

Deuteronomy



Shortly before Moses died, he gave three farewell speeches. In them he reviewed the many laws God had given the Israelites. This book gets its name, which means “second law,” from this review. Deuteronomy includes many succinct and beautiful summaries of God’s commands to love one another and to care for the poor.

The Final Speeches of Moses

1¹⁻⁵ This book contains the speeches that Moses made while Israel was in the land of Moab, camped near the town of Suph in the desert east of the Jordan River. The town of Paran was in one direction from their camp, and the towns of Tophel, Laban, Hazereth, and Dizahab were in the opposite direction.

Earlier, Moses had defeated the Amorite King Sihon of Heshbon. Moses had also defeated King Og of Bashan, who used to live in Ashtaroth for part of the year and in Edrei for the rest of the year.

Although it takes only eleven days to walk from Mount Sinai[>] to Kadesh-Barnea by way of the Mount Seir Road, these speeches were not made until 40 years after Israel left Egypt.

The First Speech: Moses Reviews the Past

The LORD’s Command at Mount Sinai

The LORD had given Moses his laws for the people of Israel. And on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses began explaining those laws by saying:

6 People of Israel, when we were in our camp at Mount Sinai,[>] the LORD our God told us:

You have stayed here long enough. **7** Leave this place and go into the land that belongs to the Amorites and their neighbors the Canaanites. This land includes the Jordan River valley, the hill country, the western foothills, the Southern Desert, the

Mediterranean seacoast, the Lebanon Mountains, and all the territory as far as the Euphrates River.

8 I give you this land, just as I promised your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now you must go and take the land.

Leaders Were Appointed

Moses said:

9 Right after the LORD commanded us to leave Mount Sinai,[>] I told you:

Israel, being your leader is too big a job for one person. **10** The LORD our God has blessed us, and so now there are as many of us as there are stars in the sky. **11** God has even promised to bless us a thousand times more, and I pray that he will. **12** But I cannot take care of all your problems and settle all your arguments alone.

13 Each tribe must choose some experienced men who are known for their wisdom and understanding, and I will make those men the official leaders of their tribes.

14 You answered, “That’s a good idea!” **15** Then I took these men, who were already wise and respected leaders, and I appointed them as your official leaders. Some of them became military officers in charge of groups of 1,000, or 100, or 50, or 10, **16** and others became judges. I gave these judges the following instructions:

When you settle legal cases, your decisions must be fair. It doesn’t matter if the case is

between two Israelites, or between an Israelite and a foreigner living in your community.

¹⁷ And it doesn't matter if one is helpless and the other is powerful. Don't be afraid of anyone! No matter who shows up in your court, God will help you make a fair decision.

If any case is too hard for you, bring the people to me, and I will make the decision.

¹⁸ After I gave these instructions to the judges, I taught you the LORD's commands.

Men Were Sent To Explore the Hill Country

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁹ The LORD had commanded us to leave Mount Sinai[>] and go to the hill country that belonged to the Amorites, so we started out into the huge desert. You remember how frightening it was, but soon we were at Kadesh-Barnea, ²⁰⁻²¹ and I told you, "We have reached the hill country. It belongs to the Amorites now, but the LORD our God is giving it to us. He is the same God our ancestors worshiped, and he has told us to go in and take this land, so don't hesitate and be afraid."

²² Then all of you came to me and said, "Before we go into the land, let's send some men to explore it. When they come back, they can tell us about the towns we will find and what roads we should take to get there."

²³ It seemed like a good idea, so I chose twelve men, one from each tribe. ²⁴ They explored the hill country as far as Bunch Valley[>] ²⁵ and even brought back some of the fruit. They said, "The LORD our God is giving us good land."

Israel Refused To Obey the LORD

Moses said to Israel:

²⁶ You did not want to go into the land, and you refused to obey the LORD your God. ²⁷ You stayed in your tents and grumbled, "The LORD must hate us—he brought us out of Egypt, just so he could hand us over to the Amorites and get rid of us. ²⁸ We are afraid, because the men who explored the land told us that the cities are large, with walls that reach to the sky. The people who live there are taller and stronger than we are,[>] and some of them are Anakim. We have nowhere to go."

²⁹ Then I said, "Don't worry! ³⁰ The LORD our God will lead the way. He will fight on our side, just as he did when we saw him do all those things to the Egyptians. ³¹ And you know that the LORD has taken care of us the whole time we've been in the desert, just as you might carry one of your children."

³² But you still would not trust the LORD, ³³ even though he had always been with us in the desert. During the daytime, the LORD was in the cloud, leading us in the right direction and showing us where to camp. And at night, he was there in the fire.

³⁴ You had made the LORD angry, and he said:

³⁵ You people of this generation are evil, and I refuse to let you go into the good land that I promised your ancestors. ³⁶ Caleb son of Jephunneh is the only one of your generation that I will allow to go in. He obeyed me completely, so I will give him and his descendants the land he explored.

³⁷ The LORD was even angry with me because of you people, and he said, "Moses, I won't let you go into the land either. ³⁸ Instead, I will let Joshua[>] your assistant lead Israel to conquer the land. So encourage him."

³⁹ Then the LORD spoke to you again:

People of Israel, you said that your innocent young children would be taken prisoner in the battle for the land. But someday I will let them go into the land, and with my help they will conquer it and live there.

⁴⁰ Now, turn around and go back into the desert by way of Red Sea[>] Road.

⁴¹ Then you told me, "We disobeyed the LORD our God, but now we want to obey him. We will go into the hill country and fight, just as he told us to do." So you picked up your weapons, thinking it would be easy to take over the hill country.

⁴² But the LORD said, "Moses, warn them not to go into the hill country. I won't help them fight, and their enemies will defeat them."

⁴³ I told you what the LORD had said, but you paid no attention. You disobeyed him and went into the hill country anyway. You thought you were so great! ⁴⁴ But when the Amorites in the hill country attacked from their towns, you ran from them as you would run from a swarm of bees. The Amorites chased your troops into Seir as far as Hormah, killing them as they went. ⁴⁵ Then you came back to the place of worship at Kadesh-Barnea and wept, but the LORD would not listen to your prayers.

