



# **A Chosen People Called Upon to Make a Total Commitment to YHWH:**

**The Portrait of 'Israel' in Deut 10,12-11,32**

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## **Abstract**

The final parenesis of Deuteronomy (Deut 10,12-11,32) invites the people of Israel to make a radical commitment to the Lord before they enter into the Promised Land. This commitment emerges from their unique identity as a 'chosen people' and their consequent distinctive relationship with the Lord. It articulates various principles required for a Yhwh-centred existence in the Promised Land. They are repeatedly called on to fear (אִירָא) him, love (בָּהָא) him, serve (דָּבַע) him, know (עָדִי) him, cling to (קָבַד) him and obey (עָמַשׁ/רָמַשׁ) him. The call for a total commitment and absolute allegiance to Yhwh in 10,12-11,32 is illustrated by Moses' successive appeals to Israel to keep the commandments of the Lord (cf. 10,12-13.16.20; 11,1.8.13.22.26-28.32). This appeal to make a total commitment to Yhwh is presented in covenantal language in the context of Yhwh's uniqueness, especially in his unique historical intervention in the life of Israel (cf. 10,14-15.17-18.21-22; 11,2-7.9-12.14-15.21.23-25.29-31).

## **Keywords**

Parenesis, chosen people, commitment, allegiance, to fear, to love, to serve, to know, to cling, to obey, to walk in his ways, commandments, statutes, covenant, 'with all your heart and with all your soul', justice and righteousness.

Deut 10,12-11,32 begin with a rhetorical question: “And now Israel what does the Lord your God demand from you?” (v12ab). Deut 10,12-11,32 is a rhetorical whole giving an answer to this question, namely a total commitment and allegiance to Yhwh. This commitment emerges from a unique relationship that Israel has with the Lord.<sup>1</sup> Following is an attempt to point out the principles underlined in 10,12-11,32 for such a relationship and commitment, and consequently to identify them as requirements of a Yhwh-centred existence in the land promised to them.

## 1. Israel – Yhwh’s chosen people

Israel as a people is the object of Yhwh’s choice or election. Deuteronomy reveals this unique relationship between Yhwh and Israel by various words, metaphors and figurative expressions, namely רהב (4,37; 7,6-7; 10,15; 14,2), חקל (4,20.34), מעל יל היה (4,20; 26,17-19), מע שודק (7,6; 14,2.21; 26,19; 28,9), הלגס מע (7,6; 14,2; 26,18), הלחנ (4,20; 32,9).<sup>2</sup> Israel lacks any special merit that will make such a choice inevitable (7,6-8), but because of Yhwh’s prior love both for the fathers (4,37) and for the present generation (7,8), and his faithfulness to his promise to the fathers (7,8). Israel is his ‘specially treasured’ people (7,6; 14,2; 26,18), a nation set apart for him (14,1-2.21) and high above all nations (26,17-19), and called by his name (28,9-10) as his inheritance (4,19-20; 9,26-29; 32,7-10).<sup>3</sup>

Deut 10,14-15 show Yhwh’s choice (רהב) of Israel from all the peoples (מכב מימעה-לכמ). The universe, i.e. the heavens, the heaven of the heavens, the earth in its entirety - belongs to Yhwh (v14), yet (קר) he chose Israel to love them among the nations (v15; cf. 4,37; 7,7-8). Yhwh’s choice of Israel is also progressively revealed through a series of verbs: קשה → בהא → רחב. Yhwh is attached to Israel (קשה), loves (הבהאל) the ancestors (ריתבאב) and he has chosen (רחב) their seed (מערוב) after them. It is this unique relationship of Yhwh with Israel and Israel’s special identity among the nations that provide the foundation for Moses’ appeal for a radical commitment to Yhwh in 10,12-11,32.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Israel – a people called upon to make a commitment to Yhwh

In Deut 10,12-11,32, Israel as Yhwh's chosen people is challenged to make a total commitment to Yhwh both individually and collectively. While on the one hand, Israel is called upon to make a commitment to Yhwh by the subsequent exhortations to keep the commandments of the Lord (cf. 10,12-13.16.20; 11,1.8.13.22.26-28.32),<sup>5</sup> on the other hand, it is motivated to profess a total allegiance to Yhwh by his unique nature and the mighty deeds that he did and will do for them (cf. 10,14-15.17-18.21-22; 11,2-7.9-12.14-15.21.23-25.29-31).<sup>6</sup>

