



**Coptic Orthodox Diocese
Of
The Southern United States**



COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

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INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLY BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

I. AUTHOR: Moses is the author of most of the Holy Book of Deuteronomy. Joshua is the writer who concluded the Holy Book after Moses' death.

A. Moses was the author of most of the Holy Book of Deuteronomy:

1. These are the words Moses spoke at the Trans-Jordan (1:1-5) across from the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth-peor in the land of Sihon (4:44-49), in the land of Moab (29:1).

2. "Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel " ... I am 121 years old ... no longer able to come and go..." and not allowed to cross the Jordan (31:1-2)

3. 40 years after what should have been an 11 day journey "Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had commanded him to give to them 1:2-3".

4. Moses says, "The LORD our God" 1:6

5. All throughout chapters 1-4 Moses refers to himself as among the people: "we" (1:19; 2:1,8; 3:1,4,6,7,12), "I and you" (1:9,13,15,16,20,24,29,43; 3:13,15,16,18,19,20,21,23; 4:1,2,5,8ff; 5:5; 6:2; 8:1,19; 9:9,15-21,25-26; 10:2-3,5,10; 12:32; 13:18; 30:15,18,19; 31:2), "me"(1:14,17,22,23,37,41,42; 2:1,9 17; 3:2; 4:5; 6:1; 10:11; 18:15), "our" (1:6,19,20,25; 3:3; 5:2,3; 9:10), "us" (1:20,25; 3:1; 5:2), to this day (8:18)

B. Someone beyond Moses (Joshua) concluded the book of Deuteronomy:

The verses (48 – 52) of chapter 32 were written by Joshua including the call of the Lord to Moses to climb the Mountain of Nebo to die there. Joshua including Moses' death and Joshua's leadership wrote the chapter 34 also. Joshua added this chapter to the Holy Book of Deuteronomy so that Moses' life becomes one continued chain.

II. DATE: The internal record of the chronology from Egypt to Moab is helpful in a reconstruction of the date of 1406 B.C. for the writing of the Holy Book of Deuteronomy:

A. The people departed from Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month--March/April [Nisan] 15, 1446 (Num 33:3; Exodus 12:2, 5)

B. The people reached the wilderness of Sinai on the first day of the third month--May/June [Sivan] 1, 1446 (Ex 19:1)

C. The tabernacle was erected on the first day of the first month of the second year--March/April [Nisan] 1, 1445 (Ex. 40:17)

D. The Holy Book of Leviticus is given during the one month interval immediately following the filling of the Tabernacle by the glory of the Lord and before the people prepared to leave Sinai for the promised land--March/April [Nisan] 1-30, 1445 (Num 1:1; cf. Ex 40:17)

E. Numbers opens with a census taken on the first day of the second month in the second year--April/May [Iyyar or Ziv] 1, 1445 (Num 1:1)

F. The cloud is taken up to begin to lead the people to the promised land from the wilderness of Sinai on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year--April/May [Iyyar or Ziv] 20, 1445 (Num 10:11)

G. The people sin at Kadesh=Barnea (Num 13--14) and are sentenced to wander 40 years in the wilderness (Num 14:33). Numbers covers 38 years and nine months (Num 1:1 with Deut 1:3)

H. Aaron dies on Mount Hor on the first day of the fifth month in the fortieth year--July/August [Ab] 1, 1406 (Num 33:38)

I. Deuteronomy opens on the Trans-Jordan on the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after what should have been an eleven-day journey (from Sinai Mountain)-- January/February [Shebat] 1, 1406 (Deut 1:1-3).

J. Therefore, a more precise date for the giving of the Holy Book of Deuteronomy would be January or February 1, 1406 B.C.

III. AUDIENCE: The Audience was all of Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness in the Arabah opposite Suph between Paran and Tophel and Leban and Hazeroth and Dizahab (1:1).

DISCUSSION OF THE INTERNAL COMPONENT

I. MOSES' FIRST ADDRESS

Through a rehearsal of covenant history, Moses traces Israel's experience with the Lord from Horeb, to Kedesh-barnea, through their wilderness wandering and up to their taking of the land from Beth-peor so that they will remember the character of the Lord and obey Him as they prepare to enter the Land (1:6--4:43)

A. Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea:

Moses recounts the experience of the nation from Mountain Horeb to Kedesh-barnea where they rebelled and were sentenced to wander in the wilderness (1:6-46):

1. Moses recounts how the Lord told Israel to leave Horeb and go to possess the land from the Negev, the hill country, the sea coast, to Lebanon and the Euphrates 1:6-8.

2. Moses recounts how he distributed the authority among the leaders of the tribes for judging people because the people had grown too much under the Lord's blessing for him to care for them alone 1:9- 18.

3. Moses recounts the journey from Mountain Horeb to Kadesh-barnea where the people rebelled against the Lord by not taking the Land as it was promised, and then by trying to take the land after they had been judged to die as a generation in the wilderness before the next generation would come to take the land 1:19-46.

