul”* (vid., Lev. 26:36ff.).

**Deuteronomy 28:66.** *“Thy life will be hung up before thee,”* i.e., will be like some valued object, hanging by a thin thread before thine eyes, which any moment might tear down (*Knobel*), that is to say, will be ever hanging in the greatest danger. *“Thou wilt not believe in thy life,”* i.e., thou wilt despair of its preservation (cf. Job 24:22).<sup>29</sup>

**Deuteronomy 28:67.** In the morning they would wish it were evening, and in the evening would wish it were morning, from perpetual dread of what each day or night would bring.

**Deuteronomy 28:68.** Last of all, Moses mentions the worst, namely, their being taken back to Egypt into ignominious slavery. *“If the exodus was the birth of the nation of God as such, return would be its death”* (*Schultz*). *“In ships:”* i.e., in a way which would cut off every possibility of escape. The clause, *“by the way whereof I spake unto thee, thou shalt see it no more again,”* is not a more precise explanation of the expression “in ships,” for it was not in ships that Israel came out of Egypt, but by land, through the desert; on the contrary, it simply serves to strengthen the announcement, *“The Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again,”* namely, in the sense that God would cause them to take a road which they would never have been again



DEUTERONOMY	Page 113
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

if they had continued in faithful dependence upon the Lord. This was the way to Egypt, in reality such a return to this land as Israel ought never to have experienced, namely, a return to slavery. *"There shall ye be sold to your enemies as servants and maids, and there shall be no buyer,"* i.e., no one will buy you as slaves. This clause, which indicates the utmost contempt, is quite sufficient to overthrow the opinion of *Ewald, Riehm*, and others, already referred to at pp. 928, 929, namely, that this verse refers to Psammetichus, who procured some Israelitish infantry from Manasseh. Egypt is simply mentioned as a land where Israel had lived in ignominious bondage. "As a fulfilment of a certain kind, we might no doubt adduce the fact that Titus sent 17,000 adult Jews to Egypt to perform hard labour there, and had those who were under 17 years of age publicly sold (*Josephus, de bell. Jud.* vi. 9, 2), and also that under Hadrian Jews without number were sold at Rachel's grave (*Jerome, ad Jer.* 31). But the word of God is not so contracted, that it can be limited to one single fact. The curses were fulfilled in the time of the Romans in Egypt (vid., *Philo in Flacc.*, and *leg. ad Caium*), but they were also fulfilled in a horrible manner during the middle ages (vid., *Depping, die Juden im Mittelalter*); and they are still in course of fulfilment, even though they are frequently less sensibly felt" (*Schultz*).

**Deuteronomy 28:69** (or Deuteronomy 29:1) is not the close of the address in Deuteronomy 5–28, as *Schultz, Knobel*, and others suppose; but the heading to Deuteronomy 29–30, which relate to the making of the covenant mentioned in this verse (vid., Deuteronomy 29:12, 14).

### Deuteronomy 29

Conclusion of the Covenant in the Land of Moab.—Ch. 29 and 30.

**Deuteronomy 29–30.** The addresses which follow in Deuteronomy 29 and 30 are announced in the heading in Deuteronomy 29:1 as "*words (addresses) of the covenant which Jehovah commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel, beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb,*" and consist,

according to vv. 10ff., in a solemn appeal to all the people to enter into the covenant which the Lord made with them that day; that is to say, it consisted literally in a renewed declaration of the covenant which the Lord had concluded with the nation at Horeb, or in a fresh obligation imposed upon the nation to keep the covenant which had been concluded at Horeb, by the offering of sacrifices and the sprinkling of the people with the sacrificial blood (Ex. 24). There was no necessity for any repetition of this act, because, notwithstanding the frequent transgressions on the part of the nation, it had not been abrogated on the part of God, but still remained in full validity and force. The obligation binding upon the people to fulfil the covenant is introduced by Moses with an appeal to all that the Lord had done for Israel (Deuteronomy 29:2–9); and this is followed by a summons to enter into the covenant which the Lord was concluding with them now, that He might be their God, and fulfil His promises concerning them (vv. 10–15), with a repeated allusion to the punishment which threatened them in case of apostasy (vv. 16–29), and the eventual restoration on the ground of sincere repentance and return to the Lord (Deuteronomy 30:1–14), and finally another solemn adjuration, with a blessing and a curse before them, to make choice of the blessing (vv. 15–20).

**Deuteronomy 29:2–9.** The introduction in v. 2a resembles that in Deuteronomy 5:1. "*All Israel*" is the nation in all its members (see vv. 10, 11).—Israel had no doubt seen the mighty acts of the Lord in Egypt (vv. 2b and 3; cf. Deuteronomy 4:34; 7:19), but Jehovah had not given them a heart, i.e., understanding, to perceive, eyes to see, and ears to hear, until this day. With this complaint, Moses does not intend to excuse the previous want of susceptibility on the part of the nation to the manifestations of grace on the part of the Lord, but simply to explain the necessity for the repeated allusion to the gracious acts of God, and to urge the people to lay them truly to heart. "By reproving the dulness of the past, he would stimulate them to a desire to understand: just as if he had

DEUTERONOMY	Page 114
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

said, that for a long time they had been insensible to so many miracles, and therefore they ought not to delay any longer, but to arouse themselves to hearken better unto God" (*Calvin*). The Lord had not yet given the people an understanding heart, because the people had not yet asked for it, simply because the need of it was not felt (cf. Deuteronomy 4:26).

**Deuteronomy 29:5ff.** With the appeal to the gracious guidance of Israel by God through the desert, the address of Moses passes imperceptibly into an address from the Lord, just as in Deuteronomy 11:14. (On vv. 5, 6, vid., Deuteronomy 8:3, 4; on v. 7, vid., Deuteronomy 2:26ff., and Deuteronomy 3:1ff. and 12ff.).

**Deuteronomy 29:9.** These benefits from the Lord demanded obedience and fidelity. "Keep the words of this covenant," etc. (cf. Deuteronomy 8:18). הַשְׁכִּיל, to act wisely (as in Deuteronomy 32:29), bearing in mind, however, that Jehovah Himself is the wisdom of Israel (Deuteronomy 4:6), and the search for this wisdom brings prosperity and salvation (cf. Josh. 1:7, 8).

**Deuteronomy 29:10–15.** Summons to enter into the covenant of the Lord, namely, to enter inwardly, to make the covenant an affair of the heart and life.

**Deuteronomy 29:10ff.** "To-day," when the covenant-law and covenant-right were laid before them, the whole nation stood before the Lord without a single exception—the heads and the tribes, the elders and the officers, all the men of Israel. The two members are parallel. The heads of the people are the elders and officers, and the tribes consist of all the men. The rendering given by the LXX and Syriac (also in the English version: *Tr.*), "heads (captains) of your tribes," is at variance with the language.

**Deuteronomy 29:11.** The covenant of the Lord embraced, however, not only the men of Israel, but also the wives and children, and the stranger who had attached himself to Israel, such as the Egyptians who came out with Israel (Ex. 12:38; Num. 11:4), and the Midianites who joined the Israelites with Hobab (Num. 10:29),

down to the very lowest servant, "from thy hewer of wood to thy drawer of water" (cf. Josh. 9:21, 27).

**Deuteronomy 29:12.** "That thou shouldest enter into the covenant of the Lord thy God, and the engagement on oath, which the Lord thy God concludeth with thee to-day." עָבַד with בָּ, as in Job 33:28, "to enter into," expresses entire entrance, which goes completely through the territory entered, and is more emphatic than בּוֹא בְּבְרִית (2 Chron. 15:12). "Into the oath:" the covenant confirmed with an oath, covenants being always accompanied with oaths (vid., Gen. 26:28).

**Deuteronomy 29:13.** "That He may set thee up (exalt thee) to-day into a people for Himself, and that He may be (become) unto thee a God" (vid., Deuteronomy 28:9; 27:9; Ex. 19:5, 6).

**Deuteronomy 29:14, 15.** This covenant Moses made not only with those who are present, but with all whether present or not; for it was to embrace not only those who were living then, but their descendants also, to become a covenant of blessing for all nations (cf. Acts 2:39, and the intercession of Christ in John 17:20).

**Deuteronomy 29:16–29.** The summons to enter into the covenant of the Lord is explained by Moses first of all by an exposition of the evil results which would follow from apostasy from the Lord, or the breach of His covenant. This exposition he introduces with an allusion to the experience of the people with reference to the worthlessness of idols, both in Egypt itself, and upon their march through the nations, whose territory they passed through (vv. 16, 17). The words, "for ye have learned how we dwelt in Egypt, and passed through the nations ... and have seen their abominations and their idols" (*gillulim*: lit., clods, see Lev. 26:30), have this signification: In our abode in Egypt, and upon our march through different lands, ye have become acquainted with the idols of these nations, that they are not gods, but only wood and stone (see at Deuteronomy 4:28), silver and gold. אֱתֵּן אֲשֶׁר, as in Deuteronomy 9:7,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 115
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

literally “ye know that which we dwelt,’ i.e., know what our dwelling there showed, what experience we gained there of the nature of heathen idols.

**Deuteronomy 29:18.** *“That there may not be among you,”* etc.: this sentence may be easily explained by introducing a thought which may be easily supplied, such as “consider this,” or “do not forget what ye have seen, that no one, either man or woman, family or tribe, may turn away from Jehovah our God.”—*“That there may not be a root among you which bears poison and wormwood as fruit.”* A striking image of the destructive fruit borne by idolatry (cf. Heb. 12:15). *Rosh* stands for a plant of a very bitter taste, as we may see from the frequency with which it is combined with לָעֵצָה, wormwood: it is not, strictly speaking, a poisonous plant, although the word is used in Job 20:16 to denote the poison of serpents, because, in the estimation of a Hebrew, bitterness and poison were kindred terms. There is no other passage in which it can be shown to have the meaning “poison.” The sense of the figure is given in plain terms in v. 19, *“that no one when he hears the words of this oath may bless himself in his heart, saying, I will prosper with me, for I walk in the firmness of my heart.”* To bless himself in his heart is to congratulate himself. נְשִׁירִית, firmness, a *vox media*; in Syriac, firmness, in a good sense, equivalent to truth; in Hebrew, generally in a bad sense, denoting hardness of heart; and this is the sense in which Moses uses it here.—*“To sweep away that which is saturated with the thirsty:”* a proverbial expression, of which very different interpretations have been given (see *Rosenmüller ad h. l.*), taken no doubt from the land and transferred to persons or souls; so that we might supply *Nephesh* in this sense, “to destroy all, both those who have drunk its poison, and those also who are still thirsting for it” (*Knobel*). But even if we were to supply אֶרֶץ (the land), we should not have to think of the land itself, but simply of its inhabitants, so that the thought would still remain the same.

**Deuteronomy 29:20, 21.** “For the Lord will not forgive him (who thinks or speaks in this way); *but then will His anger smoke* (break forth in fire; vid., (Ps. 74:1), *and His jealousy against that man, and the whole curse of the law will lie upon him, that his name may be blotted out under heaven* (vid., Deuteronomy 25:19; Ex. 17:14). *“The Lord will separate him unto evil from all the tribes,—so that he will be shut out from the covenant nation, and from its salvation, and be exposed to destruction,—according to all the curses of the covenant.”* Although the pronominal suffix refers primarily to the man, it also applies, according to v. 18, to the woman, the family, and the tribe. “That is written,” etc., as in Deuteronomy 28:58, 61.

**Deuteronomy 29:22–24.** How thoroughly Moses was filled with the thought, that not only individuals, but whole families, and in fact the greater portion of the nation, would fall into idolatry, is evident from the further expansion of the threat which follows, and in which he foresees in the Spirit, and foretells, the extermination of whole families, and the devastation of the land by distant nations; as in Lev. 26:31, 32. Future generations of Israel, and the stranger from a distant land, when they saw the strokes of the Lord which burst upon the land, and the utter desolation of the land, would ask whence this devastation, and receive the reply, The Lord had smitten the land thus in His anger, because its inhabitants (the Israelites) had forsaken His covenant. With regard to the construction, observe that וְאָמַר, in v. 22, is resumed in וְאָמַר, in v. 24, the subject of v. 22 being expanded into the general notion, “all nations” (v. 24). With וְרָאוּ, in v. 22b, a parenthetical clause is inserted, giving the reason for the main thought, in the form of a circumstantial clause; and to this there is attached, by a loose apposition in v. 23, a still further picture of the divine strokes according to their effect upon the land. The nouns in v. 23, *“brimstone and salt burning,”* are in apposition to the strokes (plagues), and so far depend upon “they see.” The description is borrowed from the character of the Dead Sea and its

DEUTERONOMY	Page 116
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

vicinity, to which there is an express allusion in the words, *"like the overthrow of Sodom,"* etc., i.e., of the towns of the vale of Siddim (see at Gen. 14:2), which resembled paradise, the garden of Jehovah, before their destruction (vid., Gen. 13:10 and 19:24ff.).

**Deuteronomy 29:24.** *"What is this great burning of wrath?"* i.e., what does it mean—whence does it come? The reply to such a question would be (vv. 25–29): The inhabitants of the land have forsaken the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers; therefore has the wrath of the Lord burned over the land.

**Deuteronomy 29:26.** *"Gods which God had not assigned them"* (vid., Deuteronomy 4:19). "All the curses," etc., are the curses contained in Deuteronomy 28:15–68, Lev. 26:14–38.—Those who give the answer close their address in v. 29 with an expression of pious submission and solemn admonition. *"That which is hidden belongs to the Lord our God (is His affair), and that which is revealed belongs to us and our children for ever, to do (that we may do) all the words of this law."* That which is revealed includes the law with its promises and threats; consequently that which is hidden can only refer to the mode in which God will carry out in the future His counsel and will, which He has revealed in the law, and complete His work of salvation notwithstanding the apostasy of the people.<sup>30</sup>

### Deuteronomy 30

**Deuteronomy 30:1–10.** Nevertheless the rejection of Israel and its dispersion among the heathen were not to be the close. If the people should return to the Lord their God in their exile, He would turn His favour towards them again, and gather them again out of their dispersion, as had already been proclaimed in Deuteronomy 4:29ff. and Lev. 26:40ff., where it was also observed that the extremity of their distress would bring the people to reflection and induce them to return.

**Deuteronomy 30:1–3.** *"When all these words, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, shall come."* The allusion to the blessing in

this connection may be explained on the ground that Moses was surveying the future generally, in which not only a curse but a blessing also would come upon the nation, according to its attitude towards the Lord as a whole and in its several members, since even in times of the greatest apostasy on the part of the nation there would always be a holy seed which could not die out; because otherwise the nation would necessarily have been utterly and for ever rejected, whereby the promises of God would have been brought to nought,—a result which was absolutely impossible. *"And thou takest to heart among all nations,"* etc., sc., what has befallen thee,—not only the curse which presses upon thee, but also the blessing which accompanies obedience to the commands of God,—*"and returnest to the Lord thy God, and hearkenest to His voice with all the heart,"* etc. (cf. Deuteronomy 4:29); *"the Lord will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and gather thee again."* אָתָּה שׁוֹב does not mean to bring back the prisoners, as the more modern lexicographers erroneously suppose (the *Kal* שׁוֹב never has the force of the *Hiphil*), but to turn the imprisonment, and that in a figurative sense, viz., to put an end to the distress (Job 42:10; Jer. 30:8; Ezek. 16:53; Ps. 14:7; also Ps. 85:2; 126:2, 4), except that in many passages the misery of exile in which the people pined is represented as imprisonment. The passage before us is fully decisive against the meaning to bring back the prisoners, since the gathering out of the heathen is spoken of as being itself the consequence of the "turning of the captivity;" so also is Jer. 29:14, where the bringing back (הַשִּׁיב) is expressly distinguished from it. But especially is this the case with Jer. 30:18, where "turning the captivity of Jacob's tents" is synonymous with having mercy on his dwelling-places, and building up the city, again, so that the city lying in ruins is represented as שׁוֹב, an imprisonment.<sup>31</sup>

**Deuteronomy 30:4, 5.** The gathering of Israel out of all the countries of the earth would then follow. Even though the rejected people should

DEUTERONOMY	Page 117
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

be at the end of heaven, the Lord would fetch them thence, and bring them back into the land of their fathers, and do good to the nation, and multiply them above their fathers. These last words show that the promised neither points directly to the gathering of Israel from dispersion on its ultimate conversion to Christ, nor furnishes any proof that the Jews will then be brought back to Palestine. It is true that even these words have some reference to the final redemption of Israel. This is evident from the curse of dispersion, which cannot be restricted to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, but includes the Roman dispersion also, in which the nation continues still; and it is still more apparent from the renewal of this promise in Jer. 32:37 and other prophetic passages. But this application is to be found in the spirit, and not in the letter. For if there is to be an increase in the number of the Jews, when gathered out of their dispersion into all the world, above the number of their fathers, and therefore above the number of the Israelites in the time of Solomon and the first monarchs of the two kingdoms, Palestine will never furnish room enough for a nation multiplied like this. The multiplication promised here, so far as it falls within the Messianic age, will consist in the realization of the promise given to Abraham, that his seed should grow into nations (Gen. 17:6 and 16), i.e., in the innumerable multiplication, not of the "Israel according to the flesh," but of the "Israel according to the spirit," whose land is not restricted to the boundaries of the earthly Canaan or Palestine (see p. 144). The possession of the earthly Canaan for all time is nowhere promised to the Israelitish nation in the law (see at Deuteronomy 11:21).

**Deuteronomy 30:6.** The Lord will then circumcise their heart, and the heart of their children (see Deuteronomy 10:16), so that they will love Him with all their heart. When Israel should turn with true humility to the Lord, He would be found of them,—would lead them to true repentance, and sanctify them through the power of His grace,—would take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a

heart of flesh, a new heart and a new spirit,—so that they should truly know Him and keep His commandments (vid., Ezek. 11:19; 36:26; Jer. 31:33ff. and 32:39ff.). "*Because of thy life*," i.e., that thou mayest live, sc., attain to true life. The fulfilment of this promise does not take place all at once. It commenced with small beginnings at the deliverance from the Babylonian exile, and in a still higher degree at the appearance of Christ in the case of all the Israelites who received Him as their Saviour. Since then it has been carried on through all ages in the conversion of individual children of Abraham to Christ; and it will be realized in the future in a still more glorious manner in the nation at large (Rom. 11:25ff.). The words of Moses do not relate to any particular age, but comprehend all times. For Israel has never been hardened and rejected in all its members, although the mass of the nation lives under the curse even to the present day.

**Deuteronomy 30:7.** But after its conversion, the curses, which had hitherto rested upon it, would fall upon its enemies and haters, according to the promise in Gen. 12:3.

**Deuteronomy 30:8ff.** Israel would then hearken again to the voice of the Lord and keep His commandments, and would rejoice in consequence in the richest blessing of its God. In the expression, אָתָּה תָּשׁוּב וְשָׁמַעְתָּ ("thou shalt return and hearken"), תָּשׁוּב ("thou shalt return") has an adverbial signification. This is evident from the corresponding expression in v. 9b, "for Jehovah will again rejoice over thee" (lit., "will return and rejoice"), in which the adverbial signification is placed beyond all doubt.

**Deuteronomy 30:8-10.** Vv. 8-10 contain the general thought, that Israel would then come again into its normal relation to its God, would enter into true and perfect covenant fellowship with the Lord, and enjoy all the blessings of the covenant.

**Deuteronomy 30:9.** V. 9a is a repetition of Deuteronomy 28:11. The Lord will rejoice again over Israel, to do them good (vid., Deuteronomy 28:63), as He had rejoiced over their fathers.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 118
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

The fathers are not the patriarchs alone, but all the pious ancestors of the people.

**Deuteronomy 30:10.** A renewed enforcement of the indispensable condition of salvation.

**Deuteronomy 30:11–20.** The fulfilment of this condition is not impossible, nor really very difficult. This natural though leads to the motive, which Moses impresses upon the hearts of the people in vv. 11–14, viz., that He might turn the blessing to them. God had done everything to render the observance of His commandments possible to Israel. *“This commandment”* (used as in Deuteronomy 6:1 to denote the whole law) is *“not too wonderful for thee,”* i.e., is not too hard to grasp, or unintelligible (vid., Deuteronomy 17:8), nor is it too far off: it is neither *in heaven*, i.e., at an inaccessible height; nor *beyond the sea*, i.e., at an unattainable distance, at the end of the world, so that any one could say, Who is able to fetch it thence? but it is *very near thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart to do it*. It not only lay before the people in writing, but it was also preached to them by word of mouth, and thus brought to their knowledge, so that it had become a subject of conversation as well as of reflection and careful examination. But however near the law had thus been brought to man, sin had so estranged the human heart from the word of God, that doing and keeping the law had become invariably difficult, and in fact impossible; so that the declaration, *“the word is in thy heart,”* only attains its full realization through the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God, and the righteousness that is by faith; and to this the Apostle Paul applies the passage in Rom. 10:25ff.

**Deuteronomy 30:15–20.** In conclusion, Moses sums up the contents of the whole of this preaching of the law in the words, *“life and good, and death and evil,”* as he had already done at Deuteronomy 11:26, 27, in the first part of this address, to lay the people by a solemn adjuration under the obligation to be faithful to the Lord, and through this obligation to conclude the covenant afresh. He had set before them this day life and good (*“good”* = prosperity

and salvation), as well as death and evil (רָעָה, adversity and destruction), by commanding them to love the Lord and walk in His ways. Love is placed first, as in Deuteronomy 6:5, as being the essential principle of the fulfilment of the commandments. Expounding the law was setting before them life and death, salvation and destruction, because the law, as the word of God, was living and powerful, and proved itself in every man a power of life or of death, according to the attitude which he assumed towards it (vid., Deuteronomy 32:47). נָדַח, to permit oneself to be torn away to idolatry (as in Deuteronomy 4:19).

**Deuteronomy 30:18,** as Deuteronomy 4:26; 8:19. He calls upon heaven and earth as witnesses (v. 19, as in Deuteronomy 4:26), namely, that he had set before them life and death. וּבְחַרְךָ, in v. 19, is the apodosis: *“therefore choose life.”*

**Deuteronomy 30:20.** כִּי הוּא חַיִּיךָ, *for that* (namely, to love the Lord) *is thy life*, that is, the condition of life, and of long life, in the promised land (vid., Deuteronomy 4:40).

### Deuteronomy 31

Moses' Farewell and Death. Ch. 31–34.

**Deuteronomy 31–34.** With the renewal of the covenant, by the choice set before the people between blessing and curse, life and death, Moses had finished the interpretation and enforcement of the law (Deuteronomy 1:5), and brought the work of legislation to a close. But in order that the work to which the Lord had called him might be thoroughly completed, it still remained for him, before his approaching death, to hand over the task of leading the people into Canaan to Joshua, who had been appointed as his successor, to finish writing out the laws, and to hand over the book of the law to the priests. The Lord also directed him to write an ode, as a witness against the people, on account of their obstinacy, and teach it to the Israelites. To these last arrangements and acts of Moses, which are narrated in Deuteronomy 31 and 32, there are added in Deuteronomy 33

<b>DEUTERONOMY</b>	<b>Page 119</b>
<b>By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch</b>	a Grace Notes study

the blessing with which this man of god bade farewell to the tribes of Israel, and in Deuteronomy 34 the account of his death, with which the Pentateuch closes.

Moses' Final Arrangements. Completion and Handing Over of the Book of the Law.—Ch. 31.

**Deuteronomy 31.** The final arrangements which Moses made before his departure, partly of his own accord, and partly by the command of God, relate to the introduction of the Israelites into the promised land, and the confirmation of their fidelity towards the Lord their God.