Israel Spent Years in the Desert

Moses said to Israel:

⁴⁶ After we had been in Kadesh for a few months, we obeyed the LORD and headed back into the desert by way of Red Sea[>] Road.

2 We spent many years wandering around outside the hill country of Seir, ² until the LORD said:

Moses,³ Israel has wandered in these hills long enough. Turn and go north.⁴ And give the people these orders: "Be very careful, because you will soon go through the land that belongs to your relatives, the descendants of Esau. They are afraid of you,⁵ but don't start a war with them. I have given them the hill country of Seir, so I won't give any of it to you, not even enough to set a foot on.⁶ And as you go through their land, you will have to buy food and water from them."

⁷ The LORD has helped us and taken care of us during the past 40 years that we have been in this huge desert. We've had everything we needed, and the LORD has blessed us and made us successful in whatever we have done.

⁸ We went past the territory that belonged to our relatives, the descendants of Esau. We followed Arabah Road that starts in the south at Elath and Ezion-Geber, then we turned onto the desert road that leads to Moab.

⁹ The LORD told me, "Don't try to start a war with Moab. Leave them alone, because I gave the land of Ar to them,[▷] and I will not let you have any of it."

Tribes That Lived near Canaan

¹⁰ Before the LORD gave the Moabites their land, a large and powerful tribe lived there. They were the Emim, and they were as tall as the Anakim.

¹¹ The Moabites called them Emim, though others sometimes used the name Rephaim for both the Anakim and the Emim.

¹² The Horites used to live in Seir, but the Edomites[▷] took over that region. They killed many of the Horites and forced the rest of them to leave, just as Israel did to the people in the land that the LORD gave them.

Israel Crossed the Zered Gorge

Moses said to Israel:

¹³ When we came to the Zered Gorge along the southern border of Moab, the LORD told us to cross the gorge into Moab, and we did.¹⁴ This was 38 years after we left Kadesh-Barnea, and by that time all the men who had been in the army at Kadesh-Barnea had died, just as the LORD had said they would.¹⁵⁻¹⁶ The LORD kept getting rid of[▷] them until finally none of them were left.

¹⁷ Then the LORD told me, ¹⁸ "Moses, now go past the town of Ar and cross Moab's northern border¹⁹ into Ammon. But don't start a war with the Ammonites. I gave them[▷] their land, and I won't give any of it to Israel."

More Nations That Lived near Canaan

²⁰ Before the Ammonites conquered the land that the LORD had given them, some of the Rephaim used to live there, although the Ammonites called them Zamzummim.²¹ The Zamzummim were a large and powerful tribe and were as tall as the Anakim. But the LORD helped the Ammonites, and they killed many of the Zamzummim and forced the rest to leave. Then the Ammonites settled there.²² The LORD helped them as he had helped the Edomites,[▷] who killed many of the Horites in Seir and forced the rest to leave before settling there themselves.

²³ A group called the Avvim used to live in villages as far south as Gaza, but the Philistines[▷] killed them and settled on their land.

Israel Crossed the Arnon Gorge

Moses said:

²⁴ After we went through Ammon, the LORD told us:

Israel, pack up your possessions, take down your tents, and cross the Arnon River gorge. The territory of the Amorite King Sihon of Heshbon lies on the other side of the river, but I now give you his land. So attack and take it!²⁵ Today I will start making all other nations afraid of you. They will tremble with fear when anyone mentions you, and they will be terrified when you show up.

The Defeat of King Sihon of Heshbon

Moses said to Israel:

²⁶ After we had crossed the Arnon and had set up camp in the Kedemoth Desert, I sent messengers to King Sihon of Heshbon, telling him that his nation and ours could be at peace. I said:

²⁷ Please let Israel go across your country. We will walk straight through, without turning off the road.²⁸⁻²⁹ You can even sell us food and water, and we will pay with silver. We need to reach the Jordan River and cross it, because the LORD our God is giving us the land on the west side. The Edomites and Moabites[▷] have already let us cross their land. Please let us cross your land as well.

³⁰⁻³¹ But Sihon refused to let us go across his country, because the LORD made him stubborn and eager to fight us. The LORD told me, "I am going to help you defeat Sihon and take his land, so attack him!"

³² We met Sihon and his army in battle at Jahaz,³³ and the LORD our God helped us defeat them.

We killed Sihon, his sons, and everyone else in his army.³⁴ Then we captured and destroyed every town in Sihon's kingdom, killing everyone,³⁵ but keeping the livestock and everything else of value.³⁶ The LORD helped us capture every town from the Arnon River gorge north to the boundary of Gilead, including the town of Aroer on the edge of the gorge and the town in the middle of the gorge.

³⁷ However, we stayed away from all the Ammonite towns, both in the hill country and near the Jabbok River, just as the LORD had commanded.

The Defeat of King Og of Bashan

Moses said to Israel:

3 When we turned onto the road that leads to Bashan, King Og of Bashan led out his whole army to fight us at Edrei.² But the LORD told me, "Moses, don't be afraid of King Og. I am going to help you defeat him and his army and take over his land. Destroy him and his people, just as you did with the Amorite King Sihon of Heshbon."

³⁻⁶ The LORD our God helped us destroy Og and his army and conquer his entire kingdom of Bashan, including the Argob region. His kingdom had lots of villages and 60 towns with high walls and gates that locked with bars. We completely destroyed them all, killing everyone,⁷ but keeping the livestock and everything else of value.

⁸ Sihon and Og had ruled Amorite kingdoms east of the Jordan River. Their land stretched from the Arnon River gorge in the south to Mount Hermon in the north, and we captured it all.⁹ Mount Hermon is called Mount Sirion by the people of Sidon, and it is called Mount Senir by the Amorites.¹⁰ We captured all the towns in the highlands, all of Gilead, and all of Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, two of the towns that Og had ruled.