B. Entrance into the Trans-Jordan:

Moses recounts the nation's return and entrance into the trans-Jordan as the Lord led and defeated Simon and Ogk (2:1--3:11):

1. Moses briefly tells of the nation's return to the wilderness under the Lord's command and then their return to the land under His command with the awareness of the Lord's provision for them for 40 years and that they were not to take land that He had given to others (Edom, Moab, Ammon) just He would give their land to them (2:1-23):

- a. The nation is told to leave the land for the wilderness (2:1)
- b. The nation is told that their wanderings are enough and thus to head back north through the land of the sons of Esau but not to take their land (2:2-6)
- c. The nation is reminded of the Lord's sustenance of them for 40 years in the wilderness (2:7)
- d. The nation is told by the Lord to pass North beyond Heir by Moab but not to touch their land since he gave it to the descendants of Lot (2:8-12)
- e. It took 38 years for Israel to pass from Kedesh-barnea to the brook Zered: until the Lord's judgment was complete upon the nation's men of war (2:13-18)
- f. The nation is to cross over into Moab but it is an inheritance to the sons of Lot so they are not to fight the sons of Amman (2:19-23)

2. Under the command of the Lord Israel took the kingdom of Sihon up to the southern boarder of Amman and the kingdom of Ogk including northern Bashan 2:24--3:11

- a. Israel is commanded by God to take the Ammorite land under Simon the king of Heshbon through which He will bring a fear of Israel upon the people (2:24-25)
- b. Moses recounts how he asked Simon for permission to pass through his land and God hardened his heart in order to give the land over to Israel (2:26-31)
- c. In a battle with Simon, The LORD God delivers the kingdom over to Israel to the land of Amman (2:32-37)
- d. In a battle with Ogk, the LORD God delivers northern Bashon over to Israel (3:1-11)

C. Final Preparations to Enter the Land:

At Beth-peor Moses made final preparations for the nation to enter the land by the allotment of the trans-Jordan, by exhortations to the trans-Jordan tribes to fight with the nation until the land is all occupied, by strengthening Joshua in what the Lord has

done, by stating that he will not enter the land, and by encouraging his replacement-- Joshua (3:12-28)

1. Moses allots the trans-Jordan including Gilead from Bashan in the north to the red sea in the south to the Reunites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh [south to north] (3:12-17)

2. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh are told that the land is theirs for a possession, but the valiant men are to continue to fight with the nation until all of the land is possessed across the Jordan (3:18-20)

3. Moses reminds Joshua of all the Lord has done so that he will not fear those in the land against whom the Lord will also fight (3:21-22)

4. Moses mentions that he pleaded with the Lord to be allowed to enter but was forbidden except to see it from Mountain Pisgah. He was also told to strengthen Joshua as his replacement to take the people into the land to give them the inheritance (3:23-28)

5. The historical setting is in the valley opposite of Beth-poor (3:29)

6. At Beth-poor Moses warns Israel in many ways that disobedience to the Lord's Law will result in judgment in the Land while obedience will bring life in the Land (4:1-40)

7. Moses sets aside three cities of refuge: one for each tribe in the trans-Jordan (4:41-43) to which man, who unintentionally killed someone whom was not his enemy, could escape and save his life. City of Bezer for Reuben, Ramoth for Gad and Bashan for Manasseh.

II. MOSES' SECOND ADDRESS

Through a rehearsal of Israel's covenant responsibilities with glimpses of national prophetic history, Moses proclaims obedience as the means by which the Lord will bless the nation in the Land (4:44--26:19)

A. Setting:

A setting is given of Israel after the Exodus, the wilderness wandering, and the defeat of Simon and Ogk, opposite of Beth-poor where Moses set before them the Law (4:44-49)

B. Ten Commandments:

After summoning all Israel, Moses exhorts them to hear the 10 Commandments that they heard at Mountain Horeb and which led them in fear to have Moses act as mediator between them and the Lord for the rest of the Law (5:1-33)

1. *Moses summons* all Israel and speaks to them (5:1a)

2. *Moses exhorts* the nation to hear the statutes and ordinances, which he is speaking to them now and which were given to them at Mountain Horeb face to face with Moses between them and God (5:1b-5)

3. *Moses states* the 10 Commandments (5:6-21)

a. **No** gods are to be placed before the Lord who redeemed Israel from Egypt (6-7)

b. **No** Idols are to be made and/or worshiped because the Lord will punish those households who do not honor Him while showing loyal love to those who do love Him with obedience (8-10)

c. **The Lord's** name is not to be taken in vain lest one receive punishment (11)

d. **The Sabbath** is to be kept separate unto the Lord by not working in any way and by remembering the redemption He provided for them from Egypt (12-15)

e. Parents are to be honored as God has commanded so that life may be long and prosperous in the land (16)

f. **One** shall not commit murder (17)

g. **One** shall not commit adultery (18)

h. **One** shall not steal (19)

i. **One** shall not bear false witness against one's neighbor (20)

j. **One** shall not covet anything, which belongs to one's neighbor (21)

4. *Moses recounts* how the nation after hearing God speak the 10 commandments pleaded that Moses would mediate between them and the Lord so that they would not be destroyed by Him whereupon the Lord agreed dismissing the nation to their tents and keeping Moses to hear, and teach the nation the law to observe in the land (5:22-33).

C. Great Commandment & Blessings and Cursing:

Moses recounts the great commandment of full commitment to the Lord and warnings of cursing and blessings to the Nation so that they may be blessed in the Land (6:1-- 11:32)

1. For the sake of blessing rather than judgment in the Land, the nation is to be fully committed to God and to communicate their commitment to the next generation (6:1-25)

a. The commandment which Moses is about to give to the nation is so that they and their generations might fear the Lord so as to obey with the result that they might receive blessing: days might be prolonged, it may be well with them, and that they might multiply as God promised in the Land (6:1-3)

b. Each person in the is to willfully commit himself to Him with all of his motives (heart), his person (soul) and his ability (strength) (6:5-6)

c. Moses' command to love God is to be taught to children in the patterns of live, and made a common part of one's life (6:7-9)

d. The nation is warned of the danger of coming to the prosperous land that they might forget the Lord who delivered them from Egypt (6:10-12)

e. The nation is warned of judgment, which the Lord will bring upon them if they follow other gods in the land as well as blessing which will come upon them if they obey God in the Land (6:13-19)

f. The history of the establishment of the nation from Egypt as well as the giving of the Law is to be told to the children so that they will obey and be blessed by God in the land (6:20-25)

