



REVIEW ARTICLE

A Call to Commitment

- Gijo John MSFS

JNANADEEPA
P-ISSN 0972-3331
23/1 Jan-June 2019: 151-154

The Book titled *A Call to Commitment: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Deut 10,12-11,32* published by Echter Verlag under Forschung Zur Bibel series is an exegetical and theological work by Thomas Karimundackal. It is resourceful, ingenious and a work of great proficiency by the author. He has perceptively tried to prove that Dt 10, 12-11, 32 could be considered as a summary of the preceding sections (Dt 1, 1-10, 11) and a link to the succeeding sections (12, 1-34, 12) of Deuteronomy. Further it could be taken as a hermeneutical key to understand and to interpret the theology of Deuteronomy. To prove this scientifically, the author has employed mostly a synchronic method to arrive at a coherent theological interpretation, to point out the theological significance, to trace the possible connections of the text within the compositional frame of Deuteronomy and to the rest of the Old Testament. Consequently, it draws out its contextual meaning and significance for the World of today.

In chapter one, the author has made considerable efforts to prove that the text (Dt. 10, 12-11, 32) is an independent literary unit and it is positioned intentionally within the larger literary block of Deuteronomy with a theological purpose. Secondly, he has defined the text as precisely as possible with a view to its literary investigation and interpretation. In doing this the author has focused on a threefold examination, namely the delimitation of the text, the context, and its translation with text-critical observations and evaluations. He affirms that, basing on the contextual and text-

linguistic grounds, Dt. 10, 12 points to the beginning of the Fifth parenthesis and Dt, 11, 32 marks the end of the fifth parenthesis (pgs. 18-24). Examining closely on the linguistic pattern, vocabulary and rhetorical development of the text (10, 12-11, 32), it has been proved that this unit is internally coherent (pgs. 25-27). Considering the different literary characteristics, time, place and theme, it has been evidenced that the pericope (10, 12-11, 32) is an independent literary unit distinguishing itself from the preceding and following units (pgs. 27-42). Analyzing the preceding and following pericopes, certain connections and commonalities have been identified. He has proved that Dt. 10, 12-11, 32 has been deliberately positioned at the middle of Deuteronomy to focus on Israel's single devotion to the Lord (pg. 43). He has translated the text literally and has compared the textual witness namely, the Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint and the Qumran Manuscripts in order to bring out the adequacy to the MT as a basis for the Exegesis (pgs. 44-67).

In the second chapter, the author has attempted logically to examine the literary division of the text and its inner dynamisms and has highlighted the movement of the text, shifting back and forth a number of times from the present (Moab) to past events (Egypt, Sea of Reeds, Wilderness) with their challenges for the future (promised land) and there to choose Mount Garizim (Blessing) or Mount Ebal (Curse). He specifically identifies a structural division of the text with regard to space, time, persons, communication and vocabulary (pgs. 69-75). He derives a fivefold section from the viewpoint of verbal patterns and linguistic features namely, 10, 12-22; 11, 1-7; 8-17; 18-25; 26- 32 (Pg. 77). He focuses a little more upon the sub sections in order to derive further structural features embedded within the text verses (pgs.77-87). He arrives at a perfect structural outline of Dt. 10, 12-11, 32 taking into consideration the above-mentioned methods (Pgs. 87-88). He recognizes the inner dynamisms and movements of the text, such as, the Beginning and the End, the Temporal movement, the Spacial movement, the Thematic movement and the Repetition and Intensification from beginning to end of the unit which will ultimately help us to realize the various changes within the text. (pgs.88-98).

In the third chapter, to arrive at a meaningful exegetical dialogue with the text, the author has analyzed each verse and has interpreted them, considering the literary characteristics, grammar, syntax, semantics, key words, phrases and clauses as well as the author's personal observations, perceptions, choices, inter-textual comparisons to precisely bring out the exegetical and theological significance of Deuteronomy. So, in Dt 10, 12-22, the author has discovered a well-developed rhetorical whole with a series of infinitive constructs which serve as a comprehensive theme for the entire section (pgs. 100-150). In Dt 11, 1-7, he has highlighted the role of Moses in exhorting the Israelites with a fresh appeal for a wholehearted commitment to the Lord (pgs.151-180). In Dt 11, 8-17, he accentuates the mighty deeds of Yhwh, namely his benevolence in guiding Israel to the promised land. He also stresses the way Yhwh motivates the people to possess the land and to have an experience of his blessing (pgs. 181-222). In Dt 11, 18-21, he points to the exhortation to Israel to keep the commandment of the Lord in order to receive the blessing of long life in the land and Yhwh's constant assistance in the conquest and possession of the land (pgs. 223-240). In Dt 11, 22-25, he then emphasizes once again on the appeal to keep the commandment which is designed in the "if-then" rhetorical pattern (pgs. 241-251). In Dt 11, 26-32 he has highlighted the specific decision that the Israel has to make between blessing and curse by either obeying the commandment or by disobeying the commandment towards a Yhwh centered existence (pgs. 251-274).

