



The Book Of Deuteronomy

A Call To Israel To
Know Their God

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Deuteronomy

The book of Deuteronomy is written in the form of a treaty between a king and his vassal state typical of the second millennium B.C. It calls Israel to remember who God is and what he has done.

Lacking faith, the old generation had wandered for 40 years and died in the desert. They left Egypt behind, but never knew the Promised Land. Then on the east bank of the Jordan River,

Moses prepared the sons and daughters of that faithless generation to possess the land. After a brief history lesson emphasizing God's great acts on behalf of his people, Moses reviewed the law. Then he restated the covenant—God's contract with his people.

The lessons are clear. Because of what God has done, Israel should have hope and follow him; because of what he expects, they should listen and obey; because of who he is, they should love him completely. Learning these lessons will prepare them to possess the Promised Land.

As you hear the message of Deuteronomy, remember how God has expressed his kindness in your life, and then commit yourself anew to trust, love, and obey him.

THE BLUEPRINT

A. WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US: MOSES' FIRST ADDRESS (Deut. 1:1-4:43)

Moses reviewed the mighty acts of God for the nation of Israel. Remembering God's special involvement in our lives gives us hope and encouragement for the future.

Deuteronomy 1:1-4:43

This book records the words that Moses spoke to all the people of Israel while they were in the wilderness east of the Jordan River. They were camped in the Jordan Valley near Suph, between Paran on one side and Tophel, Laban, Hazereth, and Di-zahab on the other. [2] Normally it takes only eleven days to travel from Mount Sinai to Kadesh-barnea, going by way of Mount Seir. [3] But forty years after the Israelites left Mount Sinai, on a day in midwinter, Moses gave these speeches to the Israelites, telling them everything the Lord had commanded him to say. [4] This was after he had defeated King Sihon of the Amorites, who had ruled in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who had ruled in Ashtaroth and Edrei.

[5] So Moses addressed the people of Israel while they were in the land of Moab east of the Jordan River. He began to explain the law as follows: [6] "When we were at Mount Sinai, the Lord our God said to us, 'You have stayed at this mountain long enough. [7] It is time to break camp and move on. Go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all the neighboring regions—the Jordan Valley, the hill country, the western foothills, the Negev, and the coastal plain. Go to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, and all the way to the great Euphrates River. [8] I am giving all this land to you! Go in and occupy it, for it is the land the Lord swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to all their descendants.'

[9] "At that time I told you, 'You are too great a burden for me to carry all by myself. [10] The Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars! [11] And may the Lord, the God of your ancestors, multiply you a thousand times more and bless you as he promised! [12] But how can I settle all your quarrels and problems by myself? [13] Choose some men from each tribe who have wisdom, understanding, and a good reputation, and I will appoint them as your leaders.'

[14] "You agreed that my plan was a good one. [15] So I took the wise and respected men you had selected from your tribes and appointed them to serve as judges and officials over you. Some were responsible for a thousand people, some for a hundred, some for fifty, and some for ten. [16] I instructed the judges, 'You must be perfectly fair at all times, not only to fellow Israelites, but also to the foreigners living among you.'

[17] When you make decisions, never favor those who are rich; be fair to lowly and great alike. Don't be afraid of how they will react, for you are judging in the place of God. Bring me any cases that are too difficult for you, and I will handle them.' [18] And at that time I gave you instructions about everything you were to do.

[19] "Then, just as the Lord our God directed us, we left Mount Sinai and traveled through the great and terrifying wilderness, which you yourselves saw, and headed toward the hill country of the Amorites. When we arrived at Kadesh-barnea, [20] I said to you, 'You have now reached the land that the Lord our God is giving us. [21] Look! He has placed it in front of you. Go and occupy it as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, has promised you. Don't be afraid! Don't be discouraged!'

[22] "But you responded, 'First, let's send out scouts to explore the land for us. They will advise us on the best route to take and decide which towns we should capture.' [23] This seemed like a good idea to me, so I chose twelve scouts, one from each of your tribes. [24] They crossed into the hills and came to the valley of Eshcol and explored it. [25] They picked some of its fruit and brought it back to us. And they reported that the land the Lord our God had given us was indeed a good land.

[26] "But you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God and refused to go in. [27] You murmured and complained in your tents and said, 'The Lord must hate us, bringing us here from Egypt to be slaughtered by these Amorites. [28] How can we go on? Our scouts have demoralized us with their report. They say that the people of the land are taller and more powerful than we are, and that the walls of their towns rise high into the sky! They have even seen giants there—the descendants of Anak!'

[29] "But I said to you, 'Don't be afraid! [30] The Lord your God is going before you. He will fight for you, just as you saw him do in Egypt. [31] And you saw how the Lord your God cared for you again and again here in the wilderness, just as a father cares for his child. Now he has brought you to this place.' [32] But even after all he did, you refused to trust the Lord your God, [33] who goes before you looking for the best places to camp, guiding you by a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of cloud by day.

[34] "When the Lord heard your complaining, he became very angry. So he solemnly swore, [35] 'Not one of you from this entire wicked generation will live to see the good land I swore to give your ancestors, [36] except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see this land because he has followed the Lord completely. I will give to him and his descendants some of the land he walked over during his scouting mission.'

[37] "And the Lord was also angry with me because of you. He said to me, 'You will never enter the Promised Land! [38] Instead, your assistant, Joshua son of Nun, will lead the people into the land. Encourage him as he prepares to enter it. [39] I will give the land to your innocent children. You were afraid they would be captured, but they will be the ones who occupy it. [40] As for you, turn around now and go on back through the wilderness toward the Red Sea.'

[41] "Then you confessed, 'We have sinned against the Lord! We will go into the land and fight for it, as the Lord our God has told us.' So your men strapped on their weapons, thinking it would be easy to conquer the hill country.

[42] "But the Lord said to me, 'Tell them not to attack, for I will not go with them. If they do, they will be crushed by their enemies.' [43] This is what I told you, but you would not listen. Instead, you again rebelled against the Lord's command and arrogantly went into the hill country to fight. [44] But the Amorites who lived there came out against you like a swarm of bees. They chased and battered you all the way from Seir to Hormah. [45] Then you returned and wept before the Lord, but he refused to listen. [46] So you stayed there at Kadesh for a long time.

[2:1] "Then we turned around and set out across the wilderness toward the Red Sea, just as the Lord had instructed me, and we wandered around Mount Seir for a long time. [2] Then at last the Lord said to me, [3] 'You have been wandering around in this hill country long enough; turn northward. [4] Give these orders to the people: "You will be passing through the country belonging to your relatives the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. The Edomites will feel threatened, so be careful.

[5] Don't bother them, for I have given them all the hill country around Mount Seir as their property, and I will not give you any of their land. [6] Pay them for whatever food or water you use. [7] The Lord your God has blessed everything you have done and has watched your every step through this great wilderness. During these forty years, the Lord your God has been with you and provided for your every need so that you lacked nothing." [8] So we went past our relatives, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, and avoided the road through the Arabah Valley that comes up from Elath and Ezion-geber.

"Then as we traveled northward along the desert route through Moab, [9] the Lord warned us, 'Do not bother the Moabites, the descendants of Lot, or start a war with them. I have given them Ar as their property, and I will not give you any of their land.' "

[10] (A numerous and powerful race of giants called the Emites had once lived in the area of Ar. They were as tall as the Anakites, another race of giants. [11] Both the Emites and the Anakites are often referred to as the Rephaites, but the Moabites called them Emites. [12] In earlier times the Horites had lived at Mount Seir, but they were driven out and displaced by the descendants of Esau. In a similar way the peoples in Canaan were driven from the land that the Lord had assigned to Israel.)

[13] Moses continued, "Then the Lord told us to cross Zered Brook, and we did. [14] So thirty-eight years passed from the time we first arrived at Kadesh-barnea until we finally crossed Zered Brook! For the Lord had vowed that this could not happen until all the men old enough to fight in battle had died in the wilderness. [15] The Lord had lifted his hand against them until all of them had finally died.

[16] "When all the men of fighting age had died, [17] the Lord said to me, [18] 'Today you will cross the border of Moab at Ar [19] and enter the land of Ammon. But do not bother the Ammonites, the descendants of Lot, or start a war with them. I have given the land of Ammon to them as their property, and I will not give you any of their land.' "

[20] (That area, too, was once considered the land of the Rephaites, though the Ammonites referred to them as Zamzummites. [21] They were a numerous and powerful race, as tall as the Anakites. But the Lord destroyed them so the Ammonites could occupy their land. [22] He had similarly helped the descendants of Esau at Mount Seir, for he destroyed the Horites so they could settle there in their place. The descendants of Esau live there to this day. [23] A similar thing happened when the Caphtorites from Crete invaded and destroyed the Avvites, who had lived in villages in the area of Gaza.)

[24] Moses continued, "Then the Lord said, 'now cross the Arnon Gorge! Look, I will help you defeat Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and I will give you his land. Attack him and begin to occupy the land. [25] Beginning today I will make all people throughout the earth terrified of you. When they hear reports about you, they will tremble with dread and fear.'

[26] "Then from the wilderness of Kedemoth I sent ambassadors to King Sihon of Heshbon with this proposal of peace: [27] 'Let us pass through your land. We will stay on the main road and won't turn off into the fields on either side. [28] We will pay for every bite of food we eat and all the water we drink. All we want is permission to pass through your land. [29] The descendants of Esau at Mount Seir allowed us to go through their country, and so did the Moabites, who live in Ar. Let us pass through until we cross the Jordan into the land the Lord our God has given us.' [30] But King Sihon refused to allow you to pass through, because the Lord your God made Sihon stubborn and defiant so he could help you defeat them, as he has now done.

[31] "Then the Lord said to me, 'Look, I have begun to hand King Sihon and his land over to you. Begin now to conquer and occupy his land.' [32] Then King Sihon declared war on us and mobilized his forces at Jahaz. [33] But the Lord our God handed him over to us, and we crushed him, his sons, and all his people. [34] We conquered all his towns and completely destroyed everyone—men, women, and children. Not a single person was spared. [35] We took all the livestock as plunder for ourselves, along with anything of value from the towns we ransacked.

[36] "The Lord our God helped us conquer Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Gorge, the town in the gorge, and the whole area as far as Gilead. No town had walls too strong for us. [37] However, we stayed away from the Ammonites along the Jabbok River and the towns in the hill country—all the places the Lord our God had commanded us to leave alone.

[3:1] "Next we headed for the land of Bashan, where King Og and his army attacked us at Edrei. [2] But the Lord told me, 'Do not be afraid of him, for I have given you victory over Og and his army, giving you his entire land. Treat him just as you treated King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon.' [3] So the Lord our God handed King Og and all his people over to us, and we killed them all. [4] We conquered all sixty of his towns, the entire Argob region in his kingdom of Bashan. [5] These were all fortified cities with high walls and barred gates. We also took many unwalled villages at the same time.

6] We completely destroyed the kingdom of Bashan, just as we had destroyed King Sihon of Heshbon. We destroyed all the people in every town we conquered—men, women, and children alike. [7] But we kept all the livestock for ourselves and took plunder from all the towns.

[8] "We now possessed all the land of the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River—from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon. [9] (Mount Hermon is called Sirion by the Sidonians; the Amorites call it Senir.) [10] We had now conquered all the cities on the plateau, and all Gilead and Bashan as far as the towns of Salecah and Edrei, which were part of Og's kingdom in Bashan. [11] (Incidentally, King Og of Bashan was the last of the giant Rephaites. His iron bed was more than thirteen feet long and six feet wide. It can still be seen in the Ammonite city of Rabbah.)

[12] "When we took possession of this land, I gave the territory beyond Aroer along the Arnon Gorge, plus half of the hill country of Gilead with its towns, to the tribes of Reuben and Gad.

[13] Then I gave the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan—Og's former kingdom—to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (The Argob region of Bashan used to be known as the land of the Rephaites.

[14] Jair, a leader from the tribe of Manasseh, acquired the whole Argob region in Bashan all the way to the borders of the Geshurites and Maacathites. Jair renamed this region after himself, calling it the Towns of Jair, as it is still known today.) [15] I gave Gilead to the clan of Makir.

[16] And to the tribes of Reuben and Gad I gave the area extending from Gilead to the middle of the Arnon Gorge, all the way to the Jabbok River on the Ammonite frontier. [17] They also received the Jordan Valley, including the Jordan River and its eastern banks, all the way from the Sea of Galilee down to the Dead Sea, with the slopes of Pisgah on the east.

[18] "At that time I gave this command to the tribes that will live east of the Jordan: 'Although the Lord your God has given you this land as your property, all your fighting men must cross the Jordan, armed and ready to protect your Israelite relatives. [19] Your wives, children, and numerous livestock, however, may stay behind in the towns I have given you. [20] When the Lord has given security to the rest of the Israelites, as he has to you, and when they occupy the land the Lord your God is giving them across the Jordan River, then you may return here to the land I have given you.'