2. Destruction of Nations: Israel, as a people graciously separated unto God, is to destroy, with the power of the Lord, the nations in the land without contaminating herself with them so that she will not also experience the judgment of God upon her but blessing (7:1-26)

a. Israel is to destroy the nations in the land, to not intermarry with them because they will turn Israel's heart away from the Lord to serve other gods, which will result in judgment upon Israel (7:1-5)

b. The reason Israel is to judge and not compromise with the nations in the land is because she is to be a people separate unto the Lord who chose her, not out of merit, but out of love and commitment to the Abrahamic covenant (7:6-8)

c. Because the Lord is a faithful yet a just God (bringing judgment upon the nations who do not follow him), Israel is to keep the commandments which Moses is proclaiming to them so that they might be blessed by Him: keeping the Abrahamic covenant with them, bringing about fertility, health, cursing their enemies and making them victorious in battle (7:9-16)

d. When Israel is fearful of the nations, which they will fight against, they are to remember the powerful deliverance, which the Lord worked for them in Egypt as well as the promises He is now making to deliver the nations and their detestable gods over to them in accordance with His timetable (7:17-26)

3. Awareness of Yahweh as Provider: Israel is to enter the land with an awareness from their own history that it is the Lord alone who has graciously and abundantly provided for them in their evil to this point and thus will bless them in the land if they obey and curse them if they disobey (8:1--11:32)

a. Israel is to remember the humbling, training, yet sustaining way in which the Lord led them for forty years in the wilderness in order to test and discipline them so as to produce obedience because obedience will result in blessing for them when they enter the fruitful land (8:1-10)

b. Israel is warned that they will perish under the judgment of God like the nations the Lord is making to perish before them if they forget that they have been and are dependent upon the Lord for their blessing and begin to consider themselves as the ones who have provided for themselves and begin to worship other gods (8:11-20)

c. Israel is to remember as the Lord goes before them to defeat the nations so that they will dispose the land that it is not because of Israel's righteousness that they are entering in but because of the wickedness of the nations and because of the Abrahamic covenant that the Lord is acting on their behalf (9:1-6)

d. Moses confirms the wickedness of Israel by recounting their rebellion against the Lord and his need to intercede for them in order that the Lord would not destroy them during the journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea (9:7- -10:5)

1) They rebelled at Horeb (9:8-21)

2) They rebelled at Teberah, Massah and at Kiboroth-hatta-avah (9:22)

3) They rebelled at Kadesh-barnea (9:23--10:5)

e. After all of this evil and the forty years of wandering the Lord commanded the people to go to possess the land (10:6-11)

f. Israel is exhorted to willingly obey the Lord who alone is God, covenant keeping, just, has blessed and whom they themselves know and have experienced in history so that they may enter and be blessed and overtake the nations in the fertile land where the Lord dwells rather than be cursed there (10:12--11:28)

g. As a reminder the promises of blessing are to be written in the land on Mountain Gerizim and the curses are to be written on Mountain Ebal so that the nation will be careful to do all that the Moses has commanded (11:29-32)

D. Specific Laws of Covenant & Prophetic History:

Specific laws of the covenant and glimpses of prophetic history are expounded so that Israel will obey and be blessed in the land (12:1--26:15)

1. Worship: After Israel possesses the land and destroys all of the pagan places of false worship, she must not assimilate their behavior but offer all sacrifices (meat for home use excluded) and worship at the central place, which the Lord will proclaim in order to receive blessing in the land (12:1-32)

a. When Israel enters the land they are to completely destroy all of the pagan places of false worship (12:1-3)

b. Unlike the nations in the land and even unlike the practice of the nation in the wilderness, all worship and sacrifice when established in the land will take place at a central location, which the Lord will establish (12:4-14)

c. Although meat may be slaughtered within one's particular city for consumption according to the standards of the Law, all tithe offerings from the harvest to the Lord must be partaken (being sure to provide for the Levite) at the central location to be announced by the Lord (12:15-27)

d. Israel must be careful to obey the Lord for blessing and not to follow the practice of the people toward their gods whom they will dispossess in the land (12:28-32).

2. False Teachers: If anyone (prophet, relative, or entire city) attempts to lead the nation away from the Lord to other gods they are to be resisted and destroyed in order to turn away God's anger and to continue to receive blessing from Him (13:1-18)

a. If a prophet or dreamer performs a sign or wonder and then attempts to lead anyone from the Lord to other gods, he is to be ignored, and killed while God is to be obeyed (13:1-5)

b. If a relative or friend entices anyone to leave the Lord for other gods, he is to be resisted and unmercifully killed as a warning to all else in the nation (13:6-11)

c. If those in a city of Israel begin to lead the people away from the Lord to other gods, the entire city is to be destroyed and placed under a ban to turn the Lord from his burning anger and to bring about blessing for the rest of the nation (13:12-18)

3. Separation of Israel: Israel is to demonstrate her separation to the Lord from the other nations of the land by how they mourn for the dead and how they even eat their food (14:1-21)

a. Israel is to demonstrate its separateness to the Lord from all people of the land by not participating in the Canaanite rituals of mourning for the dead (14:1-2)

b. Israel is to demonstrate its separateness to the Lord from all the people in the land by not eating any animal, fish, or bird, which God declares to be unclean (by virtue of its non-conformity to wholeness), but by only eating those which the Lord declares to be clean (and thus naturally whole) (14:3-21)