### *2.1. Deut 10,12-22: a people called upon to commit themselves to the Lord and their fellow humans*

Deut 10,12-22 are directed towards Israel's wholehearted commitment to Yhwh, a commitment based on a personal relationship revealed in the repeated phrase 'Yhwh your God' (יהוה ייאל 10,12<sup>3x</sup>.14.20. 21.22; מיהלא יהוה 10,17).<sup>7</sup> Together with the double imperative in v16 (ושקת אל מכפרעו מכבבל תלרע תא מתלמו) (דוע דבעל, הבהאל, תכלל, האריל) the fivefold command in v12-13 (עבשת, קבדת, דבעת, ארית, מתבהאו) and in v19-20 (רמשל), illustrate the focus of Israel's need for a total allegiance to Yhwh. Among the 12 imperatives addressed to Israel in 10,12-22, Israel is exhorted 9x directly in relation to Yhwh (v12-13.20), while only 2x are the imperatives directed to themselves without reference to Yhwh (v16) and only once are they exhorted in relation to the sojourner (v19).

In v12-13 Israel is asked to fear the Lord, to walk in all his ways, to love and to serve him and to keep his commands and statutes. All these actions show an exclusive relationship and allegiance between Israel and Yhwh and call for Israel's concrete responses of commitment and action.

The call "to fear the Lord your God" (יהאל הוהייתא האריל) is primarily an attitude of reverential obedience that arises from reflecting upon the greatness and majesty of God (cf. 10,14.17.21).<sup>8</sup> Since he is their God (יהאל אוהו 10,21) and he has chosen them from all peoples (מימעהלכמ מכב מהירחא מערזב רחביו 10,15) they must fear him and revere him.<sup>9</sup>

The command “to walk in all his ways” (ויכרד־לכב תכלל) means following the way that the Lord has shown them, namely carrying out his commandments (cf. 5,32-33; 6,1; 19,9) or keeping them (cf. 8,6; 19,9; 26,17; 28,9; 30,16).<sup>10</sup> A reverential fear of the Lord calls for a radical commitment to the ways of the Lord manifested in observing the commandments.

The command “to love him” (ותא הבהאלו) calls for fidelity and devotion to the Lord who has chosen them (10,15). Since Yhwh’s relationship to Israel is based on his love and choice of them he can hardly give any command other than to love him (cf. 5,10; 6,5; 7,9; 10,12; 11,1.13.22; 13,4; 19,9; 30,6.16.20), and Israel’s love for Yhwh (cf. 10,12; 11,13.22; 19,9; 30,6) is only a reciprocation to his love.<sup>11</sup>

The command “to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (שפנילכבו רבבלילכב דיהלא הוהי־תא דבעלו) calls for a wholehearted devotion and commitment to Yhwh. This is substantiated by the accompaniment of expressions of loyalty and devotion, such as *בהא, ארי, ירחא, קבד*, or by the adverbial phrase *שפנילכבו רבבלילכב* with the command “to serve the Lord” in 6,13; 10,12.20; 11,13; 13,4-5; 28,47.

The keeping of the commandments and statutes of the Lord (הוהי) 10,13; cf. 4,5-6; 6,1; 8,6.11; 11,1.8.13.22.32; 12,14; 26,16; 28,45) is a manifestation of their covenantal commitment.<sup>12</sup> The appearance of *רמש* in the initial position of four of the subsections in the final parenthesis (11,8.16.22.32) and 2x in the opening verses of the subsections (10,13; 11,1) show Israel’s obligation to take great care to be obedient to Yhwh.<sup>13</sup>

The double imperatives in v16 demand nothing but true allegiance to Yhwh and his covenant.

The command to “circumcise the foreskin of your heart” (תלרע) v16a) metaphorically demonstrates the prerequisite for a covenantal existence (cf. Gen 17,11; Exod 12,48), and consequently the need to follow the requirements of a Yhwh-centred existence in v12-13.

The command to “stiffen your neck no more” (ושקת אל מכפרעו)

דוע v16b ) also calls upon them to submit themselves to Yhwh, by being open and receptive to the commandments of the Lord.