[21] "At that time I said to Joshua, 'You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings. He will do the same to all the kingdoms on the west side of the Jordan. [22] Do not be afraid of the nations there, for the Lord your God will fight for you.'

[23] "At that time I pleaded with the Lord and said, [24] 'O Sovereign Lord, I am your servant. You have only begun to show me your greatness and power. Is there any god in heaven or on earth who can perform such great deeds as yours? [25] Please let me cross the Jordan to see the wonderful land on the other side, the beautiful hill country and the Lebanon Mountains.'

[26] "But the Lord was angry with me because of you, and he would not listen to me. 'That's enough!' he ordered. 'Speak of it no more. [27] You can go to Pisgah Peak and view the land in every direction, but you may not cross the Jordan River. [28] But commission Joshua and encourage him, for he will lead the people across the Jordan. He will give them the land you now see before you.' [29] So we stayed in the valley near Beth-peor.

[4:1] "And now, Israel, listen carefully to these laws and regulations that I am about to teach you. Obey them so that you may live, so you may enter and occupy the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. [2] Do not add to or subtract from these commands I am giving you from the Lord your God. Just obey them. [3] You saw what the Lord did to you at Baal-peor, where the Lord your God destroyed everyone who had worshiped the god Baal of Peor. [4] But all of you who were faithful to the Lord your God are still alive today.

[5] "You must obey these laws and regulations when you arrive in the land you are about to enter and occupy. The Lord my God gave them to me and commanded me to pass them on to you. [6] If you obey them carefully, you will display your wisdom and intelligence to the surrounding nations. When they hear about these laws, they will exclaim, 'What other nation is as wise and prudent as this!' [7] For what great nation has a god as near to them as the Lord our God is near to us whenever we call on him? [8] And what great nation has laws and regulations as fair as this body of laws that I am giving you today?

[9] "But watch out! Be very careful never to forget what you have seen the Lord do for you. Do not let these things escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren. [10] Tell them especially about the day when you stood before the Lord your God at Mount Sinai, where he told me, 'Summon the people before me, and I will instruct them. That way, they will learn to fear me as long as they live, and they will be able to teach my laws to their children.' [11] You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain was burning with fire. Flames shot into the sky, shrouded in black clouds and deep darkness.

[12] And the Lord spoke to you from the fire. You heard his words but didn't see his form; there was only a voice. [13] He proclaimed his covenant, which he commanded you to keep—the Ten Commandments—and wrote them on two stone tablets. [14] It was at that time that the Lord commanded me to issue the laws and regulations you must obey in the land you are about to enter and occupy.

[15] "But be careful! You did not see the Lord's form on the day he spoke to you from the fire at Mount Sinai. [16] So do not corrupt yourselves by making a physical image in any form—whether of a man or a woman, [17] an animal or a bird, [18] a creeping creature or a fish. [19] And when you look up into the sky and see the sun, moon, and stars—all the forces of heaven—don't be seduced by them and worship them. The Lord your God designated these heavenly bodies for all the peoples of the earth. [20] Remember that the Lord rescued you from the burning furnace of Egypt to become his own people and special possession; that is what you are today.

[21] "But the Lord was very angry with me because of you. He vowed that I would never cross the Jordan River into the good land the Lord your God is giving you as your special possession. [22] Though you will cross the Jordan to occupy the land, I will die here on this side of the river. [23] So be careful not to break the covenant the Lord your God has made with you. You will break it if you make idols of any shape or form, for the Lord your God has absolutely forbidden this. [24] The Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.

[25] "In the future, when you have children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time, do not corrupt yourselves by making idols of any kind. This is evil in the sight of the Lord your God and will arouse his anger.

[26] "Today I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you. If you disobey me, you will quickly disappear from the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy. You will live there only a short time; then you will be utterly destroyed. [27] For the Lord will scatter you among the nations, where only a few of you will survive. [28] There, in a foreign land, you will worship idols made from wood and stone, gods that neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. [29] From there you will search again for the Lord your God. And if you search for him with all your heart and soul, you will find him.

[30] "When those bitter days have come upon you far in the future, you will finally return to the Lord your God and listen to what he tells you. [31] For the Lord your God is merciful—he will not abandon you or destroy you or forget the solemn covenant he made with your ancestors.

[32] "Search all of history, from the time God created people on the earth until now. Then search from one end of the heavens to the other. See if anything as great as this has ever happened before. [33] Has any nation ever heard the voice of God speaking from fire—as you did—and survived? [34] Has any other god taken one nation for himself by rescuing it from another by means of trials, miraculous signs, wonders, war, awesome power, and terrifying acts? Yet that is what the Lord your God did for you in Egypt, right before your very eyes.

[35] "He showed you these things so you would realize that the Lord is God and that there is no other god. [36] He let you hear his voice from heaven so he could instruct you. He let you see his great fire here on earth so he could speak to you from it. [37] Because he loved your ancestors, he chose to bless their descendants and personally brought you out of Egypt with a great display of power. [38] He drove out nations far greater than you, so he could bring you in and give you their land as a special possession, as it is today.

[39] So remember this and keep it firmly in mind: The Lord is God both in heaven and on earth, and there is no other god! [40] If you obey all the laws and commands that I will give you today, all will be well with you and your children. Then you will enjoy a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you for all time."

[41] Then Moses set apart three cities of refuge east of the Jordan River, [42] where anyone who had accidentally killed someone without having any previous hostility could flee for safety. [43] These were the cities: Bezer on the wilderness plateau for the tribe of Reuben; Ramoth in Gilead for the tribe of Gad; Golan in Bashan for the tribe of Manasseh.

B. PRINCIPLES FOR GODLY LIVING: MOSES' SECOND ADDRESS (Deut. 4:44-28:68)

Obeying God's laws brought blessings to the Israelites and disobeying brought misfortune. This was part of the written agreement God made with his people. Although we are not part of this covenant, the principle holds true: obedience and disobedience carry inevitable consequences in this life and the next.

1. The Ten Commandments
2. Love the Lord your God
3. Laws for proper worship
4. Laws for ruling the nation
5. Laws for human relationships
6. Consequences of obedience and disobedience

Deut. 4:44-28:68

This is the law that Moses handed down to the Israelites. [45] These are the stipulations, laws, and regulations that Moses gave to the people of Israel when they left Egypt, [46] and as they camped in the valley near Beth-peor east of the Jordan River. (This land was formerly occupied by the Amorites under King Sihon of Heshbon. He and his people had been destroyed by Moses and the Israelites as they came up from Egypt. [47] Israel conquered his land and that of King Og of Bashan—the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan. [48] So Israel conquered all the area from Aroer at the edge of the Arnon Gorge to Mount Sirion, also called Mount Hermon. [49] And they took the eastern bank of the Jordan Valley as far south as the Dead Sea, below the slopes of Pisgah.)

[5:1] Moses called all the people of Israel together and said, "Listen carefully to all the laws and regulations I am giving you today. Learn them and be sure to obey them!"

[2] "While we were at Mount Sinai, the Lord our God made a covenant with us. [3] The Lord did not make this covenant long ago with our ancestors, but with all of us who are alive today. [4] The Lord spoke to you face to face from the heart of the fire on the mountain. [5] I stood as an intermediary between you and the Lord, for you were afraid of the fire and did not climb the mountain. He spoke to me, and I passed his words on to you. This is what he said:

[6] " 'I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt.

[7] " 'Do not worship any other gods besides me.

[8] " 'Do not make idols of any kind, whether in the shape of birds or animals or fish. [9] You must never worship or bow down to them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not share your affection with any other god! I do not leave unpunished the sins of those who hate me, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations. [10]

But I lavish my love on those who love me and obey my commands, even for a thousand generations.

[11] "Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

[12] "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you.

[13] Six days a week are set apart for your daily duties and regular work, [14] but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any kind of work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your oxen and donkeys and other livestock, and any foreigners living among you. All your male and female servants must rest as you do.

[15] Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out with amazing power and mighty deeds. That is why the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

[16] "Honor your father and mother, as the Lord your God commanded you. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God will give you.

[17] "Do not murder.

[18] "Do not commit adultery.

[19] "Do not steal.

[20] "Do not testify falsely against your neighbor.

[21] "Do not covet your neighbor's wife. Do not covet your neighbor's house or land, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else your neighbor owns.'

[22] "The Lord spoke these words with a loud voice to all of you from the heart of the fire, surrounded by clouds and deep darkness. This was all he said at that time, and he wrote his words on two stone tablets and gave them to me. [23] But when you heard the voice from the darkness, while the mountain was blazing with fire, all your tribal leaders came to me. [24] They said, 'The Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice from the heart of the fire. Today we have seen God speaking to humans, and yet we live! [25] But now, why should we die? If the Lord our God speaks to us again, we will certainly die and be consumed by this awesome fire.'

[26] Can any living thing hear the voice of the living God from the heart of the fire and yet survive? [27] You go and listen to what the Lord our God says. Then come and tell us everything he tells you, and we will listen and obey.'

[28] "The Lord heard your request and said to me, 'I have heard what the people have said to you, and they are right. [29] Oh, that they would always have hearts like this, that they might fear me and obey all my commands! If they did, they and their descendants would prosper forever.'

[30] Go and tell them to return to their tents. [31] But you stay here with me so I can give you all my commands, laws, and regulations. You will teach them to the people so they can obey them in the land I am giving to them as their inheritance.' "

[32] So Moses told the people, "You must obey all the commands of the Lord your God, following his instructions in every detail. [33] Stay on the path that the Lord your God has commanded you to follow. Then you will live long and prosperous lives in the land you are about to enter and occupy.

[6:1] "These are all the commands, laws, and regulations that the Lord your God told me to teach you so you may obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, [2] and so you and your children and grandchildren might fear the Lord your God as long as you live. If you obey all his laws and commands, you will enjoy a long life. [3] Listen closely, Israel, to everything I say. Be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

[4] "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. [5] And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. [6] And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. [7] Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. [8] Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. [9] Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

[10] "The Lord your God will soon bring you into the land he swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a land filled with large, prosperous cities that you did not build. [11] The houses will be richly stocked with goods you did not produce. You will draw water from cisterns you did not dig, and you will eat from vineyards and olive trees you did not plant. When you have eaten your fill in this land, [12] be careful not to forget the Lord, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. [13] You must fear the Lord your God and serve him. When you take an oath, you must use only his name.

[14] "You must not worship any of the gods of neighboring nations, [15] for the Lord your God, who lives among you, is a jealous God. His anger will flare up against you and wipe you from the face of the earth. [16] Do not test the Lord your God as you did when you complained at Massah. [17] You must diligently obey the commands of the Lord your God—all the stipulations and laws he has given you. [18] Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so all will go well with you. Then you will enter and occupy the good land that the Lord solemnly promised to give your ancestors. [19] You will drive out all the enemies living in your land, just as the Lord said you would.

[20] "In the future your children will ask you, 'what is the meaning of these stipulations, laws, and regulations that the Lord our God has given us?' [21] Then you must tell them, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with amazing power. [22] Before our eyes the Lord did miraculous signs and wonders, dealing terrifying blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. [23] He brought us out of Egypt so he could give us this land he had solemnly promised to give our ancestors.

[24] And the Lord our God commanded us to obey all these laws and to fear him for our own prosperity and well-being, as is now the case. [25] For we are righteous when we obey all the commands the Lord our God has given us.'

[7:1] "When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are about to enter and occupy, he will clear away many nations ahead of you: the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. These seven nations are all more powerful than you. [2] When the Lord your God hands these nations over to you and you conquer them, you must completely destroy them. Make no treaties with them and show them no mercy. [3] Do not intermarry with them, and don't let your daughters and sons marry their sons and daughters. [4] They will lead your young people away from me to worship other gods. Then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and he will destroy you. [5] Instead, you must break down their pagan altars and shatter their sacred pillars. Cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols. [6] For you are a holy people, who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure.

[7] "The Lord did not choose you and lavish his love on you because you were larger or greater than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations! [8] It was simply because the Lord loves you, and because he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. That is why the Lord rescued you with such amazing power from your slavery under Pharaoh in Egypt. [9] Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and constantly loves those who love him and obey his commands. [10] But he does not hesitate to punish and destroy those who hate him.

[11] Therefore, obey all these commands, laws, and regulations I am giving you today.

[12] "If you listen to these regulations and obey them faithfully, the Lord your God will keep his covenant of unending love with you, as he solemnly promised your ancestors.