4. Tithing: Israel is to tithe (physically or monetarily) to the Lord all of the produce which comes out of the field every year in a celebration before the Lord in that place where He will establish His name except for every third year where it is to go to the Levite in his town remembering that he has no other portion among the nation in order to receive blessing from the Lord (14:22-29)

5. Sabbath Year: The end of the seventh year is to be a time when everyone in Israel is to grant a remission of all debts to her own people who were willfully and

generously helped in their need because the Lord has blessed the nation and will continue to do so if they will obey (15:1-18)

a. Every seventh year Israel is to grant a remission of debts whereby every creditor shall release what he has loaned to those within the nation [excluding foreigners] (15:1-3)

b. The Lord promises that if the nation will obey that He will bless them so that they will not be poor and indebted to other nations but will lend to other nations (15:4- 7)

c. If one in the nation comes upon a poor brother in need (as one always will) and even if it is near the seventh year, one is to willingly and generously lend to him a sufficient amount for his need because the Lord will bless the giver for this (15:8-11)

d. If one of Israel's kinsmen (a Hebrew man or woman) is sold to them in slavery, it is to be for only seven years after which one must either release him with a liberal amount of produce, which the Lord has given and which he has worked double time for, or one is to mark him as his servant forever at his desire (15:12-18)

6. Consecration of First Born Males: All of the first-born males of the herd and flock are to be consecrated, separated from work and then sacrificed in a family meal before the Lord in the place which He chooses except for those which have a defect which are not to be sacrificed before the Lord but are to be legally partaken of in one's own city (15:19-23)

7. Three Feasts of Israel, Passover, Weeks (Harvest), Booths (Shelters): Three times a year all of Israel's males are to appear before the Lord in the place which He chooses to celebrate the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths, with a sacrifice as the Lord has blessed (16:1-17)

a. Passover: In the month of Abib (March-April) the nation is to observe the Passover in the place where the Lord chooses to establish His name by making a sacrifice from the flock or the herd and not eating leaven bread for seven days according to His prescriptions to remember His deliverance of them from Egypt (16:1-8)

b. Feast of Weeks: Seven weeks from the beginning of the grain harvest the nation is to celebrate the Feast of Weeks with a free- will offering proportionate to as the

Lord has blessed with a feast in the place where the Lord chooses to establish his name as a reminder of their liberation from Egypt (16:9-13)

c. Feast of Booths: Seven days after the ingathering from the wine vat and threshing floor Israel is to joyfully celebrate the Feast of Booths for seven days in the place, which the Lord chooses because of the Lord's blessing (16:13-15)

d. In summary: three times a year all of Israel's males are to appear before the Lord in the place which He chooses, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths, with a sacrifice as the Lord has blessed (16:13-15)

8. *Appointing of Judges:* Israel is to appoint judges for herself in each town which the Lord has given to judge uprightly all offenses of the people or to take any offense beyond their ability to the place of the Lord where the matter will be decided by a Levite or judge appointed there to be executed explicitly by the local judge in order to purge all evil from the land so that the Lord may bless the land (16:18--17:13)

a. Israel is to appoint judges for her in each town, which the Lord has given to her who will judge the people with righteous judgment and not be corrupted with any favoritism for the Lord to bless in the land (16:18-21)

b. If one does anything to turn the peoples' hearts away from the Lord to the false gods in the land, they are to be tried by the judges and given the death penalty by stoning to purge the evil from the land (16:22--17:8)

c. If the particular case is too difficult for the local judges, it is to be brought to the place where the Lord chooses to establish His name for a Levitical priest or Judge there in office to decide the matter and to be followed explicitly under penalty of death in order to purge the evil from the land (16:22--17:13)

9. *Appointing a King:* When Israel enters the land they desire to appoint a king he is to be one the Lord's choice from their countrymen, who is not to multiply horses, wives or gold and silver to himself and is to copy, read and obey the Law of the Lord so that he behaves properly and is allowed to continue his line upon the throne (17:14-20)

a. When Israel enters into the land and desires to set a king over them as the nations around them, it is to be one whom the Lord chooses from their countrymen and not a foreigner (17:14)

b. The king over Israel is not to do three things: multiply horses for himself or especially go back to Egypt to multiply horses since the Lord forbids going back that way, and he shall not multiply wives for himself lest they turn his heart away from the Lord, and he shall not multiply silver and gold for himself (17:15-17)

c. The king is to write for himself in the presence of the Levitical priests a copy of the Law to be read by him so that he may fear the Lord and thus obey His word resulting in a proper perspective with his countrymen, obedience and the continuation of his line on the throne (17:18-20)

10. Provisions for Levitical Priests: The Levitical priests from the whole tribe of Levi shall have no portion of the inheritance of the land with Israel but shall be specifically provided for in addition to any of their own assets through the offerings to the Lord since He is their inheritance (18:1-8)

a. The Levitical priests from the whole tribe of Levi shall have no portion of inheritance with Israel but shall be provided for through offerings to the Lord since He is their inheritance (18:1-2)

b. The priest's due from the people was the shoulder, two cheeks, and the stomach from an offered ram or lamb, the first fruits of the grain, new wine, oil and shearing of the sheep because the Lord has chosen them to serve Him (18:3-5)

c. If a Levite chose to come to the central sanctuary to serve he was entitled to the remunerations from the sacrifices there in addition to anything he received from the selling of his possessions (18:6-8)