Og's Coffin

¹¹ King Og was the last of the Rephaim, and his coffin[>] is in the town of Rabbah in Ammon. It is made of hard black rock[>] and is four meters long and almost two meters wide.

The Land East of the Jordan River Is Divided

Moses said to Israel:

¹²⁻¹⁷ I gave some of the land and towns we captured to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Their share started at the Arnon River gorge in the south, took in the town of Aroer on the edge of the gorge, and

went far enough north to include the southern half of the Gilead region. The northern part of their land went as far east as the upper Jabbok River gorge, which formed their border with the Ammonites. I also gave them the eastern side of the Jordan River valley, from Lake Galilee[>] south to the Dead Sea below the slopes of Mount Pisgah.

I gave the northern half of Gilead and all of the Bashan region to half the tribe of Manasseh.[>] Bashan had belonged to King Og, and the Argob region in Bashan used to be called the Land of the Rephaim. Jair from the Manasseh tribe conquered the Argob region as far west as the kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah. The Israelites even started calling Bashan by the name "Villages of Jair,"[>] and that is still its name. I gave the northern half of Gilead to the Machir clan.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ At that time I told the men of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh:

The LORD our God told me to give you this land with its towns, and that's what I have done. Now your wives and children can stay here with your large flocks of sheep and goats and your large herds of cattle. But all of you men that can serve in our army must cross the Jordan River and help the other tribes, because they are your relatives.²⁰ The LORD will let them defeat the enemy nations on the west side of the Jordan and take their land. Afterwards, you can come back here to the land I gave you.

²¹⁻²² Then I told Joshua, "You saw how the LORD our God helped us destroy King Sihon and King Og. So don't be afraid! Wherever you go, the LORD will fight on your side and help you destroy your enemies."

God Refused To Let Moses Enter Canaan

Moses said to Israel:

²³ At that time I prayed and begged,²⁴ "Our LORD, it seems that you have just begun to show me your great power. No other god in the sky or on earth is able to do the mighty things that you do.²⁵ The land west of the Jordan is such good land. Please let me cross the Jordan and see the hills and the Lebanon Mountains."

²⁶ But the LORD was angry with me because of you people, and he refused to listen. "That's enough!" he said. "I don't want to hear any more."²⁷ Climb to the top of Mount Pisgah and look north, south, east, and west. Take a good look, but you are not going to cross the Jordan River.²⁸ Joshua will lead Israel across the Jordan to take the land, so

help him be strong and brave and tell him what he must do.”

²⁹ After this we stayed in the valley at Beth-Peor.

Israel Must Obey God

Moses said:

4 Israel, listen to these laws and teachings! If you obey them, you will live, and you will go in and take the land that the LORD is giving you. He is the God your ancestors worshiped, ² and now he is your God. I am telling you everything he has commanded, so don't add anything or take anything away.

³ You saw how he killed everyone who worshiped the god Baal Peor. ⁴ But all of you that were faithful to the LORD your God are still alive today.

⁵⁻⁸ No other nation has laws that are as fair as the ones the Lord my God told me to give you. If you faithfully obey them when you enter the land, you will show other nations how wise you are. In fact, everyone that hears about your laws will say, “That great nation certainly is wise!” And what makes us greater than other nations? We have a God who is close to us and answers our prayers.

⁹ You must be very careful not to forget the things you have seen God do for you. Keep reminding yourselves, and tell your children and grandchildren as well. ¹⁰ Do you remember the day you stood in the LORD's presence at Mount Sinai? The LORD said, “Moses, bring the people of Israel here. I want to speak to them so they will obey me as long as they live, and so they will teach their children to obey me too.”

¹¹ Mount Sinai was surrounded by deep dark clouds, and fire went up to the sky. You came to the foot of the mountain, ¹² and the LORD spoke to you from the fire. You could hear him and understand what he was saying, but you couldn't see him. ¹³ The LORD said he was making an agreement with you, and he told you that your part of the agreement is to obey the Ten Commandments. Then the LORD wrote these Commandments on two flat stones.

¹⁴ That's when the LORD commanded me to give you the laws and teachings you must obey in the land that you will conquer west of the Jordan River.

Don't Worship Idols

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁵ When God spoke to you from the fire, he was invisible. So be careful ¹⁶ not to commit the sin of worshipping idols. Don't make idols to be worshiped, whether they are shaped like men, women, ¹⁷ animals, birds, ¹⁸ reptiles, or fish. ¹⁹ And

when you see the sun or moon or stars, don't be tempted to bow down and worship them. The LORD put them there for all the other nations to worship. ²⁰ But you are the LORD's people, because he led you through fiery trials and rescued you from Egypt.

²¹ The LORD was angry at me because of what you said, and he told me that he would not let me cross the Jordan River into the good land that he is giving you. ²² So I must stay here and die on this side of the Jordan, but you will cross the river and take the land.

²³ Always remember the agreement that the LORD your God made with you, and don't make an idol in any shape or form. ²⁴ The LORD will be angry if you worship other gods, and he can be like a fire destroying everything in its path.

²⁵⁻²⁶ Soon you will cross the Jordan River and settle down in the land. Then in the years to come, you will have children, and they will give you grandchildren. After many years, you might lose your sense of right and wrong and make idols, even though the LORD your God hates them. So I am giving you fair warning today, and I call the earth and the sky as witnesses. If you ever make idols, the LORD will be angry, and you won't have long to live, because the LORD will let you be wiped out. ²⁷ Only a few of you will survive, and the LORD will force you to leave the land and will scatter you among the nations. ²⁸ There you will have to worship gods made of wood and stone, and these are nothing but idols that can't see or hear or eat or smell.

²⁹⁻³⁰ In all of your troubles, you may finally decide that you want to worship only the LORD. And if you turn back to him and obey him completely, he will again be your God. ³¹ The LORD your God will have mercy—he won't destroy you or desert you. The LORD will remember his promise, and he will keep the agreement he made with your ancestors.