Deut 10,19-20 further illustrates Israel's obligation for total allegiance to Yhwh. While v19 refers to Israel's obligation to the sojourners (רגה-תא מתבהא v19a), v20 invites Israel to make a fourfold allegiance to Yhwh (קבדת, דבעת, ארית, עבשת).<sup>14</sup> This horizontal (i.e. to the sojourners) and vertical (i.e. to Yhwh) commitment of Israel is a direct response to Yhwh's sovereignty and his unique relationship with the disadvantaged in society (v17-18).<sup>15</sup>

The רג is to be loved because Yhwh loves them (v18bc), and moreover they, too, were sojourners in Egypt and they experienced Yhwh's love and saving hand during their own time as sojourners (v19b; cf. 5,15; 15,15; 16,12; 23,8; 24,18.22).<sup>16</sup> Therefore, Israel must understand itself as a community of persons who, like Yhwh, care for the needy and who establish justice and righteousness in the community.

The fourfold yiqtol commands in v20 (קבדת, דבעת, ארית, עבשת) concentrate entirely on Israel's exclusive allegiance and commitment to Yhwh, which is illustrated by the inverted object-verb-subject pattern: "the Lord your God you shall fear; him you shall serve, and to him you shall cleave, and by his name you shall swear".

At every stage, Israel's obligation to make a total commitment to Yhwh is motivated by Yhwh's exclusive relationship with them.

While v12-13 present requirements of a Yhwh-centred existence in general, v14-15 point out why Israel should respond to Yhwh with such a complete allegiance.

While v14-15 show how the sovereign Lord bestowed his affection and love on their forefathers and chose their descendants from all other peoples, v16 demands an adequate response for Yhwh's gratuitous choice on their part. The only appropriate response to this chosen status that Yhwh has bestowed on them is to circumcise their hearts and cease being stiff-necked (v16).

The command to love the sojourner in v19a and the injunctions

to express total allegiance to Yhwh in v20 serve as a direct response to Yhwh's sovereignty and his unique relationship with the less privileged in society (v17-18).

The assertions concerning his uniqueness and the unique deeds that he did for Israel in v21-22 will further substantiate the aforementioned need of Israel for a total commitment to Yhwh, and this will immediately lead to the command to love the Lord and to keep his commandments in 11,1.

In short, 10,12-22 show clearly that since Yhwh is their God (cf. *יהלא אהו* 10,21) Israel is obliged to keep a proper relationship with Yhwh and allegiance to him.

## ***2.2. Deut 11,1-7: A people called upon to know the mighty deeds of the Lord***

Deut 11,1-7 reinforce Israel's commitment for a Yhwh-centred existence with a fresh appeal to love him (*יהלא הוהי תא תבהאו* 1a; cf. 10,12) and to keep his charge (*ותרמשמ תרמשו* 1b).

The command to love (*תבהאו*) the Lord in v1 reverts to the command to love (*בהא*) the Lord in 10,12 and the command to love (*בהא*) the stranger in v19. In 10,15, Yhwh has attached himself (*קשה*) to Israel in love (*בהא*; cf. 7,8 ), but now Israel is enjoined to respond to Yhwh's love (*בהא*; cf. 10,12), and this means a fundamental requirement of total allegiance to Yhwh, along with covenantal obedience (*ותרמשמ תרמשו* 11,1b).<sup>17</sup>

Israel's commitment to Yhwh should manifest itself by keeping (*תרמשו*; cf. 10,13) the fourfold 'dimensions' of his commandments in 11,1 (*ויתוצמ, ויטפשמ, ויתקח, ותרמשמ*),<sup>18</sup> which in turn illustrates the comprehensiveness of Israel's obligations for a Yhwh-centred existence.

The temporal element *סימיה-לכ* in 11,1 is very significant for Israel's exclusive loyalty and obedience to Yhwh. Yhwh is to be loved and his commands are to be carried out always without ceasing (*סימיה-לכ*).

Yhwh's mighty deeds in the past (11,2-7) motivate Israel to love him and to keep his commandments (11,1). The w<sup>c</sup>qatal commands in v1 (תבֹהֲאוּ; תִרְמְשׁוּ) are directed towards Israel's knowledge (תַּעֲדִי) v2a) of Yhwh's greatness (v2e-3a) and his mighty deeds in the past (v3b-6).<sup>19</sup> The events in Egypt and in the wilderness make them acknowledge (עֵדִי) that Yhwh is indeed their unique God (cf. 4,35; 5,6.15; 6,12.21-22; 7,18-19; 8,14; 11, 2-4).