[13] He will love you and bless you and make you into a great nation. He will give you many children and give fertility to your land and your animals. When you arrive in the land he swore to give your ancestors, you will have large crops of grain, grapes, and olives, and great herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. [14] You will be blessed above all the nations of the earth. None of your men or women will be childless, and all your livestock will bear young. [15] And the Lord will protect you from all sickness. He will not let you suffer from the terrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will bring them all on your enemies!

[16] "You must destroy all the nations the Lord your God hands over to you. Show them no mercy and do not worship their gods. If you do, they will trap you. [17] Perhaps you will think to yourselves, 'How can we ever conquer these nations that are so much more powerful than we are?' [18] But don't be afraid of them! Just remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all the land of Egypt.

[19] Remember the great terrors the Lord your God sent against them. You saw it all with your own eyes! And remember the miraculous signs and wonders, and the amazing power he used when he brought you out of Egypt. The Lord your God will use this same power against the people you fear. [20] And then the Lord your God will send hornets to drive out the few survivors still hiding from you!

[21] "No, do not be afraid of those nations, for the Lord your God is among you, and he is a great and awesome God. [22] The Lord your God will drive those nations out ahead of you little by little. You will not clear them away all at once, for if you did, the wild animals would multiply too quickly for you. [23] But the Lord your God will hand them over to you. He will throw them into complete confusion until they are destroyed. [24] He will put their kings in your power, and you will erase their names from the face of the earth. No one will be able to stand against you, and you will destroy them all.

[25] "You must burn their idols in fire, and do not desire the silver or gold with which they are made. Do not take it or it will become a snare to you, for it is detestable to the Lord your God. [26] Do not bring any detestable objects into your home, for then you will be set apart for destruction just like them. You must utterly detest such things, for they are set apart for destruction.

[8:1] "Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors. [2] Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would really obey his commands. [3] Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes by feeding on every word of the Lord.

[4] For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell. [5] So you should realize that just as a parent disciplines a child, the Lord your God disciplines you to help you.

[6] "So obey the commands of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. [7] For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with springs that gush forth in the valleys and hills. [8] It is a land of wheat and barley, of grapevines, fig trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey. [9] It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills. [10] When you have eaten your fill, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

[11] "But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and laws. [12] For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, [13] and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else,

[14] that is the time to be careful. Do not become proud at that time and forget the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. [15] Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so hot and dry. He gave you water from the rock! [16] He fed you with manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did this to humble you and test you for your own good. [17] He did it so you would never think that it was your own strength and energy that made you wealthy. [18] Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you power to become rich, and he does it to fulfill the covenant he made with your ancestors.

[19] "But I assure you of this: If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them, you will certainly be destroyed. [20] Just as the Lord has destroyed other nations in your path, you also will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God.

[9:1] "Hear, O Israel! Today you are about to cross the Jordan River to occupy the land belonging to nations much greater and more powerful than you. They live in cities with walls that reach to the sky! [2] They are strong and tall—descendants of the famous Anakite giants. You've heard the saying, 'Who can stand up to the Anakites?' [3] But the Lord your God will cross over ahead of you like a devouring fire to destroy them. He will subdue them so that you will quickly conquer them and drive them out, just as the Lord has promised.

[4] "After the Lord your God has done this for you, don't say to yourselves, 'The Lord has given us this land because we are so righteous!' No, it is because of the wickedness of the other nations that he is doing it. [5] It is not at all because you are such righteous, upright people that you are about to occupy their land. The Lord your God will drive these nations out ahead of you only because of their wickedness, and to fulfill the oath he had sworn to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [6] I will say it again: The Lord your God is not giving you this good land because you are righteous, for you are not—you are a stubborn people.

[7] "Remember how angry you made the Lord your God out in the wilderness. From the day you left Egypt until now, you have constantly rebelled against him. [8] Remember how angry you made the Lord at Mount Sinai, where he was ready to destroy you. [9] That was when I was on the mountain receiving the tablets of stone inscribed with the covenant that the Lord had made with you. I was there for forty days and forty nights, and all that time I ate nothing and drank no water. [10] The Lord gave me the covenant, the tablets on which God himself had written all the words he had spoken to you from the fire on the mountain.

[11] "At the end of the forty days and nights, the Lord handed me the two stone tablets with the covenant inscribed on them. [12] Then the Lord said to me, 'Go down immediately because the people you led out of Egypt have become corrupt. They have already turned from the way I commanded them to live and have cast an idol for themselves from gold.'

[13] "The Lord said to me, 'I have been watching this people, and they are extremely stubborn. [14] Leave me alone so I may destroy them and erase their name from under heaven. Then I will make a mighty nation of your descendants, a nation larger and more powerful than they are.'

[15] "So I came down from the fiery mountain, holding in my hands the two stone tablets of the covenant. [16] There below me I could see the gold calf you had made in your terrible sin against the Lord your God. How quickly you had turned from the path the Lord had commanded you to follow! [17] So I raised the stone tablets and dashed them to the ground. I smashed them before your very eyes. [18] Then for forty days and nights I lay prostrate before the Lord, neither eating bread nor drinking water. I did this because you had sinned by doing what the Lord hated, thus making him very angry.

[19] How I feared for you, for the Lord was ready to destroy you. But again he listened to me. [20] The Lord was so angry with Aaron that he wanted to destroy him. But I prayed for Aaron, and the Lord spared him. [21] I took your sin—the calf you had made—and I melted it in the fire and ground it into fine dust. I threw the dust into the stream that cascades down the mountain.

[22] "You also made the Lord angry at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth-hattaavah. [23] And at Kadesh-barnea the Lord sent you out with this command: 'Go up and take the land I have given you.' But you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God and refused to trust him or obey him.

[24] Yes, you have been rebelling against the Lord as long as I have known you.

[25] "That is why I fell down and lay before the Lord for forty days and nights when he was ready to destroy you. [26] I prayed to the Lord and said, 'O Sovereign Lord, do not destroy your own people. They are your special possession, redeemed from Egypt by your mighty power and glorious strength. [27] Overlook the stubbornness and sin of these people, but remember instead your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[28] If you destroy these people, the Egyptians will say, "The Lord destroyed them because he wasn't able to bring them to the land he had sworn to give them." Or they might say, "He destroyed them because he hated them; he brought them into the wilderness to slaughter them." [29] But they are your people and your special possession, whom you brought from Egypt by your mighty power and glorious strength.'

[10:1] "At that time the Lord said to me, 'Prepare two stone tablets like the first ones, and make a sacred chest of wood to keep them in. Return to me on the mountain, [2] and I will write on the tablets the same words that were on the ones you smashed. Then place the tablets in the sacred chest—the Ark of the Covenant.'

[3] "So I made a chest of acacia wood and cut two stone tablets like the first two, and I took the tablets up the mountain. [4] The Lord again wrote the terms of the covenant—the Ten Commandments—on them and gave them to me. They were the same words the Lord had spoken to you from the heart of the fire on the mountain as you were assembled below. [5] Then I came down and placed the tablets in the Ark of the Covenant, which I had made, just as the Lord commanded me. And the tablets are still there in the Ark.

[6] "The people of Israel set out from the wells of the people of Jaakan and traveled to Moserah, where Aaron died and was buried. His son Eleazar became the high priest in his place. [7] Then they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from there to Jotbathah, a land with brooks of water.

[8] At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of the Lord's covenant, to minister before the Lord, and to pronounce blessings in his name. These are still their duties. [9] that is why the Levites have no share or inheritance reserved for them among the other Israelite tribes. The Lord himself is their inheritance, as the Lord your God told them.

[10] "As I said before, I stayed on the mountain in the Lord's presence for forty days and nights, as I had done the first time. And once again the Lord yielded to my pleas and didn't destroy you. [11] But the Lord said to me, 'Get up and lead the people into the land I swore to give their ancestors, so they may take possession of it.'

[12] "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? He requires you to fear him, to live according to his will, to love and worship him with all your heart and soul, [13] and to obey the Lord's commands and laws that I am giving you today for your own good. [14] The highest heavens and the earth and everything in it all belong to the Lord your God. [15] Yet the Lord chose your ancestors as the objects of his love. And he chose you, their descendants, above every other nation, as is evident today. [16] Therefore, cleanse your sinful hearts and stop being stubborn.

[17] "The Lord your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and takes no bribes. [18] He gives justice to orphans and widows. He shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing. [19] You, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. [20] You must fear the Lord your God and worship him and cling to him. Your oaths must be in his name alone. [21] He is your God, the one who is worthy of your praise, the one who has done mighty miracles that you yourselves have seen. [22] When your ancestors went down into Egypt, there were only seventy of them. But now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky!

[11:1] "You must love the Lord your God and obey all his requirements, laws, regulations, and commands. [2] Listen! I am not talking now to your children, who have never experienced the discipline of the Lord your God or seen his greatness and awesome power. [3] They weren't there to see the miraculous signs and wonders he performed in Egypt against Pharaoh and all his land. [4] They didn't see what the Lord did to the armies of Egypt and to their horses and chariots—how he drowned them in the Red Sea as they were chasing you, and how he has kept them devastated to this very day! [5] They didn't see how the Lord cared for you in the wilderness until you arrived here. [6] They weren't there to see what he did to Dathan and Abiram (the sons of Eliab, a descendant of Reuben) when the earth opened up and swallowed them, along with their households and tents and every living thing that belonged to them. [7] But you have seen all the Lord's mighty deeds with your own eyes!

[8] "Therefore, be careful to obey every command I am giving you today, so you may have strength to go in and occupy the land you are about to enter. [9] If you obey, you will enjoy a long life in the land the Lord swore to give to your ancestors and to you, their descendants—a land flowing with milk and honey! [10] For the land you are about to enter and occupy is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you planted your seed and dug out irrigation ditches with your foot as in a vegetable garden.

[11] It is a land of hills and valleys with plenty of rain— [12] a land that the Lord your God cares for. He watches over it day after day throughout the year!

[13] "If you carefully obey all the commands I am giving you today, and if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, and if you worship him, [14] then he will send the rains in their proper seasons so you can harvest crops of grain, grapes for wine, and olives for oil. [15] He will give you lush pastureland for your cattle to graze in, and you yourselves will have plenty to eat.

[16] "But do not let your heart turn away from the Lord to worship other gods. [17] If you do, the Lord's anger will burn against you. He will shut up the sky and hold back the rain, and your harvests will fail. Then you will quickly die in that good land the Lord is now giving you. [18] So commit yourselves completely to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands as a reminder, and wear them on your forehead. [19] Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. [20] Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, [21] so that as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors.

[22] "Be careful to obey all the commands I give you; show love to the Lord your God by walking in his ways and clinging to him. [23] Then the Lord will drive out all the nations in your land, though they are much greater and stronger than you. [24] Wherever you set your feet, the land will be yours. Your frontiers will stretch from the wilderness in the south to Lebanon in the north, and from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. [25] No one will be able to stand against you, for the Lord your God will send fear and dread ahead of you, as he promised you, wherever you go in the whole land.

[26] "Today I am giving you the choice between a blessing and a curse! [27] You will be blessed if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today. [28] You will receive a curse if you reject the commands of the Lord your God and turn from his way by worshipping foreign gods.

[29] "When the Lord your God brings you into the land to possess it, you must pronounce a blessing from Mount Gerizim and a curse from Mount Ebal. [30] (These two mountains are west of the Jordan River in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Jordan Valley, near the town of Gilgal. They are located toward the west, not far from the oaks of Moreh.) [31] For you are about to cross the Jordan to occupy the land the Lord your God is giving you. When you are living in that land, [32] you must be careful to obey all the laws and regulations I am giving you today.

[12:1] "These are the laws and regulations you must obey as long as you live in the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you.

[2] "When you drive out the nations that live there, you must destroy all the places where they worship their gods—high on the mountains, up on the hills, and under every green tree. [3] Break down their altars and smash their sacred pillars. Burn their Asherah poles and cut down their carved idols. Erase the names of their gods from those places!

[4] "Do not worship the Lord your God in the way these pagan peoples worship their gods. [5] Rather, you must seek the Lord your God at the place he himself will choose from among all the tribes for his name to be honored. [6] There you will bring to the Lord your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, your special gifts, your offerings to fulfill a vow, your freewill offerings, and your offerings of the firstborn animals of your flocks and herds. [7] There you and your families will feast in the presence of the Lord your God, and you will rejoice in all you have accomplished because the Lord your God has blessed you.

[8] "Today you are doing whatever you please, but that is not how it will be [9] when you arrive in the place of rest the Lord your God is giving you. [10] You will soon cross the Jordan River and live in the land the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession. When he gives you rest and security from all your enemies, [11] you must bring everything I command you—your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, your special gifts, and your offerings to fulfill a vow—to the place the Lord your God will choose for his name to be honored. [12] You must celebrate there with your sons and daughters and all your servants in the presence of the Lord your God. And remember the Levites who live in your towns, for they will have no inheritance of land as their own. [13] Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings just any where.