³²⁻³⁴ When the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt, you saw how he fought for you and showed his great power by performing terrifying miracles. You became his people, and at Mount Sinai you heard him talking to you out of fiery flames. And yet you are still alive! Has anything like this ever happened since the time God created humans? No matter where you go or who you ask, you will get the same answer. No one has ever heard of another god even trying to do such things as the LORD your God has done for you.

³⁵⁻³⁶ The LORD wants you to know he is the only true God, and he wants you to obey him. That's why he let you see his mighty miracles and his fierce fire on earth, and why you heard his voice from that fire and from the sky.

³⁷ The LORD loved your ancestors and decided that you would be his people. So the LORD used his great power to bring you out of Egypt. ³⁸ Now you face other nations more powerful than you are, but the LORD has already started forcing them out of their land and giving it to you.

³⁹ So remember that the LORD is the only true God, whether in the sky above or on the earth below. ⁴⁰ Today I am explaining his laws and teachings. And if you always obey them, you and your descendants will live long and be successful in the land the LORD is giving to you.

Safe Towns

⁴¹⁻⁴³ Moses said, "People of Israel, you must set aside the following three towns east of the Jordan River as Safe Towns: Bezer in the desert highlands belonging to the Reuben tribe; Ramoth in Gilead, belonging to the Gad tribe; and Golan in Bashan, belonging to the Manasseh tribe. If you kill a neighbor without meaning to, and if you had not been angry with that person, you can run to one of these towns and find safety."

The Second Speech: Moses Tells What the Lord Demands

Israel at Beth-Peor

⁴⁴⁻⁴⁶ The Israelites had come from Egypt and were camped east of the Jordan River near Beth-Peor, when Moses gave these laws and teachings. The land around their camp had once belonged to King Sihon of Heshbon. But Moses and the Israelites defeated him ⁴⁷ and King Og of Bashan, and took their lands. These two Amorite kings had ruled the territory east of the Jordan River ⁴⁸ from the town of Aroer on the edge of the Arnon River gorge, north to Mount Hermon. [>] ⁴⁹ Their land included the eastern side of the Jordan River valley, as far south as the Dead Sea [>] below the slopes of Mount Pisgah.

The Ten Commandments

5 Moses called together the people of Israel and said:

Today I am telling you the laws and teachings that you must follow, so listen carefully. ² The LORD our God made an agreement with our nation at

Mount Sinai. [>] ³ That agreement wasn't only with our ancestors but with us, who are here today. ⁴ The LORD himself spoke to you out of the fire, ⁵ but you were afraid of the fire and refused to go up the mountain. So I spoke with the LORD for you, then I told you that he had said:

⁶ I am the LORD your God, the one who brought you out of Egypt where you were slaves.

⁷ Do not worship any god except me.

⁸ Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth. ⁹ Don't bow down and worship idols. I am the LORD your God, and I demand all your love. If you reject me and worship idols, I will punish your families for three or four generations. ¹⁰ But if you love me and obey my laws, I will be kind to your families for thousands of generations.

¹¹ Do not misuse my name. I am the LORD your God, and I will punish anyone who misuses my name.

¹² Show respect for the Sabbath Day—it belongs to me. ¹³ You have six days when you can do your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day of the week belongs to me, your God. No one is to work on that day—not you, your children, your oxen or donkeys or any other animal, not even those foreigners who live in your towns. And don't make your slaves do any work. ¹⁵ This special day of rest will remind you that I reached out my mighty arm and rescued you from slavery in Egypt.

¹⁶ Respect your father and mother, and you will live a long and successful life in the land I am giving you.

¹⁷ Do not murder.

¹⁸ Be faithful in marriage.

¹⁹ Do not steal.

²⁰ Do not tell lies about others.

²¹ Do not want anything that belongs to someone else. Don't want anyone's wife or husband, house, land, slaves, oxen, donkeys, or anything else.

²² When we were gathered on the mountain, the LORD spoke to us in a loud voice from the dark fiery cloud. The LORD gave us these commands, and only these. Then he wrote them on two flat stones and gave them to me.

The People Were Afraid

Moses said to Israel:

²³ When fire blazed from the mountain, and you heard the voice coming from the darkness, your tribal leaders came to me ²⁴ and said:

Today the LORD our God has shown us how powerful and glorious he is. He spoke to us from the fire, and we learned that people can live, even though God speaks to them. ²⁵ But we don't want to take a chance on being killed by that terrible fire, and if we keep on hearing the LORD's voice, we will die. ²⁶ Has anyone else ever heard the only true God speaking from fire, as we have? And even if they have, would they live to tell about it? ²⁷ Moses, go up close and listen to the LORD. Then come back and tell us, and we will do everything he says.

²⁸ The LORD heard you and said:

Moses, I heard what the people said to you, and I approve. ²⁹ I wish they would always worship me with fear and trembling and be this willing to obey me! Then they and their children would always enjoy a successful life.

³⁰ Now, tell them to return to their tents, ³¹ but you come back here to me. After I tell you my laws and teachings, you will repeat them to the people, so they can obey these laws in the land I am giving them.

Moses said:

³² Israel, you must carefully obey the LORD's commands. ³³ Follow them, because they make a path that will lead to a long successful life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

The Most Important Commandment

Moses said to Israel:

6 The LORD told me to give you these laws and teachings, so you can obey them in the land he is giving you. Soon you will cross the Jordan River and take that land. ² And if you and your descendants want to live a long time, you must always worship the LORD and obey his laws. ³ Pay attention, Israel! Our ancestors worshiped the LORD, and he promised to give us this land that is rich with milk and honey. Be careful to obey him, and you will become a successful and powerful nation.

⁴ Listen, Israel! The LORD our God is the only true God! ⁵ So love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. ⁶ Memorize his laws and tell them to your children over and over again. Talk about them all the time, whether you're at home or walking along the road or going to bed at night, or getting up in the morning. ⁸ Write down copies and tie them to your wrists and foreheads to help you obey them. ⁹ Write

these laws on the door frames of your homes and on your town gates.