### ***2.3. Deut 11,8-17: a people called upon to respond to the promises of the Lord***

The w<sup>c</sup>qatal command to keep all the commandments in v8a (הוֹצֵמָה לִכְתֹּאת תִרְמְשׁוּ) immediately reinforces the w<sup>c</sup>qatal command in v1 (... וּתְרַמְשׁוּ תִרְמְשׁוּ 1b; cf. 10,13) to keep the Lord's charge, statutes, judgments, and commandments always. Likewise the emphatic yiqtol command to listen to the commandments in 11,13 (וְעִמַּשְׁתָּ עִמַּשְׁתָּ עִמַּשְׁתָּ v13b) and the hortatory imperative appeal to keep the commandments in v16 (וּרְמַשְׁתָּ 16a) further emphasize Israel's commitment to the Lord (cf. 10,13; 11,1.8). V13 actually elaborates on what it means to listen truly to the commandments of the Lord (וְעִמַּשְׁתָּ עִמַּשְׁתָּ עִמַּשְׁתָּ v13b), i.e. they are to love Yhwh (הוֹהִי יְיָ הֵבִיאוּ) and to serve him with all their heart and their soul (מִכָּל לִבְכֶּם וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁכֶם). The hortatory appeal in v16 identifies four kinds of actions (תִּרְסָו, תִּתְּנוּ, תִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ, תִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ) against which the Israelites must guard themselves: being deceived by other gods, turning towards them, serving them, and worshipping them. These fourfold possible kinds of deviant behaviour of Israel indirectly call for their true allegiance to Yhwh.

Moses' appeal to commit themselves to Yhwh in these verses is immediately illustrated by Yhwh's response to them. The purpose clauses in v8b.9a (... וְכִירֵאתָ וְעָמַלְתָּ v8b; וְקִזַּחְתָּ וְעָמַלְתָּ v9a) are consequential to the command to keep the commandments in v8a (הוֹצֵמָה לִכְתֹּאת תִרְמְשׁוּ). In addition to this, v10-12 describe Yhwh's gift of the land and his manifold blessings upon it.<sup>20</sup> Yhwh's two promises in v14-15, each introduced by the w<sup>c</sup>qatal יִתְּנוּ (v14a.15a),<sup>21</sup> are consequential to the conditional command to obey the Lord in v13. The blessing in v14-15 promises abundant rain in its season (רֶטֶם, שׁוֹקֵלֵם, הָרִי 14ab) that will cause the land to produce everything needed for the sustenance of Israel and their

livestock (v14c-15). The hortatory appeal to guard themselves from the possible dangers of apostasy in v16 follows its fivefold consequence (הרצו, הרחו, התיירא, ונתת אל, מתדבאו): they would incur the Lord's anger, and consequently he would shut up the heavens, would give no rain, would make the ground sterile and make them perish them from the land.

In short, Moses' successive appeals to keep the commandments of the Lord and to be loyal to him in v8-17 call for a total allegiance to Yhwh as a condition for living and prospering in the land promised to them.

#### ***2.4. Deut 11,18-25: a people called upon to hand down the teachings of the Lord***

The sequence of commands in w<sup>c</sup>qatal clauses (מתרשקו, מתמשו) and infinite construct clauses (כתבש, רבדל) in v18-20 demand Israelites' individual accountability and responsibility to hand down the commandments to future generations.<sup>22</sup> While the w<sup>c</sup>qatal clauses מתמשו and מתרשקו focus on individual learning of הלא ירבד, the w<sup>c</sup>qatal clauses מתדמלו and מתבנתו point to the imparting of הלא ירבד to the children (מכינתא) v19a), which is the core of the injunctions in v18-20. The centrality of the instruction to the children (v19a) is illustrated by the fivefold means of instructing them (v19b-f): while the gerundive clause in v19b (מב רבדל) serves as the principal means of instruction, the infinitive clauses in v19c-f demonstrate the 'where' and 'when' of the instruction. Since heart (בבל) serves as the repository of Yhwh's words and teaching (cf. 30,14; Job 22,22; Pss 37,31; 119,11), the injunction in v18a focuses more on the effect of placing Yhwh's words (הלא ירבד) upon the hearts, rather than the very act of placing it upon the hearts.<sup>23</sup>

The series of commands in v22 further emphasizes Israel's need to profess total allegiance to Yhwh. The opening injunction "to keep diligently all this commandment" (וורמשת רמש תאזה הוצמה-לכ-תא) v22a; cf. 10,13; 11,1.8.13) is spelled out in the following clauses (תכלל, תהבאל, תקבדל v22c-e), namely to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to cleave unto him. Thus, the repetition of the earlier phrases of Israel's desired actions and dispositions required



of Israel in v22 reinforces their necessity of being loyal to Yhwh.