[14] You may do so only at the place the Lord will choose within one of your tribal territories. There you must offer your burnt offerings and do everything I command you.

[15] "But you may butcher animals for meat in any town, wherever you want, just as you do now with gazelle and deer. You may eat as many animals as the Lord your God gives you. All of you, whether ceremonially clean or unclean, may eat that meat. [16] The only restriction is that you are not to eat the blood. You must pour it out on the ground like water.

[17] "But your offerings must not be eaten at home—neither the tithe of your grain and new wine and olive oil, nor the firstborn of your flocks and herds, nor an offering to fulfill a vow, nor your freewill offerings, nor your special gifts. [18] You must eat these in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he will choose. Eat them there with your children, your servants, and the Levites who live in your towns, celebrating in the presence of the Lord your God in all you do. [19] Be very careful never to forget the Levites as long as you live in your land.

[20] "When the Lord your God enlarges your territory as he has promised, you may eat meat whenever you want. [21] It might happen that the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honored is a long way from your home. If so, you may butcher any of the cattle or sheep the Lord has given you, and you may eat the meat at your home as I have commanded you. [22] Anyone, whether ceremonially clean or unclean, may eat that meat, just as you do now with gazelle and deer. [23] The only restriction is never to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat.

[24] Instead, pour out the blood on the ground like water. [25] Do not eat the blood; then all will go well with you and your children, because you will be doing what pleases the Lord. [26] Take your sacred gifts and your offerings given to fulfill a vow to the place the Lord chooses to dwell.

[27] You must offer the meat and blood of your burnt offerings on the altar of the Lord your God. The blood of your other sacrifices must be poured out beside the altar of the Lord your God, but you may eat the meat. [28] Be careful to obey all my commands so that all will go well with you and your children, because you will be doing what pleases the Lord your God.

[29] "When the Lord your God destroys the nations and you drive them out and occupy their land, [30] do not be trapped into following their example in worshiping their gods. Do not say, 'How do these nations worship their gods? I want to follow their example.'

[31] You must not do this to the Lord your God. These nations have committed many detestable acts that the Lord hates, all in the name of their gods. They have even burned their sons and daughters as sacrifices to their gods. [32] Carefully obey all the commands I give you. Do not add to them or subtract from them.

[13:1] "Suppose there are prophets among you, or those who have dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, [2] and the predicted signs or miracles take place. If the prophets then say, 'Come, let us worship the gods of foreign nations,' [3] do not listen to them. The Lord your God is testing you to see if you love him with all your heart and soul. [4] Serve only the Lord your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him. [5] The false prophets or dreamers who try to lead you astray must be put to death, for they encourage rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of slavery in the land of Egypt. Since they try to keep you from following the Lord your God, you must execute them to remove the evil from among you.

[6] "Suppose your brother, son, daughter, beloved wife, or closest friend comes to you secretly and says, 'Let us go worship other gods'—gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known. [7] They might suggest that you worship the gods of peoples who live nearby or who come from the ends of the earth. [8] If they do this, do not give in or listen, and have no pity. Do not spare or protect them. [9] You must put them to death! You must be the one to initiate the execution; then all the people must join in. [10] Stone the guilty ones to death because they have tried to draw you away from the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of slavery. [11] Then all Israel will hear about it and be afraid, and such wickedness will never again be done among you.

[12] "Suppose you hear in one of the towns the Lord your God is giving you [13] that some worthless rabble among you have led their fellow citizens astray by encouraging them to worship foreign gods. [14] In such cases, you must examine the facts carefully. If you find it is true and can prove that such a detestable act has occurred among you, [15] you must attack that town and completely destroy all its inhabitants, as well as all the livestock.

[16] Then you must pile all the plunder in the middle of the street and burn it. Put the entire town to the torch as a burnt offering to the Lord your God. That town must remain a ruin forever; it may never be rebuilt. [17] Keep none of the plunder that has been set apart for destruction. Then the Lord will turn from his fierce anger and be merciful to you. He will have compassion on you and make you a great nation, just as he solemnly promised your ancestors.

[18] "The Lord your God will be merciful only if you obey him and keep all the commands I am giving you today, doing what is pleasing to him.

[14:1] "Since you are the people of the Lord your God, never cut yourselves or shave the hair above your foreheads for the sake of the dead. [2] You have been set apart as holy to the Lord your God, and he has chosen you to be his own special treasure from all the nations of the earth.

[3] "You must not eat animals that are ceremonially unclean. [4] These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, [5] the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep.

[6] "Any animal that has split hooves and chews the cud may be eaten, [7] but if the animal doesn't have both, it may not be eaten. So you may not eat the camel, the hare, or the rock badger. They chew the cud but do not have split hooves. [8] And the pig may not be eaten, for though it has split hooves, it does not chew the cud. All these animals are ceremonially unclean for you. You may not eat or even touch the dead bodies of such animals.

[9] "As for marine animals, you may eat whatever has both fins and scales. [10] You may not, however, eat marine animals that do not have both fins and scales. They are ceremonially unclean for you.

[11] "You may eat any bird that is ceremonially clean. [12] These are the birds you may not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, [13] the buzzard, kites of all kinds, [14] ravens of all kinds, [15] the ostrich, the nighthawk, the seagull, hawks of all kinds, [16] the little owl, the great owl, the white owl, [17] the pelican, the carrion vulture, the cormorant, [18] the stork, herons of all kinds, the hoopoe, and the bat.

[19] "All flying insects are ceremonially unclean for you and may not be eaten. [20] But you may eat any winged creature that is ceremonially clean.

[21] "Do not eat anything that has died a natural death. You may give it to a foreigner living among you, or you may sell it to a foreigner. But do not eat it yourselves, for you are set apart as holy to the Lord your God.

"Do not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

[22] "You must set aside a tithe of your crops—one-tenth of all the crops you harvest each year. [23] Bring this tithe to the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honored, and eat it there in his presence. This applies to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn males of your flocks and herds. The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to fear the Lord your God. [24] Now the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honored might be a long way from your home. [25] If so, you may sell the tithe portion of your crops and herds and take the money to the place the Lord your God chooses.

[26] When you arrive, use the money to buy anything you want—an ox, a sheep, some wine, or beer. Then feast there in the presence of the Lord your God and celebrate with your household. [27] And do not forget the Levites in your community, for they have no inheritance as you do.

[28] "At the end of every third year bring the tithe of all your crops and store it in the nearest town.

[29] Give it to the Levites, who have no inheritance among you, as well as to the foreigners living among you, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, so they can eat and be satisfied. Then the Lord your God will bless you in all your work.

[15:1] "At the end of every seventh year you must cancel your debts. [2] This is how it must be done. Creditors must cancel the loans they have made to their fellow Israelites. They must not demand payment from their neighbors or relatives, for the Lord's time of release has arrived. [3] This release from debt, however, applies only to your fellow Israelites—not to the foreigners living among you. [4] There should be no poor among you, for the Lord your God will greatly bless you in the land he is giving you as a special possession. [5] You will receive this blessing if you carefully obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today. [6] The Lord your God will bless you as he has promised. You will lend money to many nations but will never need to borrow! You will rule many nations, but they will not rule over you!

[7] "But if there are any poor people in your towns when you arrive in the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tightfisted toward them. [8] Instead, be generous and lend them whatever they need. [9] Do not be mean-spirited and refuse someone a loan because the year of release is close at hand. If you refuse to make the loan and the needy person cries out to the Lord, you will be considered guilty of sin.

[10] Give freely without begrudging it, and the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do. [11] There will always be some among you who are poor. That is why I am commanding you to share your resources freely with the poor and with other Israelites in need.

[12] "If an Israelite man or woman voluntarily becomes your servant and serves you for six years, in the seventh year you must set that servant free.

[13] "When you release a male servant, do not send him away empty-handed. [14] Give him a generous farewell gift from your flock, your threshing floor, and your winepress. Share with him some of the bounty with which the Lord your God has blessed you. [15] Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you! That is why I am giving you this command. [16] But suppose your servant says, 'I will not leave you,' because he loves you and your family, and he is well off with you. [17] In that case, take an awl and push it through his earlobe into the door. After that, he will be your servant for life.

"You must do the same for your female servants.

[18] "Do not consider it a hardship when you release your servants. Remember that for six years they have given you the services worth double the wages of hired workers, and the Lord your God will bless you in all you do.

[19] "You must set aside for the Lord your God all the firstborn males from your flocks and herds. Do not use the firstborn of your herds to work your fields, and do not shear the firstborn of your flocks. [20] Instead, you and your family must eat these animals in the presence of the Lord your God each year at the place he chooses.

[21] But if this firstborn animal has any defect, such as being lame or blind, or if anything else is wrong with it, you must not sacrifice it to the Lord your God. [22] Instead, use it for food for your family at home. Anyone may eat it, whether ceremonially clean or unclean, just as anyone may eat a gazelle or deer. [23] But do not eat the blood. You must pour it out on the ground like water.

[16:1] "In honor of the Lord your God, always celebrate the Passover at the proper time in early spring, for that was when the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night. [2] Your Passover sacrifice may be from either the flock or the herd, and it must be sacrificed to the Lord your God at the place he chooses for his name to be honored. [3] Eat it with bread made without yeast. For seven days eat only bread made without yeast, as you did when you escaped from Egypt in such a hurry. Eat this bread—the bread of suffering—so that you will remember the day you departed from Egypt as long as you live. [4] Let no yeast be found in any house throughout your land for seven days. And do not let any of the meat of the Passover lamb remain until the next morning.

[5] "The Passover must not be eaten in the towns that the Lord your God is giving you. [6] It must be offered at the place the Lord your God will choose for his name to be honored. Sacrifice it there as the sun goes down on the anniversary of your exodus from Egypt. [7] Roast the lamb and eat it in the place the Lord your God chooses. Then go back to your tents the next morning. [8] For the next six days you may not eat bread made with yeast. On the seventh day the people must assemble before the Lord your God, and no work may be done on that day.

[9] "Count off seven weeks from the beginning of your grain harvest. [10] Then you must celebrate the Festival of Harvest to honor the Lord your God. Bring him a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings you have received from him. [11] It is a time to celebrate before the Lord your God at the place he chooses for his name to be honored. Celebrate with your whole family, all your servants, the Levites from your towns, and the foreigners, orphans, and widows who live among you. [12] Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, so be careful to obey all these laws.

[13] "Another celebration, the Festival of Shelters, must be observed for seven days at the end of the harvest season, after the grain has been threshed and the grapes have been pressed. [14] This festival will be a happy time of rejoicing with your family, your servants, and with the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows from your towns. [15] For seven days celebrate this festival to honor the Lord your God at the place he chooses, for it is the Lord your God who gives you bountiful harvests and blesses all your work. This festival will be a time of great joy for all.

[16] "Each year every man in Israel must celebrate these three festivals: the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters. They must appear before the Lord your God at the place he chooses on each of these occasions, and they must bring a gift to the Lord. [17] All must give as they are able, according to the blessings given to them by the Lord your God.

[18] "Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in all the towns the Lord your God is giving you. They will judge the people fairly throughout the land. [19] You must never twist justice or show partiality. Never accept a bribe, for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and corrupt the decisions of the godly. [20] Let true justice prevail, so you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

[21] "You must never set up an Asherah pole beside the altar of the Lord your God. [22] And never set up sacred pillars for worship, for the Lord your God hates them.

[17:1] "Never sacrifice a sick or defective ox or sheep to the Lord your God, for he detests such gifts.

[2] "Suppose a man or woman among you, in one of your towns that the Lord your God is giving you, has done evil in the sight of the Lord your God and has violated the covenant [3] by serving other gods or by worshiping the sun, the moon, or any of the forces of heaven, which I have strictly forbidden. [4] When you hear about it, investigate the matter thoroughly. If it is true that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, [5] then that man or woman must be taken to the gates of the town and stoned to death. [6] But never put a person to death on the testimony of only one witness. There must always be at least two or three witnesses. [7] The witnesses must throw the first stones, and then all the people will join in. In this way, you will purge all evil from among you.

[8] "Suppose a case arises in a local court that is too hard for you to decide—for instance, whether someone is guilty of murder or only of manslaughter, or a difficult lawsuit, or a case involving different kinds of assault. Take such cases to the place the Lord your God will choose, [9] where the Levitical priests and the judge on duty will hear the case and decide what to do. [10] The decision they make at the place the Lord chooses will always stand. You must do exactly what they say. [11] After they have interpreted the law and reached a verdict, the sentence they impose must be fully executed; do not modify it in any way. [12] Anyone arrogant enough to reject the verdict of the judge or of the priest who represents the Lord your God must be put to death. Such evil must be purged from Israel. [13] Then everyone will hear about it and be afraid to act so arrogantly.