**Deuteronomy 31:1–13.** Vv. 1–13 describe how Moses promised the help of the Lord in the conquest of the land, both to the people generally, and also to Joshua, their leader into Canaan (vv. 2–8), and commanded the priests to keep the book of the law, and read it publicly every seventh year (vv. 9–13); and vv. 14–23, how the Lord appeared to Moses before the tabernacle, and directed him to compose an ode as a testimony against the apostasy of the people, and promised Joshua His assistance. And lastly, vv. 24–27 relate how the book of the law, when brought to completion, was handed over to the Levites; and vv. 28–30 describe the reading of the ode to the people.

**Deuteronomy 31:1–8.** In v. 1 Moses' final arrangements are announced. וַיֵּלֶךְ does not mean "he went away" (into his tent), which does not tally with what follows ("and spake"); nor is it merely equivalent to *porro, amplius*. It serves, as in Ex. 2:1 and Gen. 35:22, as a pictorial description of what he was about to do, in the sense of "he prepared himself," or rose up. After closing the exposition of the law, Moses had either withdrawn, or at any rate made a pause, before he proceeded to make his final arrangements for laying down his office, and taking leave of the people.

**Deuteronomy 31:2.** These last arrangements he commences with the declaration, that he must now bid them farewell, as he is 120 years old (which agrees with Ex. 7:7), and can no more go out and in, i.e., no longer work in the

nation and for it (see at Num. 27:17); and the Lord has forbidden him to cross over the Jordan and enter Canaan (see Num. 20:24). The first of these reasons is not at variance with the statement in Deuteronomy 34:7, that up to the time of his death his eyes were not dim, nor his strength abated. For this is merely an affirmation, that he retained the ability to see and to work to the last moment of his life, which by no means precludes his noticing the decline of his strength, and feeling the approach of his death.

**Deuteronomy 31:3–5.** But although Moses could not, and was not to lead his people into Canaan, the Lord would fulfil His promise, to go before Israel and destroy the Canaanites, like the two kings of the Amorites; only they (the Israelites) were to do to them as the Lord had commanded them, i.e., to root out the Canaanites (vid., Deuteronomy 7:2ff.; Num. 33:51ff.; Ex. 34:11ff.).

**Deuteronomy 31:6.** Israel was therefore to be of good courage, and not to be afraid of them (vid., Deuteronomy 1:21; 20:3).

**Deuteronomy 31:7, 8.** Moses then encourages Joshua in the same way in the presence of all the people, on the strength of the promise of God in Deuteronomy 1:38 and Num. 27:18ff.

וְתָבוֹא אֶת־הָעָם, "thou wilt come with this people into the land." These words are quite appropriate; and the alteration of תָּבוֹא into תָּבִיא, according to v. 23 (*Samar., Syr., Vulg.*), is a perfectly unnecessary conjecture; for Joshua was not appointed leader of the people here, but simply promised an entrance with all the people into Canaan.

**Deuteronomy 31:9–13.** Moses then handed over the law which he had written to the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant, and to all the elders of Israel, with instructions to read it to the people at the end of every seven years, during the festal season of the year of release ("at the end," as in Deuteronomy 15:1), viz., at the fast of Tabernacles (see Lev. 23:34), when they appeared before the Lord. It is evident from the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 120
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

context and contents of these verses, apart from v. 24, that the ninth verse is to be understood in the way described, i.e., that the two clauses, which are connected together by *vav. relat.* (“*and Moses wrote this law,*” “*and delivered it*”), are not logically co-ordinate, but that the handing over of the written law was the main thing to be recorded here. With regard to the handing over of the law, the fact that Moses not only gave the written law to the priests, that they might place it by the ark of the covenant, but also “*to all the elders of Israel,*” proves clearly enough that Moses did not intend at this time to give the law-book entirely out of his own hands, but that this handing over was merely an assignment of the law to the persons who were to take care, that in the future the written law should be kept before the people, as the rule of their life and conduct, and publicly read to them. The explanation which *J. H. Mich.* gives is perfectly correct, “He gave it for them to teach and keep.” The law-book would only have been given to the priests, if the object had been simply that it should be placed by the ark of the covenant, or at the most, in the presence of the elders, but certainly not *to all* the elders, since they were not allowed to touch the ark. The correctness of this view is placed beyond all doubt by the contents of vv. 10ff. The main point in hand was not the writing out of the law, or the transfer of it to the priests and elders of the nation, but the command to read the law in the presence of the people at the feast of Tabernacles of the year of release. The writing out and handing over simply formed the substratum for this command, so that we cannot infer from them, that by this act Moses formally gave the law out of his own hands. He entrusted the reading to the priesthood and the college of elders, as the spiritual and secular rulers of the congregation; and hence the singular, “Thou shalt read this law to all Israel.” The regulations as to the persons who were to undertake the reading, and also as to the particular time during the seven days’ feast, and the portions that were to be read, he left to the rulers of the congregation. We learn from Neh. 8:18, that in Ezra’s time they read *in* the

book of the law every day from the first to the last day of the feast, from which we may see on the one hand, that the whole of the *Thorah* (or Pentateuch), from beginning to end, was not read; and on the other hand, by comparing the expression in v. 18, “the book of the law of God,” with “the law,” in v. 14, that the reading was not restricted to Deuteronomy: for, according to v. 14, they had already been reading in Leviticus (Lev. 23) before the feast was held,—an evident proof that Ezra the scribe did not regard the book of Deuteronomy like the critics of our day, as the true national law-book, an acquaintance with which was all that the people required. Moses did not fix upon the feast of Tabernacles of the sabbatical year as the time for reading the law, because it fell at the beginning of the year,<sup>32</sup> as *Schultz* wrongly supposes, that the people might thereby be incited to occupy this year of entire rest in holy employment with the word and works of God. And the reading itself was nether intended to promote a more general acquaintance with the law on the part of the people,—an object which could not possibly have been secured by reading it once in seven years; nor was it merely to be a solemn promulgation and restoration of the law as the rule for the national life, for the purpose of removing any irregularities that might have found their way in the course of time into either the religious or the political life of the nation (*Bähr*, Symbol. ii. p. 603). To answer this end, it should have been connected with the Passover, the festival of Israel’s birth. The reading stood rather in close connection with the idea of the festival itself; it was intended to quicken the soul with the law of the Lord, to refresh the heart, to enlighten the eyes,—in short, to offer the congregation the blessing of the law, which David celebrated from his own experience in Ps. 19:8–15, to make the law beloved and prized by the whole nation, as a precious gift of the grace of God. Consequently (vv. 12, 13), not only the men, but the women and children also, were to be gathered together for this purpose, that they might hear the word of God, and learn to fear the Lord their God, as long as they



DEUTERONOMY	Page 121
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

should live in the land which He gave them for a possession. On v. 11, see Ex. 23:17, and 34:23, 24, where we also find לְהִרְאוֹת for לְרִאוֹת (v. 24).

**Deuteronomy 31:14–23.** After handing over the office to Joshua, and the law to the priests and elders, Moses was called by the Lord to come to the tabernacle with Joshua, to command him (צִוָּה), i.e., to appoint him, confirm him in his office. To this end the Lord appeared in the tabernacle (v. 15), in a pillar of cloud, which remained standing before it, as in Num. 12:5 (see the exposition of Num. 11:25). But before appointing Joshua, He announced to Moses that after his death the nation would go a whoring after other gods, and would break the covenant, for which it would be visited with severe afflictions, and directed him to write an ode and teach it to the children of Israel, that when the apostasy should take place, and punishment from God be felt in consequence, it might speak as a witness against the people, as it would not vanish from their memory. The Lord communicated this commission to Moses in the presence of Joshua, that he also might hear from the mouth of God that the Lord foreknew the future apostasy of the people, and yet nevertheless would bring them into the promised land. In this there was also implied an admonition to Joshua, not only to take care that the Israelites learned the ode and kept it in their memories, but also to strive with all his might to prevent the apostasy, so long as he was leader of Israel; which Joshua did most faithfully to the very end of his life (vid., Josh. 23 and 24).—The announcement of the falling away of the Israelites from the Lord into idolatry, and the burning of the wrath of God in consequence (vv. 16–18), serves as a basis for the command in vv. 19ff. In this announcement the different points are simply linked together with “and,” whereas in their actual signification they are subordinate to one another: When thou shalt lie with thy fathers, and the people shall rise up, and go a whoring after other gods: My anger will burn against them, etc. קָם, to rise up, to prepare, serves to bring out distinctly the course which the thing would take. The

expression, “foreign gods of the land,” indicates that in the land which Jehovah gave His people, He (Jehovah) alone was God and Lord, and that He alone was to be worshipped there. בְּקִרְבּוֹ is in apposition to שָׁמָּה, “whither thou comest, in the midst of it.” The punishment announced in v. 17 corresponds most closely to the sin of the nation. For going a whoring after strange gods, the anger of the Lord would burn against them; for forsaking Him, He would forsake them; and for breaking His covenant, He would hide His face from them, i.e., withdraw His favour from them, so that they would be destroyed. הָיָה לְאֵכָל, it (the nation) will be for devouring, i.e., will be devoured or destroyed (see *Ewald*, § 237, c.; and on אֵכָל in this sense, see Deuteronomy 7:16, and Num. 14:9). “And many evils and troubles will befall it; and it will say in that day, Do not these evils befall me, because my God is not in the midst of me?” When the evils and troubles broke in upon the nation, the people would inquire the cause, and would find it in the fact that they were forsaken by their God; but the Lord (“but I” in v. 18 forms the antithesis to “they” in v. 17) would still hide His face, namely, because simply missing God is not true repentance.

**Deuteronomy 31:19.** “And now,” sc., because what was announced in vv. 16–18 would take place, “write you this song.” “This” refers to the song which follows in Deuteronomy 32. Moses and Joshua were to write the song, because they were both of them to strive to prevent the apostasy of the people; and Moses, as the author, was to teach it to the children of Israel, to make them learn it, that it might be a witness for the Lord (for Me) against the children of Israel. “This” is defined still further in vv. 20, 21: if Israel, through growing satisfied and fat in its land, which was so rich in costly good, should turn to other gods, and the Lord should visit it in consequence with grievous evils and troubles, the song was to answer before Israel as a witness; i.e., not only serve the Lord as a witness to the people that He had foretold all the evil consequences of apostasy, and had

DEUTERONOMY	Page 122
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

given Israel proper warning (*Knobel*), but to serve, as we may see from vv. 20, 21, and from the contents of the song, as a witness, on the one hand, that the Lord had conferred upon the people so many benefits and bestowed upon them such abundant blessings of His grace, that apostasy from Him was the basest ingratitude, for which they would justly be punished; and, on the other hand, that the Lord had not rejected His people in spite of the punishments inflicted upon them, but would once more have compassion upon them and requite their foes, and thus would sanctify and glorify Himself as the only true God by His judgments upon Israel and the nations. The law, with its commandments, promises, and threats, was already a witness of this kind against Israel (cf. v. 26); but just as in every other instance the appearance of a plurality of unanimous witnesses raises the matter into an indisputable truth, so the Lord would set up another witness against the Israelites besides the law, in the form of this song, which was adapted to give all the louder warning, “because the song would not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed” (v. 21). The song, when once it had passed into the mouths of the people, would not very readily vanish from their memory, but would be transmitted from generation to generation, and be heard from the mouths of their descendants, as a perpetual warning voice, as it would be used by Israel for God knew the invention of the people, i.e., the thoughts and purposes of their heart, which they cherished (עָשָׂה used to denote the doing of the heart, as in Isa. 32:6) even then before He had brought them into Canaan. (On v. 20a, vid., Deuteronomy 7:5; 9:5, and Ex. 3:8.)—In v. 22 the result is anticipated, and the command of God is followed immediately by an account of its completion by Moses (just as in Ex. 12:50; Lev. 16:34, etc.).—After this command with reference to the song, the Lord appointed Joshua to the office which he had been commanded to take, urging him at the same time to be courageous, and promising him His help in the conquest of Canaan. That the subject

to יִצָּו is not Moses, but Jehovah, is evident partly from the words themselves, “I will be with thee” (vid., Ex. 3:12).<sup>33</sup>

**Deuteronomy 31:24–27.** With the installation of Joshua on the part of God, the official life of Moses was brought to a close. Having returned from the tabernacle, he finished the writing out of the laws, and then gave the book of the law to the Levites, with a command to put it by the side of the ark of the covenant, that it might be there for a witness against the people, as He knew its rebellion and stiffneckedness (vv. 24–27). כָּתַב עַל-סֵפֶר, to write upon a book, equivalent to write down, commit to writing. עַד תִּקְמָם, till their being finished, i.e., complete. By the “*Levites who bare the ark of the covenant*” we are not to understand ordinary Levites, but the Levitical priests, who were entrusted with the ark. “The Levites” is simply a contraction for the full expression, “the priests the sons of Levi” (v. 9). It is true that, according to Num. 4:4ff., the Kohathites were appointed to carry the holy vessels, which included the ark of the covenant, on the journey through the desert; but it was the priests, and not they, who were the true bearers and guardians of the holy things, as we may see from the fact that the priests had first of all to wrap up these holy things in a careful manner, before they handed them over to the Kohathites, that they might not touch the holy things and die (Num. 4:15). Hence we find that on solemn occasions, when the ark was to be brought out in all its full significance and glory,—as, for example, in the crossing of the Jordan (Josh. 3:3ff., 4:9, 10), when encompassing Jericho (Josh. 6:6, 12), at the setting up of the law on Ebal and Gerizim (Josh. 8:33), and at the consecration of Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 8:3),—it was not by the Levites, but by the priests, that the ark of the covenant was borne. In fact the Levites were, strictly speaking, only their (the priests’) servants, who relieved them of this and the other labour, so that what they did was done in a certain sense through them. If the (non-priestly) Levites were not to touch the ark of the covenant, and not

DEUTERONOMY	Page 123
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

even to put in the poles (Num. 4:6), Moses would not have handed over the law-book, to be kept by the ark of the covenant to them, but to the priests. מִצֵּד אֲרוֹן, at the side of the ark, or, according to the paraphrase of *Jonathan*, "in a case on the right side of the ark of the covenant," which may be correct, although we must not think of this case, as many of the early theologians do, as a secondary ark attached to the ark of the covenant (see *Lundius, Jüd. Heiligth.* pp. 73, 74). The tables of the law were deposited in the ark (Ex. 25:16; 40:20), and the book of the law was to be kept by its side. As it formed, from its very nature, simply an elaborate commentary upon the decalogue, it was also to have its place outwardly as an accompaniment to the tables of the law, for a witness against the people, in the same manner as the song in the mouth of the people (v. 21). For, as Moses adds in v. 27, in explanation of his instructions, *"I know thy rebelliousness, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord (vid., Deuteronomy 9:7); and how much more after my death."*

With these words Moses handed over the complete book of the law to the Levitical priests. For although the handing over is not expressly mentioned, it is unquestionably implied in the words, "Take this book, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant," as the finishing of the writing of the laws is mentioned immediately before. But if Moses finished the writing of the law after he had received instructions from the Lord to compose the ode, what he wrote will reach to v. 23; and what follows from v. 24 onwards will form the appendix to his work by a different hand.<sup>34</sup> The supposition that Moses himself inserted his instructions concerning the preservation of the book of the law, and the ode which follows, is certainly possible, but not probable. The decision as to the place where it should be kept was not of such importance as to need insertion in the book of the law, since sufficient provision for its safe keeping had been made by the directions in vv. 9ff.; and although God had

commanded him to write the ode, it was not for the purpose of inserting it on the *Thorah* as an essential portion of it, but to let the people learn it, to put it in the mouth of the people. The allusion to this ode in vv. 19ff. furnishes no conclusive evidence, either that Moses himself included it in the law-book which he had written with the account of his oration in vv. 28–30 and Deuteronomy 32:1–43, or that the appendix which Moses did not write commences at v. 14 of this chapter. For all that follows with certainty from the expression "this song" (vv. 19 and 22), which certainly points to the song in Deuteronomy 32, is that Moses himself handed over the ode to the priests with the complete book of the law, as a supplement to the law, and that this ode was then inserted by the writer of the appendix in the appendix itself.

**Deuteronomy 31:28–30.** Directly after handing over the book of the law, Moses directed the elders of all the tribes, together with the official persons, to gather round him, that he might rehearse to them the ode which he had written fore the people. The summons, "gather unto me," was addressed to the persons to whom he had given the book of the law. The elders and officers, as the civil authorities of the congregation, were collected together by him to hear the ode, because they were to put it in the mouth of the people, i.e., to take care that all the nation should learn it. The words, *"I will call heaven and earth as witnesses against you,"* refer to the substance of the ode about to be rehearsed, which begins with an appeal to the heaven and the earth (Deuteronomy 32:1). The reason assigned for this in v. 29 is a brief summary of what the Lord had said to Moses in vv. 16–21, and Moses thought it necessary to communicate to the representatives of the nation. *"The work of your hands"* refers to the idols (vid., Deuteronomy 4:28).

**Deuteronomy 31:30.** Verse 30 forms the introduction to the rehearsal of the ode.

### Deuteronomy 32

Song of Moses, and Announcement of His Death.—Ch. 32.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 124
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 32:1–43.** The Song of Moses.—In accordance with the object announced in Deuteronomy 31:19, this song contrasts the unchangeable fidelity of the Lord with the perversity of His faithless people. After a solemn introduction pointing out the importance of the instruction about to be given (vv. 1–3), this thought is placed in the foreground as the theme of the whole: the Lord is blameless and righteous in His doings, but Israel acts corruptly and perversely; and this is carried out in the first place by showing the folly of the Israelites in rebelling against the Lord (vv. 6–18); secondly, by unfolding the purpose of God to reject and punish the rebellious generation (vv. 19–23); and lastly, by announcing and depicting the fulfilment of this purpose, and the judgment in which the Lord would have mercy upon His servants and annihilate His foes (vv. 34–43).

The song embraces the whole of the future history of Israel, and bears all the marks of a prophetic testimony from the mouth of Moses, in the perfectly ideal picture which it draws, on the one hand, of the benefits and blessings conferred by the Lord upon His people; and on the other hand, of the ingratitude with which Israel repaid its God for them all. “This song, soaring as it does to the loftiest heights, moving amidst the richest abundance of pictures of both present and future, with its concise, compressed, and pictorial style, rough, penetrating, and sharp, but full of the holiest solemnity, a witness against the disobedient nation, a celebration of the covenant God, sets before us in miniature a picture of the whole life and conduct of the great man of God, whose office it pre-eminently was to preach condemnation” (*O. v. Gerlach*).—It is true that the persons addressed in this ode are not the contemporaries of Moses, but the Israelites in Canaan, when they had grown haughty in the midst of the rich abundance of its blessings, and had fallen away from the Lord, so that the times when God led the people through the wilderness to Canaan are represented as days long past away. But this, the stand-point of the ode, is not to be identified with the poet’s own

time. It is rather a prophetic anticipation of the future, which has an *analogon* in a poet’s absorption in an ideal future, and differs from this merely in the certainty and distinctness with which the future is foreseen and proclaimed. 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, and a mistaken attempt to turn figurative language into prosaic history. In the whole of the song there is not a single word to indicate that the persons addressed were “already sighing under the oppression of a wild and hostile people, the barbarous hordes of Assyrians or Chaldeans” (*Ewald, Kamphausen, etc.*).<sup>35</sup> The Lord had indeed determined to reject the idolatrous nation, and excite it to jealousy through those that were “no people,” and to heap up all evils upon it, famine, pestilence, and sword; but the execution of this purpose had not yet taken place, and, although absolutely certain, was in the future still. Moreover, the benefits which God had conferred upon His people, were not of such a character as to render it impossible that they should have been alluded to by Moses. All that the Lord had done for Israel, by delivering it from bondage and guiding it miraculously through the wilderness, had been already witnessed by Moses himself; and the description in vv. 13 and 14, which goes beyond that time, is in reality nothing more than a pictorial expansion of the thought that Israel was most bountifully provided with the richest productions of the land of Canaan, which flowed with milk and honey. It is true, the satisfaction of Israel with these blessings had not actually taken place in the time of Moses, but was still only an object of hope; but it was hope of such a kind, that Moses could not cherish a moment’s doubt concerning it. Throughout the whole we find no allusions to peculiar circumstances or historical events belonging to a later age.—On the other hand, the whole circle of ideas, figures, and words in the ode points decidedly to Moses as the author. Even if we leave out of sight the number

DEUTERONOMY	Page 125
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

of peculiarities of style (ἄπ. λεγόμενα), which is by no means inconsiderable, and such bold original composite words as לֹא-אֱלֹהִים (*not-God*, v. 21; cf. v. 17) and לֹא-עָם (*not-people*, v. 21), which might point to a very remote antiquity, and furnish evidence of the vigour of the earliest poetry,—the figure of the *eagle* in v. 11 points back to Ex. 19:4; the description of God as a *rock* in vv. 4, 15, 18, 30, 31, 37, recalls Gen. 49:24; the *fire* of the wrath of God, burning even to the world beneath (v. 22), points to the representation of God in Deuteronomy 4:24 as a consuming fire; the expression “to move to *jealousy*,” in vv. 16 and 21, recalls the “jealous God” in Deuteronomy 4:24; 6:15, Ex. 20:5; 34:14; the description of Israel as *children* (sons) in v. 5, and “children without faithfulness” in v. 20, suggests Deuteronomy 14:1; and the words, “O that they were *wise*,” in v. 29, recall Deuteronomy 4:6, “a wise people.” Again, it is only in the Pentateuch that the word גָּדֹל (*greatness*, v. 3) is used to denote the greatness of God (vid., Deuteronomy 3:24; 5:21; 9:26; 11:2; Num. 14:19); the name of honour given to Israel in v. 15, viz., *Jeshurun*, only occurs again in Deuteronomy 33:5 and 26, with the exception of Isa. 44:2, where it is borrowed from these passages; and the plural form יְמוֹת, in v. 7, is only met with again in the prayer of Moses, viz., Ps. 90:15.

**Deuteronomy 32:1–5.** “*Introduction and Theme.*—in the introduction (vv. 1–3),—“*Give ear, O ye heavens, I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. Let my doctrine drop as the rain, let my speech fall as the dew; as showers upon green, and rain-drops upon herb, for I will publish the name of the Lord; give ye greatness to our God,*”—Moses summons heaven and earth to hearken to his words, because the instruction which he was about to proclaim concerned both heaven and earth, i.e., the whole universe. It did so, however, not merely as treating of the honour of its Creator, which was disregarded by the murmuring people (*Kamphausen*), or to justify God, as the witness of the righteousness of His doings, in

opposition to the faithless nation, when He punished it for its apostasy (just as in Deuteronomy 4:26; 30:19; 31:28, 29, heaven and earth are appealed to as witnesses against rebellious Israel), but also inasmuch as heaven and earth would be affected by the judgment which God poured out upon faithless Israel and the nations, to avenge the blood of His servants (v. 43); since the faithfulness and righteousness of God would thus become manifest in heaven and on earth, and the universe be sanctified and glorified thereby. The *vav consec.* before אֲדַבְרָה expresses the desired or intended sequel: so that I may then speak, or “so will I then speak” (vid., Köhler on *Hagg.* p. 44, note).