As in the previous cases, each of Moses' appeals to be loyal to Yhwh in v18-25 is substantiated by Yhwh's response to them. V21 substantiates the motive for observing the injunctions in v18-20, such as the prolongation of their life in the Promised Land (v21a). If they are loyal to the commandments and teachings of the Lord their days and those of their children will be multiplied as long as there is a heaven over the earth. V23-25 spell out Yhwh's response to their faithfulness to his commandments in v22, such as various ways of Yhwh's assistance in the conquest of the land as he has promised them (cf. 7,19-24; Exod 23,27-31). If they are faithful in keeping his commandments and loving him whole-heartedly, then Yhwh will powerfully intervene on their behalf so that no one will be able to prevent them taking possession of the land promised to them.<sup>24</sup>

### ***2.5. Deut 11,26-32: a people called upon to make a choice***

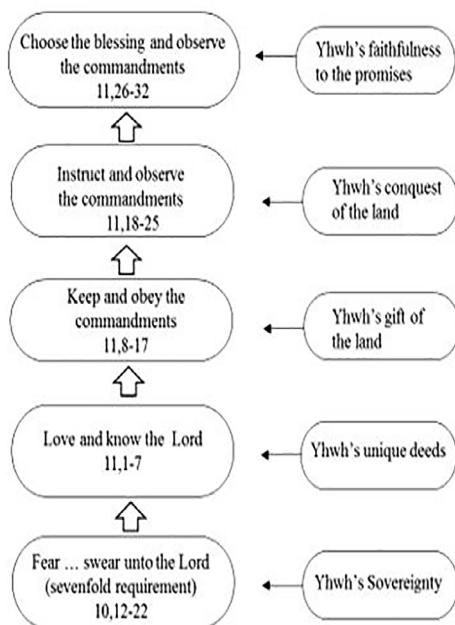
V26-32 call for a decision to make a choice between blessing and curse (v26). The sanction of both the blessing (v27a) and the curse (v28a) is governed by heeding Yhwh's commandments (v27b) or not heeding them (v28b). While the reason for the blessing is specified by obedience to the commandments of the Lord (v27b), the reason for the curse is elaborated further by specifying Israel's inordinate behavior of turning away from the ways of the Lord (v28c) and going after other gods whom they have not known (v28e-f).

The concluding verse of the parenthesis (11,32) makes a final appeal to observe all the statutes and the judgments (v32a-b) and thus restates one of its central themes, namely obedience to the statutes and the judgments of the Lord (cf. 10,12-13; 11,1.8.13.22.27-28.32). Just as in the previous cases, v29-31 demonstrate the motive for taking a decision in favour of blessing. It is Yhwh who brings and gives the land to which they are heading (cf. v29b-c; v31c). In short, the choice between blessing and curse in v26-32 summons them to take a decision - to take a decision in favour of the blessing and to 'walk

in his ways' (רדב v28; cf. רדב 10,12; 11,22).

## Conclusion

Yhwh has chosen Israel as his people among the nations (10,14-15). This unique choice of Israel calls for a total commitment to Yhwh. The call for a radical commitment and allegiance to Yhwh in 10,12-11,32 is illustrated by Moses' successive appeals to Israel. Every exhortation to Israel to make an absolute allegiance to Yhwh is motivated by the 'person' and 'works' of Yhwh. That is to say, at every stage of Moses' hortatory appeal Israel is confronted by who Yhwh is and what Yhwh did and will do for them.



The call for a total commitment to Yhwh is theologically very significant as 10,12-11,32 immediately follow from the description of Israel's recalcitrant and sinful deeds typified in the golden calf incident (9,7-17). Israel is to acknowledge that Yhwh alone is their

God (cf. 4,35; 32,39) who brought them out of Egypt (cf. 1,27; 4,20.37; 5,6.15; 6,12. 21.23; 7,8.19; 8,14; 9,12.26) and takes them into the land promised to their fathers (cf. 4,38; 6,23; 8,7; 9,4.28).