Worship Only the LORD

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁰ The LORD promised your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give you this land. Now he will take you there and give you large towns, with good buildings that you didn't build, ¹¹ and houses full of good things that you didn't put there. The LORD will give you wells that you didn't have to dig, and vineyards and olive orchards that you didn't have to plant. But when you have eaten so much that you can't eat any more, ¹² don't forget it was the LORD who set you free from slavery and brought you out of Egypt. ¹³ Worship and obey the LORD your God with fear and trembling, and promise that you will be loyal to him.

¹⁴ Don't have anything to do with gods that are worshiped by the nations around you. ¹⁵ If you worship other gods, the LORD will be furious and wipe you off the face of the earth. The LORD your God is with you, ¹⁶ so don't try to make him prove that he can help you, as you did at Massah. ¹⁷ Always obey the laws that the LORD has given you ¹⁸⁻¹⁹ and live in a way that pleases him. Then you will be able to go in and take this good land from your enemies, just as he promised your ancestors.

²⁰ Someday your children will ask, "Why did the LORD give us these laws and teachings?"

²¹ Then you will answer:

We were slaves of the king of Egypt, but the LORD used his great power and set us free. ²² We saw him perform miracles and make horrible things happen to the king, his officials, and everyone else. ²³ The LORD rescued us from Egypt, so he could bring us into this land, as he had promised our ancestors. ²⁴⁻²⁵ That's why the LORD our God demands that we obey his laws and worship him with fear and trembling. And if we do, he will protect us and help us be successful.

Force the Other Nations Out of the Land

Moses said:

7 People of Israel, the LORD your God will help you take the land of the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. These seven nations have more people and are stronger than Israel, but when you attack them, ² the LORD will force them out of the land. Then you must destroy

them without mercy. Don't make any peace treaties with them,³ and don't let your sons and daughters marry any of them.⁴ If you do, those people will lead your descendants to worship other gods and to turn their backs on the LORD. That will make him very angry, and he will quickly destroy Israel.

⁵ So when you conquer these nations, tear down the altars where they worship their gods. Break up their sacred stones, cut down the poles that they use in worshiping the goddess Asherah, and throw their idols in the fire.

The LORD's Chosen People

Moses said:

⁶ Israel, you are the chosen people of the LORD your God. There are many nations on this earth, but he chose only Israel to be his very own.⁷ You were the weakest of all nations,⁸ but the LORD chose you because he loves you and because he had made a promise to your ancestors. Then with his mighty arm, he rescued you from the king of Egypt, who had made you his slaves.

⁹ You know that the LORD your God is the only true God. So love him and obey his commands, and he will faithfully keep his agreement with you and your descendants for a thousand generations.¹⁰ But if you turn against the LORD, he will quickly destroy you.¹¹ So be sure to obey his laws and teachings I am giving you today.

The LORD Will Bless You if You Obey

Moses said to Israel:

¹² If you completely obey these laws, the LORD your God will be loyal and keep the agreement he made with you, just as he promised our ancestors.¹³ The LORD will love you and bless you by giving you many children and plenty of food, wine, and olive oil. Your herds of cattle will have many calves, and your flocks of sheep will have many lambs.¹⁴ God will bless you more than any other nation—your families will grow and your livestock increase.¹⁵ You will no longer suffer with the same horrible diseases that you sometimes had in Egypt. You will be healthy, but the LORD will make your enemies suffer from those diseases.

Destroy the Nations and Their Gods

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁶ When the LORD helps you defeat your enemies, you must destroy them without pity! And don't get trapped into worshiping their gods.

¹⁷ You may be thinking, "How can we destroy these nations? They are more powerful than we are."¹⁸ But stop worrying! Just remember what the LORD your God did to Egypt and its king.¹⁹ You saw how the LORD used his tremendous power to work great miracles and bring you out of Egypt. And he will again work miracles for you when you face these enemies you fear so much.²⁰ Some of them may try to survive by hiding from you, but the LORD will make them panic, and soon they will be dead.²¹ So don't be frightened when you meet them in battle. The LORD your God is great and fearsome, and he will fight at your side.

²² As you attack these nations, the LORD will force them out little by little. He won't let you get rid of them all at once—if he did, there wouldn't be enough people living in the land to keep down the number of wild animals.²³⁻²⁴ But when you attack your enemies, the LORD will make them panic, and you will easily destroy them. You will defeat them one after another until they are gone, and no one will remember they ever lived.

²⁵ After you conquer a nation, burn their idols. Don't get trapped into wanting the silver or gold on an idol. Even the metal on an idol is disgusting to the LORD,²⁶ so destroy it. If you bring it home with you, both you and your house will be destroyed. Stay away from those disgusting idols!

The LORD Takes Care of You

Moses said:

8 Israel, do you want to go into the land the LORD promised your ancestors? Do you want to capture it, live there, and become a powerful nation? Then be sure to obey every command I am giving you.

² Don't forget how the LORD your God has led you through the desert for the past 40 years. He wanted to find out if you were truly willing to obey him and depend on him,³ so he made you go hungry. Then he gave you manna, a kind of food that you and your ancestors had never even heard about. The LORD was teaching you that people need more than food to live—they need every word that the LORD has spoken.

⁴ Over the past 40 years, your clothing hasn't worn out, and your feet haven't swollen.⁵ So keep in mind that the LORD has been correcting you, just as parents correct their children.⁶ Obey the commands the LORD your God has given you and worship him with fear and trembling.

⁷The LORD your God is bringing you into a good land with streams that flow from springs in the valleys and hills. ⁸⁻⁹You can dig for copper in those hills, and the stones are made of iron ore. And you won't go hungry. Wheat and barley fields are everywhere, and so are vineyards and orchards full of fig, pomegranate, and olive trees, and there is plenty of honey.

Don't Forget the LORD

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁰After you eat and are full, give praise to the LORD your God for the good land he gave you. ¹¹Make sure that you never forget the LORD or disobey his laws and teachings that I am giving you today. If you always obey them, ¹²you will have plenty to eat, and you will build good houses to live in. ¹³You will get more and more cattle, sheep, silver, gold, and other possessions.