**Deuteronomy 32:2.** But because what was about to be announced was of such importance throughout, he desired that the words should trickle down like rain and dew upon grass and herb. The point of comparison lies in the refreshing, fertilizing, and enlivening power of the dew and rain. Might the song exert the same upon the hearts of the hearers. לָקַח, accepting, then, in a passive sense, that which is accepted, *instruction* (doctrine, Prov. 16:21, 23; Isa. 29:24). To “*publish the name of the Lord*,” lit., call, i.e., proclaim (not “call upon”), or *praise*. It was not by himself alone that Moses desired to praise the name of the Lord; the hearers of his song were also to join in this praise. The second clause requires this: “*give ye* (i.e., ascribe by word and conduct) *greatness to our God.*” גָּדֹל, applied here to God (as in Deuteronomy 3:24; 5:21; 9:26; 11:2), which is only repeated again in Ps. 150:2, is the greatness manifested by God in His acts of omnipotence; it is similar in meaning to the term “glory” in Ps. 29:1, 2; 96:7, 8.

**Deuteronomy 32:4, 5.** “*The Rock—blameless is His work; for all His ways are right: a God of faithfulness, and without injustice; just and righteous is He. Corruptly acts towards Him, not His children; their spot, a perverse and crooked generation.*” הַצֹּר is placed first absolutely, to give it the greater prominence. God is called “the rock,” as the unchangeable refuge, who

DEUTERONOMY	Page 126
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

grants a firm defence and secure resort to His people, by virtue of His unchangeableness or impregnable firmness (see the synonym, “the Stone of Israel,” in Gen. 49:24). This epithet points to the Mosaic age; and this is clearly shown by the use made of this title of God (*Zur*) in the construction of surnames in the Mosaic era; such, for example, as *Pedahzur* (Num. 1:10), which is equivalent to *Pedahel* (“God-redeemed,” Num. 34:28), *Elizur* (Num. 1:5), *Zuriel* (Num. 3:35), and *Zurishaddai* (Num. 1:6; 2:12). David, who had so often experienced the rock-like protection of his God, adopted it in his Psalms (2 Sam. 22:3, 32 = Ps. 18:3, 32; also Ps. 19:15; 31:3, 4; 71:3). *Perfect* (i.e., blameless, without fault or blemish) is His work; for His ways, which He adopts in His government of the world, are right. As the rock, He is “a God of faithfulness,” upon which men may rely and build in all the storms of life, and “without iniquity,” i.e., anything crooked or false in His nature.

**Deuteronomy 32:5.** His people Israel, on the contrary, had acted corruptly towards Him. The subject of “acted corruptly” is the rebellious generation of the people but before this subject there is introduced parenthetically, and in apposition, “not his children, but their spot.” *Spot (mum)* is used here in a moral sense, as in Prov. 9:7, Job 11:15; 31:7, equivalent to stain. The rebellious and ungodly were not children of the Lord, but a stain upon them. If these words had stood after the actual subject, instead of before them, they would have presented no difficulty. This verse is the original of the expression, “children that are corrupters,” in Isa. 1:4.

**Deuteronomy 32:6–18.** Expansion of the theme according to the thought expressed in v. 5. The perversity of the rebellious generation manifested itself in the fact, that it repaid the Lord, to whom it owed existence and well-being, for all His benefits, with a foolish apostasy from its Creator and Father. This thought is expressed in v. 6, in a reproachful question addressed to the people, and then supported in vv. 7–14 by an enumeration of the

benefits conferred by God, and in vv. 15–18 by a description of the ingratitude of the people.

**Deuteronomy 32:6.** “*Will ye thus repay the Lord? thou foolish people and unwise! Is He not thy Father, who hath founded thee, who hath made thee and prepared thee?*” גָּמַל, the primary idea of which is doubtful, signifies properly *to show*, or *do*, for the most part *good*, but sometimes *evil* (vid., Ps. 7:5). For the purpose of painting the folly of their apostasy distinctly before the eyes of the people, Moses crowds words together to describe what God was to the nation,—“*thy Father*,” to whose love Israel was indebted for its elevation into an independent people: comp. Isa. 63:16, where Father and Redeemer are synonymous terms, with Isa. 64:7, God the Father, Israel the clay which He had formed, and Mal. 2:10, where God as Father is said to have created Israel; see also the remarks at Deuteronomy 14:1 on the notion of Israel’s sonship.—קָנָה, *He has acquired thee*; קָנָה, κτᾶσθαι, to get, acquire (Gen. 4:1), then so as to involve the idea of κτίζειν (Gen. 14:9), though without being identical with בָּרָא. It denotes here the founding of Israel as a nation, by its deliverance out of the power of Pharaoh. The verbs which follow (*made* and *established*) refer to the elevation and preparation of the redeemed nation, as the nation of the Lord, by the conclusion of a covenant, the giving of the law, and their guidance through the desert.

**Deuteronomy 32:7.** “*Remember the days of old, consider the years of the past generations: ask thy father, that he may make known to thee; thine old men, that they may tell it to thee!*” With these words Moses summons the people to reflect upon what the Lord had done to them. The days of old (עוֹלָם), and years of generation and generation, i.e., years through which one generation after another had lived, are the times of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, including the pre-Mosaic times, and also the immediate post-Mosaic, when Israel had entered into the possession of Canaan. These times are described by Moses as a far distant past, because he transported himself in spirit to

DEUTERONOMY	Page 127
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the “latter days” (Deuteronomy 31:29), when the nation would have fallen away from its God, and would have been forsaken and punished by God in consequence. “*Days of eternity*” are times which lie an eternity behind the speaker, not necessarily, however, before all time, but simply at a period very far removed from the present, and of which even the fathers and old men could only relate what had been handed down by tradition to them.

**Deuteronomy 32:8, 9.** “*When the Most High portioned out inheritance to the nations, when He divided the children of men; He fixed the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the sons of Israel: for the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob the cord of His inheritance.*” Moses commences his enumeration of the manifestations of divine mercy with the thought, that from the very commencement of the forming of nations God had cared for His people Israel. The meaning of v. 8 is given in general correctly by *Calvin*: “In the whole arrangement of the world God had kept this before Him as the end: to consult the interests of His chosen people.” The words, “when the Most High portioned out inheritance to the nations,” etc., are not to be restricted to the one fact of the confusion of tongues and division of the nations as described in Gen. 11, but embrace the whole period of the development of the one human family in separate tribes and nations, together with their settlement in different lands; for it is no doctrine of the Israelitish legend, as *Kamphausen* supposes, that the division of the nations was completed once for all. The book of Genesis simply teaches, that after the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel, God scattered men over the entire surface of the earth (Gen. 11:9), and that the nations were divided, i.e., separate nations were formed from the families of the sons of Noah (Gen. 10:32); that is to say, the nations were formed in the divinely-appointed way of generation and multiplication, and so spread over the earth. And the Scriptures say nothing about a division of the countries among the different nations at one particular time; they simply show, that, like

the formation of the nations from families and tribes, the possession of the lands by the nations so formed was to be traced to God,—was the work of divine providence and government,—whereby God so determined the boundaries of the nations (“the nations” are neither the tribes of Israel, nor simply the nations round about Canaan, but the nations generally), that Israel might receive as its inheritance a land proportioned to its numbers.<sup>36</sup>

**Deuteronomy 32:9.** God did this, because He had chosen Israel as His own nation, even before it came into existence. As the Lord’s people of possession (cf. Deuteronomy 7:6; 10:15, and Ex. 19:5), Israel was Jehovah’s portion, and the inheritance assigned to Him. חֶבֶל, a *cord*, or measure, then a piece of land measured off; here it is figuratively applied to the nation.

**Deuteronomy 32:10ff.** He had manifested His fatherly care and love to Israel as His own property.

**Deuteronomy 32:10.** “*He found him in the land of the desert, and in the wilderness, the howling of the steppe; He surrounded him, took care of him, protected him as the apple of His eye.*” These words do not “relate more especially to the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai” (*Luther*), nor merely to all the proofs of the paternal care with which God visited His people in the desert, to lead them to Sinai, there to adopt them as His covenant nation, and then to guide them to Canaan, to the exclusion of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. The reason why Moses does not mention this fact, or the passage through the Red Sea, is not to be sought for, either solely or even in part, in the fact that “the song does not rest upon the standpoint of the Mosaic times;” for we may see clearly that distance of time would furnish no adequate ground for “singling out and elaborating certain points only from the renowned stories of old,” say from the 105th Psalm, which no one would think of pronouncing an earlier production than this song. Nor is it because the gracious help of God,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 128
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

which the people experienced up to the time of the exodus from Egypt, was inferior in importance to the divine care exercised over it during the march through the desert (a fact which would need to be proved), or because the solemn conclusion of the covenant, whereby Israel first because the people of God, took place during the sojourn at Sinai, that Moses speaks of God as finding the people in the desert and adopting them there; but simply because it was not his intention to give a historical account of the acts performed by God upon and towards Israel, but to describe how Israel was in the most helpless condition when the Lord had compassion upon it, to take it out of that most miserable state in which it must have perished, and bring it into the possession of the richly-blessed land of Canaan. The whole description of what the Lord did for Israel (vv. 10–14) is figurative; Israel is represented as a man in the horrible desert, and in danger of perishing in the desolate waste, where not only bread and water had failed, but where ravenous beasts lay howling in wait for human life, when the Lord took him up and delivered him out of all distress. The expression “found him” is also to be explained from this figure. Finding presupposes seeking, and in the seeking the love which goes in search of the loved on is manifested. Also the expression “land of the desert”—a land which is a desert, without the article defining the desert more precisely—shows that the reference is not to the finding of Israel in the desert of Arabia, and that these words are not to be understood as relating to the fact, that when His people entered the desert the Lord appeared to them in the pillar of cloud and fire (Ex. 13:20, *Schultz*). For although the figure of the desert is chosen, because in reality the Lord had led Israel through the Arabian desert to Canaan, we must not so overlook the figurative character of the whole description as to refer the expression “in a desert land” directly and exclusively to the desert of Arabia. The measures adopted by the Pharaohs, the object of which was the extermination or complete suppression of Israel, made even Egypt a land of desert to the

Israelites, where they would inevitably have perished if the Lord had not sought, found, and surrounded them there. To depict still further the helpless and irremediable situation of Israel, the idea of the desert is heightened still further by the addition of וּבְתֵהוּ וְגוֹ', “and in fact (וְ is explanatory) in a waste,” or wilderness (*tohu* recalls Gen. 1:2). “Howling of the desert” is in apposition to *tohu* (waste), and not a genitive dependent upon it, viz., “waste of the howling of the desert, or of the desert in which wild beasts howl” (*Ewald*), as if יָלַל stood after יָשִׁימֶן. “Howling of the desert” does not mean the desert in which wild beasts howl, but the howling which is heard in the desert of wild beasts. The meaning of the passage, therefore, is “in the midst of the howling of the wild beasts of the desert.” This clause serves to strengthen the idea of *tohu* (waste), and describes the waste as a place of the most horrible howling of wild beasts. It was in this situation that the Lord surrounded His people. סָבַב, to surround with love and care, not merely to protect (vid., Ps. 26:6; Jer. 31:22). בּוֹנֵן, from בִּין or הִבֵּן, to pay attention, in the sense of “not to lose sight of them.” “To keep as the apple of the eye” is a figurative description of the tenderest care. The apple of the eye is most carefully preserved (vid., Ps. 17:8; Prov. 7:2).

**Deuteronomy 32:11.** “As an eagle, which stirreth up its nest and soars over its young, He spread out His wings, took him up, carried him upon His wings.” Under the figure of an eagle, which teaches its young to fly, and in doing so protects them from injury with watchful affection, Moses describes the care with which the Lord came to the relief of His people in their helplessness, and assisted them to develop their strength. This figure no doubt refers more especially to the protection and assistance of God experienced by Israel in its journey through the Arabian desert; but it must not be restricted to this. It embraces both the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt by the outstretched arm of the Lord, as we may see from a comparison with Ex. 19:4, where the



DEUTERONOMY	Page 129
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

Lord is said to have brought His people out of Egypt upon eagles' wings, and also the introduction into Canaan, when the Lord drove the Canaanites out from before them and destroyed them. This verse contains an independent thought; the first half is the protasis, the second the apodosis. The nominative to "spreadeth abroad" is Jehovah; and the suffixes in יִשְׂאֲרוּ and יִקְחֵהוּ ("taketh" and "beareth") refer to Israel or Jacob (v. 9), like the suffixes in v. 10. As הֵן cannot open a sentence like בְּאֶשֶׁר, we must supply the relative אֲשֶׁר after הֵן. הֵעִיר קִנּוֹ, to waken up, rouse up its nest, i.e., to encourage the young ones to fly. It is rendered correctly by the Vulgate, *provocans ad volandum pullos suos*; and freely by Luther, "bringeth out its young." "Soareth over its young;" namely, in order that, when they were attempting to fly, if any were in danger of falling through exhaustion, it might take them at once upon its powerful wings, and preserve them from harm. Examples of this, according to the popular belief, are given by *Bochart (Hieroz. ii. p. 762)*. רָחַץ, from רָחַץ to be loose or slack (Jer. 23:9): in the *Piel* it is applied to a bird in the sense of loosening its wings, as distinguished from binding its wings to its body; hence (1) to sit upon eggs with loosened wings, and (2) to fly with loosened wings. Here it is used in the latter sense, because the young are referred to. The point of comparison between the conduct of God towards Jacob and the acts of an eagle towards its young, is the loving care with which He trained Israel to independence. The carrying of Israel upon the eagle's wings of divine love and omnipotence was manifested in the most glorious way in the guidance of it by the pillar of cloud and fire, though it was not so exclusively in this visible vehicle of the gracious presence of God as that the comparison can be restricted to this phenomenon alone. *Luther's* interpretation is more correct than this,—“Moses points out in these words, how He fostered them in the desert, bore with their manners, tried them and blessed them that they might learn to fly, i.e., to

trust in Him,”—except that the explanation of the expression “to fly” is narrowed too much.

**Deuteronomy 32:12–14.** “*The Lord alone did lead him, and with Him was no strange god. He made him drive over the high places of the earth, and eat the productions of the field; and made him suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flint-stone. Cream of cattle, and milk of the flock, with the fat of lambs, and rams of Bashan's kind, and bucks, with the kidney-fat of wheat: and grape-blood thou drankest as fiery wine.*” Moses gives prominence to the fact that Jehovah alone conducted Israel, to deprive the people of every excuse for their apostasy from the Lord, and put their ingratitude in all the stronger light. If no other god stood by the Lord to help Him, He had thereby laid Israel under the obligation to serve Him alone as its God. “*With Him*” refers to Jehovah, and not to Israel.

**Deuteronomy 32:13, 14.** The Lord caused the Israelites to take possession of Canaan with victorious power, and enter upon the enjoyment of its abundant blessings. The phrase, “to cause to drive over the high places of the earth,” is a figurative expression for the victorious subjugation of a land; it is not taken from Ps. 18:34, as *Ewald* assumes, but is original both here and in Deuteronomy 33:29. “*Drive*” (ride) is only a more majestic expression for “advance.” The reference to this passage in Isa. 58:14 is unmistakeable. Whoever has obtained possession of the high places of a country is lord of the land. The “high places of the earth” do not mean the high places of Canaan only, although the expression in this instance relates to the possession of Canaan. “*And he (Jacob) ate:*” for, so that he could now eat, the productions of the field, and in fact all the riches of the fruitful land, which are then described in superabundant terms. Honey out of the rock and oil out of the flint-stone, i.e., the most valuable productions out of the most unproductive places, since God so blessed the land that even the rocks and stones were productive. The figure is derived from the fact that Canaan abounds in wild bees, which make their hives in clefts of the rock, and in olive-

DEUTERONOMY	Page 130
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

trees which grow in a rocky soil. "Rock-flints," i.e., rocky flints. The nouns in v. 14 are dependent upon "to suck" in v. 13, as the expression is not used literally. "Things which are sweet and pleasant to eat, people are in the habit of sucking" (*Ges. thes.* p. 601). חֲמִצָּה and חֶלֶב (though חֶלֶב seems to require a form חֲלֵב; vid., *Ewald*, § 213, b.) denotes the two forms in which the milk yielded by the cattle was used; the latter, milk in general, and the former thick curdled milk, cream, and possibly also butter. The two are divided poetically here, and the cream being assigned to the cattle, and the milk to the sheep and goats. "The fat of lambs," i.e., "lambs of the best description laden with fat" (*Vitringa*). Fat is a figurative expression for the best (vid., Num. 18:12). "And rams:" grammatically, no doubt, this might also be connected with "the fat," but it is improbable from a poetical point of view, since the enumeration would thereby drag prosaically; and it is also hardly reconcilable with the apposition בָּנֵי בָשָׁן, i.e., reared in Bashan (vid., Ezek. 39:18), which implies that Bashan was celebrated for its rams, and not merely for its oxen. This epithet, which *Kamphausen* renders "of Bashan's kind," is unquestionably used for the best description of rams. The list becomes poetical, if we take "rams" as an accusative governed by the verb "to suck" (v. 13). "Kidney-fat (i.e., the best fat) of wheat," the finest and most nutritious wheat. Wine is mentioned last, and in this case the list passes with poetic freedom into the form of an address. "Grape-blood" for red wine (as in Gen. 49:11). חֲמֵר, from חָמַר to ferment, froth, foam, lit., the foaming, i.e., fiery wine, serves as a more precise definition of the "blood of the grape."

**Deuteronomy 32:15–18.** Israel had repaid its God for all these benefits by a base apostasy.—V. 15. "But Righteous-nation became fat, and struck out—thou becamest fat, thick, gross—and let go God who made him, and despised the rock of his salvation." So much is certain concerning *Jeshurun*, that it was an honourable surname given to Israel; that it is derived from יָשַׁר, and

describes Israel as a nation of just or right men (a similar description to that given by Balaam in Num. 23:10), because Jehovah, who is just and right (v. 4), had called it to uprightness, to walk in His righteousness, and chosen it as His servant (Isa. 44:2). The prevalent opinion, that *Jeshurun* is a diminutive, and signifies *rectalus*, or "little pious" (*Ges.* and others), has no more foundation than the derivation from Israel, and the explanation, "little Israel," since there is no philological proof that the termination *un* ever had a diminutive signification in Hebrew (see *Hengstenberg*, Balaam, p. 415); and an *appellatio blanda et charitativa* is by no means suitable to this passage, much less to Deuteronomy 33:5. The epithet *Righteous-nation*, as we may render *Jeshurun*, was intended to remind Israel of its calling, and involved the severest reproof of its apostasy. "By placing the name of *righteous* before Israel, he censured ironically those who had fallen away from righteousness; and by thus reminding them with what dignity they had been endowed, he upbraided them with the more severity for their guilt of perfidy. For in other places (sc., Deuteronomy 33:5, 26) Israel is honoured with an eulogium of the same kind, without any such sinister meaning, but with simple regard to its calling; whilst here Moses shows reproachfully how far they had departed from that pursuit of piety, to the cultivation of which they had been called" (*Calvin*). The words, "became fat, and struck out," are founded upon the figure of an ox that had become fat, and intractable in consequence (vid., Isa. 10:27, Hos. 4:16; and for the fact itself, Deuteronomy 6:11; 8:10; 31:20). To sharpen this reproof, Moses repeats the thought in the form of a direct address to the people: "Thou hast become fat, stout, gross." Becoming fat led to forsaking God, the Creator and ground of its salvation. "A full stomach does not promote piety, for it stands secure, and neglects God" (*Luther*). נָבַל is no doubt a *denom.* verb from נָבַל, lit., to treat as a fool, i.e., to despise (vid., Micah 7:6).

DEUTERONOMY	Page 131
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

**Deuteronomy 32:16–18.** *“They excited His jealousy through strange (gods), they provoked Him by abominations. They sacrificed to devils, which (were) not-God; to gods whom they knew not, to new (ones) that had lately come up, whom your fathers feared not. The rock which begat thee thou forsookest, and hast forgotten the God that bare thee.”* These three verses are only a further expansion of v. 15b. Forsaking the rock of its salvation, Israel gave itself up to the service of worthless idols. The expression “excite to jealousy” is founded upon the figure of a marriage covenant, under which the relation of the Lord to Israel is represented (vid., Deuteronomy 31:16, and the com. on Ex. 34:15). “This jealousy rests upon the sacred and spiritual marriage tie, by which God had bound the people to Himself” (Calvin). “Strange gods,” with which Israel committed adultery, as in Jer. 2:25; 3:13. The idols are called “abominations” because Jehovah abhorred them (Deuteronomy 7:25; 27:15; cf. 2 Kings 23:13). **שְׂדִים** signifies *demons* in Syriac, as it has been rendered by the LXX and Vulgate here; lit, lords, like Baalim. It is also used in Ps. 106:37.—“Not-God,” a composite noun, in apposition to *Shedim* (devils), like the other expressions which follow: “gods whom they knew not,” i.e., who had not made themselves known to them as gods by any benefit or blessing (vid., Deuteronomy 11:28); “new (ones), who had come from near,” i.e., had but lately risen up and been adopted by the Israelites. “Near,” not in a local but in a temporal sense, in contrast to *Jehovah*, who had manifested and attested Himself as God from of old (v. 7). **שָׁעַר**, to shudder, construed here with an accusative, to experience a holy shuddering before a person, to revere with holy awe.—In v. 18 Moses returns to the thought of v. 15, for the purpose of expressing it emphatically once more, and paving the way for a transition to the description of the acts of the Lord towards His rebellious nation. To bring out still more prominently the base ingratitude of the people, he represents the creation of Israel by Jehovah, the rock of its salvation, under the figure of

generation and birth, in which the paternal and maternal love of the Lord to His people had manifested itself. **חֹלְלָה**, to twist round, then applied to the pains of childbirth. The **ἀπ. λεγ.** **שָׁעַר** is to be traced to **שָׁחַ**, and is a pausal form like **יָחַ** in Deuteronomy 4:33. **שָׁחַ** = **שָׁחָה**, to forget, to neglect.

**Deuteronomy 32:19–33.** For this foolish apostasy the Lord would severely visit His people. This visitation is represented indeed in v. 19, as the consequence of apostasy that had taken place,—not, however, as a punishment already inflicted, but simply as a resolution which god had formed and would carry out,—an evident proof that we have no song here belonging to the time when God visited with severe punishments the Israelites who had fallen into idolatry. In v. 19 the determination to reject the degenerate children is announced, and in vv. 20–22 this is still further defined and explained.

**Deuteronomy 32:19.** *“And the Lord saw it, and rejected—from indignation at His sons and daughters.”* The object to “saw” may easily be supplied from the context: He saw the idolatry of the people, and rejected those who followed idols, and that because of indignation that His sons and daughters practised such abominations. The expression “he saw” simply serves to bring out the causal link between the apostasy and the punishment. **וַיִּבָּחַ** has been very well rendered by *Kamphausen*, “He resolved upon rejection,” since vv. 20ff. clearly show that the rejection had only been resolved upon by God, and was not yet carried out. In what follows, Moses puts this resolution into the mouth of the Lord Himself.