The fourth chapter, concludes the study undertaken by the author with certain thought aggravating pastoral implications for our life. Firstly, with the help of a table, the author has systematically proved that Dt 10, 12-11, 32 is a summation of Dt 1, 1-10, 11 and also a link to Dt 12, 1-34, 12 by discovering certain common elements, vocabularies, recurrent motifs, instructive characters, blessing and curse motifs and unique expressions (pgs. 275-288). Secondly, the author has methodically exposed some of the portraits and roles of Yhwh which is found in the preceding and succeeding parts of the pericope so that we may comprehend the profound portrait of Yhwh in the present text (pgs.289-300). Thirdly, the author has minutely underscored the principles of

Yhwh's committed relationship with Israel and as response, Israel's requirements of a Yhwh centered existence in the land promised to them (pgs. 301-329). Fourthly, the author provides certain theological implications of this pericope with the help of a triangle indicating a close relationship between God, Israel and the Land, which ultimately moves towards a closer relationship between God, Humankind and the Earth (pgs.330-333).

To conclude, although this is an extensive work carried out by the author, there are certain areas that are just hinted at and are left unexplored by the author and secondly, there seems to be too much repetition of the biblical verses which makes it a bit monotonous. However, this work by the author can be considered as a masterwork in understanding the whole of Deuteronomy. It is indeed fascinating to see the methodology employed and also the number of Bibliography the author has used, emerging from various sources and different ancient languages. Finally, as per his intension of doing this research, he has proved that the fifth parenthesis i.e. Dt 10, 12-11, 32 is a summary of the preceding sections and a link to the succeeding sections of Deuteronomy and it could be taken as a hermeneutical key to understand and to interpret the theology of Deuteronomy and also has offered beautiful insights for our practical life.

Thomas Karimundackal SJ, *A Call to Commitment: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Deut 10,12-11,32* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag GmbH, FzB 185, 2017. Pp. 371, ISBN 978-3-429-04400-8)



Our Contributors

Dr. M. Paul Raj is a catholic priest of the diocese of Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu, India. He has a doctorate in Biblical Theology from the University of Innsbruck, Austria, with specialization in the Epistles of St Paul. He is at present a member of the Scripture Department at the Faculty of Theology, JDV, Pune and resides in the Papal Seminary and helps out in the formation of the seminarians. Email: maprmay22@gmail.com

Dr. Stephen Chundamthadam SJ a Jesuit from Kerala Province, Director, Samanvaya Centre for Indian Studies, Kanjirapally, Kerala. He is a former resident faculty at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. He teaches Indian Philosophy, Spirituality, World Religion, Yoga and Karate. Besides his Ph D in Advaita vedanta from Madras University, he has done his postdoctoral research in Katholic University of Louven, Belgium. He has Masters in Economics, Masters in Indian Philosophy, Yogacharya in yoga and Black Belt (3 Dan) in Karate. Email: sthadam@gmail.com

Dr. Arjen Tete SJ is a Jesuit from Calcutta Province. Currently, he is a lecturer of Theology at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. He has a Licentiate and Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University at Berkeley, USA. He has also an M.A. (Anthropology) from the University of Pune. Email: arjensj@gmail.com

Dr. Konrad J. Noronha SJ, PhD (USA), MS (USA), MTh (Delhi), BHMS (Pune), is the Director and Coordinator of the Pastoral Management Program at Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune,

India. He is spiritual director at De Nobili College, Pune, India. He can be contacted at kjnoronha2000@gmail.com.

Prof. Dr. S. Stephen Jayard, teaching at the Faculty of Philosophy, Jnan-Deepa Vidyapeeth, belongs to the diocese of Tiruchirapally, Tamil Nadu; has obtained PhD in Philosophy of Science; he has done the Postdoctoral research at Lonergan Research Institute, at Washington DC, Boston USA; and University of Toronto, Canada. His publications include *Towards a Theory of Rationality in Science – A Plea for Reasonableness* (2012), and *A Book that Cannot Be Titled* (2015). He has been a visiting faculty at Sogang University, Seoul, South Korea and International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Hyderabad. Email: sjayard@gmail.com

Prof Dr. Nishant Irudayadason is an expert in Epistemology, Metaphysics, Social and Political Philosophy and teaches at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. His doctorates are from Universite Paris-Est & Institut Catholique de Paris (France). Email: nishant@jdv.edu.in

Rev. Dr. J.C. Paul Rohan is Senior Lecturer / Head / Dept. of Christian and Islamic Civilizations, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. He has written numerous articles and attended national and international seminars. Email: rohanpaul66@hotmail.com

Rev. Dr. Thomas Karimundackal SJ is Professor of Old Testament at Faculty of Theology, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, since three years. He has completed Licentiate in Biblicum, Rome and PhD at the University of Innsbruck. He has been engaging in serious research in Sacred Scripture. His book *A Call to Commitment: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Deut 10,12-11,32* has been highly appreciated. Email: tomksj@gmail.com.

Prof Dr. Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ teaches Philosophy at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. His areas of specialisation: Science-Religion Dialogue, Philosophical Anthropology. Email: kuru@jdv.edu.in

Rev Dr. Victor Ferrao is the Dean of Philosophy at Rachol Seminary, God. He has specialized in science-religion dialogue and political philosophy. His book *Involving God in an Evolving World* has become a best seller. Email: victorferrao@yahoo.co.uk.

Rev Gijo John MSFS is a research scholar (Biblical studies) at Jnana-Deepa Vidya, peeth, Pune.