[14] "You will soon arrive in the land the Lord your God is giving you, and you will conquer it and settle there. Then you may begin to think, 'We ought to have a king like the other nations around us.' [15] If this happens, be sure that you select as king the man the Lord your God chooses. You must appoint a fellow Israelite, not a foreigner. [16] The king must not build up a large stable of horses for himself, and he must never send his people to Egypt to buy horses there, for the Lord has told you, 'You must never return to Egypt.' [17] The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will lead him away from the Lord. And he must not accumulate vast amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself.

[18] "When he sits on the throne as king, he must copy these law

s on a scroll for himself in the presence of the Levitical priests. [19] He must always keep this copy of the law with him and read it daily as long as he lives. That way he will learn to fear the Lord his God by obeying all the terms of this law.

[20] This regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud and acting as if he is above his fellow citizens. It will also prevent him from turning away from these commands in the smallest way. This will ensure that he and his descendants will reign for many generations in Israel.

[18:1] "Remember that the Levitical priests and the rest of the tribe of Levi will not be given an inheritance of land like the other tribes in Israel. Instead, the priests and Levites will eat from the offerings given to the Lord by fire, for that is their inheritance. [2] They will have no inheritance of their own among the Israelites. The Lord himself is their inheritance, just as he promised them.

[3] "These are the parts the priests may claim as their share from the oxen and sheep that the people bring as offerings: the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. [4] You must also give to the priests the first share of the grain, the new wine, the olive oil, and the wool at shearing time. [5] For the Lord your God chose the tribe of Levi out of all your tribes to minister in the Lord's name forever.

[6] "Any Levite who so desires may come from any town in Israel, from wherever he is living, to the place the Lord chooses. [7] He may minister there in the name of the Lord his God, just like his fellow Levites who are serving the Lord there. [8] He may eat his share of the sacrifices and offerings, even if he has a private source of income.

[9] "When you arrive in the land the Lord your God is giving you, be very careful not to imitate the detestable customs of the nations living there. [10] For example, never sacrifice your son or daughter as a burnt offering. And do not let your people practice fortune-telling or sorcery, or allow them to interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, [11] or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. [12] Anyone who does these things is an object of horror and disgust to the Lord. It is because the other nations have done these things that the Lord your God will drive them out ahead of you. [13] You must be blameless before the Lord your God. [14] The people you are about to displace consult with sorcerers and fortune-tellers, but the Lord your God forbids you to do such things.

[15] "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites, and you must listen to that prophet. [16] For this is what you yourselves requested of the Lord your God when you were assembled at Mount Sinai. You begged that you might never again have to listen to the voice of the Lord your God or see this blazing fire for fear you would die.

[17] "Then the Lord said to me, 'Fine, I will do as they have requested. [18] I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will tell that prophet what to say, and he will tell the people everything I command him. [19] I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf. [20] But any prophet who claims to give a message from another god or who falsely claims to speak for me must die.' [21] You may wonder, 'How will we know whether the prophecy is from the Lord or not?' [22] If the prophet predicts something in the Lord's name and it does not happen, the Lord did not give the message. That prophet has spoken on his own and need not be feared.

[19:1] "The Lord your God will soon destroy the nations whose land he is giving you, and you will displace them and settle in their towns and homes. [2] Then you must set apart three cities of refuge in the land the Lord your God is giving you to occupy. [3] Divide the land the Lord your God is giving you into three districts, with one of these cities in each district. Keep the roads to these cities in good repair so that anyone who has killed someone can flee there for safety.

[4] "If someone accidentally kills a neighbor without harboring any previous hatred, the slayer may flee to any of these cities and be safe. [5] For example, suppose someone goes into the forest with a neighbor to cut wood. And suppose one of them swings an ax and the ax head flies off the handle, killing the other person. In such cases, the slayer could flee to one of the cities of refuge and be safe.

[6] If the distance to the nearest city of refuge was too far, an enraged avenger might be able to chase down and kill the person who caused the death. The slayer would die, even though there was no death sentence and the first death had been an accident. [7] That is why I am commanding you to set aside three cities of refuge.

[8] "If the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he solemnly promised your ancestors, and gives you all the land he promised them, [9] you must designate three additional cities of refuge. (He will give you this land if you obey all the commands I have given you—if you always love the Lord your God and walk in his ways.) [10] That way you will prevent the death of innocent people in the land the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession, and you will not be held responsible for murder.

[11] "But suppose someone hates a neighbor and deliberately ambushes and murders that neighbor and then escapes to one of the cities of refuge. [12] In that case, the leaders of the murderer's hometown must have the murderer brought back from the city of refuge and handed over to the dead person's avenger to be killed. [13] Do not feel sorry for that murderer! Purge the guilt of murder from Israel so all may go well with you.

[14] "When you arrive in the land the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession, never steal someone's land by moving the boundary markers your ancestors set up to mark their property.

[15] "Never convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of just one witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. [16] If a malicious witness comes forward and accuses someone of a crime, [17] then both the accuser and accused must appear before the priests and judges who are on duty before the Lord. [18] They must be closely questioned, and if the accuser is found to be lying,

[19] the accuser will receive the punishment intended for the accused. In this way, you will cleanse such evil from among you. [20] Those who hear about it will be afraid to do such an evil thing again. [21] You must never show pity! Your rule should be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

[20:1] "When you go out to fight your enemies and you face horses and chariots and an army greater than your own, do not be afraid. The Lord your God, who brought you safely out of Egypt, is with you! [2] Before you go into battle, the priest will come forward to speak with the troops. [3] He will say, 'Listen to me, all you men of Israel! Do not be afraid as you go out to fight today! Do not lose heart or panic. [4] For the Lord your God is going with you! He will fight for you against your enemies, and he will give you victory!'

[5] "Then the officers of the army will address the troops and say, 'Has anyone just built a new house but not yet dedicated it? If so, go home! You might be killed in the battle, and someone else would dedicate your house! [6] Has anyone just planted a vineyard but not yet eaten any of its fruit? If so, go home! You might die in battle, and someone else would eat from it! [7] Has anyone just become engaged? Well, go home and get married! You might die in the battle, and someone else would marry your fiancée.' [8] Then the officers will also say, 'Is anyone terrified? If you are, go home before you frighten anyone else.' [9] When the officers have finished saying this to their troops, they will announce the names of the unit commanders.

[10] "As you approach a town to attack it, first offer its people terms for peace. [11] If they accept your terms and open the gates to you, then all the people inside will serve you in forced labor. [12] But if they refuse to make peace and prepare to fight, you must attack the town. [13] When the Lord your God hands it over to you, kill every man in the town. [14] But you may keep for yourselves all the women, children, livestock, and other plunder. You may enjoy the spoils of your enemies that the Lord your God has given you. [15] But these instructions apply only to distant towns, not to the towns of nations nearby.

[16] "As for the towns of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession, destroy every living thing in them. [17] You must completely destroy the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, just as the Lord your God has commanded you. [18] This will keep the people of the land from teaching you their detestable customs in the worship of their gods, which would cause you to sin deeply against the Lord your God.

[19] "When you are besieging a town and the war drags on, do not destroy the trees. Eat the fruit, but do not cut down the trees. They are not enemies that need to be attacked! [20] But you may cut down trees that you know are not valuable for food. Use them to make the equipment you need to besiege the town until it falls.

[21:1] "Suppose someone is found murdered in a field in the land the Lord your God is giving you, and you don't know who committed the murder. [2] In such cases, your leaders and judges must determine which town is nearest the body. [3] Then the leaders of that town must select a young cow that has never been trained or yoked to a plow. [4] They must lead it to a valley that is neither plowed nor planted with a stream running through it. There they must break the cow's neck. [5] The Levitical priests must go there also, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister before him and to pronounce blessings in the Lord's name. And they are to decide all lawsuits and punishments.

[6] "The leaders of the town nearest the body must wash their hands over the young cow whose neck was broken.

[7] Then they must say, 'Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did we see it happen. [8] O Lord, forgive your people Israel whom you have redeemed. Do not charge your people Israel with the guilt of murdering an innocent person.' Then they will be absolved of the guilt of this person's blood. [9] By following these instructions and doing what is right in the Lord's sight, you will cleanse the guilt of murder from your community.

[10] "Suppose you go to war against your enemies and the Lord your God hands them over to you and you take captives. [11] And suppose you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you are attracted to her and want to marry her. [12] If this happens, you may take her to your home, where she must shave her head, cut her fingernails, [13] and change all her clothes. Then she must remain in your home for a full month, mourning for her father and mother. After that you may marry her. [14] But if you marry her and then decide you do not like her, you must let her go free. You may not sell her or treat her as a slave, for you have humiliated her.

[15] "Suppose a man has two wives, but he loves one and not the other, and both have given him sons. And suppose the firstborn son is the son of the wife he does not love. [16] When the man divides the inheritance, he may not give the larger inheritance to his younger son, the son of the wife he loves. [17] He must give the customary double portion to his oldest son, who represents the strength of his father's manhood and who owns the rights of the firstborn son, even though he is the son of the wife his father does not love.

[18] "Suppose a man has a stubborn, rebellious son who will not obey his father or mother, even though they discipline him. [19] In such cases, the father and mother must take the son before the leaders of the town. [20] They must declare: 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and refuses to obey. He is a worthless drunkard.' [21] Then all the men of the town must stone him to death. In this way, you will cleanse this evil from among you, and all Israel will hear about it and be afraid.

[22] "If someone has committed a crime worthy of death and is executed and then hanged on a tree, [23] the body must never remain on the tree overnight. You must bury the body that same day, for anyone hanging on a tree is cursed of God. Do not defile the land the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession.

[22:1] "If you see your neighbor's ox or sheep wandering away, don't pretend not to see it. Take it back to its owner. [2] If it does not belong to someone nearby or you don't know who the owner is, keep it until the owner comes looking for it; then return it. [3] Do the same if you find your neighbor's donkey, clothing, or anything else your neighbor loses. Don't pretend you did not see it.

[4] "If you see your neighbor's ox or donkey lying on the road, do not look the other way. Go and help your neighbor get it to its feet!

[5] "A woman must not wear men's clothing, and a man must not wear women's clothing. The Lord your God detests people who do this.

[6] "If you find a bird's nest on the ground or in a tree and there are young ones or eggs in it with the mother sitting in the nest, do not take the mother with the young. [7] You may take the young, but let the mother go, so you may prosper and enjoy a long life.

[8] "Every new house you build must have a barrier around the edge of its flat rooftop. That way you will not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your household if someone falls from the roof.

[9] "Do not plant any other crop between the rows of your vineyard. If you do, you are forbidden to use either the grapes from the vineyard or the produce of the other crop.

[10] "Do not plow with an ox and a donkey harnessed together.

[11] "Do not wear clothing made of wool and linen woven together.

[12] "You must put tassels on the four corners of your cloaks.

[13] "Suppose a man marries a woman and, after sleeping with her, changes his mind about her [14] and falsely accuses her of having slept with another man. He might say, 'I discovered she was not a virgin when I married her.' [15] If the man does this, the woman's father and mother must bring the proof of her virginity to the leaders of the town. [16] Her father must tell them, 'I gave my daughter to this man to be his wife, and now he has turned against her. [17] He has accused her of shameful things, claiming that she was not a virgin when he married her. But here is the proof of my daughter's virginity.' Then they must spread the cloth before the judges. [18] The judges must then punish the man. [19] They will fine him one hundred pieces of silver, for he falsely accused a virgin of Israel. The payment will be made to the

woman's father. The woman will then remain the man's wife, and he may never divorce her.

[20] "But suppose the man's accusations are true, and her virginity could not be proved. [21] In such cases, the judges must take the girl to the door of her father's home, and the men of the town will stone her to death. She has committed a disgraceful crime in Israel by being promiscuous while living in her parents' home. Such evil must be cleansed from among you.

[22] "If a man is discovered committing adultery, both he and the other man's wife must be killed. In this way, the evil will be cleansed from Israel.

[23] "Suppose a man meets a young woman, a virgin who is engaged to be married, and he has sexual intercourse with her. If this happens within a town, [24] you must take both of them to the gates of the town and stone them to death. The woman is guilty because she did not scream for help. The man must die because he violated another man's wife. In this way, you will cleanse the land of evil.

[25] "But if the man meets the engaged woman out in the country, and he rapes her, then only the man should die. [26] Do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no crime worthy of death. This case is similar to that of someone who attacks and murders a neighbor. [27] Since the man raped her out in the country, it must be assumed that she screamed, but there was no one to rescue her.

[28] "If a man is caught in the act of raping a young woman who is not engaged, [29] he must pay fifty pieces of silver to her father. Then he must marry the young woman because he violated her, and he will never be allowed to divorce her.