**Deuteronomy 32:20–22.** *“And He said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be: for they are a generation full of perversities, children in whom is no faithfulness. They excited My jealousy by a no-god, provoked Me by their vanities: and I also will excite their jealousy by a no-people, provoke them by a foolish nation. For a fire blazes up in My nose, and burns to the lowest hell, and consumes the*

DEUTERONOMY	Page 132
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

earth with its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains." The divine purpose contains two things:—*first* of all (v. 20) the negative side, to hide the face, i.e., to withdraw His favour and see what their end would be, i.e., that their apostasy would bring nothing but evil and destruction; for they were "a nation of perversities" (*taphuchoth* is moral perversity, Prov. 2:14; 6:14), i.e., "a thoroughly perverse and faithless generation" (*Knobel*);—and then, *secondly* (v. 21), the positive side, viz., chastisement according to the right of complete retaliation. The Israelites had excited the jealousy and vexation of God by a *no-god* and vanities; therefore God would excite their jealousy and vexation by a *no-people* and a foolish nation. How this retaliation would manifest itself is not fully defined however here, but is to be gathered from the conduct of Israel towards the Lord. Israel had excited the jealousy of God by preferring a no-god, or הַבְּלִים, nothingnesses, i.e., gods that were vanities or nothings (*Elilim*, Lev. 19:4), to the true and living God, its Father and Creator. God would therefore excite them to jealousy and ill-will by a no-people, a foolish nation, i.e., by preferring a no-people to the Israelites, transferring His favour to them, and giving the blessing which Israel had despised to a foolish nation. It is only with this explanation of the words that full justice is done to the idea of retribution; and it was in this sense that Paul understood this passage as referring to the adoption of the Gentiles as the people of God (Rom. 10:19), and that not merely by adaptation, or by connecting another meaning with the words, as *Umbreit* supposes, but by interpreting it in exact accordance with the true sense of the words.<sup>37</sup>

The adoption of the Gentile world into covenant with the Lord involved the rejection of the disobedient Israel; and this rejection would be consummated in severe judgments, in which the ungodly would perish. In this way the retribution inflicted by the Lord upon the faithless and perverse generation of His sons and daughters becomes a judgment upon the whole world. The jealousy of the Lord blazes up

into a fire of wrath, which burns down to sheol. This aspect of the divine retribution comes into the foreground in what follows, from v. 23 onwards; whilst the adoption of the Gentile world, which the Apostle Paul singles out as the leading thought of this verse, in accordance with the special purpose of the song, falls back behind the thought, that the Lord would not utterly destroy Israel, but when all its strength had disappeared would have compassion upon His servants, and avenge their blood upon His foes. The idea of a *no-people* is to be gathered from the antithesis *no-god*. As *Schultz* justly observes, "the expression *no-people* can no more denote a people of monsters, than the *no-god* was a monster, by which Israel had excited the Lord to jealousy." This remark is quite sufficient to show that the opinion of *Ewald* and others is untenable and false, namely, that "the expression *no-people* signifies a truly inhuman people, terrible and repulsive." No-god is a god to whom the predicate of godhead cannot properly be applied; and so also *no-people* is a people that does not deserve the name of a people or nation at all. The further definition of *no-god* is to be found in the word "*vanities*" *No-god* are the idols, who are called vanities or nothingnesses, because they deceive the confidence of men in their divinity; because, as Jeremiah says (Jer. 14:22), they can give no showers of rain or drops of water from heaven. *No-people* is explained by a "foolish nation." A "foolish nation" is the opposite of a wise and understanding people, as Israel is called in Deuteronomy 4:6, because it possessed righteous statutes and rights in the law of the Lord. The foolish nation therefore is not "an ungodly nation, which despises all laws both *human* and *divine*" (*Ros., Maur.*), but a people whose laws and rights are not founded upon divine revelation. Consequently the *no-people* is not "a barbarous and inhuman people" (*Ros.*), or "a horde of men that does not deserve to be called a people" (*Maurer*), but a people to which the name of a people or nation is to be refused, because its political and judicial constitution is the work of man, and because it has not the true God for its head and king; or, as *Vitringa*

DEUTERONOMY	Page 133
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

explains, “a people not chosen by the true God, passed by when a people was chosen, shut out from the fellowship and grace of God, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenant of promise (Eph. 2:12).” In this respect every heathen nation was a “no-people,” even though it might not be behind the Israelites so far as its outward organization was concerned. This explanation cannot be set aside, either by the objection that at that time Israel had brought itself down to the level of the heathen, by its apostasy from the Eternal,—for the notion of people and no-people is not taken from the outward appearance of Israel at any particular time, but is derived from its divine idea and calling,—or by an appeal to the singular, “a foolish nation,” whereas we should expect “foolish nations” to correspond to the “vanities,” if we were to understand by the *no-people* not one particular heathen nation, but the heathen nations generally. The singular, “a foolish nation,” was required by the antithesis, upon which it is founded, the “wise nation,” from which the expression *no-people* first receives its precise definition, which would be altogether obliterated by the plural. Moreover, Moses did not intend to give expression to the thought that God would excite Israel to jealousy by either few, or many, or all the Gentile nations.

**Deuteronomy 32:22.** In v. 22, the determination of the Lord with regard to the faithless generation is explained by the threat, that the wrath of the Lord which was kindled against this faithlessness would set the whole world in flames down to the lowest hell. We may see how far the contents of this verse are from favouring the conclusion that “no-people” means a barbarous and inhuman horde, from the difficulty which the supporters of this view had found in dealing with the word *כִּי*. *Ewald* renders it *doch* (yet), in total disregard of the usages of the language; and *Venema, certe, profecto* (surely); whilst *Kamphausen* supposes it to be used in a somewhat careless manner. The contents of v. 22, which are introduced with *כִּי*, by no means harmonize with the

thought, “I will send a barbarous and inhuman horde;” whilst the announcement of a judgment setting the whole world in flames may form a very suitable explanation of the thought, that the Lord would excite faithless Israel to jealousy by a “*no-people*.” This judgment, for example, would make the worthlessness of idols and the omnipotence of the God of Israel manifest in all the earth, and would lead the nations to seek refuge and salvation with the living God; and, as we learn from the history of the kingdom of God, and the allusions of the Apostle Paul to this mystery of the divine counsels, the heathen themselves would be the first to do so when they saw all their power and glory falling into ruins, and then the Israelites, when they saw that God had taken the kingdom from them and raised up the heathen who were converted to Him to be His people. The fire in the nose of the Lord is a figurative description of burning wrath and jealousy (vid., Deuteronomy 29:19). The fire signifies really nothing else than His jealousy, His vital energy, and in a certain sense His breath; it therefore naturally burns in the nose (vid., Ps. 18:9). In this sense the Lord as “a jealous God” is a consuming fire (vid., Deuteronomy 4:24, and the exposition of Ex. 3:2). This fire burns down even to the lower hell. The lower hell, i.e., the lowest region of sheol, or the lower regions, forms the strongest contrast to heaven; though we cannot deduce any definite doctrinal conclusions from the expression as to the existence of more hells than one. This fire “consumes the earth with its increase,” i.e., all its vegetable productions, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains. This description is not a hyperbolic picture of the judgment which was to fall upon the children of Israel alone (*Kamphausen, Aben-Ezra*, etc.); for it is a mistake to suppose that the judgment foretold affected the Israelitish nation only. The thought is weakened by the assumption that the language is hyperbolic. The words are not intended to foretell one particular penal judgment, but refer to judgment in its totality and universality, as realized in the course of centuries in different judgments upon the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 134
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

nations, and only to be completely fulfilled at the end of the world. "Calvin is right therefore when he says, "As the indignation and anger of God follow His enemies to hell, to eternal flames and infernal tortures, so they devour their land with its produce, and burn the foundations of the mountains; ... there is no necessity therefore to imagine that there is any hyperbole in the words, 'to the lower hell.' " This judgment is then depicted in vv. 23–33 as it would discharge itself upon rebellious Israel.

**Deuteronomy 32:23.** "I will heap up evils upon them, use up My arrows against them." The evils threatened against the despisers of the Lord and His commandments would be poured out in great abundance by the Lord upon the foolish generation. סָפַף, to add one upon the other (vid., Num. 32:14); hence in *Hiphil* to heap up, sweep together. These evils are represented in the second clause of the verse as arrows, which the Lord as a warrior would shoot away at his foes (as in v. 42; cf. Ps. 38:3; 91:6; Job 6:4). בָּלָה, to bring to an end, to use up to the very last.

**Deuteronomy 32:24, 25.** "Have they wasted away with hunger, are they consumed with pestilential heat and bitter plague: I will let loose the tooth of beasts upon them, with the poison of things that crawl in the dust." (v. 25) "If the sword without shall sweep them away, and in the chambers of terrors, the young man as the maiden, the suckling with the grey-haired man." The evils mentioned are hunger, pestilence, plague, wild beasts, poisonous serpents, and war. The first hemistich in v. 24 contains simply nouns construed absolutely, which may be regarded as a kind of circumstantial clause. The literal meaning is, "With regard to those who are starved with hunger, etc., I will send against them;" i.e., when hunger, pestilence, plague, have brought them to the verge of destruction, I will send, etc. מָוֶה, construct state of מָוָה, אֵפ. לֵעָן. with which *Cocceius* compares מָצָה and מָצֵץ, to suck out, and for which *Schultens* has cited analogies from the Arabic. "Sucked out by hunger," i.e., wasted away. "Tooth of beasts and poison of serpents:" poetical for beasts of prey

and poisonous animals. See Lev. 26:22, where wild beasts are mentioned as a plague along with pestilence, famine, and sword.

**Deuteronomy 32:25.** These are accompanied by the evils of war, which sweeps away the men outside in the slaughter itself by the sword, and the defenceless—viz., youths and maidens, sucklings and old men—in the chambers by alarm. אֵימָה is a sudden mortal terror, and *Knobel* is wrong in applying it to hunger and plague. The use of the verb שָׁכַל, to make childless, is to be explained on the supposition that the nation or land is personified as a mother, whose children are the members of the nation, old and young together. Ezekiel has taken the four grievous judgments out of these two verses: sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence (Ezek. 14:21: see also 5:17, and Jer. 15:2, 3).

**Deuteronomy 32:26, 27.** "I should say, I will blow them away, I will blot out the remembrance of them among men; if I did not fear wrath upon the enemy, that their enemies might mistake it, that they might say, Our hand was high, and Jehovah has not done all this." The meaning is, that the people would have deserved to be utterly destroyed, and it was only for His own name's sake that God abstained from utter destruction. אֶמְרָתִי to be construed

conditionally requires לוֹלִי: if I did not fear (as actually was the case) I should resolve to destroy them, without leaving a trace behind. "I should say," used to denote the purpose of God, like "he said" in v. 20. The אֵפ. לֵעָן. אֶפְאִיָהּ, which has been rendered in very different ways, cannot be regarded, as it is by the Rabbins, as a *denom.* verb from פָּאָה, a corner; and *Calvin's* rendering, "to scatter through corners," does not suit the context; whilst the meaning, "to cast or scare out of all corners," cannot be deduced from this derivation. The context requires the signification to annihilate, as the remembrance of them was to vanish from the earth. We get this meaning if we trace it to פָּאָה, to blow,—related to פָּעָה (Isa. 42:14)

DEUTERONOMY	Page 135
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

and פָּהַק, from which comes פָּה, —in the Hiphil “to blow away,” not to blow asunder. הַשְׁבִּית, not “to cause to rest,” but to cause to cease, *delere* (as in Amos 8:4). “*Wrath upon the enemy*,” i.e., “displeasure on the part of God at the arrogant boasting of the enemy, which was opposed to the glory of God” (*Vitringa*). פֶּן, *lest*, after גִּיר, to fear. On this reason for sparing Israel, see Deuteronomy 9:28; Ex. 32:12; Num. 14:13ff.; Isa. 10:5ff. *Enemy* is a generic term, hence it is followed by the plural. נִכְר, Piel, to find strange, sc., the destruction of Israel, i.e., to mistake the reason for it, or, as is shown by what follows, to ascribe the destruction of Israel to themselves and their own power, whereas it had been the word of God. “*Our hand was high*,” i.e., has lifted itself up or shown itself mighty, an intentional play upon the “high hand” of the Lord (Ex. 14:8; cf. Isa. 26:11).—The reason why Israel did not deserve to be spared is given in v. 28: “*For a people forsaken of counsel are they, and there is not understanding in them.*” “Forsaken of counsel,” i.e., utterly destitute of counsel.

This want of understanding on the part of Israel is still further expounded in vv. 29–32, where the words of God pass imperceptibly into the words of Moses, who feels impelled once more to impress the word which the Lord had spoken upon the hearts of the people.

**Deuteronomy 32:29–31.** “*If they were wise, they would understand this, would consider their end. Ah, how could one pursue a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, were it not that their Rock had sold them, and Jehovah had given them up! For their rock is not as our rock; of that our enemies are judges.*” לֹא presupposes a case, which is either known not to exist, or of which this is assumed; “if they were wise,” which they are not. “*This*” refers to the leading thought of the whole, viz., that apostasy from God the Lord is sure to be followed by the severest judgment. “*Their end*,” as in v. 20, the end towards which the people were going through obstinate perseverance in their sin, i.e., utter destruction, if the Lord did not avert it for His name’s sake.

**Deuteronomy 32:30.** If Israel were wise, it could easily conquer all its foes in the power of its God (vid., Lev. 26:8); but as it had forsaken the Lord its rock, He, their (Israel’s) rock, had given them up into the power of the foe. אִם לֹא כִי is more emphatic or distinct than אִם לֹא only, and introduces an exception which does not permit the desired event to take place. Israel could have put all its enemies to flight were it not that its God had given it entirely up to them (sold them as slaves). The supposition that this had already occurred by no means proves, as *Kamphausen* believes, “that the poet was speaking of the existing state of the nation,” but merely that Moses thinks of the circumstances as certain to occur when the people should have forsaken their God. The past implied in the verbs “sold” and “given up” is a prophetically idea past or present, but not a real and historical one. The assertion of *Hupfeld* and *Kamphausen*, that נִכְר, as used with special reference to the giving up of a nation into the power of the heathen, “belongs to a somewhat later usage of the language,” is equally groundless.

**Deuteronomy 32:31.** The giving up of Israel into the power of the heathen arose, not from the superior power of the heathen and their gods, but solely from the apostasy of Israel from its own God. “*Our rock*,” as Moses calls the Lord, identifying himself with the nation, is not as their rock, i.e., the gods in whom the heathen trust. That the pronoun in “*their rock*” refers to the heathen, is so perfectly obvious from the antithesis “*our rock*,” that there cannot possibly be any doubt about it. The second hemistich in v. 30 contains a circumstantial clause, introduced to strengthen the thought which precedes it. The heathen themselves could be arbitrators (vid., Ex. 21:22), and decide whether the gods of the heathen were not powerless before the God of Israel. “*Having experience so often the formidable might of God, they knew for a certainty that the God of Israel was very different from their own idols*” (*Calvin*). The objection offered by *Schultz*, namely, that “the heathen would not admit that

DEUTERONOMY	Page 136
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

their idols were inferior to Jehovah, and actually denied this at the time when they had the upper hand (Isa. 10:10, 11)," has been quite anticipated by *Calvin*, when he observes that Moses "leaves the decision to the unbelievers, not as if they would speak the truth, but because he knew that they must be convinced by experience." As a confirmation of this, *Luther* and others refer not only to the testimony of Balaam (Num. 23 and 24), but also to the Egyptians (Ex. 14:25) and Philistines (1 Sam. 5:7ff.), to which we may add Josh. 2:9, 10.

**Deuteronomy 32:32, 33.** "*For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are poisonous grapes, bitter clusters have they. Dragon-poison is their wine, and dreadful venom of asps.*" The connection is pointed out by *Calovius* thus: "Moses returns to the Jews, showing why, although the rock of the Jews was very different from the gods of the Gentiles, even according to the testimony of the heathen themselves, who were their foes, they were nevertheless to be put to flight by their enemies and sold; and why Jehovah sold them, namely, *because their vine* was of the vine of Sodom, i.e., of the very worst kind, resembling the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, as if they were descended from them, and not from their holy patriarchs." The "for" in v. 32 is neither co-ordinate nor subordinate to that in v. 31. To render it as subordinate would give no intelligible meaning; and the supposition that it is co-ordinate is precluded by the fact, that in that case vv. 32 and 33 would contain a description of the corruptions of the heathen. The objections to this view have been thus expressed by *Schultz* with perfect justice: "It is *à priori* inconceivable, that in so short an ode there should be so elaborate a digression on the subject of the heathen, seeing that their folly is altogether foreign to the theme of the whole." To this we may add, that throughout the Old Testament it is the moral corruption and ungodliness of the Israelites, and never the vices of the heathen, that are compared to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Israelites who were forsaken by the Lord, were designated by Isaiah (Is. 1:10) as a people of

Gomorrah, and their rulers as rulers of Sodom (cf. Isa. 3:9); the inhabitants of Jerusalem were all of them like Sodom and Gomorrah (Jer. 23:14); and the sin of Jerusalem was greater than that of Sodom (Ezek. 16:46ff.). The only sense in which the "for" in v. 32 can be regarded as co-ordinate to that in v. 31, is on the supposition that the former gives the reason for the thought in v. 30*b*, whilst the latter serves to support the idea in v. 30*a*. The order of thought is the following: Israel would have been able to smite its foes with very little difficulty, because the gods of the heathen are not a rock like Jehovah; but Jehovah had given up His people to the heathen, because it had brought forth fruits like Sodom, i.e., had resembled Sodom in its wickedness. The vine and its fruits are figurative terms, applied to the nation and its productions. "The nation was not only a degenerate, but also a poisonous vine, producing nothing but what was deadly" (*Calvin*). This figure is expanded still further by Isa. 5:2ff. Israel was a vineyard planted by Jehovah, that it might bring forth good fruits, instead of which it brought forth wild grapes (vid., Jer. 2:21; Psa. 80:9ff.; Hos. 10:1). "Their vine" is the Israelites themselves, their nature being compared to a vine which had degenerated as much as if it had been an offshoot of a Sodomitish vine. שְׂדֵמָה, the construct state of שְׂדֵמָה, floors, fields. The grapes of this vine are worse than wild grapes is snake-poison. *Tannin*: see Ex. 7:9, 10. *Pethen*: the asp or adder, one of the most poisonous kinds of snake, whose bite was immediately fatal (vid., *Rosenmüller, bibl. Althk.* iv. 2, pp. 364ff.). These figures express the thought, that "nothing could be imagined worse, or more to be abhorred, than that nation" (*Calvin*). Now although this comparison simply refers to the badness of Israel, the thought of the penal judgment that fell upon Sodom lies behind. "They imitate the Sodomites, they bring forth the worst fruits of all impiety, they deserve to perish like Sodom" (*J. H. Michaelis*). The description of this judgment commences in v. 34. Israel had deserved for its corruption to



DEUTERONOMY	Page 137
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

be destroyed from the earth (v. 26); yet for His name's sake the Lord would have compassion upon it, when it was so humiliated with its heavy punishments that its strength was coming to an end.

**Deuteronomy 32:34.** *"Is not this hidden with Me, sealed up in My treasures?"* The allusion in this verse has been disputed; many refer it to what goes before, others to what follows after. There is some truth in both. The verse forms the transition, closing what precedes, and introducing what follows. The assertion that the figure of preserving in the treasures precludes the supposition that *"this"* refers to what follows, cannot be sustained. For although in Hos. 13:12, and Job 14:17, the binding and sealing of sins in a bundle are spoken of, yet it is very evident from Ps. 139:16, Mal. 3:16, and Dan. 7:10, that not only the evil doings of men, but their days generally, i.e., not only their deeds, but the things which happen to them, are written in a book before God. *O. v. Gerlach* has explained it correctly: "All these things have been decreed long ago; their coming is infallibly certain." *"This"* includes not only the sins of the nation, but also the judgments of God. The apostasy of Israel, as well as the consequent punishment, is laid up with God—sealed up in His treasures—and therefore they have not yet actually occurred: an evident proof that we have prophecy before us, and not the description of an apostasy that had already taken place, and of the punishment inflicted in consequence. The ἀπ. λεγ. סָמָּךְ in this connection signifies to lay up, preserve, conceal, although the etymology is disputed. The figure in the second hemistich is not taken from secret archives, but from treasures or stores, in which whatever was to be preserved was to be laid up, to be taken out in due time.

**Deuteronomy 32:35, 36.** *"Vengeance is Mine, and retribution for the time when their foot shall shake: for the day of their destruction is near, and that which is determined for them cometh hastily. For the Lord will judge His people, and have compassion upon His servants, when He seeth that every hold has disappeared, and the*

*fettered and the free are gone.*"—The Lord will punish the sins of His people in due time. "Vengeance is Mine:" it belongs to Me, it is My part to inflict. שָׁלוּם is a *noun* here for the usual שָׁלוּם, retribution (vid., *Ewald*, § 156, *b.*). The shaking of the foot is a figure representing the commencement of a fall, or of stumbling vid., Ps. 38:17; 94:18). The thought in this clause is not, "At or towards the time when their misfortune begins, I will plunge them into the greatest calamity," as *Kamphausen* infers from the fact that the shaking denotes the beginning of the calamity; and yet the vengeance can only be completed by plunging them into calamity,—a thought which he justly regards as unsuitable, though he resorts to emendations of the text in consequence. But the supposed unsuitability vanishes, if we simply regard the words, "Vengeance is Mine, and retribution," not as the mere announcement of a quality founded in the nature of God, and residing in God Himself, but as an expression of the divine energy, with this signification, I will manifest Myself as an avenger and recompenser, when their foot shall shake. Then what had hitherto been hidden with God, lay sealed up as it were in His treasures, should come to light, and be made manifest to the sinful nation. God would not delay in this; for the day of their destruction was near. יָדָא signifies misfortune, and sometimes utter destruction. The primary meaning of the word cannot be determined with certainty. That it does not mean utter destruction, we may see from the parallel clause. "The things that shall come upon them," await them, or are prepared for them, are, according to the context, both in v. 26 and also in vv. 36ff., not destruction, but simply a calamity or penal judgment that would bring them near to utter destruction. Again, these words do not relate to the punishment of "the wicked deeds of the inhuman horde," or the vengeance of God upon the enemies of Israel (*Ewald*, *Kamphausen*), but to the vengeance or retribution which God would inflict upon Israel. This is evident, apart from what has been said above against the application of vv. 33, 34, to

DEUTERONOMY	Page 138
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the heathen, simply from v. 36*b*, which unquestionably refers to Israel, and has been so interpreted by every commentator.—The first clause is quoted in Rom. 12:19 and Heb. 10:30, in the former to warn against self-revenge, in the latter to show the energy with which God will punish those who fall away from the faith, in connection with v. 36*a*, “the Lord will judge His people.”—In v. 36 the reason is given for the thought in v. 35. *דן* is mostly taken here in the sense of “procure right,” help to right, which it certainly often has (e.g., Ps. 54:3), and which is not to be excluded here; but this by no means exhausts the idea of the word. The parallel *יְהוָה* does not compel us to drop the idea of punishment, which is involved in the judging; for it is a question whether the two clauses are perfectly synonymous. “Judging His people” did not consist merely in the fact that Jehovah punished the heathen who oppressed Israel, but also in the fact that He punished the wicked in Israel who oppressed the righteous. “His people” is no doubt Israel as a whole (as, for example, in Isa. 1:3), but this whole was composed of righteous and wicked, and God could only help the righteous to justice by punishing and destroying the wicked. In this way the judging of His people became compassion towards His servants. “His servants” are the righteous, or, speaking more correctly, all who in the time of judgment are found to be the servants of God, and are saved. Because Israel was His nation, the Lord judged it in such a manner as not to destroy it, but simply to punish it for its sins, and to have compassion upon His servants, when He saw that the strength of the nation was gone. *יד*, the hand, with which one grasps and works, is a figure employed to denote power and might (vid., Isa. 28:2). *אָזל*, to run out, or come to an end (1 Sam. 9:7; Job 14:11). The meaning is, “when every support is gone,” when all the rotten props of its might, upon which it has rested, are broken (*Ewald*). The noun *אָפֶס*, cessation, disappearance, takes the place of a verb. The words *עָצוּר וְעֹזֹב* are a proverbial

phrase used to denote all men, as we may clearly see from 1 Kings 14:10; 21:21; 2 Kings 4:8; 14:6. The literal meaning of this form, however, cannot be decided with certainty. The explanation given by *L. de Dieu* is the most plausible one, viz., the man who is fettered, restrained, i.e., married, and the single or free. For *עָזֹב* the meaning *caelebs* is established by the Arabic, though the Arabic can hardly be appealed to as proving that *עָצוּר* means *paterfamilias*, as this meaning, which *Roediger* assigns to the Arabic word, is founded upon a mistaken interpretation of a passage in *Kamus*.