11. Prohibition against Spiritual Practices of the Nations: When Israel enters into the land, the Lord does not permit them to imitate the detestable spiritual practices of the nations: child sacrifices, divination, witchcraft, interpreting omens or sorcery, casting spells, or acting as a medium or spiritist by calling up the dead so that they will not be driven out of the land as the nations before them are being driven (18:9-14)

12. Prophet Like Moses: The Lord will raise up a prophet like Moses to speak as a mediator between the people and the Lord, as the people requested of Moses, bringing judgment from the Lord upon all of those who do not listen to him (18:15-19)

13. Test of a Prophet: Any "prophet" who speaks for another god or who says that he speaks for the Lord but is proven to be false since his words do not come true is to be killed by the people (18:20- 22)

14. Cities of Refuge: Israel is to prepare at least three and up to six cities of refuge (under God's blessing) so that the nation might protect the unintentional manslayer from an angry avenger but not to protect the premeditated manslayer who must be brought before his avenger so that the Lord will continue to bless the land (19:1-13)

a. Israel is to prepare three cities of refuge as well as roads to the cities in the midst of the land where the unintentional manslayer may flee from an angry pursuer (19:1-7)

b. If the Lord blesses Israel with more land promised to the fathers in Israel's obedience, they are to establish three more cities to protect the nation from the shedding of innocent blood (19:8-10)

c. If someone commits premeditated manslaughter he is not to be protected by the cities of refuge but to be handed over to his avenger so as to purge the nation from innocent blood and so that God might bless them (19:11-13)

15. Moving Neighbor's Boundary: Israel is not to move his neighbor's boundary mark from where the ancestors placed it to mark off the inheritance of the Lord (19:14)

16. Two or Three Witnesses: A matter against a man is never confirmed on the witness of one person but on the evidence of two or three witness with false witnesses receiving the punishment they intended for their brother so as to purge the evil from the land and to be a deterrent to others (19:15-21)

a. A matter against a man is never confirmed on the witness of only one person but on the evidence of two or three witnesses (19:15)

b. If it is determined in a hearing before a priest, a judge and the Lord that a man is a malicious witness, then he is to receive the judgment he had intended for his brother thereby purging the evil from the people and providing a deterrent for others who might do such a thing (19:16-21)

17. God as Protector: When Israel comes to battle against powerful enemies they are to realize that it is the Lord who is fighting for them, send home those who have

unfinished beginnings in the land and to either wage a measured attack on distant cities or an unmeasured destruction on those peoples near to them (20:1-20)

a. When Israel comes to battle against their powerful enemies they are not to be afraid because the Lord who brought them up from Egypt is with them (20:1)

b. When Israel approaches their enemies to fight the priest is to come before the people and encourage them to not be afraid or panic because the Lord is with them to fight for them against their enemies (20:2-4)

c. When Israel is approaching their enemies the officers are to come before the people and dismiss from battle the man who has built but not dedicated his house, the man who planted a vineyard but has not begun to use its fruit, the man who is engaged but has not married, and the man who is afraid and fainthearted so that he will not discourage others before they appoint commanders of the armies (20:5- 9)

d. When Israel comes to a city that is far from them they are to offer peace and place the people into forced labor if they accept, but if they refuse, God will give it into their hands and they are to strike all of the men down and take the women, children and the spoil as booty as from the Lord (20:10-16)

e. When Israel comes to a city of the people near to them (the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites) they are to utterly destroy it (except for its fruit trees) in order that the people will not lead them astray to detestable spiritual practices leading to sin against the Lord (20:17-20)

18. Undetected Homicide: In the event of an undetected homicide in the open country, the elders of the nearest city had to make atonement by breaking the neck of a heifer and then confessing their innocence before the priests above the dead heifer whereupon God would remove the blood-guiltiness from upon the people (21:1-9)

19. Laws concerning the Family Are Expounded: marrying a captive woman, blessing the first-born of an unloved wife and stoning a rebellious son (21:10- 21)

a. Marrying a Captive Woman: If one is attracted to a woman taken captive in battle he is to take her to his home, allow her one month to grieve her family loss and then to have relations with her thus making her his wife but he may also free (or divorce) her if she does not please him, though he may not mistreat her (21:10-14)

b. Blessing the First Born of an Unloved Wife: If a man has two sons, a first born from an unloved wife and the second from a loved wife, he must give the rights of the first born to the first born son since he is the beginning of his strength (21:15-17)

c. Stoning a Rebellious Son: If a man has a rebellious son who will not obey his parents but is disruptive, he is to be taken to the elders and stoned to remove the evil from their midst and to speak to the rest of Israel (21:18-21)

20. Laws concerning Community Life in the Land Are given: burial of a criminal, responsibility toward neighbors, dress, animal life, building codes, purity rather than mixture in all of life, men who rape women, and children with stepmothers (21:22--22:30)

a. Burial of a Criminal: A man hung on a tree for a sin worthy of death is to be buried before evening of the same day so that he does not defile the land which the Lord has given (21:22-23)

b. Responsibilities towards Neighbors: Israelites are responsible to care for the possessions (oxen, sheep, garments, anything) of their countrymen so as to return or restore them to his countryman as soon as possible (22:1-4)

c. Dress: It is an abomination to the Lord for a man or woman to dress as the opposite sex (22:5)

d. Animal Life: If one comes upon a bird's nest with the mother sitting on her young, it is only permissible to take the young but not their mother for the Lord's blessing (22:6-7)

e. Building Codes: Whoever builds a house needs to build a wall about their roof to keep anyone from falling so that they are not guilty of blood [someone's death] (22:8)