[30] "A man must not have intercourse with his father's wife, for this would violate his father.

[23:1] "If a man's testicles are crushed or his penis is cut off, he may not be included in the assembly of the Lord.

[2] "Those of illegitimate birth and their descendants for ten generations may not be included in the assembly of the Lord.

[3] "No Ammonites or Moabites, or any of their descendants for ten generations, may be included in the assembly of the Lord. [4] These nations did not welcome you with food and water when you came out of Egypt. Instead, they tried to hire Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram-naharaim to curse you. [5] (But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam. He turned the intended curse into a blessing because the Lord your God loves you.) [6] You must never, as long as you live, try to help the Ammonites or the Moabites in any way.

[7] "Do not detest the Edomites or the Egyptians, because the Edomites are your relatives, and you lived as foreigners among the Egyptians. [8] The third generation of Egyptians who came with you from Egypt may enter the assembly of the Lord.

[9] "When you go to war against your enemies, stay away from everything impure.

[10] "Any man who becomes ceremonially defiled because of a nocturnal emission must leave the camp and stay away all day. [11] Toward evening he must bathe himself, and at sunset he may return to the camp.

[12] "Mark off an area outside the camp for a latrine. [13] Each of you must have a spade as part of your equipment. Whenever you relieve yourself, you must dig a hole with the spade and cover the excrement. [14] The camp must be holy, for the Lord your God moves around in your camp to protect you and to defeat your enemies. He must not see any shameful thing among you, or he might turn away from you.

[15] "If slaves should escape from their masters and take refuge with you, do not force them to return. [16] Let them live among you in whatever town they choose, and do not oppress them.

[17] "No Israelite man or woman may ever become a temple prostitute. [18] Do not bring to the house of the Lord your God any offering from the earnings of a prostitute, whether a man or a woman, for both are detestable to the Lord your God.

[19] "Do not charge interest on the loans you make to a fellow Israelite, whether it is money, food, or anything else that may be loaned with interest. [20] You may charge interest to foreigners, but not to Israelites, so the Lord your God may bless you in everything you do in the land you are about to enter and occupy.

[21] "When you make a vow to the Lord your God, be prompt in doing whatever you promised him. For the Lord your God demands that you promptly fulfill all your vows. If you don't, you will be guilty of sin. [22] However, it is not a sin to refrain from making a vow. [23] But once you have voluntarily made a vow, be careful to do as you have said, for you have made a vow to the Lord your God.

[24] "You may eat your fill of grapes from your neighbor's vineyard, but do not take any away in a basket. [25] And you may pluck a few heads of your neighbor's grain by hand, but you may not harvest it with a sickle.

[24:1] "Suppose a man marries a woman but later discovers something about her that is shameful. So he writes her a letter of divorce, gives it to her, and sends her away. [2] If she then leaves and marries another man [3] and the second husband also divorces her or dies, [4] the former husband may not marry her again, for she has been defiled. That would be detestable to the Lord. You must not bring guilt upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession.

[5] "A newly married man must not be drafted into the army or given any other special responsibilities. He must be free to be at home for one year, bringing happiness to the wife he has married.

[6] "It is wrong to take a pair of millstones, or even just the upper millstone, as a pledge, for the owner uses it to make a living.

[7] "If anyone kidnaps a fellow Israelite and treats him as a slave or sells him, the kidnapper must die. You must cleanse the evil from among you.

[8] "Watch all contagious skin diseases carefully and follow the instructions of the Levitical priests; obey the commands I have given them. [9] Remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam as you were coming from Egypt.

[10] "If you lend anything to your neighbor, do not enter your neighbor's house to claim the security. [11] Stand outside and the owner will bring it out to you. [12] If your neighbor is poor and has only a cloak to give as security, do not keep the cloak overnight. [13] Return the cloak to its owner by sunset so your neighbor can sleep in it and bless you. And the Lord your God will count it as a righteous act.

[14] "Never take advantage of poor laborers, whether fellow Israelites or foreigners living in your towns. [15] Pay them their wages each day before sunset because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they might cry out to the Lord against you, and it would be counted against you as sin.

[16] "Parents must not be put to death for the sins of their children, nor the children for the sins of their parents. Those worthy of death must be executed for their own crimes.

[17] "True justice must be given to foreigners living among you and to orphans, and you must never accept a widow's garment in pledge of her debt. [18] Always remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I have given you this command.

[19] "When you are harvesting your crops and forget to bring in a bundle of grain from your field, don't go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigners, orphans, and widows. Then the Lord your God will bless you in all you do. [20] When you beat the olives from your olive trees, don't go over the boughs twice. Leave some of the olives for the foreigners, orphans, and widows.

[21] This also applies to the grapes in your vineyard. Do not glean the vines after they are picked, but leave any remaining grapes for the foreigners, orphans, and widows. [22] Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt. That is why I am giving you this command.

[25:1] "Suppose two people take a dispute to court, and the judges declare that one is right and the other is wrong. [2] If the person in the wrong is sentenced to be flogged, the judge will command him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of lashes appropriate to the crime. [3] No more than forty lashes may ever be given; more than forty lashes would publicly humiliate your neighbor.

[4] "Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain.

[5] "If two brothers are living together on the same property and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Instead, her husband's brother must marry her and fulfill the duties of a brother-in-law. [6] The first son she bears to him will be counted as the son of the dead brother, so that his name will not be forgotten in Israel.

[7] But if the dead man's brother refuses to marry the widow, she must go to the town gate and say to the leaders there, 'My husband's brother refuses to preserve his brother's name in Israel—he refuses to marry me.' [8] The leaders of the town will then summon him and try to reason with him. If he still insists that he doesn't want to marry her, [9] the widow must walk over to him in the presence of the leaders, pull his sandal from his foot, and spit in his face. She will then say, 'This is what happens to a man who refuses to raise up a son for his brother.' [10] Ever afterward his family will be referred to as 'the family of the man whose sandal was pulled off'!

[11] "If two Israelite men are fighting and the wife of one tries to rescue her husband by grabbing the testicles of the other man, [12] her hand must be cut off without pity.

[13] "You must use accurate scales when you weigh out merchandise, [14] and you must use full and honest measures. [15] Yes, use honest weights and measures, so that you will enjoy a long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you. [16] Those who cheat with dishonest weights and measures are detestable to the Lord your God.

[17] "Never forget what the Amalekites did to you as you came from Egypt. [18] They attacked you when you were exhausted and weary, and they struck down those who were lagging behind. They had no fear of God. [19] Therefore, when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies in the land he is giving you as a special possession, you are to destroy the Amalekites and erase their memory from under heaven. Never forget this!

[26:1] "When you arrive in the land the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession and you have conquered it and settled there, [2] put some of the first produce from each harvest into a basket and bring it to the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honored. [3] Go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, 'With this gift I acknowledge that the Lord your God has brought me into the land he swore to give our ancestors.'

[4] The priest will then take the basket from your hand and set it before the altar of the Lord your God.

[5] You must then say in the presence of the Lord your God, 'My ancestor Jacob was a wandering Aramean who went to live in Egypt. His family was few in number, but in Egypt they became a mighty and numerous nation. [6] When the Egyptians mistreated and humiliated us by making us their slaves, [7] we cried out to the Lord, the God of our ancestors. He heard us and saw our hardship, toil, and oppression. [8] So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with amazing power, overwhelming terror, and miraculous signs and wonders. [9] He brought us to this place and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey! [10] And now, O Lord, I have brought you a token of the first crops you have given me from the ground.' Then place the produce before the Lord your God and worship him. [11] Afterward go and celebrate because of all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household. Remember to include the Levites and the foreigners living among you in the celebration.

[12] "Every third year you must offer a special tithe of your crops. You must give these tithes to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows so that they will have enough to eat in your towns. [13] Then you must declare in the presence of the Lord your God, 'I have taken the sacred gift from my house and have given it to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows, just as you commanded me. I have not violated or forgotten any of your commands. [14] I have not eaten any of it while in mourning; I have not touched it while I was ceremonially unclean; and I have not offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the Lord my God and have done everything you commanded me. [15] Look down from your holy dwelling place in heaven and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us—a land flowing with milk and honey—just as you solemnly promised our ancestors.'

[16] "Today the Lord your God has commanded you to obey all these laws and regulations. You must commit yourself to them without reservation. [17] You have declared today that the Lord is your God. You have promised to obey his laws, commands, and regulations by walking in his ways and doing everything he tells you. [18] The Lord has declared today that you are his people, his own special treasure, just as he promised, and that you must obey all his commands. [19] And if you do, he will make you greater than any other nation. Then you will receive praise, honor, and renown. You will be a nation that is holy to the Lord your God, just as he promised."

[27:1] Then Moses and the leaders of Israel charged the people as follows: "Keep all these commands that I am giving you today. [2] When you cross the Jordan River and enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. [3] Then write all the terms of this law on them. I repeat, you will soon cross the river to enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

[4] When you cross the Jordan, set up these stones at Mount Ebal and coat them with plaster, as I am commanding you today. [5] Then build an altar there to the Lord your God, using natural stones. [6] Do not shape the stones with an iron tool. On the altar you must offer burnt offerings to the Lord your God. [7] Sacrifice peace offerings on it also, and feast there with great joy before the Lord your God. [8] On the stones coated with plaster, you must clearly write all the terms of this law."

[9] Then Moses and the Levitical priests addressed all Israel as follows: "O Israel, be quiet and listen! Today you have become the people of the Lord your God. [10] So obey the Lord your God by keeping all these commands and laws that I am giving you today."

[11] That same day Moses gave this charge to the people: [12] "When you cross the Jordan River, the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin must stand on Mount Gerizim to proclaim a blessing over the people. [13] And the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali must stand on Mount Ebal to proclaim a curse. [14] Then the Levites must shout to all the people of Israel:

[15] 'Cursed is anyone who carves or casts idols and secretly sets them up. These idols, the work of craftsmen, are detestable to the Lord.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[16] 'Cursed is anyone who despises father or mother.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[17] 'Cursed is anyone who steals property from a neighbor by moving a boundary marker.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[18] 'Cursed is anyone who leads a blind person astray on the road.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[19] 'Cursed is anyone who is unjust to foreigners, orphans, and widows.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[20] 'Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with his father's wife, for he has violated his father.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[21] 'Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with an animal.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[22] 'Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with his sister, whether she is the daughter of his father or his mother.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[23] 'Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with his mother-in-law.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[24] 'Cursed is anyone who kills another person in secret.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[25] 'Cursed is anyone who accepts payment to kill an innocent person.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[26] 'Cursed is anyone who does not affirm the terms of this law by obeying them.'
And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

[28:1] "If you fully obey the Lord your God by keeping all the commands I am giving you today, the Lord your God will exalt you above all the nations of the world. [2] You will experience all these blessings if you obey the Lord your God:

[3] You will be blessed in your towns and in the country.

[4] You will be blessed with many children and productive fields.

You will be blessed with fertile herds and flocks.

[5] You will be blessed with baskets overflowing with fruit, and with kneading bowls filled with bread.

[6] You will be blessed wherever you go, both in coming and in going.

[7] "The Lord will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in seven!

[8] "The Lord will bless everything you do and will fill your storehouses with grain. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

[9] "If you obey the commands of the Lord your God and walk in his ways, the Lord will establish you as his holy people as he solemnly promised to do. [10] Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the Lord, and they will stand in awe of you.

[11] "The Lord will give you an abundance of good things in the land he swore to give your ancestors—many children, numerous livestock, and abundant crops. [12] The Lord will send rain at the proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens to bless all the work you do. You will lend to many nations, but you will never need to borrow from them. [13] If you listen to these commands of the Lord your God and carefully obey them, the Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you will always have the upper hand. [14] You must not turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today to follow after other gods and worship them.

[15] "But if you refuse to listen to the Lord your God and do not obey all the commands and laws I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overwhelm you:

[16] You will be cursed in your towns and in the country.

[17] You will be cursed with baskets empty of fruit, and with kneading bowls empty of bread.

[18] You will be cursed with few children and barren fields.

You will be cursed with infertile herds and flocks.

[19] You will be cursed wherever you go, both in coming and in going.

[20] "The Lord himself will send against you curses, confusion, and disillusionment in everything you do, until at last you are completely destroyed for doing evil and forsaking me.

[21] The Lord will send diseases among you until none of you are left in the land you are about to enter and occupy. [22] The Lord will strike you with wasting disease, fever, and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, and with blight and mildew. These devastations will pursue you until you die. [23] The skies above will be as unyielding as bronze, and the earth beneath will be

as hard as iron. [24] The Lord will turn your rain into sand and dust, and it will pour down from the sky until you are destroyed.

[25] "The Lord will cause you to be defeated by your enemies. You will attack your enemies from one direction, but you will scatter from them in seven! You will be an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. [26] Your dead bodies will be food for the birds and wild animals, and no one will be there to chase them away.