**Deuteronomy 32:37–39.** The Lord would then convince His people of the worthlessness of idols and the folly of idolatry, and bring it to admit the fact that He was God alone. “*Then will He say, Where are their gods, the rock in whom they trusted; who consumed the fat of their burnt-offerings, the wine of their libations? Let them rise up and help you, that there may be a shelter over you! See now that I, I am it, and there is no God beside Me: I kill, and make alive; I smite in pieces, and I heal; and there is no one who delivers out of My hand.*” *וְאֵמַר* might be taken impersonally, as it has been by *Luther* and others, “men will say;” but as it is certainly Jehovah who is speaking in v. 39, and what Jehovah says there is simply a deduction from what is addressed to the people in vv. 37 and 38, there can hardly be any doubt that Jehovah is speaking in vv. 37, 38, as well as in vv. 34, 35, and therefore that Moses simply distinguishes himself from Jehovah in v. 36, when explaining the reason for the judgment foretold by the Lord. The expression “*their gods*,” relates, not to the heathen, but to the Israelites, upon whom the judgment had fallen. The worthlessness of their gods had become manifest, namely, of the strange gods or idols, which the Israelites had preferred to the living God (vid., cf. 16, 17), and to which they had brought their sacrifices and drink-offerings. In v. 38, *אֱלֹהִים* is the subject,—the gods, who consumed the fat of the sacrifices offered to them by their worshippers (the foolish Israelites),—and is not to be taken as

DEUTERONOMY	Page 139
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the relative with זֶהְחִימוֹ, as the LXX, *Vulg.*, and *Luther* have rendered it, viz., “whose sacrifices they (the Israelites) ate,” which neither suits the context nor the word חֶלֶב (fat), which denotes the fat portions of the sacrificial animals that were burned upon the altar, and therefore presented to God. The wine of the drink-offerings was also poured out upon the altar, and thus given up to the deity worshipped. The handing over of the sacrificial portions to the deity is described here with holy irony, as though the gods themselves consumed the fat of the slain offerings, and drank the wine poured out for them, for the purpose of expression this thought: “The gods, whom ye entertained so well, and provided so abundantly with sacrifices, let them now arise and help you, and thus make themselves clearly known to you.” The address here takes the form of a direct appeal to the idolaters themselves; and in the last clause the imperative is introduced instead of the optative, to express the thought as sharply as possible, that men need the protection of God, and are warranted in expecting it from the gods they worship: “let there be a shelter over you.” *Sithrah* for *sether*, a shelter or defence.

**Deuteronomy 32:39.** The appeal to their own experience of the worthlessness of idols is followed by a demand that they should acknowledge Jehovah as the only true God. The repetition of “I” is emphatic: “I, I only it,” as an expression of being; I *am* it, ἐγὼ εἰμι, John 8:24; 18:5. The predicate *Elohim* (vid., 2 Sam. 7:28; Isa. 37:16) is omitted, because it is contained in the thought itself, and moreover is clearly expressed in the parallel clause which follows, “there is not a God beside Me.” Jehovah manifests himself in His doings, which Israel had experienced already, and still continued to experience. He kills and makes alive, etc., i.e., He has the power of life and death. These words do not refer to the immortality of the soul, but to the restoration of life of the people of Israel, which God had delivered up to death (so 1 Sam. 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7; cf. Isa. 26:19; Hos. 13:10; Wis. 16:13; Tobit 13:2). This thought, and the

following one, which is equally consolatory, that God smites and heals again, are frequently repeated by the prophets (vid., Hos. 6:1; Isa. 30:26; 57:17, 18; Jer. 17:14). None can deliver out of His hand (vid., Isa. 43:13; Hos. 5:14; 2:12).

**Deuteronomy 32:40–43.** The Lord will show Himself as the only true God, who slays and makes alive, etc. He will take vengeance upon His enemies, avenge the blood of His servants, and expiate His land, His people. With this promise, which is full of comfort for all the servants of the Lord, the ode concludes. “For I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, As truly as I live for ever, if I have sharpened My flashing sword, and My hand grasps for judgment, I will repay vengeance to My adversaries, and requite My haters. I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword will eat flesh; with the blood of the slain and prisoners, with the hairy head of the foe.” Lifting up the hand to heaven was a gesture by which a person taking an oath invoked God, who is enthroned in heaven, as a witness of the truth and an avenger of falsehood (Gen. 14:22). Here, as in Ex. 6:8 and Num. 14:30, it is used anthropomorphically of God, who is in heaven, and can swear by no greater than Himself (vid., Isa. 45:23; Jer. 22:5; Heb. 6:17). The oath follows in vv. 41 and 42. אֲנִי, however, is not the particle employed in swearing, which has a negative meaning (vid., Gen. 14:23), but is conditional, and introduces the protasis. As the avenger of His people upon their foes, the Lord is represented as a warlike hero, who whets His sword, and has a quiver filled with arrows (as in Ps. 7:13). “As long as the Church has to make war upon the world, the flesh, and the devil, it needs a warlike head” (*Schultz*). בֶּרֶק חֶרֶב, the flash of the sword, i.e., the flashing sword (vid., Gen. 3:24; Nahum 3:3; Hab. 3:11). In the next clause, “and My hand grasps judgment,” *mishpat* (judgment) does not mean punishment or destruction hurled by God upon His foes, nor the weapons employed in the execution of judgment, but judgment is introduced poetically as the thing which God takes in hand for the purpose of carrying it out.

DEUTERONOMY	Page 140
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

הַשִּׁיב נָקָם, to lead back vengeance, i.e., to repay it. Punishment is retribution for evil done. By the enemies and haters of Jehovah, we need not understand simply the heathen enemies of the Israelites, for the ungodly in Israel were enemies of God quite as much as the ungodly heathen. If it is evident from vv. 25–27, where God is spoken of as punishing Israel to the utmost when it had fallen into idolatry, but not utterly destroying it, that the punishment which God would inflict would also fall upon the heathen, who would have made an end of Israel; it is no less apparent from vv. 37 and 38, especially from the appeal in v. 38, Let your idols arise and help you (v. 38), which is addressed, as all admit, to the idolatrous Israelites, and not to the heathen, that those Israelites who had made worthless idols their rock would be exposed to the vengeance and retribution of the Lord. In v. 42 the figure of the warrior is revived, and the judgment of God is carried out still further under this figure. Of the four different clauses in this verse, the third is related to the first, and the fourth to the second. God would make His arrows drunk with the blood not only of the slain, but also of the captives, whose lives are generally spared, but were not to be spared in this judgment. This sword would eat flesh of the hairy head of the foe. The edge of the sword is represented poetically as the mouth with which it eats (2 Sam. 2:26; 18:8, etc.); “the sword is said to devour bodies when it slays them by piercing” (*Ges. thes.* p. 1088). פָּרַעַת, from פָּרַע, a luxuriant, uncut growth of hair (Num. 6:5; see at Lev. 10:6). The hairy head is not a figure used to denote the “wild and cruel foe” (*Knobel*), but a luxuriant abundance of strength, and the indomitable pride of the foe, who had grown fat and forgotten his Creator (v. 15). This explanation is confirmed by Ps. 68:22; whereas the rendering ἄρχοντες, princes, leaders, which is given in the Septuagint, has no foundation in the language itself, and no tenable support in Judg. 5:2.

**Deuteronomy 32:43.** For this retribution which God accomplishes upon His enemies, the

nations were to praise the people of the Lord. As this song commenced with an appeal to heaven and earth to give glory to the Lord (vv. 1–3), so it very suitably closes with an appeal to the heathen to rejoice with His people on account of the acts of the Lord. “Rejoice, nations, over His people; for He avenges the blood of His servants, and repays vengeance to His adversaries, and so expiates His land, His people.” “His people” is an accusative, and not in apposition to nations in the sense of “nations which are His people.” For, apart from the fact that such a combination would be unnatural, the thought that the heathen had become the people of God is nowhere distinctly expressed in the song (not even in v. 21); nor is the way even so prepared for it as that we could expect it here, although the appeal to the nations to rejoice with His people on account of what God had done involves the Messianic idea, that all nations will come to the knowledge of the Lord (vid., Ps. 47:2; 66:8; 67:4).—The reason for this rejoicing is the judgment through which the Lord avenges the blood of His servants and repays His foes. As the enemies of God are not the heathen as such (see at v. 41), so the servants of Jehovah are not the nation of Israel as a whole, but the faithful servants whom the Lord had at all times among His people, and who were persecuted, oppressed, and put to death by the ungodly. By this the land was defiled, covered with blood-guiltiness, so that the Lord was obliged to interpose as a judge, to put an end to the ways of the wicked, and to expiate His land, His people, i.e., to wipe out the guilt which rested upon the land and people, by the punishment of the wicked, and the extermination of idolatry and ungodliness, and to sanctify and glorify the land and nation (vid., Isa. 1:27; 4:4, 5).

**Deuteronomy 32:44–47.** In vv. 44–47 it is stated that Moses, with Joshua, spake the song to the people; and on finishing this rehearsal, once more impressed upon the hearts of the people the importance of observing all the commandments of God. This account proceeds from the author of the supplement to the *Thorah* of Moses, who inserted the song in the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 141
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

book of the law. This explains the name Hoshea, instead of *Jehoshuah* (Joshua), which Moses had given to his servant (Num. 13:8, 16), and invariably uses (compare Deuteronomy 31:3, 7, 14, 23, with Deuteronomy 1:38; 3:21, 28, and the exposition of Num. 13:16).—On v. 46, vid., Deuteronomy 6:7 and 11:19; and on v. 47, vid., Deuteronomy 30:20.

**Deuteronomy 32:48–52.** *“That self-same day,”* viz., the day upon which Moses had rehearsed the song to the children of Israel, the Lord renewed the announcement of his death, by repeating the command already given to him (Num. 27:12–14) to ascend Mount Nebo, there to survey the land of Canaan, and then to be gathered unto his people. In form, this repetition differs from the previous announcement, partly in the fact that the situation of Mount Nebo is more fully described (in the land of Moab, etc., as in Deuteronomy 1:5; 28:69), and partly in the continual use of the imperative, and a few other trifling points. These differences may all be explained from the fact that the account here was not written by Moses himself.

### Deuteronomy 33

Moses' Blessing.—Ch. 33.

**Deuteronomy 33.** Before ascending Mount Nebo to depart this life, Moses took leave of his people, the tribes of Israel, in the blessing which is very fittingly inserted in the book of the law between the divine announcement of his approaching death and the account of the death itself, as being the last words of the departing man of God. The blessing opens with an allusion to the solemn conclusion of the covenant and giving of the law at Sinai, by which the Lord became King of Israel, to indicate at the outset the source from which all blessings must flow to Israel (vv. 2–5). Then follow the separate blessings upon the different tribes (vv. 6–25). And the whole concludes with an utterance of praise to the Lord, as the mighty support and refuge of His people in their conflicts with all their foes (vv. 26–29). This blessing was not written down by Moses himself, like the song in Deuteronomy 32, but

simply pronounced in the presence of the assembled tribes. This is evident, not only from the fact that there is nothing said about its being committed to writing, but also from the heading in v. 1, where the editor clearly distinguishes himself from Moses, by speaking of Moses as “the man of God,” like Caleb in Josh. 14:6, and the author of the heading to the prayer of Moses in Ps. 90:1. In later times, “man of God” was the title usually given to a prophet (vid., 1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Kings 12:22; 13:14, etc.), as a man who enjoyed direct intercourse with God, and received supernatural revelations from Him. Nevertheless, we have Moses' own words, not only in the blessings upon the several tribes (vv. 6–25), but also in the introduction and conclusion of the blessing (vv. 2–5 and 26–29). The introductory words before the blessings, such as “and this for Judah” in v. 7, “and to Levi he said” (v. 8), and the similar formulas in vv. 12, 13, 18, 20, 22, 23, and 24, are the only additions made by the editor who inserted the blessing in the Pentateuch. The arrangement of the blessings in their present order is probably also his work. It neither accords with the respective order of the sons of Jacob, nor with the distribution of the tribes in the camp, nor with the situation of their possessions in the land of Canaan. It is true that Reuben stands first as the eldest son of Jacob; but Simeon is then passed over, and Judah, to whom the dying patriarch bequeathed the birthright which he withdrew from Reuben, stands next; and then Levi, the priestly tribe. Then follow Benjamin and Joseph, the sons of Rachel; Zebulun and Issachar, the last sons of Leah (in both cases the younger before the elder); and lastly, the tribes descended from the sons of the maids: Gad, the son of Zilpah; Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah; and finally, Asher, the second son of Zilpah. To discover the guiding principle in this arrangement, we must look to the blessings themselves, which indicate partly the position already obtained by each tribe, as a member of the whole nation, in the earthly kingdom of God, and partly the place which it was to reach and occupy in the further development of Israel in the future, not only in relation to the Lord,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 142
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

but also in relation to the other nations. The only exception to this is the position assigned to Reuben, who occupies the foremost place as the first-born, notwithstanding his loss of the birthright. In accordance with this principle, the first place properly belonged to the tribe of Judah, who was raised into the position of lord over his brethren, and the second to the tribe of Levi, which had been set apart to take charge of the sacred things; whilst Benjamin is associated with Levi as the "beloved of the Lord." Then follow Joseph, as the representative of the might which Israel would manifest in conflict with the nations; Zebulun and Issachar, as the tribes which would become the channels of blessings to the nations through their wealth in earthly good; and lastly, the tribes descended from the sons of the maids, Asher being separated from his brother Gad, and placed at the end, in all probability simply because it was in the blessing promised to him that the earthly blessedness of the people of God was to receive its fullest manifestation.

On comparing the blessing of Moses with that of Jacob, we should expect at the very outset, that if the blessings of these two men of God have really been preserved to us, and they are not later inventions, their contents would be essentially the same, so that the blessing of Moses would contain simply a confirmation of that of the dying patriarch, and would be founded upon it in various ways. This is most conspicuous in the blessing upon Joseph; but there are also several other blessings in which it is unmistakeable, although Moses' blessing is not surpassed in independence and originality by that of Jacob, either in its figures, its similes, or its thoughts. But the resemblance goes much deeper. It is manifest, for example, in the fact, that in the case of several of the tribes, Moses, like Jacob, does nothing more than expound their names, and on the ground of the peculiar characters expressed in the names, foretell to the tribes themselves their peculiar calling and future development within the covenant nation. Consequently we have nowhere any special predictions, but simply prophetic glances at the future, depicted in a purely ideal manner,

whilst in the case of most of the tribes the utter want of precise information concerning their future history prevents us from showing in what way they were fulfilled. The difference in the times at which the two blessings were uttered is also very apparent. The existing circumstances from which Moses surveyed the future history of the tribes of Israel in the light of divine revelation, were greatly altered from the time when Jacob blessed the heads of the twelve tribes before his death, in the persons of his twelve sons. These tribes had now grown into a numerous people, with which the Lord had established the covenant that He had made with the patriarchs. The curse of dispersion in Israel, which the patriarch had pronounced upon Simeon and Levi (Gen. 49:5-7), had been changed into a blessing so far as Levi was concerned. The tribe of Levi had been entrusted with the "light and right" of the Lord, had been called to be the teacher of the rights and law of God in Israel, because it had preserved the covenant of the Lord, after the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, even though it involved the denial of flesh and blood. Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh had already received their inheritance, and the other tribes were to take possession of Canaan immediately. These circumstances formed the starting-point for the blessings of Moses, not only in the case of Levi and Gad, where they are expressly mentioned, but in that of the other tribes also, where they do not stand prominently forward, because for the most part Moses simply repeats the leading features of their future development in their promised inheritance, as already indicated in the blessing of Jacob, and "thus bore his testimony to the patriarch who anticipated him, that the spirit of his prophecy was truth" (Ziegler, p. 159).

In this peculiar characteristic of the blessing of Moses, we have the strongest proof of its authenticity, particularly in the fact that there is not the slightest trace of the historical circumstances of the nation at large and the separate tribes which were peculiar to the post-Mosaic times. The little ground that there is for the assertion which *Knobel* repeats, that the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 143
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

blessing betrays a closer acquaintance with the post-Mosaic times, such as Moses himself could not possibly have possessed, is sufficiently evident from the totally different expositions which have been given by the different commentators of the saying concerning Judah in v. 7, which is adduced in proof of this. Whilst *Knobel* finds the desire expressed in this verse on behalf of Judah, that David, who had fled from Saul, might return, obtain possession of the government, and raise his tribe into the royal tribe, *Graf* imagines that it expresses the longing of the kingdom of Judah for reunion with that of Israel; and *Hofmann* and *Maurer* even trace an allusion to the inhabitants of Judea who were led into captivity along with Jehoiachin: one assumption being just as arbitrary and as much opposed to the text as the other.—All the objections brought against the genuineness of this blessing are founded upon an oversight or denial of its prophetic character, and upon untenable interpretations of particular expressions abstracted from it. Not only is there no such thing in the whole blessing as a distinct reference to the peculiar historical circumstances of Israel which arose after Moses' death, but there are some points in the picture which Moses has drawn of the tribes that it is impossible to recognise in these circumstances. Even *Knobel* from his naturalistic stand-point is obliged to admit, that no traces can be found in the song of any allusion to the calamities which fell upon the nation in the Syrian, Assyrian, and Chaldean periods. And hitherto it has proved equally impossible to point out any distinct allusion to the circumstances of the nation in the period of the judges. On the contrary, as *Schultz* observes, the speaker rises throughout to a height of ideality which it would have been no longer possible for any sacred author to reach, when the confusions and divisions of a later age had actually taken place. He sees nothing of the calamities from without, which fell upon the nations again and again with destructive fury, nothing of the Canaanites who still remained in the midst of the Israelites, and nothing of the hostility of the different tribes towards one

another; he simply sees how they work together in the most perfect harmony, each contributing his part to realize the lofty ideal of Israel. And again he grasps this ideal and the realization of it in so elementary a way, and so thoroughly from the outer side, without regard to any inward transformation and glorification, that he must have lived in a time preceding the prophetic age, and before the moral conflicts had taken place.

**Deuteronomy 33:2–5.** In the introduction Moses depicts the elevation of Israel into the nation of God, in its origin (v. 2), its nature (v. 3), its intention and its goal (vv. 4, 5).

**Deuteronomy 33:2.** "*Jehovah came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shone from the mountains of Paran, and came out of holy myriads, at His right rays of fire to them.*" To set forth the glory of the covenant which God made with Israel, Moses depicts the majesty and glory in which the Lord appeared to the Israelites at Sinai, to give them the law, and become their king. The three clauses, "Jehovah came from Sinai ... from Seir ... from the mountains of Paran," do not refer to different manifestations of God (*Knobel*), but to the one appearance of God at Sinai. Like the sun when it rises, and fills the whole of the broad horizon with its beams, the glory of the Lord, when He appeared, was not confined to one single point, but shone upon the people of Israel from Sinai, and Seir, and the mountains of Paran, as they came from the west to Sinai. The Lord appeared to the people from the summit of Sinai, as they lay encamped at the foot of the mountain. This appearance rose like a streaming light from Seir, and shone at the same time from the mountains of Paran. *Seir* is the mountain land of the Edomites to the east of Sinai; and the mountains of Paran are in all probability not the mountains of *et-Tih*, which form the southern boundary of the desert of Paran, but rather the mountains of the Azazimeh, which ascend to a great height above Kadesh, and form the boundary wall of Canaan towards the south. The glory of the Lord, who appeared upon Sinai, sent its beams even to the eastern

DEUTERONOMY	Page 144
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

and northern extremities of the desert. This manifestation of God formed the basis for all subsequent manifestations of the omnipotence and grace of the Lord for the salvation of His people. This explains the allusions to the description before us in the song of Deborah (Judg. 5:4) and in Hab. 3:3.—The Lord came not only from Sinai, but from heaven, “out of holy myriads,” i.e., out of the midst of the thousands of holy angels who surround His throne (1 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6; Dan. 7:10), and who are introduced in Gen. 28:12 as His holy servants, and in Gen. 32:2, 3, as the hosts of God, and form the assembly of holy ones around His throne (Ps. 89:6, 8; cf. Ps. 68:18; Zech. 14:5; Matt. 26:53; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11; 7:11).—The last clause is a difficult one. The writing אש דת in two words, “fire of the law,” not only fails to give a suitable sense, but has against it the fact that דת, law, *edictum*, is not even a Semitic word, but was adopted from the Persian into the Chaldee, and that it is only by Gentiles that it is ever applied to the law of God (Ezra 7:12, 21, 25, 26; Dan. 6:6). It must be read as one word, אשדת, as it is in many MSS and editions,—not, however, as connected with אשד, the pouring out of the brooks, slopes of the mountains (Num. 21:15), but in the form אשדת, composed, according to the probable conjecture of Böttcher, of אש, fire, and דת (in the Chaldee and Syriac), to throw, to shoot arrows, in the sense of “fire of throwing,” shooting fire, a figurative description of the flashes of lightning. Gesenius adopts this explanation, except that he derives דת from דת, to throw. It is favoured by the fact that, according to Ex. 19:16, the appearance of God upon Sinai was accompanied by thunder and lightning; and flashes of lightning are often called the arrows of God, whilst דת, in Hebrew, is established by the name דת (Num. 1:5; 2:10). To this we may add the parallel passage, Hab. 3:4, “rays out of His hand,” which renders this explanation a very probable one. By “them,” in the second and fifth clauses, the

Israelites are intended, to whom this fearful theophany referred. On the signification of the manifestation of God in fire, see Deuteronomy 4:11, and the exposition of Ex. 3:2.

**Deuteronomy 33:3.** “*Yea, nations He loves; all His holy ones are in Thy hand: and they lie down at Thy feet; they rise up at Thy words.*” חֵבֵב עַמִּים is the subject placed first absolutely: “nations loving,” sc., is he; or “as loving nations—all Thy holy ones are in Thy hand.” The nations or peoples are not the tribes of Israel here, any more than in Deuteronomy 32:8, or Gen. 28:3; 35:11, and 48:4; whilst Judg. 5:14 and Hos. 10:14 cannot come into consideration at all, for there the word is defined by a suffix. The meaning of the words depends upon whether “all His holy ones” are the godly in Israel, or the Israelites generally, or the angels. There is nothing to favour the first explanation, as the distinction between the godly and the wicked would be out of place in the introduction to a blessing upon all the tribes. The second has only as seeming support in Dan. 7:21ff. and Ex. 19:6. It does not follow at once from the calling of Israel to be the holy nation of Jehovah, that all the Israelites were or could be called “holy ones of the Lord.” Least of all should Num. 16:3 be adduced in support of this. Even in Dan. 7 the holy ones of the Most High are not the Jews generally, but simply the godly, or believers, in the nation of God. The third view, on the other hand, is a perfectly natural one, on account of the previous reference to the holy myriads. The meaning, therefore, would be this: The Lord embraces all nations with His love, He who, so to speak, has all His holy angels in His hand, i.e., His power, so that they serve Him as their Lord. They lie down at His feet. The ἅπ. λεγ. ἑκὼς is explained by Kimchi and Saad. as signifying *adjuncti sequuntur vestigia sua*; and by the Syriac, They follow thy foot, from conjecture rather than any certain etymology. The derivation proposed by modern linguists, from the verb תָּכַח, according to an Arabic word signifying *recubuit, innixus est*, has apparently more to support it. יָשָׁא, it rises up: intransitive,



DEUTERONOMY	Page 145
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

as in Hab. 1:3, Nah. 1:5, Hos. 13:1, and Ps. 89:10. מְדַבֵּר־יָד is not a Hithpael participle (that which is spoken); for מְדַבֵּר has not a passive, but an active signification, to converse (Num. 7:89; Ezek. 2:2, etc.). It is rather a noun, דְּבָרָה, from דִּבֶּרָה, words, utterances. The singular, יִשָּׂא, is distributive: every one (of them) rises on account of thine utterance, i.e., at thy words. The suffixes relate to God, and the discourse passes from the third to the second person. In our own language, such a change in a sentence like this, “all His (God’s) holy ones are in Thy (God’s) hand,” would be intolerably harsh, but in Hebrew poetry it is by no means rare (see, for example, Ps. 49:19).