The call for a radical commitment and allegiance to Yhwh in 10,12-11,32 is also theologically significant in the composition of Deuteronomy. In the preceding parenesis in 9,1-10,11 Moses recalled their defiant nature from the time they left Egypt till they arrived at the Jordan: they are stiff-necked (פָּרַע־הֶשֶׁק (3x) 9,6.13.27), rebellious (הָרַם (3x) 9,7.23.24), wicked (עָשָׂר 9,27; cf. 9,4-5), prone to sin (אָטָה 9,16.18; תֹּאטָה 9,18.21.27) and provocative (הִצִּיק 9,7.8.22; סָעַב 9,18) by doing evil (עָרָה תּוֹשָׁעַל 9,18), acting corruptly (תָּחַשׁ 9,12) and turning away (רוּס 9,12.16) from the ways that he commanded, not believing him (וְנֹא 9,23), and not hearing his voice (עָמַשׁ 9,23). Therefore, as they are preparing to enter the land that Yhwh promised them, what is expected of Israel is nothing but true allegiance to Yhwh.

Moses' appeal for total commitment to Yhwh in 10,12-11,32 is also theologically relevant in the immediate goal of acquiring the land. In 9,1-10,11 Moses has already made it clear that the acquisition of the land (שָׂרִי (7x); cf. 9,1.3.4a.4b.5a.b.6a) will not be due to Israel's righteousness (הִקְדִּיצַ (3x); cf. 9,4.5.6), but by Yhwh's grace (9,1-6). This is reaffirmed at the end of the parenesis by stating that it is Yhwh himself who brings them to the land to which they are heading and gives it to them (cf. 11,29b-c.31c). Therefore, Moses exhorts Israel to recognize and acknowledge Yhwh always because their existence and acquisition of the land is a gracious gift from him.

Finally, Moses' successive appeals for a radical allegiance to Yhwh in 10,12-11,32, especially to keep the commandments of the Lord (cf. רָמַשׁ 10,13; 11,1.8.13.22.32) directly lead into the Law Code, which is a detailed description of various specific stipulations concerning their life in the land. Obedience to Yhwh's commandments is an essential condition for their continuing existence in the land. Thus, the imperatives to make a true allegiance to Yhwh in 10,12-11,32 give way to the collection of the legal imperatives required for their life in the land (chs. 12-26).

In short, in the context of Israel's appalling record of past disobedience (9,1-10,11), 10,12-11,32 spell out the requirements of Israel at Moab before they enter into the land. They are repeatedly called on to fear (אָרֵי) him, love (בָּהָא) him, serve (דָּבַע) him, know (עָדִי) him, cling to (קָבַד) him and obey (עֲמַשׁ/רָמַשׁ) him. All of these are ways of expressing Israel's exclusive allegiance to Yhwh and commitment to the requirements of the covenant. This appeal to make a total commitment to Yhwh is presented in covenantal language in the context of Yhwh's uniqueness, especially in his unique historical intervention in the life of Israel.

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## Notes

1. In this context it is good to recall the frequent expression וַיִּהְיֶה לָּנוּ ("our God") in Deuteronomy (23x) that denotes a very personal interpersonal relationship between Yhwh and Israel (cf. 1,6.19.20.25.41; 2,29.33.36.37; 3,3; 4,7; 5,2.24.25.27<sup>2x</sup>; 6,4.20.24.25; 29,14.17.28). This expression otherwise occurs only 7x in the Pentateuch and that too only in Exodus (3,18; 5,3; 8,6.22.23; 10,25.26).

2 For an overview of the Old Testament's statements about election, see PREUSS, H. D., *Theologie des Alten Testaments* Vol. I, Stuttgart 1991, 31-42; PAGANINI, S., *Deuteronomio. Nuova versione, introduzione e commento*, Milano 2011, 518; MOBERLY, R. W. L., *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture*, Grand Rapids 2013, 43-74.

3 For the distinctiveness of Israel as Yhwh's chosen people, see WRIGHT, C. J. H., *Living as the People of God: The Relevance of Old Testament Ethics*, Leicester 1983, 35-45; MCCONVILLE, J. G., *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology*, London 2008, 92-93. For Yhwh's election and covenant with Israel in general, see GRÜN WALDT, K., *Gott und sein Volk: Die Theologie der Bibel*, Darmstadt 2006, 21-41.