¹⁴But when all this happens, don't be proud! Don't forget that you were once slaves in Egypt and that it was the LORD who set you free. ¹⁵Remember how he led you in that huge and frightening desert where poisonous snakes and scorpions live. There was no water, but the LORD split open a rock, and water poured out so you could drink. ¹⁶He also gave you manna, a kind of food your ancestors had never even heard about. The LORD was testing you to make you trust him, so that later on he could be good to you.

¹⁷When you become successful, don't say, "I'm rich, and I've earned it all myself." ¹⁸Instead, remember that the LORD your God gives you the strength to make a living. That's how he keeps the promise he made to your ancestors.

¹⁹⁻²⁰But I'm warning you—if you forget the LORD your God and worship other gods, the LORD will destroy you, just as he destroyed the nations you fought.

Why the LORD Will Help Israel

Moses said:

S Israel, listen to me! You will soon cross the Jordan River and go into the land to force out the nations that live there. They are more powerful than you are, and the walls around their cities reach to the sky. ²Some of these nations are descendants of the Anakim. You know how tall and strong they are, and you've heard that no one can defeat them in battle. ³But the LORD your God has promised to go ahead of you, like a raging fire burning everything in its path. So when you attack

your enemies, it will be easy for you to destroy them and take their land.

⁴⁻⁶After the LORD helps you wipe out these nations and conquer their land, don't think he did it because you are such good people. You aren't good—you are stubborn! No, the LORD is going to help you, because the nations that live there are evil, and because he wants to keep the promise he made to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

When Israel Made an Idol

Moses said to Israel:

⁷Don't ever forget how you kept rebelling and making the LORD angry the whole time you were in the desert. You rebelled from the day you left Egypt until the day you arrived here.

⁸At Mount Sinai[>] you made the LORD so angry that he was going to destroy you. ⁹⁻¹¹It happened during those 40 days and nights that I was on the mountain, without anything to eat or drink. He had told me to come up there so he could give me the agreement he made with us. And this agreement was actually the same Ten Commandments he had announced to you when he spoke from the fire on the mountain. The LORD had written them on two flat stones with his own hand. But after giving me the two stones, ¹²he said:

Moses, hurry down the mountain to those people you led out of Egypt. They have already disobeyed me and committed the terrible sin of making an idol.

¹³I've been watching the Israelites, and I've seen how stubborn and rebellious they are.

¹⁴So don't try to stop me! I am going to wipe them out, and no one on earth will remember they ever lived. Then I will let your descendants become an even bigger and more powerful nation than Israel.

Moses said:

¹⁵Fire was raging on the mountaintop as I went back down, carrying the two stones with the commandments on them. ¹⁶I saw how quickly you had sinned and disobeyed the LORD your God. There you were, worshiping the metal idol you had made in the shape of a calf. ¹⁷So I threw down the two stones and smashed them before your very eyes.

¹⁸⁻²⁰I bowed down at the place of worship and prayed to the LORD, without eating or drinking for 40 days and nights. You had committed a terrible sin by making that idol, and the LORD hated what you had done. He was angry enough to destroy all

of you and Aaron as well. So I prayed for you and Aaron as I had done before, and this time the LORD answered my prayers.

²¹ It was a sin for you to make that idol, so I threw it into the fire to melt it down. Then I took the lump of gold, ground it into powder, and threw the powder into the stream flowing down the mountain.

²² You also made the LORD angry when you were staying at Taberah, at Massah, and at Kibroth-Hattaavah. ²³ Then at Kadesh-Barnea the LORD said, "I am giving you the land, so go ahead and take it!" But since you didn't trust the LORD, you rebelled and disobeyed his command. ²⁴ In fact, you've rebelled against the LORD for as long as he has known you.

²⁵ After you had made the idol in the shape of a calf, the LORD said he was going to destroy you. So I bowed down in front of the sacred tent for 40 days and nights, ²⁶ and I prayed:

Our LORD, please don't wipe out your people. You used your great power to rescue them from Egypt and to make them your very own.

²⁷ Israel's ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob obeyed you faithfully. Think about them, and not about Israel's stubbornness, evil, and sin.

²⁸ If you destroy your people, the Egyptians will say, "The LORD promised to give Israel land, but he wasn't powerful enough to keep his promise. In fact, he hated them so much that he took them into the desert and killed them." ²⁹ But you, our LORD, chose the people of Israel to be your own, and with your mighty power you rescued them from Egypt.

The Second Set of Commandments

Moses said to the people:

10 The LORD told me to chisel out two flat stones, just like the ones he had given me earlier. He also commanded me to make a wooden chest, then come up the mountain and meet with him. ² He told me that he would write the same words on the new stones that he had written on the ones I broke, and that I could put these stones in this sacred chest.

³ So I made a chest out of acacia wood, and I chiseled two flat stones like the ones I broke. Then I carried the stones up the mountain, ⁴ where the LORD wrote the Ten Commandments on them, just as he had done the first time. The commandments were exactly what he had announced from the fire, when you were gathered at the mountain.

After the LORD returned the stones to me, ⁵ I took them down the mountainside and put them in the chest, just as he had commanded. And they are still there.

Aaron Died

Moses said to Israel:

⁶ Later we set up camp at the wells belonging to the descendants of Jaakan. ⁷ Then we moved on and camped at Moserah, where Aaron died and was buried, and his son Eleazar became the priest.

⁷ Next, we camped at Gudgodah and then at Jotbathah, where there are flowing streams.

The Levites Were Appointed To Carry the Chest

Moses said to Israel:

⁸ After I put the two stones in the sacred chest, ⁹ the LORD chose the tribe of Levi, not only to carry the chest, but also to serve as his priests at the place of worship and to bless the other tribes in his name. And they still do these things. ⁹ The LORD promised that he would always provide for the tribe of Levi, and that's why he won't give them any land, when he divides it among the other tribes.