**Deuteronomy 33:4, 5.** “*Moses appointed us a law, a possession of the congregation of Jacob. And He became King in righteous-nation (Jeshurun); there the heads of the people assembled, in crowds the tribes of Israel.*” The God who met Israel at Sinai in terrible majesty, out of the myriads of holy angels, who embraces all nations in love, and has all the holy angels in His power, so that they lie at His feet and rise up at His word, gave the law through Moses to the congregation of Jacob as a precious possession, and became King in Israel. This was the object of the glorious manifestation of His holy majesty upon Sinai. Instead of saying, “He gave the law to the tribes of Israel through my mediation,” Moses personates the listening nation, and not only speaks of himself in the third person, but does so by identifying his own person with the nation, because he wished the people to repeat his words from thorough conviction, and because the law which he gave in the name of the Lord was given to himself as well, and was as binding upon him as upon every other member of the congregation. In a similar manner the prophet Habakkuk identifies himself with the nation in Deuteronomy 3, and says in v. 19, out of the heart of the nation, “The Lord is my strength, ... who maketh me to walk upon mine high places,”—an expression which did not apply to himself, but to the nation as a

whole. So again in the 20th and 21st Psalms, which David composed as the prayers of the nation for its king, he not only speaks of himself as the anointed of the Lord, but addresses such prayers to the Lord for himself as could only be offered by the nation for its king. “A possession for the congregation of Jacob.” “Israel was distinguished above all other nations by the possession of the divinely revealed law (Deuteronomy 4:5–8); that was its most glorious possession, and therefore is called its true κειμήλιον” (*Knobel*). The subject in v. 5 is not Moses but Jehovah, who became King in Jeshurun (see at Deuteronomy 32:15 and Ex. 15:18). “Were gathered together;” this refers to the assembling of the nation around Sinai (Deuteronomy 4:10ff.; cf. Ex. 19:17ff.), to the day of assembly (Deuteronomy 9:10; 10:4; 18:16).

**Deuteronomy 33:6.** The blessings upon the tribes commence with this verse. “*Let Reuben live and not die, and there be a (small) number of his men.*” The rights of the first-born had been withheld from Reuben in the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49:3); Moses, however, promises this tribe continuance and prosperity. The words, “and let his men become a number,” have been explained in very different ways. מִסְפָּר in this connection cannot mean a large number (πολὺς ἐν ἀριθμῷ, LXX), but, like מִסְפָּר (Deuteronomy 4:27; Gen. 34:30; Jer. 44:28), simply a *small* number, that could easily be counted (cf. Deuteronomy 28:62). The negation must be carried on to the last clause. This the language will allow, as the rule that a negation can only be carried forward when it stands with emphatic force at the very beginning (*Ewald*, § 351) is not without exceptions; see for example Prov. 30:2, 3, where three negative clauses follow a positive one, and in the last the לֹא is omitted, without the particle of negation having been placed in any significant manner at the beginning.—*Simeon* was the next in age to Reuben; but he is passed over entirely, because according to Jacob’s blessing (Gen. 49:7) he was to be

DEUTERONOMY	Page 146
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

scattered abroad in Israel, and lost his individuality as a tribe in consequence of this dispersion, in accordance with which the Simeonites simply received a number of towns within the territory of Judah (Josh. 19:2–9), and, “having no peculiar object of its own, took part, as far as possible, in the fate and objects of the other tribes, more especially of Judah” (*Schultz*). Although, therefore, it is by no means to be regarded as left without a blessing, but rather as included in the general blessings in vv. 1 and 29, and still more in the blessing upon Judah, yet it could not receive a special blessing like the tribe of Reuben, because, as *Ephraim Syrus* observes, the Simeonites had not endeavoured to wipe out the stain of the crime which Jacob cursed, but had added to it by fresh crimes (more especially the audacious prostitution of Zimri, Num. 25). Even the Simeonites did not become extinct, but continued to live in the midst of the tribe of Judah, so that as late as the eighth century, in the reign of Hezekiah, thirteen princes are enumerated with their families, whose fathers’ houses had increased greatly (1 Chron. 4:34ff.); and these families effected conquests in the south, even penetrating into the mountains of Seir, for the purpose of seeking fresh pasture (1 Chron. 4:39–43). Hence the assertion that the omission of Simeon is only conceivable from the circumstances of a later age, is as mistaken as the attempt made in some of the MSS of the Septuagint to interpolate the name of Simeon in the second clause of v. 6.

**Deuteronomy 33:7.** The blessing upon Judah is introduced with the formula, “*And this for Judah, and he said: ‘Hear, Jehovah, the voice of Judah, and bring him to his people; with his hands he fights for him; and help against his adversaries wilt Thou be.’*” Judah, from whom the sceptre was not to depart (Gen. 49:10), is mentioned before Levi as the royal tribe. The prayer, May Jehovah bring Judah to his people, can hardly be understood in any other way than it is by *Onkelos* and *Hengstenberg* (Chistol. i. 80), viz., as founded upon the blessing of Jacob, and expressing the desire, that as Judah was to lead the way as the champion of his brethren in

the wars of Israel against the nations, he might have a prosperous return to his people; for the thought, “introduce him to the kingdom of Israel and Judah” (*Luther*), or “give up to him the people which belongs to him according to Thine appointment” (*Schultz*), is hardly implied in the words, “bring to his people.” Other explanations are not worth mentioning. What follows points to strife and war: “With his hands (יָדָיו accusative of the instrument, vid., *Ges.* § 138, 1, note 3; *Ewald*, § 283, a.) is he fighting (רָב participle of רָבָה) for it (the nation); Thou wilt grant him help, deliverance before his foes.”

**Deuteronomy 33:8–11.** Levi.—Vv. 8, 9. “*Thy right and Thy light is to Thy godly man, whom Thou didst prove in Massah, and didst strive with him at the water of strife; who says to his father and his mother, I see him not; and does not regard his brethren, and does not know his sons: for they observed Thy word, and kept Thy covenant.*” This blessing is also addressed to God as a prayer. The *Urim* and *Thummim*—that pledge, which the high priest wore upon his breast-plate, that the Lord would always give His people light to preserve His endangered right (vid., Ex. 28:29, 30)—are here regarded as a prerogative of the whole of the tribe of Levi. *Thummim* is placed before *Urim*, to indicate at the outset that Levi had defended the right of the Lord, and that for that very reason the right of the *Urim* and *Thummim* had been given to him by the Lord. “Thy holy one” is not Aaron, but Levi the tribe-father, who represents the whole tribe to which the blessing applies; hence in vv. 9b and 10 the verb passes into the plural. To define more precisely the expression “Thy holy one,” reference is made to the trials at Massah and at the water of strife, on the principle that the Lord humbles His servants before He exalts them, and confirms those that are His by trying and proving them. The proving at Massah refers to the murmuring of the people on account of the want of water at *Rephidim* (Ex. 17:1–7, as in Deuteronomy 6:16 and 9:22), from which the place received the name of *Massah* and *Jeribah*; the striving at the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 147
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

water of strife, to the rebellion of the people against Moses and Aaron on account of the want of water at *Kadesh* (Num. 20:1–13). At both places it was primarily the people who strove with Moses and Aaron, and thereby tempted God. For it is evident that even at Massah the people murmured not only against Moses, but against their leaders generally, from the use of the plural verb, “*Give ye us water to drink*” (Ex. 17:2). This proving of the people, however, was at the same time a proof, to which the Lord subjected the heads and leaders of the nation, for the purpose of trying their faith. And thus also, in Deuteronomy 8:2ff., the whole of the guidance of Israel through the desert is described as a trial and humiliation of the people by the Lord. But in Moses and Aaron, the heads of the tribe of Levi, the whole of the tribe of Levi was proved. The two provings by means of water are selected, as *Schultz* observes, “because in their correlation they were the best adapted to represent the beginning and end, and therefore the whole of the temptations.”

**Deuteronomy 33:9.** In these temptations Levi had proved itself “a holy one,” although in the latter Moses and Aaron stumbled, since the Levites had risen up in defence of the honour of the Lord and had kept His covenant, even with the denial of father, mother, brethren, and children (Matt. 10:37; 19:29). The words, “who says to his father,” etc., relate to the event narrated in Ex. 32:26–29, where the Levites draw their swords against the Israelites their brethren, at the command of Moses, after the worship of the golden calf, and execute judgment upon the nation without respect of person. To this we may add Num. 25:8, where Phinehas interposes with his sword in defence of the honour of the Lord against the shameless prostitution with the daughters of Moab. On these occasions the Levites manifested the spirit which Moses predicates here of all the tribe. By the interposition at Sinai especially, they devoted themselves with such self-denial to the service of the Lord, that the dignity of the priesthood was conferred upon their tribe in consequence.—In vv. 10 and 11, Moses

celebrates this vocation: “*They will teach Jacob Thy rights, and Israel Thy law; bring incense to Thy nose, and whole-offering upon Thine altar. Bless, Lord, his strength, and let the work of his hands be well-pleasing to Thee: smite his adversaries and his haters upon the hips, that they may not rise!*” The tribe of Levi had received the high and glorious calling to instruct Israel in the rights and commandments of God (Lev. 10:11), and to present the sacrifices of the people to the Lord, viz., incense in the holy place, whole-offering in the court. “Whole-offering,” a term applied to the burnt-offering (see p. 515), which is mentioned *instar omnium* as being the leading sacrifice. The priests alone were actually entrusted with the instruction of the people in the law and the sacrificial worship; but as the rest of the Levites were given them as assistants in their service, this service might very properly be ascribed to the whole tribe; and no greater blessing could be desired for it than that the Lord should give them power to discharge the duties of their office, should accept their service with favour, and make their opponents powerless. The enemies and haters of Levi were not only envious persons, like Korah and his company (Num. 16:1), but all opponents of the priests and Levites. The *loins* are the seat of strength (Ps. 69:24; Job 40:16; Prov. 31; 17). This is the only place in which *נָּ* is used before a finite verb, whereas it often stands before the infinitive (e.g., Gen. 27:1; 31:29).

**Deuteronomy 33:12.** Benjamin.—“*The beloved of the Lord will dwell safely with Him; He shelters him at all times, and he dwells between His shoulders.*” Benjamin, the son of prosperity, and beloved of his father (Gen. 35:18; 44:20), should bear his name with right. He would be the beloved of the Lord, and as such would dwell in safety with the Lord (*עֲלֵי*, lit., founded upon Him). The Lord would shelter him continually. The participle expresses the permanence of the relation: is his shelterer. In the third clause Benjamin is the subject once more; he dwells between the shoulders of Jehovah. “Between the shoulders” is equivalent

DEUTERONOMY	Page 148
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

to “upon the back” (vid., 1 Sam. 17:6). The expression is founded upon the figure of a father carrying his son (Deuteronomy 1:29). This figure is by no means so bold as that of the eagle’s wings, upon which the Lord had carried His people, and brought them to Himself (Ex. 19:4; vid., Deuteronomy 32:11). There is nothing strange in the change of subject in all three clauses, since it is met with repeatedly even in plain prose (e.g., 2 Sam. 11:13); and here it follows simply enough from the thoughts contained in the different clauses, whilst the suffix in all three clauses refers to the same noun, i.e., to Jehovah.<sup>38</sup> There are some who regard Jehovah as the subject in the third clause, and explain the unheard-of figure which they thus obtain, viz., that of Jehovah dwelling between the shoulders of Benjamin, as referring to the historical fact that God dwelt in the temple at Jerusalem, which was situated upon the border of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. To this application of the words *Knobel* has properly objected, that God did not dwell between ridges (= shoulders) of mountains there, but upon the top of Moriah; but, on the other hand, he has set up the much more untenable hypothesis, that the expression refers to Gibeon, where the tabernacle stood after the destruction of Nob by Saul.—Moreover, the whole nation participated in the blessing which Moses desired for Benjamin; and this applies to the blessings of the other tribes also. All Israel was, like Benjamin, the beloved of the Lord (vid., Jer. 11:15; Ps. 60:7), and dwelt with Him in safety (vid., v. 28).

**Deuteronomy 33:13–17.** Joseph.—V. 13. *“Blessed of the Lord be his land, of (in) the most precious things of heaven, the dew, and of the flood which lies beneath, (v. 14) and of the most precious of the produce of the sun, and of the most precious of the growth of the moons, (v. 15) and of the head of the mountains of olden time, and of the most precious thing of the everlasting hills, (v. 16) and of the most precious thing of the earth, and of its fulness, and the good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush: let it come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of him that is illustrious among his brethren.”* What Jacob

desired and solicited for his son Joseph, Moses also desires for this tribe, namely, the greatest possible abundance of earthly blessing, and a vigorous manifestation of power in conflict with the nations. But however unmistakeable may be the connection between these words and the blessing of Jacob (Gen. 49:22ff.), not only in the things desired, but even in particular expression, there is an important difference which equally strikes us, namely, that in the case of Jacob the main point of the blessing is the growth of Joseph into a powerful tribe, whereas with Moses it is the development of power on the part of this tribe in the land of its inheritance, in perfect harmony with the different times at which the blessings were pronounced. Jacob described the growth of Joseph under the figure of the luxuriant branch of a fruit-tree planted by the water; whilst Moses fixes his eye primarily upon the land of Joseph, and desires for him the richest productions. “May his land be blessed by Jehovah from (מן) of the cause of the blessing, whose author was Jehovah; vid., Ps. 28:7; 104:3) the most precious thing of the heaven.” מִן, which only occurs again in the Song of Sol. 4:13, 16, and 7:14, is applied to precious fruits. The most precious fruit which the heaven yields to the land is the dew. The “productions of the sun,” and גֶּרֶשׁ אֶלֶּפ. לֵעָלָם. from גֶּרֶשׁ, “the produce of the moons,” are the fruits of the earth, which are matured by the influence of the sun and moon, by their light, their warmth. At the same time, we can hardly so distinguish the one from the other as to understand by the former the fruits which ripen only once a year, and by the latter those which grow several times and in difference months; and Ezek. 47:12 and Rev. 22:2 cannot be adduced as proofs of this. The plural “moons” in parallelism with the sun does not mean months, as in Ex. 2:2, but the different phases which the moon shows in its revolution round the earth. מִרְאֵשׁ (from the head), in v. 15, is a contracted expression signifying “from the most precious things of the head.” The most precious things of the head of the mountains of old and the eternal

DEUTERONOMY	Page 149
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

hills, are the crops and forests with which the tops of the mountains and hills are covered. Moses sums up the whole in the words, "the earth, and the fulness thereof:" everything in the form of costly good that the earth and its productions can supply.—To the blessings of the heaven and earth there are to be added the good-will of the Lord, who appeared to Moses in the thorn-bush to redeem His people out of the bondage and oppression of Egypt and bring it into the land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:2ff.). The expression "that dwells in the bush" is to be explained from the significance of this manifestation of God as shown at Ex. 3, which shadowed forth a permanent relation between the Lord and His people. The spiritual blessing of the covenant grace is very suitably added to the blessings of nature; and there is something no less suitable in the way in which the construction commencing with וְרָצוֹן is dropped, so that an *anakolouthon* ensues. This word cannot be taken as an accusative of more precise definition, as *Schultz* supposes; nor is מֶן to be supplied before it, as *Knobel* suggests. Grammatically considered, it is a nominative to which the verb תִּבְּרָאָה properly belongs, although, as a matter of fact, not only the good-will, but the natural blessings, of the Lord were also to come upon the head of Joseph. Consequently we have not יְבוֹאָה (*masc.*), which רָצוֹן would require, but the lengthened poetical feminine form תִּבְּרָאָה (vid., *Ewald*, § 191, c.), used in a neuter sense. It, i.e., everything mentioned before, shall come upon Joseph. On the expression, "illustrious among his brethren," see at Gen. 49:26. In the strength of this blessing, the tribe of Joseph would attain to such a development of power, that it would be able to tread down all nations.

**Deuteronomy 33:17.** "The first-born of his ox, majesty is to him, and buffalo-horns his horns: with them he thrusts down nations, all at once the ends of the earth. These are the myriads of Ephraim, and these the thousands of Manasseh." The "first-born of his (Joseph's) oxen" (*shor*, a

collective noun, as in Deuteronomy 15:19) is not Joshua (*Rabb.*, *Schultz*); still less is it Joseph (*Bleek*, *Diestel*), in which case the pronoun *his* ox would be quite out of place; nor is it King Jeroboam II, as *Graf* supposes. It is rather Ephraim, whom the patriarch Jacob raised into the position of the first-born of Joseph (Gen. 48:4ff.). All the sons of Joseph resembled oxen, but Ephraim was the most powerful of them all. He was endowed with majesty; his horns, the strong weapon of oxen, in which all their strength is concentrated, were not the horns of common oxen, but horns of the wild buffalo (*reem*, Num. 23:22), that strong indomitable beast (cf. Job. 39:9ff.; Ps. 22:22). With them he would thrust down nations, the ends of the earth, i.e., the most distant nations (vid., Ps. 2:8; 7:9; 22:28). "Together," i.e., all at once, belongs rhythmically to "the ends of the earth." Such are the myriads of Ephraim, i.e., in such might will the myriads of Ephraim arise. To the tribe of Ephraim, as the more numerous, the ten thousands are assigned; to the tribe of Manasseh, the thousands.

**Deuteronomy 33:18, 19.** Zebulun and Issachar.—"Rejoice, Zebulun, at thy going out; and, Issachar, at thy tents. Nations will they invite to the mountain; there offer the sacrifices of righteousness: for they suck the affluence of the seas, and the hidden treasures of the sand." The tribes of the last two sons of Leah Moses unites together, and, like Jacob in Gen. 49:13, places Zebulun the younger first. He first of all confirms the blessing which Jacob pronounced through simply interpreting their names as *omnia*, by calling upon them to rejoice in their undertakings abroad and at home. "At thy tents" corresponds to "at thy going out" (tents being used poetically for dwellings, as in Deuteronomy 16:7); like "sitting" to "going out and coming in" in 2 Kings 19:27, Isa. 37:28, Ps. 139:2; and describes in its two aspects of work and production, rest and recreation. Although "going out" (enterprise and labour) is attributed to Zebulun, and "remaining in tents" (the comfortable enjoyment of life) to Issachar, in accordance with the delineation of their respective characters in the blessing of Jacob,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 150
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

this is to be attributed to the poetical parallelism of the clauses, and the whole is to be understood as applying to both in the sense suggested by *Graf*, "Rejoice, Zebulun and Issachar, in your labour and your rest." This peculiarity, which is founded in the very nature of poetical parallelism, which is to individualize the thought by distributing it into parallel members, has been entirely overlooked by all the commentators who have given a historical interpretation to each, referring the "going out" to the shipping trade and commercial pursuits of the Zebulunites, and the expression "in thy tents" either to the spending of a nomad life in tents, for the purpose of performing a subordinate part in connection with trade (*Schultz*), or to the quiet pursuits of agriculture and grazing (*Knobel*). They were to rejoice in their undertakings at home and abroad; for they would be successful. The good things of life would flow to them in rich abundance; they would not make them into mammon, however, but would invite nations to the mountain, and there offer sacrifices of righteousness. "The peoples" are nations generally, not the tribes of Israel, still less the members of their own tribes. By the "*mountain*," without any more precise definition, we are not to understand Tabor or Carmel any more than the mountain land of Canaan. It is rather "the mountain of the Lord's inheritance" (Ex. 15:17), upon which the Lord was about to plant His people, the mountain which the Lord had chosen for His sanctuary, and in which His people were to dwell with Him, and rejoice in sacrificial meals of fellowship with Him (see p. 356). To this end the Lord had sanctified Moriah through the sacrifice of Isaac which He required of Abraham, though it had not been revealed to Moses that it was there that the temple, in which the name of the Lord in Israel would dwell, was afterwards to be built. There is no distinct or direct allusion to Morah or Zion, as the temple-mountain, involved in the words of Moses. It was only by later revelations and appointments on the part of God that this was to be made known. The words simply contain the Messianic thought that Zebulun and

Issachar would offer rich praise-offerings and thank-offerings to the Lord, from the abundant supply of earthly good that would flow to them, upon the mountain which He would make ready as the seat of His gracious presence, and would call, i.e., invite the nations to the sacrificial meals connected with them to delight themselves with them in the rich gifts of the Lord, and worship the Lord who blessed His people thus. For the explanation of this thought, see Ps. 22:28–31. Sacrifice is mentioned here as an expression of divine worship, which culminated in sacrifice; and slain-offerings are mentioned, not burnt-offerings, to set forth the worship of God under the aspect of blessedness in fellowship with the Lord. "Slain-offerings of righteousness" are not merely outwardly legal sacrifices, in conformity with the ritual of the law, but such as were offered in a right spirit, which was well-pleasing to God (as in Ps. 4:6; 51:21). It follows as a matter of course, therefore, that by the abundance of the seas we are not merely to understand the profits of trade upon the Mediterranean Sea; and that we are still less to understand by the hidden treasures of the sand "the fish, the purple snails, and sponges" (*Knobel*), or "tunny-fish, purple shells, and glass" (*Ps. Jon.*); but that the words receive their best exposition from Isa. 60:5, 6, 16, and 66:11, 12, i.e., that the thought expressed is, that the riches and treasures of both sea and land would flow to the tribes of Israel.