4 Cf. BRUEGGEMANN, W., *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, dispute, Advocacy*, Minneapolis 1997, 417. See the following classical works for a discussion of covenant in the Old Testament and Yhwh's covenant relationship with Israel: LOHFINK, N.,

Bund als Vertrag im Deuteronomium, in: Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur IV (SBAB 31), Stuttgart 2000, 285-309; PERLITT, L., Bundestheologie im Alten Testament (WMANT 36), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969; BALTZER, K., Das Bundesformular (WMANT 4), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1960; HILLERS, D., Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea, Baltimore 1969; MCCARTHY, D. J., Covenant: A Summary of Current Opinions, Oxford 1972 NICHOLSON, W., God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament, Oxford 1986; MENDENHALL, G. W., Law and Covenant in Israel and in the Ancient Near East, Pittsburgh 1955; JOCZ, J., The Covenant: A Theology of Human Destiny, Grand Rapids 1968, 17-82.

5 Obedience to the commandments arises from Yhwh's covenantal relationship with Israel. The renowned covenant formula reveals this mutual covenantal relationship: "I will be your God and you will be my people" (Jer 11,4; 24,7; 30,22; 31,33; 32,38; Ezek 11,20; 14,11; 36,28; 37,23.27; Hos 2,23). Therefore, as Ernst Kutsch puts it, we cannot separate Israel's obligation to keep his commandments from their relationship with him, cf. KUTSCH, E., Gesetz und Gnade: Probleme des alttestamentlichen Bundesbegriffs, in: ZAW 79 (1967), 18-35. For obedience to the commandments of the Lord as a means for faith in Yhwh and knowledge of Yhwh, see CALVIN, J., Institutes of the Christian Religion (LCC 20), Philadelphia 1960, 72; HESCHEL, A., Who Is Man? Stanford 1965, 97-98.

6 PAGANINI, S., Deuteronomio, 471, no. 42. describes the role of Yhwh's deeds for the existence of Israel in the following way: "Il Deuteronomio descrive come il popolo è e come deve essere; esso è definito mediante il ricordo delle azioni compiute da Yhwh nella sua storia e mediante la presentazione di un nuovo stile di vita che lo dovrà caratterizzare". For a similar argument, see also BRAULIK, G., Das Testament des Mose. Das Buch Deuteronomium (SKK.AT 4), Stuttgart 1976, 14-15.

7 Deut 10,12-11,32 is coherently connected with the phrase "Yhwh your God" (יהוה אלהינו 10,12 (3x). 14.20.21.22; 11,1.12<sup>2x</sup>.29; יהוה אלהינו 10,17; 11,2.13.22.25.27.28.31). KESSLER, Theology, 199, identifies the expression "Yhwh your God" as characteristic of "Sinai covenant theology". He elaborates it like this: "It expresses the fact Yahweh is not simply God, but our God – the one with whom Israel as a whole, or individuals within it, are in covenantal union". PAGANINI,

Deuteronomio, 471, considers the interpersonal relationship that exists between Yhwh and Israel as a basis for the command to observe commandments in Deuteronomy.

8 The object of האֱלֹהִים in Deuteronomy is always God, appositional with varying pronominal suffixes (וַיִּהְיֶה הוֹדִיָּתָא 6,24; וַיִּהְיֶה הוֹדִיָּתָא 6,2.13; 10,12.20; 14,23; וַיִּהְיֶה הוֹדִיָּתָא 31,12.13; וַיִּהְיֶה הוֹדִיָּתָא 17,19; וַיִּהְיֶה הוֹדִיָּתָא 4,10; 5,29; וַיִּהְיֶה הוֹדִיָּתָא 8,6; 13,5), illustrating an exclusive relationship and allegiance between Israel and Yhwh.

9 EICHRODT, W., *Theology of the Old Testament Vol. II*, trans. J. A. Baker, London 1967, 268-277, identifies “the fear of God” as one of the fundamental forms of man’s relationship with God: “the predominant trait in the personal relationship of man with God in the Old Testament is given linguistic expression in the habit of describing the whole religious experience as the fear of God”. MYERS, J.M., *The Requisites for Response: On the Theology of Deuteronomy*, in: *Int* 15 (1961), 19, considers “the fear of God” as an essential requirement for Israel’s long life in the land.

10 לָקַח can be also used to denote Yhwh’s leading of Israel in the wilderness (cf. Deut 8,2-3). For the elaboration of ‘Yhwh as the God who leads’, see BRUEGGEMANN, *Theology*, 201-204.

11 EICHRODT, *Theology*, 292, recognizes the love of God as a “responsive love and trustful surrender awakened by the unmerited love of God”.