f. Purity rather than Mixture: One is to not mix seeds in a vineyard, animals at a plow or materials together in clothing. There is to be natural purity (22:9-11)

g. Tassels on Garments: Israel is to tie tassels on the four corners of their garments to remind them to obey the Law (22:12)

h. Charge of Not Being a Virgin: If a man charges his wife with not being a virgin at their marriage, the parents have an opportunity to defend her with the garment of proof; if the man is wrong he must be whipped by the elders, pay the father silver and

remain with his wife; if the man is right the woman will be stoned to purge the evil from Israel (22:13-21)

i. Various laws are given for men lying with women: (1) if she is married they are both to be stoned to purge the evil from Israel, (2) if he lies with an engaged woman in a city they must both be stoned: the girl because she did not cry out and the man for violating his neighbor, (3) if he lies with an engaged woman in a field only the man shall be stoned for violating his neighbor; the girl could not be heard, (4) if a man lies with a virgin and is discovered he must pay the father 50 pieces of silver and marry her with no hope of divorce (22:22-29)

j. Marriage to Stepmother: A man may not marry his stepmother since that would be a dishonor of his father's authority (22:30)

21. Laws concerning Congregational Life Are Given: whom to allow into the assembly, what to do with bodily functions, how to deal with runaway slaves, not to seek fertility from pagan gods (23:1-18)

a. Whom to Allow in the Assembly: The assembly of the Lord may not be entered by anyone who: is emasculated, of illegitimate birth to the tenth generation, Ammorite, or Mobite to the tenth generation because of their hostility toward the nation in the wilderness when Israel came from Egypt; however the assembly of the Lord may be entered by Edomites who are Israel's brothers and by Egyptians because Israel was an alien in their land (23:1-6)

b. Bodily Functions: All bodily functions (nocturnal emissions, excrement) are to be cared for outside of the camp so that the camp will be clean for the presence of the Lord (23:7-14)

c. Runaway Slaves: Runaway slaves shall not be handed over to their (foreign) masters, but shall be allowed to live in one of Israel's towns without being mistreated (23:15-16)

d. Fertility from Pagan Gods: None of the children of Israel may be cult prostitutes and Israel may not heir any harlot to seek fertility from pagan gods since this is an abomination to the Lord (23:18)

22. Laws concerning the Weak and or Vulnerable Are Given: charging interest, vows, eating when hungry, divorce, marriage taking pledges, kidnapers, leprosy, paying

wages, responsibility for sin, widows, orphans and aliens, punishment of the wicked, Levites barrage, talionic justice, measuring weights, dealing with the ruthless Amalekites (23:19--25:19)

a. Charging of Interest: Although interest may be charged to a foreigner, it may not be charged to anyone of Israel's countrymen to receive the Lord's blessing (23:19-20)

b. Vows: All vows to the Lord must be paid to Him therefore it is best to be careful before making a vow (23:21-23)

c. Eating when Hungry: When one passes through a neighbor's vineyard or field, he may take what he can eat but he may not take any more (23:24-35)

d. Divorce: When a man divorces his wife for any reason and she marries another and becomes available again because of divorce or the death of her spouse, the first husband may not remarry her since she has been defiled and to do so would be to bring an abomination upon the land (24:1-4)

e. Obligations for the Newly Married: When a man takes a new wife he is not to go out with the army or to be charged with any duty but is free to be at home to make his wife happy (24:5)

f. Illegal Pledges: No one is to take as a pledge a hand mill or an upper millstone [those things which are central to the grinding of bread and thus his livelihood] (24:6)

g. Kidnappers: If a man kidnaps any of his countrymen from Israel and hurts or sells him, he is to be put to death so as to purge the evil from among them (24:7)

h. Those Infected with Leprosy: In case of an infection of leprosy, Israel was to follow the prescriptions of the Levitical priests (24:8-9)

i. Forbidden Pledge: No pledge may be taken from a man, which threatens his life [a cloak over-night] (24:10-13)

j. Wages to Hired Servant: No one is to oppress a hired servant (whether Israelite or alien) by not giving him his wages because he needs it and for him to cry against one is to be a sin before the Lord (24:14-15)

k. Death for Sin: Death for sin shall not be the responsibility of family members; each suffers his own consequences (24:16)

l. Protection of the Weak: No one is to pervert the justice of an alien or orphan or take a widows garment as a pledge remembering that Israel was once a slave in Egypt (24:17-18)

m. Provision for Needy: When one harvests in the field, the olive tree and/or the vineyard it is not to be gone over twice; what is left is to be for the orphan, the alien and the widow remembering that one was a slave in Egypt (24:19-22)

n. Limit of Punishment for the Wicked: If at court the judges decide in favor of the righteous and against the wicked, the evil one may be beaten up to forty times but no more lest he be degraded before other men (25:1-4)

o. Levites Marriage: If a man marries and then dies without children, the wife is not to marry outside of the family but to allow her husband's brother to marry her and raise up seed to the name of his dead brother to prevent his name from being blotted out; but if the brother will not fulfill his duty he is to be disgraced before the whole community (25:5-10)

p. Talionic Justice: If two countrymen are in a brawl and the wife of one of them seeks to stop the fight by squeezing the other's genitals she is to have her hand cut off (perhaps implying talionic justice: part of life for taking his ability away to produce life (25:11-12)

q. Fair Weights: One is to always have the same weights for measuring produce to be blessed by the Lord; otherwise it is a an abomination to the Lord (25:13-16)

r. Destruction of the Amalekites: Because of the abuse of the Amalekites to Israel when they attacked them in the wilderness [Ex.17:8-16], they are to be destroyed when the nation has rest from their surrounding enemies (25:17-19)