[27] "The Lord will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, scurvy, and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. [28] The Lord will strike you with madness, blindness, and panic. [29] You will grope around in broad daylight, just like a blind person groping in the darkness, and you will not succeed at anything you do. You will be oppressed and robbed continually, and no one will come to save you.

[30] "You will be engaged to a woman, but another man will ravish her. You will build a house, but someone else will live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but you will never enjoy its fruit. [31] Your ox will be butchered before your eyes, but you won't get a single bite of the meat. Your donkey will be driven away, never to be returned. Your sheep will be given to your enemies, and no one will be there to help you. [32] You will watch as your sons and daughters are taken away as slaves. Your heart will break as you long for them, but nothing you do will help. [33] A foreign nation you have never heard about will eat the crops you worked so hard to grow. You will suffer under constant oppression and harsh treatment. [34] You will go mad because of all the tragedy around you. [35] The Lord will cover you from head to foot with incurable boils.

[36] "The Lord will exile you and the king you crowned to a nation unknown to you and your ancestors. Then in exile you will worship gods of wood and stone! [37] You will become an object of horror, a proverb and a mockery among all the nations to which the Lord sends you.

[38] "You will plant much but harvest little, for locusts will eat your crops. [39] You will plant vineyards and care for them, but you will not drink the wine or eat the grapes, for worms will destroy the vines. [40] You will grow olive trees throughout your land, but you will never use the olive oil, for the trees will drop the fruit before it is ripe. [41] You will have sons and daughters, but you will not keep them, for they will be led away into captivity. [42] Swarms of insects will destroy your trees and crops. [43] The foreigners living among you will become stronger and stronger, while you become weaker and weaker. [44] They will lend money to you, not you to them. They will be the head, and you will be the tail!

[45] "If you refuse to listen to the Lord your God and to obey the commands and laws he has given you, all these curses will pursue and overtake you until you are destroyed. [46] These horrors will serve as a sign and warning among you and your descendants forever. [47] Because you have not served the Lord your God with joy and enthusiasm for the abundant benefits you have received, [48] you will serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you. You will be left hungry, thirsty, naked, and lacking in everything. They will oppress you harshly until you are destroyed.

[49] "The Lord will bring a distant nation against you from the end of the earth, and it will swoop down on you like an eagle. It is a nation whose language you do not understand, [50] a fierce and heartless nation that shows no respect for the old and no pity for the young. [51] Its armies will devour your livestock and crops, and you will starve to death. They will leave you no grain, new wine, olive oil, calves, or lambs, bringing about your destruction. [52] They will lay siege to your cities until all the fortified walls in your land—the walls you trusted to protect you—are knocked down. They will attack all the towns in the land the Lord your God has given you.

[53] The siege will be so severe that you will eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters, whom the Lord your God has given you. [54] The most tenderhearted man among you will have no compassion for his own brother, his beloved wife, and his surviving children.

[55] He will refuse to give them a share of the flesh he is devouring—the flesh of one of his own children—because he has nothing else to eat during the siege that your enemy will inflict on all your towns. [56] The most tender and delicate woman among you—so delicate she would not so much as touch her feet to the ground—will be cruel to the husband she loves and to her own son or daughter. [57] She will hide from them the afterbirth and the new baby she has borne, so that she herself can secretly eat them. She will have nothing else to eat during the siege and terrible distress that your enemy will inflict on all your towns.

[58] "If you refuse to obey all the terms of this law that are written in this book, and if you do not fear the glorious and awesome name of the Lord your God, [59] then the Lord will overwhelm both you and your children with indescribable plagues. These plagues will be intense and without relief, making you miserable and unbearably sick. [60] He will bring against you all the diseases of Egypt that you feared so much, and they will claim you. [61] The Lord will bring against you every sickness and plague there is, even those not mentioned in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed. [62] Though you are as numerous as the stars in the sky, few of you will be left because you would not listen to the Lord your God.

[63] "Just as the Lord has found great pleasure in helping you to prosper and multiply, the Lord will find pleasure in destroying you, until you disappear from the land you are about to enter and occupy. [64] For the Lord will scatter you among all the nations from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship foreign gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, gods made of wood and stone! [65] There among those nations you will find no place of security and rest. And the Lord will cause your heart to tremble, your eyesight to fail, and your soul to despair. [66] Your lives will hang in doubt. You will live night and day in fear, with no reason to believe that you will see the morning light.

[67] In the morning you will say, 'If only it were night!' And in the evening you will say, 'If only it were morning!' You will say this because of your terror at the awesome horrors you see around you. [68] Then the Lord will send you back to Egypt in ships, a journey I promised you would never again make. There you will offer to sell yourselves to your enemies as slaves, but no one will want to buy you."

C. A CALL FOR COMMITMENT TO GOD: MOSES' THIRD ADDRESS (Deut. 29:1-30:20)

Moses called the people to commitment. God still calls us to be committed to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Deut. 29:1-30:20

These are the terms of the covenant the Lord commanded Moses to make with the Israelites while they were in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Mount Sinai.

[2] Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them, "You have seen with your own eyes everything the Lord did in Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants and his whole country— [3] all the great tests of strength, the miraculous signs, and the amazing wonders. [4] But to this day the Lord has not given you minds that understand, nor eyes that see, nor ears that hear! [5] For forty years I led you through the wilderness, yet your clothes and sandals did not wear out. [6] You had no bread or wine or other strong drink, but he gave you food so you would know that he is the Lord your God.

[7] When we came here, King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan came out to fight against us, but we defeated them. [8] We took their land and gave it to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to the half-tribe of Manasseh as their inheritance.

[9] "Therefore, obey the terms of this covenant so that you will prosper in everything you do. [10] All of you—your tribal leaders, your judges, your officers, all the men of Israel—are standing today before the Lord your God. [11] With you are your little ones, your wives, and the foreigners living among you who chop your wood and carry your water. [12] You are standing here today to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God. The Lord is making this covenant with you today, and he has sealed it with an oath.

[13] He wants to confirm you today as his people and to confirm that he is your God, just as he promised you, and as he swore to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [14] But you are not the only ones with whom the Lord is making this covenant with its obligations. [15] The Lord your God is making this covenant with you who stand in his presence today and also with all future generations of Israel.

[16] "Surely you remember how we lived in the land of Egypt and how we traveled through the lands of enemy nations as we left. [17] You have seen their detestable idols made of wood, stone, silver, and gold. [18] The Lord made this covenant with you so that no man, woman, family, or tribe among you would turn away from the Lord our God to worship these gods of other nations, and so that no root among you would bear bitter and poisonous fruit. [19] Let none of those who hear the warnings of this curse consider themselves immune, thinking, 'I am safe, even though I am walking in my own stubborn way.' This would lead to utter ruin!

[20] The Lord will not pardon such people. His anger and jealousy will burn against them. All the curses written in this book will come down on them, and the Lord will erase their names from under heaven. [21] The Lord will separate them from all the tribes of Israel, to pour out on them all the covenant curses recorded in this Book of the Law.

[22] "Then the generations to come, both your own descendants and the foreigners who come from distant lands, will see the devastation of the land and the diseases the Lord will send against it. [23] They will find its soil turned into sulfur and salt, with nothing planted and nothing growing, not even a blade of grass. It will be just like Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord destroyed in his anger. [24] The surrounding nations will ask, 'Why has the Lord done this to his land? Why was he so angry?'

[25] "And they will be told, 'This happened because the people of the land broke the covenant they made with the Lord, the God of their ancestors, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. [26] They turned to serve and worship other gods that were foreign to them, gods that the Lord had not designated for them. [27] That is why the Lord's anger burned against this land, bringing down on it all the curses recorded in this book. [28] In great anger and fury the Lord uprooted his people from their land and exiled them to another land, where they still live today!'

[29] "There are secret things that belong to the Lord our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our descendants forever, so that we may obey these words of the law.

[30:1] "Suppose all these things happen to you—the blessings and the curses I have listed—and you meditate on them as you are living among the nations to which the Lord your God has exiled you. [2] If at that time you return to the Lord your God, and you and your children begin wholeheartedly to obey all the commands I have given you today, [3] then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes. He will have mercy on you and gather you back from all the nations where he has scattered you. [4] Though you are at the ends of the earth, the Lord your God will go and find you and bring you back again. [5] He will return you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will possess that land again. He will make you even more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors!

[6] "The Lord your God will cleanse your heart and the hearts of all your descendants so that you will love him with all your heart and soul, and so you may live! [7] The Lord your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and persecutors. [8] Then you will again obey the Lord and keep all the commands I am giving you today. [9] The Lord your God will make you successful in everything you do. He will give you many children and numerous livestock, and your fields will produce abundant harvests, for the Lord will delight in being good to you as he was to your ancestors.

[10] The Lord your God will delight in you if you obey his voice and keep the commands and laws written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.

[11] "This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you to understand or perform. [12] It is not up in heaven, so distant that you must ask, 'Who will go to heaven and bring it down so we can hear and obey it?'

[13] It is not beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, 'Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear and obey it?' [14] The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.

[15] "Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between prosperity and disaster, between life and death. [16] I have commanded you today to love the Lord your God and to keep his commands, laws, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and become a great nation, and the Lord your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy. [17] But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, [18] then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

[19] "Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, that you and your descendants might live!

[20] Choose to love the Lord your God and to obey him and commit yourself to him, for he is your life. Then you will live long in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

D. THE CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP: MOSES' LAST DAYS (Deut. 31:1-34:12)

Although Moses made some serious mistakes, he had lived uprightly and carried out God's commands. Moses died with integrity. We too may make some serious mistakes, but that should not stop us from living with integrity and godly commitment.

Deut. 31:1-34:12

When Moses had finished saying these things to all the people of Israel, [2] he said, "I am now 120 years old and am no longer able to lead you. The Lord has told me that I will not cross the Jordan River. [3] But the Lord your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy the nations living there, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua is your new leader, and he will go with you, just as the Lord promised. [4] The Lord will destroy the nations living in the land, just as he destroyed Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites. [5] The Lord will hand over to you the people who live there, and you will deal with them as I have commanded you. [6] Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid of them! The Lord your God will go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor forsake you."

[7] Then Moses called for Joshua, and as all Israel watched he said to him, "Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the Lord swore to give their ancestors. You are the one who will deliver it to them as their inheritance. [8] Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord is the one who goes before you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor forsake you."

[9] So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, who carried the Ark of the Lord's covenant, and to the leaders of Israel. [10] Then Moses gave them this command: "At the end of every seventh year, the Year of Release, during the Festival of Shelters, [11] you must read this law to all the people of Israel when they assemble before the Lord your God at the place he chooses. [12] Call them all together—men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns—so they may listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully obey all the terms of this law. [13] Do this so that your children who have not known these laws will hear them and will learn to fear the Lord your God. Do this as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy."

[14] Then the Lord said to Moses, "The time has come for you to die. Call Joshua and take him with you to the Tabernacle, and I will commission him there." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the Tabernacle. [15] And the Lord appeared to them in a pillar of cloud at the entrance to the sacred tent.

[16] The Lord said to Moses, "You are about to die and join your ancestors. After you are gone, these people will begin worshiping foreign gods, the gods of the land where they are going. They will abandon me and break the covenant I have made with them. [17] Then my anger will blaze forth against them. I will abandon them, hiding my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Terrible trouble will come down on them, so that they will say, 'These disasters have come because God is no longer among us!' [18] At that time I will hide my face from them on account of all the sins they have committed by worshiping other gods."

[19] "Now write down the words of this song, and teach it to the people of Israel. Teach them to sing it, so it may serve as a witness against them. [20] For I will bring them into the land I swore to give their ancestors—a land flowing with milk and honey. There they will become prosperous; they will eat all the food they want and become well nourished. Then they will begin to worship other gods; they will despise me and break my covenant. [21] Then great disasters will come down on them, and this song will stand as evidence against them, for it will never be forgotten by their descendants. I know what these people are like, even before they have entered the land I swore to give them." [22] So that very day Moses wrote down the words of the song and taught it to the Israelites.

[23] Then the Lord commissioned Joshua son of Nun with these words: "Be strong and courageous! You must bring the people of Israel into the land I swore to give them. I will be with you."

[24] When Moses had finished writing down this entire body of law in a book, [25] he gave these instructions to the Levites who carried the Ark of the Lord's covenant: [26] "Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, so it may serve as a witness against the people of Israel. [27] For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Even now, while I am still with you, you have rebelled against the Lord. How much more rebellious will you be after my death! [28] Now summon all the leaders and officials of your tribes so that I can speak to them and call heaven and earth to witness against them. [29] I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt and will turn from the path I have commanded you to follow. In the days to come, disaster will come down on you, for you will make the Lord very angry by doing what is evil in his sight."