**Deuteronomy 33:20, 21.** Gad.—"*Blessed be He that enlargeth Gad: like a lioness he lieth down, and teareth the arm, yea, the crown of the head. And he chose his first-fruit territory, for there was the leader's portion kept; and he came to the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the Lord, and his rights with Israel.*" Just as in the blessing of Noah (Gen. 9:26) the God of Shem is praised, to point out the salvation appointed by God for Shem, so here Moses praises the Lord, who enlarged Gad, i.e., who not only gave him a broad territory in the conquered kingdom of Sihon, but furnished generally an unlimited space for his development (vid., Gen. 26:22), so that he might unfold his lion-like nature in

DEUTERONOMY	Page 151
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

conflict with his foes. On the figure of a lioness, see Gen. 49:9; and on the warlike character of the Gadites, the remarks on the blessing of Jacob upon Gad (Gen. 49:19). The second part of the blessing treats of the inheritance which Gad obtained from Moses at his own request beyond Jordan. גָּד, with an accusative and ל, signifies to look out something for oneself (Gen. 22:8; 1 Sam. 16:17). The "first-fruit" refers here to the first portion of the land which Israel received for a possession; this is evident from the reason assigned, בִּי שָׁם חֵלֶקֶת, whilst the statement that Gad chose the hereditary possession is in harmony with Num. 32:2, 6, 25ff., where the children of Gad are described as being at the head of the tribes, who came before Moses to ask for the conquered land as their possession. The meaning of the next clause, of which very different explanations have been given, can only be, that Gad chose such a territory for its inheritance as became a leader of the tribes. מַחֲקֵק, he who determines, commands, organizes; hence both a commander and also a leader in war. It is in the latter sense that it occurs both here and in Judg. 5:14. חֵלֶקֶת מַחֲקֵק, the field, or territory of the leader, may either be the territory appointed or assigned by the lawgiver, or the territory falling to the lot of the leader. According to the former view, Moses would be the *mechokek*. But the thought, that Moses appointed or assigned him his inheritance, could be no reason why Gad should choose it for himself. Consequently חֵלֶקֶת מַחֲקֵק can only mean the possession which the *mechokek* chose for himself, as befitting him, or specially adapted for him. Consequently the *mechokek* was not Moses, but the tribe of Gad, which was so called because it unfolded such activity and bravery at the head of the tribes in connection with the conquest of the land, that it could be regarded as their leaders. This peculiar prominence on the part of the Gadites may be inferred from the fact, that they distinguished themselves above the Reubenites in the fortification of the conquered land (Num. 32:34ff.). סָפַן, from סָפַן, to cover, hide, preserve,

is a predicate, and construed as a noun, "a thing preserved."—On the other hand, the opinion has been very widely spread, from the time of *Onkelos* down to *Baumgarten* and *Ewald*, that this hemistich refers to Moses: "there is the portion of the lawgiver hidden," or "the field of the hidden leader," and that it contains an allusion to the fact that the grave of Moses was hidden in the inheritance of Gad. But this is not only at variance with the circumstance, that a prophetic allusion to the grave of Moses such as *Baumgarten* assumes is apparently inconceivable, from the simple fact that we cannot imagine the Gadites to have foreseen the situation of Moses' grave at the time when they selected their territory, but also with the fact that, according to Josh. 13:20, the spot where this grave was situated (Deuteronomy 34:5) was not allotted to the tribe of Gad, but to that of Reuben; and lastly, with the use of the word *chelhkah*, which does not signify a burial-ground or grave.—But although Gad chose out an inheritance for himself, he still went before his brethren, i.e., along with the rest of the tribes, into Canaan, to perform in connection with them, what the Lord demanded of His people as a right. This is the meaning of the second half of the verse. The clause, "he came to the heads of the people," does not refer to the fact that the Gadites came to Moses and the heads of the congregation, to ask for the conquered land as a possession (Num. 32:2), but expressed the thought that Gad joined the heads of the people to go at the head of the tribes of Israel (comp. Josh. 1:14; 4:12, with Num. 32:17, 21, 32), to conquer Canaan with the whole nation, and root out the Canaanites. The Gadites had promised this to Moses and the heads of the people; and this promise Moses regarded as an accomplished act, and praised in these words with prophetic foresight as having been already performed, and that not merely as one single manifestation of their obedience towards the word of the Lord, but rather as a pledge that Gad would always manifest the same disposition. "To do the righteousness of Jehovah," i.e., to do what Jehovah requires of His people as righteousness,—namely, to fulfil

DEUTERONOMY	Page 152
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the commandments of God, in which the righteousness of Israel was to consist (Deuteronomy 6:25). יִצְחָק, imperfect Kal for יִצְחָק or יִצְחָק; see *Ges.* § 76, 2, c., and *Ewald*, § 142, c. “*With Israel:*” in fellowship with (the rest of) Israel.

**Deuteronomy 33:22.** Dan is “*a young lion which springs out of Bashan.*” Whilst Jacob compared him to a serpent by the way, which suddenly bites a horse’s feet, so that its rider falls backward, Moses gives greater prominence to the strength which Dan would display in conflict with foes, by calling him a young lion which suddenly springs out of its ambush. The reference to Bashan has nothing to do with the expedition of the Danites against Laish, in the valley of Rehoboth (Judg. 18:28), as this valley did not belong to Bashan. It is to be explained from the simple fact, that in the regions of eastern Bashan, which abound with caves, and more especially in the woody western slopes of Jebel Hauran, many lions harboured, which rushed forth from the thicket, and were very dangerous enemies to the herds of Bashan. Even if no other express testimonies to this fact are to be found it may be inferred from the description given of the eastern spurs of Antilibanus in the Song of Sol. (Deuteronomy 4:8), as the abodes of lions and leopards. The meaning leap forth, spring out, is confirmed by both the context and dialects, though the word only occurs here.

**Deuteronomy 33:23.** Naphtali.—“*O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of Jehovah; of sea and south shall he take possession.*” If the gracefulness of Naphtali is set forth in the blessing of Jacob, by comparing it to a gazelle, here Moses assures the same tribe of satisfaction with the favour and blessing of God, and promises it the possession of the sea and of the south, i.e., an inheritance which should combine the advantages of the sea—a healthy sea-breeze—with the grateful warmth of the south. This blessing is expressed in far too general terms for it to be possible to interpret it historically, as relating to the natural characteristics of the inheritance of the

Naphtalites in Canaan, or to regard it as based upon them, apart altogether from the fact, that the territory of Naphtali was situated in the north-east of Canaan, and reached as far as the sea of Galilee, and that it was for the most part mountainous, though it was a very fertile hill-country (Josh. 18:32–39). יִרְשָׁה is a very unique form of the imperative, though this does not warrant an alteration of the text.

**Deuteronomy 33:24, 25.** Asher.—“*Blessed before the sons be Asher; let him be the favoured among his brethren, and dipping his foot in oil. Iron and brass be thy castle; and as the days of thy life let thy rest continue.*” Asher, the prosperous (see at Gen. 30:15), was justly to bear the name. He was to be a child of prosperity; blessed with earthly good, he was to enjoy rest all his life long in strong fortresses. It is evident enough that this blessing is simply an exposition of the name *Asher*, and that Moses here promises the tribe a verification of the omen contained in its name. מְבֹרָךְ מִבְּנֵי does not mean “blessed with children,” or “praised because of his children,” in which case we should have בְּנָיָו; but “blessed before the sons” (cf. Judg. 5:24), i.e., blessed before the sons of Jacob, who were peculiarly blessed, equivalent to the most blessed of all the sons of Israel. רְצֹוֹי

אֶחָדֹו does not mean the beloved among his brethren, acceptable to his brethren, but the one who enjoyed the favour of the Lord, i.e., the one peculiarly favoured by the Lord. Dipping the foot in oil points to a land flowing with oil (Job 29:6), i.e., fat or fertile throughout, which Jacob had already promised to Asher (see Gen. 49:20). To complete the prosperity, however, security and rest were required for the enjoyment of the blessings bestowed by God; and these are promised in v. 25. מְנַעֲלָ (ἄπ. λεγ.) does not mean a shoe, but is derived from נָעַל, to bolt (Judg. 3:23), and signifies either a bolt, or that which is shut fast; a poetical expression for a castle or fortress. Asher’s dwellings were to be castles, fortresses of iron and brass; i.e., as strong and impregnable as if they were built of



DEUTERONOMY	Page 153
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

iron and brass. The pursuit of mining is not to be thought of as referred to here, even though the territory of Asher, which reached to Lebanon, may have contained brass and iron (see at Deuteronomy 8:9). *Luther* follows the LXX and Vulgate, and renders this clause, “iron and brass be upon his shoes;” but this is undoubtedly wrong, as the custom of fastening the shoes or sandals with brass or iron was quite unknown to the Israelites; and even Goliath, who was clothed in brass from head to foot, and wore iron greaves, had no iron sandals, though the military shoes of the ancient Romans had nails in the soles. Moreover, the context contains no reference to war, so as to suggest the idea that the treading down and cursing of the foe are intended. “As thy days,” i.e., as long as the days of thy life last, let thy rest be (continue). *Luther’s* rendering, “let thine old age be as thy youth,” which follows the *Vulgate*, cannot be sustained; for although אָדָם, derived from אָדָם, to vanish away, certainly might signify old age, the expression “thy days” cannot possibly be understood as signifying youth.

**Deuteronomy 33:26–29.** The conclusion of the blessing corresponds to the introduction. As Moses commenced with the glorious fact of the founding of the kingdom of Jehovah in Israel, as the firm foundation of the salvation of His people, so he also concludes with a reference to the Lord their eternal refuge, and with a congratulation of Israel which could find refuge in such a God.

**Deuteronomy 33:26, 27.** “*Who is as God, a righteous nation, who rides in heaven to thy help, and in His exaltation upon the clouds. Abiding is the God of olden time, and beneath are everlasting arms: and He drives the enemy before thee, and says, Destroy.*” The meaning is: No other nation has a God who rules in heaven with almighty power, and is a refuge and help to his people against every foe. *Jeshurun* is a vocative, and the alteration of אֱלֹהֵינוּ into אֱלֹהֵינוּ, “as the God of *Jeshurun*,” according to the ancient versions, is to be rejected on the simple ground that the expression “in thy help,” which follows

immediately afterwards, is an address to Israel. Riding upon the heaven and the clouds is a figure used to denote the unlimited omnipotence with which God rules the world out of heaven, and is the helper of His people. “In thy help,” i.e., as thy helper. This God is a dwelling to His people. מְעֻנָּה, like the masculine מְעֻנָּה in Ps. 90:1, and 91:9, signifies “dwelling,” — a genuine Mosaic figure, to which, in all probability, the houseless wandering of the people in the desert, which made them feel the full worth of a dwelling, first gave rise. The figure not only implies that God grants protection and a refuge to His people in the storms of life (Ps. 91:1, 2, cf. Isa. 4:6), but also that He supplies His people with everything that can afford a safe abode. “The God of old,” i.e., who has proved Himself to be God from the very beginning of the world (vid., Ps. 90:1; Hab. 1:12). The expression “underneath” is to be explained from the antithesis to the heaven where God is enthroned above mankind. He who is enthroned in heaven above is also the God who is with His people upon the earth below, and holds and bars them in His arms. “Everlasting arms” are arms whose strength is never exhausted. There is no need to supply “thee” after “underneath;” the expression should rather be left in its general form, “upon the earth beneath.” The reference to Israel is obvious from the context. The driving of the enemy before Israel is not to be restricted to the rooting out of the Canaanites, but applies to every enemy of the congregation of the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 33:28.** “*And Israel dwells safely, alone the fountain of Jacob, in a land full of corn and wine; his heavens also drop down dew.*” Because the God of old was the dwelling and help of Israel, it dwelt safely and separate from the other nations, in a land abounding with corn and wine. “The fountain of Jacob” is parallel to “Israel;” “*alone* (separate) *dwells the fountain of Jacob.*” This title is given to Israel as having sprung from the patriarch Jacob, in whom it had its source. A similar expression occurs in Ps. 68:27. It completely destroys the symmetry of the clauses of the verse to connect

DEUTERONOMY	Page 154
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the words, as *Luther* does, with what follows, in the sense of “the eye of Jacob is directed upon a land.” The construction of שָׁכַן with אֶל, to dwell into a land, may be explained on the ground that the dwelling involves the idea of spreading out over the land. On the “land of corn,” etc., see Deuteronomy 8:7 and 8. הָאֵל is emphatic: yea his heaven, i.e., the heaven of this land drops down dew (vid., Gen. 27:28). Israel was to be congratulated upon this.

**Deuteronomy 33:29.** *“Hail to thee, O Israel! who is like thee, a people saved in the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who (is) the sword of thine eminence. Thine enemies will deny themselves to thee, and thou ridest upon their heights.”*

“Saved;” not merely delivered from danger and distress, but in general endowed with salvation (like Zech. 9:9; see also Isa. 45:17). The salvation of Israel rested in the Lord, as the ground out of which it grew, from which it descended, because the Lord was its help and shield, as He had already promised Abraham (Gen. 15:1), and “the sword of his eminence,” i.e., the sword which had fought for the eminence of Israel. But because the Lord was Israel’s shield and sword, or, so to speak, both an offensive and defensive weapon, his enemies denied themselves to him, i.e., feigned friendship, did not venture to appear openly as enemies (for the meaning “feign,” act the hypocrite, see Ps. 18:45; 81:16). But Israel would ride upon their heights, the high places of their land, i.e., would triumph over all its foes (see at Deuteronomy 32:13).

### Deuteronomy 34

Death and Burial of Moses.—Ch. 34.

**Deuteronomy 34:1–8.** After blessing the people, Moses ascended Mount Nebo, according to the command of God (Deuteronomy 32:48–51), and there the Lord showed him, in all its length and breadth, that promised land into which he was not to enter. From Nebo, a peak of Pisgah, which affords a very extensive prospect on all sides (see p. 799), he saw the land of Gilead, the land to the east of the Jordan as far as Dan, i.e., not Laish-Dan near the central

source of the Jordan (Judg. 18:27), which did not belong to Gilead, but a Dan in northern Peraea, which has not yet been discovered (see at Gen. 14:14); and the whole of the land on the west of the Jordan, Canaan proper, in all its different districts, namely, “*the whole of Naphtali*,” i.e., the later Galilee on the north, “*the land of Ephraim and Manasseh*” in the centre, and “*the whole of the land of Judah*,” the southern portion of Canaan, in all its breadth, “*to the hinder (Mediterranean) sea*” (see Deuteronomy 11:24); also “*the south land*” (*Negeb*: see at Num. 13:17), the southern land of steppe towards the Arabian desert, and “*the valley of the Jordan*” (see Gen. 13:10), i.e., the deep valley from Jericho the palm-city (so called from the palms which grew there, in the valley of the Jordan: Judg. 1:16; 3:43; 2 Chron. 28:15) “*to Zoar*” at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea (see at Gen. 19:22). This sight of every part of the land on the east and west was not an ecstatic vision, but a sight with the bodily eyes, whose natural power of vision was miraculously increased by God, to give Moses a glimpse at least of the glorious land which he was not to tread, and delight his eye with a view of the inheritance intended for his people.

**Deuteronomy 34:5, 6.** After this favour had been granted him, the aged servant of the Lord was to taste death as the ages of sin. There, i.e., upon Mount Nebo, he died, “*at the mouth*,” i.e., according to the commandment, “*of the Lord*” (not “by a kiss of the Lord,” as the Rabbins interpret it), in the land of Moab, not in Canaan (see at Num. 27:12–14). “*And He buried him in the land of Moab, over against Beth Peor.*” The subject in this sentence is Jehovah. Though the third person singular would allow of the verb being taken as impersonal (ἐθαψαν αὐτόν, LXX: they buried him), such a rendering is precluded by the statement which follows, “*no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.*” “The valley” where the Lord buried Moses was certainly not the Jordan valley, as in Deuteronomy 3:29, but most probably “the valley in the field of Moab, upon the top of Pisgah,” mentioned in Num. 21:20, near to Nebo (see p. 751); in any case, a valley on the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 155
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

mountain, not far from the top of Nebo.—The Israelites inferred what is related in vv. 1–6 respecting the end of Moses' life, from the promise of God in Deuteronomy 32:49, and Num. 27:12, 13, which was communicated to them by Moses himself (Deuteronomy 3:27), and from the fact that Moses went up Mount Nebo, from which he never returned. On his ascending the mountain, the eyes of the people would certainly follow him as far as they possibly could. It is also very possible that there were many parts of the Israelitish camp from which the top of Nebo was visible, so that the eyes of his people could not only accompany him thither, but could also see that when the Lord had shown him the promised land, He went down with him into the neighbouring valley, where Moses was taken for ever out of their sight. There is not a word in the text about God having brought the body of Moses down from the mountain and buried it in the valley. This "romantic idea" is invented by *Knobel*, for the purpose of throwing suspicion upon the historical truth of a fact which is offensive to him. The fact itself that the Lord buried His servant Moses, and no man knows of his sepulchre, is in perfect keeping with the relation in which Moses stood to the Lord while he was alive. Even if his sin at the water of strife rendered it necessary that he should suffer the punishment of death, as a memorable example of the terrible severity of the holy God against sin, even in the case of His faithful servant; yet after the justice of God had been satisfied by this punishment, he was to be distinguished in death before all the people, and glorified as the servant who had been found faithful in all the house of God, whom the Lord had known face to face (v. 10), and to whom He had spoken mouth to mouth (Num. 12:7, 8). The burial of Moses by the hand of Jehovah was not intended to conceal his grave, for the purpose of guarding against a superstitious and idolatrous reverence for his grave; for which the opinion held by the Israelites, that corpses and graves defiled, there was but little fear of this; but, as we may infer from the account of the transfiguration of Jesus, the intention was to

place him in the same category with Enoch and Elijah. As *Kurtz* observes, "The purpose of God was to prepare for him a condition, both of body and soul, resembling that of these two men of God. Men bury a corpse that it may pass into corruption. If Jehovah, therefore, would not suffer the body of Moses to be buried by men, it is but natural to seek for the reason in the fact that He did not intend to leave him to corruption, but, when burying it with His own hand, imparted a power to it which preserved it from corruption, and prepared the way for it to pass into the same form of existence to which Enoch and Elijah were taken, without either death or burial."—There can be no doubt that this truth lies at the foundation of the Jewish theologoumenon mentioned in the Epistle of Jude, concerning the contest between Michael the archangel and the devil for the body of Moses.

**Deuteronomy 34:7, 8.** Though he died at the age of one hundred and twenty (see at Deuteronomy 31:2), Moses' eyes had not become dim, and his freshness had not abated (חַיָּ אִפְּ. לֵעָ., connected with חַיָּ in Gen. 30:37, signifies freshness). Thus had the Lord preserved the full vital energy of His servant, even till the time of his death. The mourning of the people lasted thirty days, as in the case of Aaron (Num. 20:29).

**Deuteronomy 34:9–12.** Joshua now took Moses' place as the leader of the people, filled with the spirit of wisdom (practical wisdom, manifesting itself in action), because Moses had ordained him to his office by the laying on of hands (Num. 27:18). And the people obeyed him; but he was not like Moses. "*There arose no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,*" i.e., so far as the miracles and signs were concerned which Moses did, by virtue of his divine mission, upon Pharaoh, his servants, and his land, and the terrible acts which he performed before the eyes of Israel (vv. 11 and 12; vid., Deuteronomy 26:8, and 4:34). "*Whom Jehovah knew:*" not who knew Him, the Lord. "To know," like γινώσκειν in 1 Cor. 8:3, relates to the divine knowledge,

DEUTERONOMY	Page 156
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

which not only involves a careful observance (Deuteronomy 2:7), but is also a manifestation of Himself to man, a penetration of man with the spiritual power of God. Because he was thus known by the Lord, Moses was able to perform signs and wonders, and mighty, terrible acts, such as no other performed either before or after him. In this respect Joshua stood far below Moses, and no prophet arose in Israel like unto Moses.—This remark concerning Moses does not presuppose that a long series of prophets had already risen up since the time of Moses. When Joshua had defeated the Canaanites, and conquered their land with the powerful help of the Lord, which was still manifested in signs and wonders, and had divided it among the children of Israel, and when the tribes had settled down in their inheritance, so that the different portions of the land began to be called by the names of Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah, as is the case in v. 2; the conviction might already have become established in Israel, that no other prophet would arise like Moses, to whom the Lord had manifested Himself with such signs and wonders before the Egyptians and the eyes of Israel. The position occupied by Joshua in relation to this his predecessor, as the continuer of his work, would necessarily awaken and confirm this conviction, in connection with what the Lord had said as to the superiority of Moses to all the prophets (Num. 12:6ff.). Moses was the founder and mediator of the old covenant. As long as this covenant was to last, no prophet could arise in Israel like unto Moses. There is but One who is worthy of greater honour than Moses, namely, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, who is placed as the Son over all the house of God, in which Moses was found faithful as a servant (compare Heb. 3:2–6 with Num. 12:7), Jesus Christ, the founder and mediator of the new and everlasting covenant.

### Concluding Remarks on the Composition of the Pentateuch.

If we close our commentary with another survey of the entire work, viz., the five books of Moses, we may sum up the result of our

detailed exposition, so far as critical opinions respecting its origin are concerned, in these words: We have found the decision which we pronounced in our General Introduction, as to the internal unity and system of the whole *Thorah*, as well as its Mosaic origin, thoroughly confirmed. With the exception of the last chapters of the fifth book, which are distinctly shown to be an appendix to the Mosaic *Thorah*, added by a different hand, by the statement in Deuteronomy 31:24ff., that when the book of the law was finished Moses handed it over to the Levites to keep, there is nothing in the whole of the five books which Moses might not have written. There are no historical circumstances or events either mentioned or assumed, which occurred for the first time after Moses was dead. Neither the allusion to the place called Dan in Gen. 14:14 (cf. Deuteronomy 34:1); nor the remark in Gen. 36:1, that there were kings in the land of Edom before the children of Israel had a king over them; nor the statement that the monument which Jacob erected over Rachel's grave remained "to this day" (Gen. 35:20); nor even the assertion in Deuteronomy 3:14, that Jair called Bashan "Chavvoth Jair" after his own name, furnishes any definite and unmistakeable indication of a post-Mosaic time.<sup>39</sup> And the account in Ex. 16:35, that the Israelites ate the manna forty years, till they came to an inhabited land, "to the end," i.e., the extreme boundary, of the land of Canaan, could only be adduced by *Bleek* (*Einl.* p. 204) as an evident proof that "this could not have been written before the arrival of the Israelites in the land of Canaan," through a παρερμηνεία, or misinterpretation of the words, "into the land of their dwelling." For were not the Israelites on the border of the land when they were encamped in the steppes of Moab by the Jordan opposite to Jericho? Or are we to suppose that the kingdoms of Sihon and Og with their cities, which the Israelites had already conquered under Moses, were an uninhabited land? The passage mentioned last simply proves, that in the middle books of the Pentateuch we have not simple diaries before us containing the historical occurrences of the

DEUTERONOMY	Page 157
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

Mosaic times, but a work drawn up according to a definite plan, and written in the last year of Moses' life. This is apparent from the remarks about the shining face of Moses (Ex. 34:33–35), and the guidance of Israel in all its journeys by the pillar of cloud (Ex. 40:38, cf. Num. 10:34), as well as from the systematic arrangement and distribution of the materials according to certain well-defined and obvious points of view, as we have already endeavoured to show in the introductions to the different books, and in the exposition itself.

If, however, the composition of the whole *Thorah* by Moses is thus firmly established, in accordance with the statements in Deuteronomy 31:9 and 24, it by no means follows that Moses wrote the whole work from Gen. 1 to Deuteronomy 31 *uno tenore*, and in the closing days of his life. Even in this case it may have been written step by step; and not only Genesis, but the three middle books, may have been composed before the discourses in the fifth book, so that the whole work was simply finished and closed after the renewal of the covenant recorded in Deuteronomy 29 and 30. Again, such statements as that Moses wrote this law, and made an end of writing the words of this law in a book till they were finished (Deuteronomy 31:9 and 24), by no means require us to assume that Moses wrote it all with his own hand. The epistles which the Apostle Paul sent to the different churches were rarely written with his own hand, but were dictated to one of his assistants; yet their Pauline origin is not called in question in consequence. And so Moses may have employed some assistant, either a priest or scribe (*shoter*), in the composition of the book of the law, without its therefore failing to be his own work. Still less is the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch rendered doubtful by the fact that he availed himself of written documents from earlier times in writing the primeval history, and incorporated them to some extent in the book of Genesis without alteration; and that in the history of his own time, and when introducing the laws into his work, he inserted documents in the middle books which had been

prepared by the priests and *shoterim* at his own command,—such, for example, as the lists of the numbering of the people (Num. 1–3 and 26), the account of the dedicatory offerings of the tribe-princes (Num. 7), and of the committee of heads of tribes appointed for the purpose of dividing the land of Canaan (Num. 34:16ff.),—in the exact form in which they had been drawn up for public use. This conjecture is rendered very natural by the contents and form of the Pentateuch.