23. Offering of First Fruit when Entering the Land: When Israel enters the land they are to offer the first fruits to the Lord at the place where He chooses to dwell declaring the Lord's faithfulness to him and on the third year he is to give it to the Levite, stranger, orphan, and stranger in his city asking for the Lord's blessing in obedience (26:1-15)

a. Entering the Land: When Israel enters the land and receives the first fruits of the harvest they are to take them to the place where the Lord chooses to establish His

name and declare to the priest and the Lord God's gracious faithfulness in bringing them from Aram to this day in the land with rejoicing for all the Lord has done for them (26:1-11)

b. In the Third Year: In the third year the Israelite is to take the Lord's offering in purity according to the prescriptions of the Law and give it to be eaten by the Levite, stranger, orphan, and widow in his town so that the Lord will bless all of Israel (26:12-15)

E. Summary Charge:

In a summary charge the Lord commands Israel to do all of the statutes and ordinances given with all of their heart and soul since they are in covenant relationship with Him so that in their obedience He may exalt them as a people separated unto Him (26:16-19)

III. MOSES' THIRD ADDRESS

Covenant Renewal: Through a covenant renewal with the nation on the plains of Moab, Moses proclaims the blessing and/or cursing which will come upon the nation depending upon whether they obey or disobey the word of the Lord (27:1--30:27)

A. Exhortations to Keep the Commandments of the Lord Mountains Ebal and Gerizim:

Moses, the elders, and the Levites, exhort Israel that day to keep all of the commandments of the Lord and to proclaim them to the nation by writing the curses on Mountain Ebal where an altar and sacrifice are also to be placed, and by writing the blessings on Mountain Gerizim by proclaiming them from each mountain as they cross the Jordan to the people (27:1-26)

1. Mountain Ebal: Moses and the elders of Israel exhort Israel to keep all of the commandments of the Lord, to write the Law on white washed stones and to place them on Mountain Ebal as well as to build an altar on Mountain Ebal in order to offer sacrifice since on this day they have become a people of God to obey Him (27:1-10)

2. Mountain Gerizim: When Israel crosses the Jordan six tribes (Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin) are to stand on Mountain Gerizim to bless the people and six tribes (Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali) are to stand on

Mountain Ebal to curse the people with the Levites saying in a loud voice to all of the people that they will be cursed if they disobey specific laws of God: (making an idol, dishonoring parents, moving a neighbor's boundary, misleading a blind person, distorting justice, lying with one's father's wife, lying with an animal, lying with one's sister, lying with one's mother-in-law, striking one's neighbor in secret, accepting a bribe) [27:11-26]

B. Blessings & Cursing:

The Lord promises to either bless or curse Israel in the land according to whether or not she follows Him in diligent obedience (28:1-68)

1. Blessings: If Israel will be careful to diligently obey the Lord, He promises to bless them in the city and country, with fertility, with food, on their way, against their enemies, in their work, in their relationship to Him, before the nations, in fertility, as a supplier of other nations, as a leader (28:1-14)

2. Cursing: If Israel will not obey the Lord, He promises to curse them in the city and country, with food, with fertility, on their way, general curses, confusion, and rebuke in all their actions, pestilence, sickness, bad weather, drought, defeat before their enemies, physical and emotional illness, oppression, being overtaken by enemies, servitude to another nation, no crops, indebtedness to other countries, a besieging of Israel by a ruthless nation leading to savageness on behalf of the refined in the nation, destructive plagues, and discouraging captivity (28:15-68)

C. Covenant Renewal:

Moses renews the covenant with Israel at Mob by reviewing their historical relationship with the Lord, presenting it before those present and a future generation, telling of a future time when the nation will remember this covenant and be restored to its blessing, reminding them that these words are reachable so that they might obey the Lord, and reminding them that disobedience will bring about judgment from the Lord so they should choose obedience and life (29--30)

1. Covenant Renewal: Moses renews the covenant, which He made with Israel while in Mob which is distinct in time from the one made at Horeb (29:1)

2. Rehearsal of Salvation History: Moses once again rehearses the Lord's historical deliverance of the nation from Egypt, through the wilderness, and

against Simon and Ogk as a motivation for the nation to obey the covenant so that they might prosper in all that they do (29:2-9)

3. *Presentation before Generations:* As all of the nation stands before Moses on that day to enter into a renewed Mosaic covenant with God which has been revealed with its incumbent responsibilities, it is presented to all of those present who might one day rebel and reap judgment as well as to all of those of a future generation who will recognize the judgment as from the Lord due to the nation breaking the covenant (29:10-29)

4. *Future Captivity & Deliverance:* When the nation in captivity remembers all which Moses has said to them and repents, the Lord will restore them from captivity with compassion gathering them from wherever they may be to be back in the land with a circumcised heart to then inflict the curses upon Israel's enemies and prosper the nation as they obey (30:1-10)

5. *Commands within Reach:* The commands of the Lord are not beyond the reach of the nation but very near to her so that she may do it (30:11-14)

6. *Choice of Life or Death:* Moses concludes his charge by telling Israel before the witness of heaven and earth that they may choose either life or death by choosing obedience or disobedience to the commands set before them; he encourages them to choose life through obedience (30:15-20)

IV. Moses' Fourth Address

Final Charge: In the final words of Moses, he charges the Nation to take the land, read the Law, know that his words will be a witness against them beside the arch of the covenant, listen to prophetic history to know that they will need to be obedient to be blessed and he blesses the nation with respect to the land tribe by tribe (31:1--33:29)