12 According to KESSLER, *Theology*, 199, “this phrase stresses Israel’s ongoing responsibility to live in faithfulness to the terms of the covenant in order to continue to enjoy its benefits and to maintain the nation’s relationship with Yahweh in good order”.

13 OTTO, E., *Theologische Ethik des Alten Testaments (ThW3/2)* Stuttgart 1994, 18-116.175-232, shows how obedience to the individual commandments in Deuteronomy serves as a decisive role for the life and faith of Israel. See BRUEGGEMANN, *Theology*, 181-201, for the elaboration on the concept ‘Yhwh as the God who commands’.

14 MYERS, J.M., *Requisites*, 29, summarizes the threefold nature of Israel’s commitment like this: “For Deuteronomy Israel was the beloved community, which was based on the Covenant (27x) that moved in three directions – from God to Man, man to God, and man to

man”.

15 For Yhwh as the basis of the justice-righteousness imperatives in Deuteronomy, see McCONVILLE, God, 78-81; HOUSTON, W.J., *Contending for Justice: Ideologies and Theologies of Social Justice in the Old Testament*, London 2008, 204-214.

16 The identity and the social status of אֱלֹהִים in the Israelite society will further disclose the necessity of loving the אֱלֹהִים, see DRIVER, S. R., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (ICC), Edinburgh<sup>3</sup> 1902,126; SPENCER, J. R., Sojourner, in: ABD IV, 103; PEDERSEN, J., *Israel: Its Life and Culture Vols I-II*, London 1946, 1926-1940; PAGANINI, S., *Deuteronomio*, 472; YAN, Y. S., The Alien in Deuteronomy, in: BT 60/2 (2009), 112-117.

17 Cf. BRUEGGEMANN, Deuteronomy, 135.

18 For the analysis and theological significance of these terms in Deuteronomy, see BRAULIK, G., *Die Ausdrücke für Gesetz im Buch Deuteronomium*, in: idem, *Studien zur Theologie des Deuteronomiums* (SBAB 2), Stuttgart 1988, 24-34.

19 For the theological significance of Yhwh's mighty deeds for Israel's commitment to Yhwh, see HERRMANN, W., *Jahwe, der Furchtbare* (BTS 97), Neukirchen-Vluyn 2008, 40-57; BRUEGGEMANN, *Theology*, 173-181; BORGONOVO, G., *La Memoria fondatrice. Storia e ideologia, identità e costituzione di un popolo. Il caso della "ricapitolazione" deuteronomica*, in: Sc 33/2 (2005), 323-350. See also BLAIR, E. P., *An Appeal to Remembrance: The Memory Motif in Deuteronomy*, in: Int 15 (1961), 41-47, especially 45, to see the role of memory motif in Deuteronomy for a true covenantal allegiance to Yhwh.

20 However, Moses has already warned Israel that the inheritance and the prosperity of the land depends on their allegiance to the Lord (cf. 4,1.25-28; 5,32-33; 6,2-3.14-15.17-18.25; 7,12-16; 8,1.19-20). See also VEIJOLA, T., *Bundestheologie in Dtn 10,12-11,30*, in: R.G. Kratz - H. Speckermann (eds.), *Liebe und Gebot: Studien zum Deuteronomium*. FS L. Perlit (FRLANT 190), Göttingen 2000,213-214.

21 For אָמַן as a verb of promise, cf. BRUEGGEMANN, *Theology*, 165, and for the elaboration of 'Yhwh as the God who makes promises',

see, *ibid.*, 164-173.

22 For a discussion of the individual and collective responsibility as guiding principles of ethical action in the covenant community, see VRIEZEN, TH. C., *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, Oxford<sup>2</sup> 1970, 382-387.

23 Cf. FISCHER-LOHFINK, „Diese Worte sollst du summen“. Dtn 6,7 w<sup>c</sup>dibbartā bām - ein verlorener Schlüssel zur meditativen Kultur in Israel, in: L. Lohfink, *Studien zum Deuteronomium und zur deuteronomistischen Literatur III* (SBAB 20) Stuttgart 1995, 187-188; BRAULIK, *Deuteronomium 1-16,17*(NEB), Würzburg 1986, 57.

24 See the summary of MILLER, *Gift*, 459: “The land is not only the sphere in which blessing and life and prosperity take place. It is also the sphere in which Israel does what Yahweh requires, in which therefore the obedience of the people shall be visible (4:5,14; 5:31; 6:1; 12:1)”.

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