[30] So Moses recited this entire song to the assembly of Israel:

[32:1] "Listen, O heavens, and I will speak!

Hear, O earth, the words that I say!

[2] My teaching will fall on you like rain;
my speech will settle like dew.

My words will fall like rain on tender grass,
like gentle showers on young plants.

[3] I will proclaim the name of the Lord;
how glorious is our God!

[4] He is the Rock; his work is perfect.

Everything he does is just and fair.

He is a faithful God who does no wrong;
how just and upright he is!

[5] "But they have acted corruptly toward him;
when they act like that, are they really his children?

They are a deceitful and twisted generation.

[6] Is this the way you repay the Lord,
you foolish and senseless people?

Isn't he your Father who created you?

Has he not made you and established you?

[7] Remember the days of long ago;

think about the generations past.
Ask your father and he will inform you.
Inquire of your elders, and they will tell you.
[8] When the Most High assigned lands to the nations,
when he divided up the human race,
he established the boundaries of the peoples
according to the number of angelic beings.
[9] For the people of Israel belong to the Lord;
Jacob is his special possession.

[10] "He found them in a desert land,
in an empty, howling wasteland.
He surrounded them and watched over them;
he guarded them as his most precious possession.
[11] Like an eagle that rouses her chicks
and hovers over her young,
so he spread his wings to take them in
and carried them aloft on his pinions.
[12] The Lord alone guided them;
they lived without any foreign gods.
[13] He made them ride over the highlands;
he let them feast on the crops of the fields.
He nourished them with honey from the cliffs,
with olive oil from the hard rock.
[14] He fed them curds from the herd and milk from the flock,
together with the fat of lambs and goats.
He gave them choice rams and goats from Bashan,
Together with the choicest wheat.
You drank the finest wine,
made from the juice of grapes.

[15] But Israel soon became fat and unruly;
the people grew heavy, plump, and stuffed!
Then they abandoned the God who had made them;
they made light of the Rock of their salvation.
[16] They stirred up his jealousy by worshiping foreign gods;
they provoked his fury with detestable acts.
[17] They offered sacrifices to demons, non-gods,
to gods they had not known before,
to gods only recently arrived,
to gods their ancestors had never feared.
[18] You neglected the Rock who had fathered you;
you forgot the God who had given you birth.

[19] "The Lord saw this and was filled with loathing.
He was provoked to anger by his own sons and daughters.

[20] He said, 'I will abandon them;
I will see to their end!
For they are a twisted generation,
children without integrity.
[21] They have roused my jealousy by worshiping non-gods;
they have provoked my fury with useless idols.
Now I will rouse their jealousy by blessing other nations;
I will provoke their fury by blessing the foolish Gentiles.

[22] For my anger blazes forth like fire
and burns to the depths of the grave.
It devours the earth and all its crops
and ignites the foundations of the mountains.

[23] I will heap disasters upon them
and shoot them down with my arrows.

[24] I will send against them wasting famine,
burning fever, and deadly disease.
They will be troubled by the fangs of wild beasts,
by poisonous snakes that glide in the dust.

[25] Outside, the sword will bring death,
and inside, terror will strike
both young men and young women,
both infants and the aged.

[26] I decided to scatter them,
so even the memory of them would disappear.

[27] But I feared the taunt of the enemy,
that their adversaries might misunderstand and say,
"Our power has triumphed!
It was not the Lord who did this!" '

[28] "Israel is a nation that lacks sense;
the people are foolish, without understanding.

[29] Oh, that they were wise and could understand this!
Oh, that they might know their fate!

[30] How could one person chase a thousand of them,
and two people put ten thousand to flight,
unless their Rock had sold them,
unless the Lord had given them up?

[31] But the rock of our enemies is not like our Rock,
as even they recognize.

[32] Their vine grows from the vine of Sodom,
from the vineyards of Gomorrah.

Their grapes are poison,
and their clusters are bitter.

[33] Their wine is the venom of snakes,
the deadly poison of vipers.

[34] " I am storing up these things,
sealing them away within my treasury.
[35] I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it.
In due time their feet will slip.
Their day of disaster will arrive,
and their destiny will overtake them.'

[36] "Indeed, the Lord will judge his people,
and he will change his mind about his servants,
when he sees their strength is gone
and no one is left, slave or free.
[37] Then he will ask, 'Where are their gods,
the rocks they fled to for refuge?
[38] Where now are those gods,
who ate the fat of their sacrifices
and drank the wine of their offerings?
Let those gods arise and help you!
Let them provide you with shelter!

[39] Look now; I myself am he!
There is no god other than me!
I am the one who kills and gives life;
I am the one who wounds and heals;
no one delivers from my power!
[40] Now I raise my hand to heaven
and declare, "As surely as I live,
[41] when I sharpen my flashing sword
and begin to carry out justice,
I will bring vengeance on my enemies
and repay those who hate me.
[42] I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
and my sword will devour flesh—
the blood of the slaughtered and the captives,
and the heads of the enemy leaders."'

[43] "Rejoice with him, O heavens,
and let all the angels of God worship him,
for he will avenge the blood of his servants.
He will take vengeance on his enemies
and cleanse his land and his people."

[44] So Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and recited all the words of this song to the people. [45] When Moses had finished reciting these words to Israel, [46] he added: "Take to heart all the words I have given you today. Pass them on as a command to your children so they will obey every word of this law.

[47] These instructions are not mere words—they are your life! By obeying them you will enjoy a long life in the land you are crossing the Jordan River to occupy."

[48] That same day the Lord said to Moses, [49] "Go to Moab, to the mountains east of the river, and climb Mount Nebo, which is across from Jericho. Look out across the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the people of Israel as their own possession. [50] Then you must die there on the mountain and join your ancestors, just as Aaron, your brother, died on Mount Hor and joined his ancestors. [51] For both of you broke faith with me among the Israelites at the waters of Meribah at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin. You failed to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel there. [52] So you will see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel."

[33:1] this is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, gave to the people of Israel before his death:

[2] "The Lord came from Mount Sinai
and dawned upon us from Mount Seir;
he shone forth from Mount Paran
and came from Meribah-kadesh
with flaming fire at his right hand.
[3] Indeed, you love the people;
all your holy ones are in your hands.
They follow in your steps
and accept your instruction.
[4] Moses charged us with the law,
the special possession of the assembly of Israel.
[5] The Lord became king in Israel—
when the leaders of the people assembled,
when the tribes of Israel gathered."

[6] Moses said this about the tribe of Reuben:

"Let the tribe of Reuben live and not die out,
even though their tribe is small."

[7] Moses said this about the tribe of Judah:

"O Lord, hear the cry of Judah
and bring them again to their people.
Give them strength to defend their cause;
help them against their enemies!"

[8] Moses said this about the tribe of Levi:

"O Lord, you have given the sacred lots
to your faithful servants the Levites.

You put them to the test at Massah
and contended with them at the waters of Meribah.

[9] The Levites obeyed your word
and guarded your covenant.

They were more loyal to you
than to their parents, relatives, and children.

[10] Now let them teach your regulations to Jacob;
let them give your instructions to Israel.

They will present incense before you
and offer whole burnt offerings on the altar.

[11] Bless the Levites, O Lord,
and accept all their work.

Crush the loins of their enemies;
strike down their foes so they never rise again."

[12] Moses said this about the tribe of Benjamin:

"The people of Benjamin are loved by the Lord
and live in safety beside him.

He surrounds them continuously
and preserves them from every harm."

[13] Moses said this about the tribes of Joseph:

"May their land be blessed by the Lord
with the choice gift of rain from the heavens,
and water from beneath the earth;

[14] with the riches that grow in the sun,
and the bounty produced each month;

[15] with the finest crops of the ancient mountains,
and the abundance from the everlasting hills;

[16] with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness,
and the favor of the one who appeared in the burning bush.

May these blessings rest on Joseph's head,
crowning the brow of the prince among his brothers.

[17] Joseph has the strength and majesty of a young bull;
his power is like the horns of a wild ox.

He will gore distant nations,
driving them to the ends of the earth.

This is my blessing for the multitudes of Ephraim
and the thousands of Manasseh."

[18] Moses said this about the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar:

"May the people of Zebulun prosper in their expeditions abroad.

May the people of Issachar prosper at home in their tents.

[19] They summon the people to the mountain
to offer proper sacrifices there.
They benefit from the riches of the sea
and the hidden treasures of the sand."

[20] Moses said this about the tribe of Gad:

"Blessed is the one who enlarges Gad's territory!
Gad is poised there like a lion
to tear off an arm or a head.

[21] The people of Gad took the best land for themselves;
a leader's share was assigned to them.
When the leaders of the people were assembled,
they carried out the Lord's justice
and obeyed his regulations for Israel."

[22] Moses said this about the tribe of Dan:

"Dan is a lion's cub,
leaping out from Bashan."

[23] Moses said this about the tribe of Naphtali:

"O Naphtali, you are rich in favor
and full of the Lord's blessings;
may you possess the west and the south."

[24] Moses said this about the tribe of Asher:

"May Asher be blessed above other sons;
may he be esteemed by his brothers;
may he bathe his feet in olive oil.

[25] May the bolts of your gates be of iron and bronze;
may your strength match the length of your days!"

[26] "There is no one like the God of Israel.
He rides across the heavens to help you,
across the skies in majestic splendor.

[27] The eternal God is your refuge,
and his everlasting arms are under you.

He thrusts out the enemy before you;
It is he who cries, 'Destroy them!'

[28] So Israel will live in safety,
prosperous Jacob in security,

In a land of grain and wine,
while the heavens drop down dew.

[29] How blessed you are, O Israel!
Who else is like you, a people saved by the Lord?
He is your protecting shield
and your triumphant sword!
Your enemies will bow low before you,
and you will trample on their backs!"

[34:1] Then Moses went to Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab and climbed Pisgah Peak, which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him the whole land, from Gilead as far as Dan; [2] all the land of Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; all the land of Judah, extending to the Mediterranean Sea; [3] the Negev; the Jordan Valley with Jericho—the city of palms—as far as Zoar. [4] Then the Lord said to Moses, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I told them I would give it to their descendants. I have now allowed you to see it, but you will not enter the land."

[5] So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, just as the Lord had said. [6] He was buried in a valley near Beth-peor in Moab, but to this day no one knows the exact place. [7] Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was clear, and he was as strong as ever. [8] The people of Israel mourned thirty days for Moses on the plains of Moab, until the customary period of mourning was over.

[9] Now Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did everything just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

[10] There has never been another prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. [11] The Lord sent Moses to perform all the miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and his entire land. [12] And it was through Moses that the Lord demonstrated his mighty power and terrifying acts in the sight of all Israel.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: History

EXPLANATION:

Moses reviewed the mighty acts of God whereby he liberated Israel from slavery in Egypt. He recounted how God had helped them and how the people had disobeyed.

IMPORTANCE:

By reviewing God's promises and mighty acts in history, we can learn about his character. We come to know God more intimately through understanding how he has acted in the past. We can also avoid mistakes in our own lives through learning from Israel's past failures.

THEME: Laws

EXPLANATION:

God reviewed his laws for the people. The legal contract between God and his people had to be renewed by the new generation about to enter the Promised Land.

IMPORTANCE:

Commitment to God and his truth cannot be taken for granted. Each generation and each person must respond afresh to God's call for obedience.

Theme: Love

EXPLANATION:

God's faithful and patient love is portrayed more often than his punishment. God shows his love by being faithful to his people and his promises. In response, God desires love from the heart, not merely legalistically keeping his law.

IMPORTANCE:

God's love forms the foundation for our trust in him. We trust him because he loves us. Because God loves us, we should maintain justice and respect.

THEME: Choices

EXPLANATION:

God reminded his people that in order to ratify his agreement they must choose the path of obedience. A personal decision to obey would bring benefits to their lives; rebellion would bring severe calamity.

IMPORTANCE:

Our choices make a difference. Choosing to follow God benefits us and improves our relationships with others. Choosing to abandon God's ways brings harm to ourselves and others.

THEME: Teaching

EXPLANATION:

God commanded the Israelites to teach their children his ways. They were to use ritual, instruction, and memorization to make sure their children understood God's principles and passed them on to the next generation.

IMPORTANCE:

Quality teaching for our children must be a priority. It is important to pass on God's truth to future generations in our traditions. But God desires that his truth be in our hearts and minds and not merely in our traditions.

TIMELINE

Joseph dies 1805 B.C. (1640 B.C.)

Exodus from Egypt 1446 (1280)

Ten Commandments given 1445 (1279)

DESERT WANDERINGS

Moses' death; Israelites enter Canaan 1406 (1240)

Judges begin to rule 1375 (1220)

United Kingdom under Saul 1050 (1045)

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print