The LORD Answered the Prayers of Moses

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁰ When I had taken the second set of stones up the mountain, I spent 40 days and nights there, just as I had done before. Once again, the LORD answered my prayer and did not destroy you. ¹¹ Instead, he told me, "Moses, get ready to lead the people into the land that I promised their ancestors."

What the LORD Wants

Moses said:

¹² People of Israel, what does the LORD your God want from you? The LORD wants you to respect and follow him, to love and serve him with all your heart and soul, ¹³ and to obey his laws and teachings that I am giving you today. Do this, and all will go well for you.

¹⁴ Everything belongs to the LORD your God, not only the earth and everything on it, but also the sky and the highest heavens. ¹⁵ Yet the LORD loved your ancestors and wanted them to belong to him. So he chose them and their descendants rather than any other nation, and today you are still his people.

¹⁶ Remember your agreement with the LORD and stop being so stubborn. ¹⁷ The LORD your God is

more powerful than all other gods and lords, and his tremendous power is to be feared. His decisions are always fair, and you cannot bribe him to change his mind. ¹⁸The LORD defends the rights of orphans and widows. He cares for foreigners and gives them food and clothing. ¹⁹And you should also care for them, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

²⁰Respect the LORD your God, serve only him, and make promises in his name alone. ²¹Offer your praises to him, because you have seen him work such terrifying miracles for you.

²²When your ancestors went to live in Egypt, there were only seventy of them. But the LORD has blessed you, and now there are more of you than there are stars in the sky.

If You Are Loyal to the LORD, He Will Bless You

Moses said to Israel:

11 The LORD is your God, so you must always love him and obey his laws and teachings.

²Remember, he corrected you and not your children. You are the ones who saw the LORD use his great power ³when he worked miracles in Egypt, making terrible things happen to the king and all his people. ⁴And when the Egyptian army chased you in their chariots, you saw the LORD drown them and their horses in the Red Sea.▷ Egypt still suffers from that defeat!

⁵You saw what the LORD did for you while you were in the desert, right up to the time you arrived here. ⁶And you saw how the LORD made the ground open up in the middle of our camp underneath the tents of Dathan and Abiram,▷ who were swallowed up along with their families, their animals, and their tents.

⁷With your own eyes, you saw the LORD's mighty power do all these things.

⁸Soon you will cross the Jordan River, and if you obey the laws and teachings I'm giving you today, you will be strong enough to conquer the land ⁹that the LORD promised your ancestors and their descendants. It's rich with milk and honey, and you will live there and enjoy it for a long time. ¹⁰It's better land than you had in Egypt, where you had to struggle just to water your crops. ¹¹But the hills and valleys in the promised land are watered by rain from heaven, ¹²because the LORD your God keeps his eye on this land and takes care of it all year long.

¹³The LORD your God commands you to love him and to serve him with all your heart and soul. If

you obey him, ¹⁴⁻¹⁵he will send rain at the right seasons, so you will have more than enough food, wine, and olive oil, and there will be plenty of grass for your cattle.

¹⁶But watch out! You will be tempted to turn your backs on the LORD. And if you worship other gods, ¹⁷the LORD will become angry and keep the rain from falling. Nothing will grow in your fields, and you will die and disappear from the good land that the LORD is giving you.

¹⁸Memorize these laws and think about them. Write down copies and tie them to your wrists and your foreheads to help you obey them. ¹⁹Teach them to your children. Talk about them all the time—whether you're at home or walking along the road or going to bed at night, or getting up in the morning. ²⁰Write them on the door frames of your homes and on your town gates. ²¹Then you and your descendants will live a long time in the land that the LORD promised your ancestors. Your families will live there as long as the sky is above the earth.

²²Love the LORD your God and obey all the laws and teachings that I'm giving you today. If you live the way the LORD wants, ²³he will help you take the land. And even though the nations there are more powerful than you, the LORD will force them to leave when you attack. ²⁴You will capture the land everywhere you go, from the Southern Desert to the Lebanon Mountains, and from the Euphrates River west to the Mediterranean Sea. ²⁵No one will be able to stand up to you. The LORD will make everyone terrified of you, just as he promised.

²⁶You have a choice—do you want the LORD to bless you, or do you want him to put a curse on you? ²⁷Today I am giving you his laws, and if you obey him, he will bless you. ²⁸But if you disobey him and worship those gods that have never done anything for you, the LORD will put a curse on you.

²⁹After the LORD your God helps you take the land, you must have a ceremony where you announce his blessings from Mount Gerizim and his curses from Mount Ebal. ³⁰You know that these two mountains are west of the Jordan River in land now controlled by the Canaanites living in the Jordan River valley. The mountains are west of the road near the sacred trees of Moreh on the other side of Gilgal.

³¹Soon you will cross the Jordan River to conquer the land that the LORD your God is giving you. And

when you have settled there, ³²be careful to obey his laws and teachings that I am giving you today.

Only One Place To Worship the LORD

Moses said to Israel:

12 Now I'll tell you the laws and teachings that you have to obey as long as you live. Your ancestors worshiped the LORD, and he is giving you this land. ² But the nations that live there worship other gods. So after you capture the land, you must completely destroy their places of worship—on mountains and hills or in the shade of large trees. ³ Wherever these nations worship their gods, you must tear down their altars, break their sacred stones, burn the sacred poles[>] used in worshipping the goddess Asherah, and smash their idols to pieces. Destroy these places of worship so completely that no one will remember they were ever there. ⁴ Don't worship the LORD your God in the way those nations worship their gods.

⁵⁻¹⁹ Soon you will cross the Jordan, and the LORD will help you conquer your enemies and let you live in peace, there in the land he has given you. But after you are settled, life will be different. You must not offer sacrifices just anywhere you want to. Instead, the LORD will choose a place somewhere in Israel where you must go to worship him. All of your sacrifices and offerings must be taken there, including sacrifices to please the LORD and any gift you promise or voluntarily give him. That's where you must also take one tenth of your grain, wine, and olive oil, as well as the first-born of your cattle, sheep, and goats. You and your family and servants will eat your gifts and sacrifices and celebrate there at the place of worship, because the LORD your God has made you successful in everything you have done. And since Levites will not have any land of their own, you must ask some of them to come along and celebrate with you.