The Pentateuch contains historical narrative and law, answering to the character of the divine revelation, which consisted in historical facts, and received a development in accordance with the times. And on closer inspection we find that several different elements may be distinguished in each of these. The historical contents are divisible into an annalistic or monumental portion, and into prophetic-historical accounts. The former includes the simple notices of the most important events from the creation of the world to the death of Moses, with their exact chronological, ethnographical, and geographical data; also the numerous genealogical documents introduced into the history. To the latter belong statements, whether shorter or longer, respecting those revelations and promises of God, by which the Creator of the heaven and the earth prepared the way from the very earliest time for the redemption of the fallen human race, and which, after laying the foundation for the Old Testament kingdom of God by the guidance of the patriarchs and the redemption of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, He eventually carried out at Sinai by the conclusion of a covenant and the giving of a law. In the same way, we may distinguish a twofold element in the legal portion of the Pentateuch. The kernel of the Sinaitic legislation is to be found in the decalogue, with the moral and rightful conditions upon the basis of which the Lord concluded the covenant with Israel. The religious and moral truths and commandments, which, as being the absolute demands of the holiness and justice, the love and mercy of God, constitute the very essence of true religion, are

DEUTERONOMY	Page 158
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

surrounded in the covenant economy of the Old Testament by certain religious statutes and institutions, which were imposed upon the people of God simply for the time of its infancy, and constituted that “shadow of things to come” which was to pass away when the “body” appeared. This “shadow” embraces all the special theocratic ordinances and precepts of the so-called Levitical law (whether ecclesiastical, disciplinary, or magisterial), in which religious and ethical ideas were symbolically incorporated; so that they contained within them eternal truths, whilst their earthly form was to pass away. These covenant statutes are so intimately bound up with the general religious doctrines and the purely moral commands, by virtue of their symbolical significance, that in many respects they interlace one another, the moral commands being enclosed and pervaded by the covenant statutes, and the latter again being sanctified and transformed by the former, so that the entire law assumes the form of a complete organic whole. A similar organic connection is also apparent between the historical and legal constituents of the Pentateuch. The historical narrative not only supplied the framework or outward setting for the covenant legislation, but it also prepared the way for that legislation, just as God Himself prepared the way for concluding the covenant with Israel by His guidance of the human race and the patriarchs of Israel; and it so pervades every portion of it also, that, on the one hand, the historical circumstances form the groundwork for the legal institutions, and on the other hand a light is thrown by the historical occurrences upon the covenant ordinances and laws. Just as nature and spirit interpenetrate each other in the world around us and in human life, and the spirit not only comes to view in the life of nature, but transforms it at the same time; so has God planted His kingdom of grace in the natural order of the world, that nature may be sanctified by grace. But, notwithstanding this organic connection between the various constituents of the Pentateuch, from the very

nature of the case not only are the historical and legal portions kept quite distinct from one another in many passages, but the distinctions between these two constituents are here and there brought very clearly out to view.

The material differences necessarily determined in various ways the form of the narrative, the phraseology, and even the words employed. In the historical portions many words and expressions occur which are never met with in the legal sections, and *vice versa*. The same remark also applies to the different portions in which we have either historical narrative, or the promulgation of laws. In addition to this, we might reasonably expect to find whole sections also, in which the ideas and verbal peculiarities of the different constituents are combined. And this is really the case. The differences stand out very sharply in the earliest chapters of Genesis, where the account of paradise and the fall, together with the promise of the victory of the seed of the woman over the serpent, which contains the germ of all future revelations of God (Gen. 2:4ff.), is appended immediately to the history of the creation of the world (Deuteronomy 1:1–2:3); whilst in the mode of narration it differs considerably from the style of the first chapter. Whereas in Deuteronomy 1 the Creator of the heaven and the earth is called *Elohim* simply; in the history of paradise and the fall, not to mention other differences, we meet with the composite name *Jehovah Elohim*; and, after this, the two names *Elohim* and *Jehovah* are used interchangeably, so that in many chapters the former only occurs, and in others again only the latter, until the statement in Ex. 6, that God appeared to Moses and commissioned him to bring the people of Israel out of Egypt, after which the name *Jehovah* predominates, so that henceforth, with but few exceptions, *Elohim* is only used in an appellative sense.

Upon this interchange in the names of God in the book of Genesis, modern critics have built up their hypothesis as to the composition of Genesis, and in fact of the entire Pentateuch, either from different documents, or from

DEUTERONOMY	Page 159
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

repeated supplementary additions, in accordance with which they discover an outward cause for the change of names, viz., the variety of editors, instead of deducing it from the different meanings of the names themselves; whilst they also adduce, in support of their view, the fact that certain ideas and expressions change in connection with the name of God. The fact is obvious enough. But the change in the use of the different names of God is associated with the gradual development of the saving purposes of God; and as we have already shown on pp. 45ff., the names *Elohim* and *Jehovah* are expressive of different relations on the part of God to the world. Now, as God did not reveal Himself in the full significance of His name *Jehovah* till the time of the exodus of Israel out of Egypt, and the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, we could expect nothing else than what we actually find in Genesis, namely, that this name is not used by the author of the book of Genesis before the call of Abraham, except in connection with such facts as were directly preparatory to the call of Abraham to be the father of the covenant nation; and that even in the history of the patriarchs, in which it predominates from Gen. 12–16, it is used less frequently again after *Jehovah* revealed Himself to Abraham as *El Shaddai*, and other titles of God sprang out of the continued manifestations of God to the patriarchs, which could take the place of that name. (For more detailed remarks, see pp. 213ff.). It would not have been by any means strange, therefore, if the name *Jehovah* had not occurred at all in the account of the creation of the world, in the genealogies of the patriarchs of the primeval and preparatory age (Gen. 5 and 11), in the table of nations (Gen. 10), in the account of the negotiations of Abraham with the Hittites concerning the purchase of the cave of Machpelah for a family sepulchre (Gen. 23), in the notices respecting Esau and the Edomitish tribe-princes and kings (Gen. 36), and other narratives of similar import. Nevertheless we find it in the genealogy in Gen. 5:29, and in the table of nations in Gen. 10:9, where the critics, in order to save their

hypothesis, are obliged to have recourse to an assumption of glosses, or editorial revisions. They have dealt still more violently with Gen. 17:1. There *Jehovah* appears to Abram, and manifests Himself to him as *El Shaddai*, from which it is very evident that the name *El Shaddai* simply expresses one particular feature in the manifestation of *Jehovah*, and describes a preliminary stage, anticipatory of the full development of the nature of the absolute God, as expressed in the name *Jehovah*. This is put beyond all doubt by the declaration of God to Moses in Ex. 6:3, "I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as *El Shaddai*, and by My name *Jehovah* was I not known to them." Even *Astruc* observes, with reference to these words, "The passage in exodus, when properly understood, does not prove that the name of *Jehovah* was a name of God unknown to the patriarchs, and revealed for the first time to Moses; it simply proves that God had not shown the patriarchs the full extent of the meaning of this name, as He had made it known to Moses." The modern critics, on the other hand, have erased *Jehovah* from the text in Gen. 17:1, and substituted *Elohim* in its place, and then declare *El Shaddai* synonymous with *Elohim*, whilst they have so perverted Ex. 6:3 as to make the name *Jehovah* utterly unknown to the patriarchs. By similar acts of violence they have mangled the text in very many other passages, for the purpose of carrying out the distinction between the *Elohim* and *Jehovah* documents; and yet for all that they cannot escape the admission, that there are certain portions or sections of the book of Genesis in which the separation is impossible. It is just the same with the supposed "favourite expressions" of the Elohistic and Jehovistic sections, as with the names of God. "There are certain favourite expressions, it is said, which are common to the Elohistic portions; and the same things are frequently called by different names in the Elohistic and Jehovistic sections. Among the Elohistic expressions are: אֶחָדָה (possession), אֶרֶץ מְגוּרִים (land of the stranger's sojourn), לְדִרְוֹתֵיכֶם, הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, לְמִינוֹ (the self-same day), *Padan-Aram* (the Jehovistic for this

DEUTERONOMY	Page 160
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

is always (?) *Aram-Naharaim*, or simply *Aram*),<sup>40</sup> פָּרָה וְרָבָה (the Jehovistic is בְּרִית); wherever the name Elohim occurs, these expressions also appear as its inseparable satellites." This statement is in part incorrect, and not in accordance with fact; and even where there is any foundation for it, it really proves nothing. In the first place, it is not correct that אֲרָץ מְגֻרִים and אֲחֻזָּה are only to be met with in Elohistic portions. In the very first passage in which we meet with this word in the Pentateuch (Gen. 17:8), it is not *Elohim*, but Jehovah, who appears as *El Shaddai*, and promises Abraham and his seed the land of his pilgrimage, the land of Canaan, לְאֻחֻזַּת עוֹלָם. This passage is clearly pointed to in Gen. 48:4. In addition to this, the word *achuzzah* occurs in Gen. 23:4, 9, 20; 49:30; 50:13, in connection with the family sepulchre which Abraham had acquired as a possession by purchase; also in the laws concerning the sale and redemption of landed property (Lev. 25 and 27 very frequently), and in those concerning the division of the land as a possession among the tribes and families of Israel (Num. 27:7; 32:5ff., 35:2, 8); also in Lev. 25:34 and Gen. 36:43, — in both passages with reference to property or a fixed landed possession, for which there was no other word in the Hebrew language that could be used in these passages; not to mention the fact, that *Stähelin*, *Knobel*, and others, pronounce Num. 32:32 a Jehovistic passage. So again the expressions בְּרִית הַקִּים (to set up a covenant) and לְדֹרֹתָם (in their generations) occur in Gen. 17:7 in a Jehovistic framework; for it was not *Elohim*, but Jehovah, who appeared to Abram (see v. 1), to set up (not conclude) His covenant with him and his posterity as an everlasting covenant, according to their generations. To set up (i.e., realize, carry out) a covenant, and to conclude a covenant, are certainly two distinct ideas. In Gen. 47:27, again, and Lev. 26:9, we meet with פָּרָה וְרָבָה in two sections, which are pronounced Jehovistic. The other three, no

doubt, occur in Genesis in connection with *Elohim*; but the expression, "in the self-same day," could not be expected in Jehovistic sections, for the simple reason, that the time of the revelations and promises of God is not generally reckoned by day and hour. "After his kind" is only met with in four sections in the whole of the Pentateuch,—in the accounts of the creation and that of the flood (Gen. 1 and 6–7), and in the laws concerning clean and unclean beasts (Lev. 11 and Deuteronomy 14), where it is simply the species of animals that are referred to. Can this word then be called a favourite Elohistic expression, which constantly appears like an inseparable satellite, wherever the name *Elohim* occurs? The same remarks apply to other words and phrases described as Elohistic: e.g., *tholedoth* (which stands at the head of a Jehovistic account, however, in Gen. 2:4), "father's house," "in their families" (*Mishpachoth*), and many others. But just as such expressions as these are not to be expected in the prophetic-historical sections, for the simple reason that the ideas which they express belong to a totally different sphere, so, on the other hand, a considerable number of notions and words, which are associated with the visible manifestations of God, the promises to the patriarchs, their worship, etc., are found in the book of Genesis always in connection with the name *Jehovah*: see, for example, קָרָא, רִיחַ הַנֶּחֱחַ, הַעֲלָה עֹלָה (עֹלֹת), בִּשְׁם יְהוָה, and others of the same kind. And yet the last two occur in the laws of the middle books, which the critics attribute to the Elohist much more frequently than many of the so-called Elohistic expressions and formulas of the book of Genesis. This fact clearly shows, that there are no such things as favourite expressions of the Elohist and Jehovist, but that the words are always adapted to the subject. In the covenant statutes of the middle books, we find Elohistic and Jehovistic expressions combined, because the economy of the Sinaitic covenant was anticipated on the one hand by the patriarchal revelations of Jehovah the covenant God, and established on the other hand upon the natural foundations of



DEUTERONOMY	Page 161
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the Israelitish commonwealth. The covenant which Jehovah concluded with the people of Israel at Sinai (Ex. 24) was simply the setting up and full realization of the covenant which He made with Abram (Gen. 15), and had already begun to set up with him by the promise of a son, and the institution of circumcision as the covenant sign (Gen. 17). The indispensable condition of membership in the covenant was circumcision, which Jehovah commanded to Abraham when He made Himself known to him as *El Shaddai* (Gen. 17), and in connection with which we meet for the first time with the legal formulas, "a statute for ever," "in your generations," and "that soul shall be cut off," which recur so constantly in the covenant statutes of the middle books, but so arranged, that the expression "a statute for ever" is never used in connection with general religious precepts or purely moral commandments, the eternal significance of which did not need to be enjoined, since it naturally followed from the unchangeable holiness and justice of the eternal God whilst this could not be assumed without further ground of the statutory laws and ordinances of the covenant. But these covenant ordinances also had their roots in the natural order of the world and of the national life. The nation of Israel which sprang from the twelve sons of Israel by natural generation, received its division into tribes, and the constitution founded upon this, as a covenant nation and congregation of Jehovah. The numbering of the people was taken in tribes, according to the families and fathers' houses of the different tribes; and the land of Canaan, which was promised them for an inheritance, was to be divided among the tribes, with special reference to the number and magnitude of their families. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that in the laws and statements concerning these things, words and formularies should be repeated which already occur in the book of Genesis in connection with the genealogical notices.

Modern critics, as is well known, regard the whole of the Sinaitic legislation, from Ex. 25 to Num. 10:28, as an essential part of the original

work, with the exception of Ex. 20–23, Lev. 17–20 and 26, and a few verses in Lev. 10, 23, 24, 25, and Num. 4 and 8. Now, as a great variety of things are noticed in this law—such as the building and setting up of the tabernacle, the description of the priests' clothes, the order of sacrifice—which are not mentioned again in the other parts of the Pentateuch, it was very easy for *Knobel* to fill several pages with expressions from the original Elohist work, which are neither to be found in the Jehovistic historical narratives, nor in the general commands of a religious and moral character, by simply collecting together all the names of these particular things. But what does such a collection prove? Nothing further than that the contents of the Pentateuch are very varied, and the same things are not repeated throughout. Could we expect to find beams, pillars, coverings, tapestries, and the vessels of the sanctuary, or priests' dresses and sacrificial objects, mentioned in the ten commandments, or among the rights of Israel (Ex. 20–23), or in the laws of marriage and chastity and the moral commandments (Lev. 17–20)? With the exception of the absence of certain expressions and formulas, which are of frequent occurrence in the covenant statutes, the critics are unable to adduce any other ground for excluding the general religious and moral commandments from the legislation of the so-called original work, than the *a priori* axiom, "The Elohist had respect simply to the theocratic law; and such laws as are introduced in Ex. 21–23, in connection with moral and civil life, lay altogether outside his plan." These are assertions, not proofs. The use of words in the Pentateuch could only furnish conclusive evidence that it had been composed by various authors, if the assertion were a well founded one, that different expressions are employed for the same things in different parts of the work. But all that has hitherto been adduced in proof of this amounts to nothing more than a few words, chiefly in the early chapters of Genesis; whilst it is assumed at the same time that Gen. 2:4ff. contains a second account of the creation, whereas it simply gives a description

DEUTERONOMY	Page 162
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

of paradise, and a more minute account of the creation of man than is to be found in Gen. 1, the difference in point of view requiring different words.

To this we have to add the fact, that by no means a small number of sections exhibit, so far as the language is concerned, the peculiarities of the two original documents or main sources, and render a division utterly impossible. The critics have therefore found themselves compelled to assume that there was a third or even a fourth source, to which they refer whatever cannot be assigned to the other two. This assumption is a pure offshoot of critical difficulty, whilst the fact itself is a proof that the Pentateuch is founded upon unity of language, and that the differences which occur here and there arise for the most part from the variety and diversity of the actual contents; whilst in a very few instances they may be attributable to the fact that Moses availed himself of existing writings in the composition of the book of Genesis, and in the middle books inserted public documents without alteration in his historical account.

The other proofs adduced, for the purpose of supporting the evidence from language, viz., the frequent *repetitions* of the same thing and the actual *discrepancies*, are even weaker still. No doubt the Pentateuch abounds in repetitions. The longest and most important is the description of the tabernacle, where we have, first of all, the command to prepare this sanctuary given in Ex. 25–31, with a detailed description of all the different parts, and all the articles of furniture, as well as of the priests' clothing and the consecration of the priests and the altar; and then again, in Ex. 35–39 and Lev. 8, a detailed account of the fulfilment of these instructions in almost the same words. The holy candlestick is mentioned five times (Ex. 25:31–40; 27:20, 21; 30:7, 8, Lev. 24:1–4, and Num. 8:1–4); the command not to eat blood occurs as many as eight times (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26, 27; 17:10–14; Deuteronomy 12:16, 23, 24, and 15:23), and on the first three occasions, at all events, in passages belonging to the so-called

original work. Now, if these repetitions have not been regarded by any of the critics, with the exception of *J. Popper*, as furnishing proofs of difference of authorship, what right can we have to adduce other repetitions of a similar kind as possessing any such significance?—But lastly, the critics have involved *themselves* in almost incomprehensible contradictions, through the supposed contradictions in the Pentateuch. Some of them, e.g., *Stähelin* and *Bertheau*, think these discrepancies only apparent, or at least as of such a character that the last editor saw no discrepancies in them, otherwise he would have expunged them. Others, such as *Knobel* and *Hupfeld*, place them in the foreground, as the main proofs of a plurality of authors; whilst *Hupfeld* especially, by a truly inquisitorial process, has made even the smallest differences into irreconcilable contradictions. Yet, for all that, he maintains that the Pentateuch, in its present form, is a work characterized by unity, arranged and carried out according to a definite plan, in which the different portions are so arranged and connected together, “with an intelligent regard to connection and unity or plan,” yea, “dovetailed together in so harmonious a way, that they have the deceptive appearance of a united whole” (*Hupfeld, die Quellen der Genes.* p. 196). In working up the different sources, the editor, it is said, “did not hesitate to make systematic corrections of the one to bring it into harmony with the other,” as, for example, in the names Abram and Sarai, which he copied from the original document into the Jehovistic portions before Gen. 17, because “he would not allow of any discrepancy between his sources in these points, and in fact could not have allowed it without a manifest contradiction, and the consequent confusion of his readers” (p. 198). How then does it square with so intelligent a procedure, to assume that there are irreconcilable contradictions in the work? An editor who worked with so much intelligence and reflection would never have left actual contradictions standing; and modern critics have been able to discover them simply because they judge the biblical writings

DEUTERONOMY	Page 163
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

according to modern notions, and start in their operations from a fundamental opinion which is directly at variance with the revelation of the Bible.

The strength of the opposition to the unity and Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch arises much less from the peculiarities of form, which the critics have placed in the foreground, than from the offence which they take at the contents of the books of Moses, which are irreconcilable with the naturalism of the modern views of the world. To the leaders of modern criticism, not only is the spuriousness, or post-Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, an established fact, but the gradual rise of the Mosaic laws in connection with the natural development of the Hebrew people, without any direct or supernatural interposition on the part of God, is also firmly established *a priori* on dogmatical grounds. This is openly expressed by *De Wette* in the three first editions of his Introduction, in which he opens the critical inquiry concerning the Pentateuch with this observation (§ 145): "Many occurrences are opposed to the laws of nature, and presuppose a direct interposition on the part of God;" and then proceeds to say, that "if to an educated mind it is a *decided* fact that such miracles have never really occurred, the question arises whether, perhaps, they may have *appeared* to do so to the eye-witnesses and persons immediately concerned; but to this also we must give a negative reply. And *thus* we are brought to the conclusion that the narrative is not contemporaneous, or derived from contemporaneous sources." *Ewald* has expressed his naturalistic views, which acknowledge no supernatural revelation from God, in his "History of the People of Israel," and developed the gradual formation of the Pentateuch from the principles involved in these fundamental views. But just as *De Wette* expressed this candid confession in a much more cautious and disguised manner in the later editions of his Introduction, so have his successors endeavoured more and more to conceal the naturalistic background of their critical operations, and restricted themselves to

arguments, the weakness and worthlessness of which they themselves admit in connection with critical questions which do not affect their naturalistic views. So long as biblical criticism is fettered by naturalism, it will never rise to a recognition of the genuineness and internal unity of the Pentateuch. For if the miraculous acts of the living God recorded in it are not true, and did not actually occur, the account of them cannot have come down from eye-witnesses, but can only be myths, which grew up in the popular belief long after the events referred to. And if there is no prophetic foresight of the future produced by the Spirit of God, Moses cannot have foretold the rejection of Israel and their dispersion among the heathen even before their entrance into Canaan, whereas they did not take place till many centuries afterwards.

If, on the other hand, the reality of the supernatural revelations of God, together with miracles and prophecies, be admitted, not only are the contents of the Pentateuch in harmony with its Mosaic authorship, but even its formal arrangement can be understood and scientifically vindicated, provided only we suppose the work to have originated in the following manner. After the exodus of the tribes of Israel from Egypt, and their adoption as the people of Jehovah through the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, when Moses had been commanded by God to write down the covenant rights (Ex. 24:4, and 34:27), and then formed the resolution not only to ensure the laws which the Lord had given to the people through his mediation against alteration and distortion, and hand them down to futurity by committing them to writing, but to write down all the great and glorious things that the Lord had done for His people, for the instruction of his own and succeeding generations, and set himself to carry out this resolution; he collected together the traditions of the olden time, which had been handed down in Israel from the days of the patriarchs, partly orally, and partly in writings and records, for the purpose of combining them into a preliminary history of the kingdom of God, which was founded by the conclusion of

DEUTERONOMY	Page 164
By C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch	a Grace Notes study

the covenant at Sinai. Accordingly, in all probability during the stay at Sinai, in the five or six months which were occupied in building the tabernacle, he wrote not only the book of Genesis, but the history of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and the march to Sinai (Ex. 19), to which the decalogue, with the book of the covenant (Ex. 20–23), is attached, according to that plan of the kingdom of God which had then been fully revealed, or, in other words, from a theocratic point of view. As he had written the covenant rights in a book by the command of God, as a preliminary to the conclusion of the covenant itself (Ex. 24:4), there can be no doubt whatever that he did not merely publish to the people by word of mouth the very elaborate revelation and directions of God concerning the construction of the tabernacle and the apparatus of worship, which he had received upon the mountain (Ex. 25–31), as well as all the rest of the laws, but either committed them to writing himself directly after he had received them from the Lord, or had them written out by one of his assistants, and collected together for the purpose of forming them eventually into a complete work. We may make the same assumption with reference to the most important events which occurred during the forty years' journey through the desert, so that, on the arrival of the camp in the steppes of Moab, the whole of the historical and legal materials for the three middle books of the Pentateuch were already collected together, and all that remained to be

done was to form them into a united whole, and give them a final revision. The collection, arrangement, and final working up of these materials would be accomplished in a very short time, since Moses had, at all events, the priests and *shoterim* by his side.—All this had probably taken place before the last addresses of Moses, which compose the book of Deuteronomy, so that nothing further remained to be done but to write down these addresses, and append them as a fifth book to the four already in existence. With this the writing of “all the words of this book of the law” was finished, so that the whole book of the law could be handed over in a complete state to the priests, to be properly taken care of by them (Deuteronomy 31:24ff.).

A copy of the song of Moses was added to this written work, in all probability immediately after it had been deposited by the side of the ark of the covenant; and, after his death, the blessing pronounced upon the tribes before his departure was also committed to writing. Finally, after the conquest of Canaan, possibly on the renewal of the covenant under Joshua, an account of the death of Moses was added to these last two testimonies of the man of God, and adopted along with them, in the form of an appendix, into his book of the law.