A. Do Not Fear Enter the Land with the Law:

In a recounting of final charges Moses encouraged the Nation and Joshua to not fear but enter to take the Land, he gave the completed Law to be read to the nation each Year of Remission before the Lord, he was told by the Lord to write a song as a witness against the nation when Joshua was commissioned by the Lord, and he had the Law placed by the ark of the covenant as a witness against the nation (31:1-27)

1. *Exhortation to the People to Take the Land:* Because Moses is 121 years old, no longer able to move about, and forbidden by the Lord to enter across the Jordan, he encourages the Nation and their new leader Joshua to not fear but to take the land remembering that the Lord will be the one fighting before them as He has to this point (31:1-8)

2. *Giving of the Law to the Priests:* Moses wrote down this Law and gave it to the priests and to all of the elders of Israel with the commanded at the end of every seven years during the year of remission, at the feast of booths when all of Israel was together at the Lord's chosen place, this law was to be read to all of gathered Israel in order that they may fear the Lord and obey it all (31:9-13)

3. *Song of Moses --A Witness against the People:* As Moses and Joshua came before the Lord at the tent of meeting, the Lord appeared and told Moses to write a song as a witness against the people for when they sin against the Lord as well as commissioned Joshua to be strong and courageous since he will bring the nation into the Land (31:14-24)

4. *Law Next to the Ark as a Witness:* When Moses finished writing the Law it was placed by the Levities next to the Ark of the Covenant as a witness against the nation whereupon Moses assembled the elders and officers to speak to because he knew of their future rebellion against the Lord (31:24-27)

B. Exhortation to Obedience in View of Future:

Gathering all of Israel together to proclaim one last time the need for obedience on their behalf for there to be blessing, Moses proclaims in prophetic history the Lord's magnificent character which Israel will rebel against, and thus suffer judgment under the hand of the nations and then be delivered after they realized that the Lord alone is God (31:28--32:47)

1. *Proclamation of Moses' Song to the People:* Moses gathers the leaders of Israel together and proclaims his song as a witness against them (31:28-30)

2. *Heaven and Earth as a Witness:* Moses beseeches all of heaven and earth to his penetrating song which proclaims the character of the Lord who is great, like a rock, perfect in His work, just, faithful, righteous and upright in His ways (32:1--4)

3. **Rebuke of Israel:** Israel is rebuked for their corruption, defection, perversion and lack of thoughtfulness for the Lord who has redeemed and established them (32:5-6)

4. **The Lord's Choice of Israel:** The Lord's historical creation of Israel from insignificance to blessing is recounted from the dividing of the nations (Gen. 10-11), through the choosing of Jacob, their deliverance from Egypt, their protection and training and their experience of blessing in the trans-Jordan (32:7-14)

5. **Israel's Rebellion:** Israel, in her blessing, rebelled against the Lord by forgetting Him and going after other gods (32:15-18)

6. **Future Judgment:** The Lord will bring about severe judgment through another nation upon Israel for their evil, but it will not be complete lest the other nations consider that they had been the ones who were triumphant rather than God allowing them to be victorious (32:19-33)

7. **Future Vindication:** The time will come when Israel realizes that the gods are powerless and it is the Lord who rules over life and death that He will vindicate His people with deliverance under the judgment of their enemies (32:34-43)

8. **Warning to Be Obedient:** After proclaiming all of these words to the people Moses warned them once more that they need to take them to heart since it is by obedience to them that they will have life in the Land (32:44-47)

C. Blessing of the People:

Before Moses goes to Mountain Nebo to see the land that he may not enter due to his sin and then to be gathered to his people in death, He prophetically blesses the nation tribe by tribe (32:48--33:29)

1. **Mountain Nebo:** The Lord tells Moses to go to Mount Nebo in Moab to see the land of Canaan and then die to be gathered to his people since he was not allowed to enter the land due to his sin against the Lord at Meribah-kadesh where he did not treat the Lord as holy in the midst of the people (32:48-52)

2. **Blessing of Israel:** Before his death Moses blessed the sons of Israel in a prophetic manner concerning their place in the Land: by recounting the Lord's advance with His people from Sinai, by blessing each tribe in particular: Reuben, Judah (who later absorbed Simeon who is not mentioned in this list [Joshua 19:1-9]), Levi,

Benjamin, Joseph (represented by Ephraim and Manasseh), Zebulun, Issachar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali, Asher and by concluding that God is an eternal refuge for His people (33:1-29)

V. EPILOGUE: A SETTING CONFIRMING THE TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP

As the last days of Moses came, he was shown the land from Mountain Nebo by the Lord, died and was buried in the plains of Mob according to the word of the Lord, mourned over by Israel, replaced in leadership by Joshua, but not replaced in Israel as a supreme prophet before the Lord (34:1-12)

A. The Death of Moses:

The last days of Moses are recounted including his journey up Mountain Nebo to the top of Pisgah where the Lord showed him all of the land which he was not allowed to enter, his death according to the word of the Lord, his burial in the valley of Mob, and the weeping of the nation for 30 days (34:1-8)

B. Moses' Replacement Joshua:

Joshua was filled with the Spirit of wisdom as the one commissioned by Moses and the nation listened and did as he commanded as they had with Moses (34:9)

C. Awaiting a Prophet like Moses:

No prophet has risen in Israel like Moses since Moses whom the Lord knew face to face for the sake of representing Him in such a powerful way before the nations and Israel (34:10-12)