Sometimes you may want to kill an animal for food and not as a sacrifice. If the LORD has blessed you and given you enough cows or sheep or goats, then you can butcher one of them where you live. You can eat it just like the meat from a deer or gazelle that you kill when you go hunting. And even those people who are unclean and unfit for worship can have some of the meat. But you must not eat the blood of any animal—let the blood drain out on the ground.

²⁰⁻²¹ The LORD has promised that later on he will give Israel more land, and some of you may not be able to travel all the way from your homes to the

place of worship each time you are hungry for meat. But the LORD will give you cattle, sheep, and goats, and you can butcher any of those animals at home and eat as much as you want. ²² It is the same as eating the meat from a deer or a gazelle that you kill when you go hunting. And in this way, anyone who is unclean and unfit for worship can have some of the meat.

²³⁻²⁴ But don't eat the blood. It is the life of the animal, so let it drain out on the ground before you eat the meat. ²⁵ Do you want the LORD to make you successful? Do you want your children to be successful even after you are gone? Then do what pleases the LORD and don't eat blood.

²⁶⁻²⁷ All sacrifices and offerings to the LORD must be taken to the place where he chooses to be worshiped. If you offer a sacrifice to please the LORD, all of its meat must be burned on the altar. You can eat the meat from certain kinds of sacrifices, but you must always pour out the animal's blood on the altar.

²⁸ If you obey these laws, you will be doing what the LORD your God says is right and good. Then he will help you and your descendants be successful.

Worship the LORD in the Right Way

Moses said:

²⁹ Israel, as you go into the land and attack the nations that are there, the LORD will get rid of them, and you can have their land.

³⁰ But that's when you must be especially careful not to ask, "How did those nations worship their gods? Shouldn't we worship the LORD in the same way?" ³¹ No, you should not! The LORD hates the disgusting way those nations worship their gods, because they even burn their sons and daughters as sacrifices.

³² Obey all the laws and teachings I am giving you. Don't add any, and don't take any away.

Don't Worship Other Gods

Moses said to Israel:

13 ¹⁻² Someday a prophet[>] may come along who is able to perform miracles or tell what will happen in the future. Then the prophet may say, "Let's start worshipping some new gods—some gods that we know nothing about."³ If the prophet says this, don't listen! The LORD your God will be watching to find out whether or not you love him with all your heart and soul. ⁴ You must be completely faithful to the LORD. Worship and obey only the LORD and do

this with fear and trembling,⁵ because he rescued you from slavery in Egypt.

If a prophet tells you to disobey the LORD your God and to stop worshipping him, then that prophet is evil and must be put to death.

⁶⁻¹⁰Someone else may say to you, "Let's worship other gods." That person may be your best friend, your brother or sister, your son or daughter, or your own dear wife or husband. But you must not listen to people who say such things. Instead, you must stone them to death. You must be the first to throw the stones, then others from the community will finish the job. Don't show any pity.

The gods worshiped by other nations have never done anything for you or your ancestors. People who ask you to worship other gods are trying to get you to stop worshipping the LORD, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt. So put to death anyone who asks you to worship another god.¹¹ And when the rest of Israel hears about it, they will be afraid, and no one else will ever do such an evil thing again.

¹²After the LORD your God gives you towns to live in, you may hear a rumor about one of the towns.¹³ You may hear that some worthless people have talked everyone there into worshipping other gods, even though these gods had never done anything for them.¹⁴ You must carefully find out if the rumor is true. Then if the people of that town have actually done such a disgusting thing in your own country,¹⁵ you must take your swords and kill every one of them, and their livestock too.¹⁶⁻¹⁷ Gather all the possessions of the people who lived there, and pile them up in the marketplace, without keeping anything for yourself. Set the pile and the whole town on fire, and don't ever rebuild the town. The whole town will be a sacrifice to the LORD your God. Then he won't be angry anymore, and he will have mercy on you and make you successful, just as he promised your ancestors.¹⁸ That's why you must do what the LORD your God says is right. I am giving you his laws and teachings today, and you must obey them.

Don't Mourn like Other Nations

Moses said:

14 People of Israel, you are the LORD's children, so when you mourn for the dead, you must not cut yourselves or shave your forehead.² Out of all the nations on this earth, the LORD your God chose you to be his own. You

belong to the LORD, so don't behave like those who worship other gods.

Animals That Can Be Eaten

³Don't eat any disgusting animals.

⁴⁻⁵You may eat the meat of cattle, sheep, and goats; wild sheep and goats; and gazelles, antelopes, and all kinds of deer.⁶ It is all right to eat meat from any animals that have divided hoofs and also chew the cud.

⁷But don't eat camels, rabbits, and rock badgers. These animals chew the cud but do not have divided hoofs. You must treat them as unclean.⁸ And don't eat pork, since pigs have divided hoofs, but they do not chew their cud. Don't even touch a dead pig!

⁹You can eat any fish that has fins and scales. But there are other creatures that live in the water,¹⁰ and if they do not have fins and scales, you must not eat them. Treat them as unclean.

¹¹You can eat any clean bird.¹²⁻¹⁸ But don't eat the meat of any of the following birds: eagles, vultures, falcons, kites, ravens, ostriches, owls, sea gulls, hawks, pelicans, ospreys, cormorants, storks, herons, and hoopoes. You must not eat bats.¹⁹ Swarming insects are unclean, so don't eat them.²⁰ However, you are allowed to eat certain kinds of winged insects.

²¹You belong to the LORD your God, so if you happen to find a dead animal, don't eat its meat. You may give it to foreigners who live in your town or sell it to foreigners who are visiting your town.

Don't boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Give the LORD Ten Percent of Your Harvest

Moses said:

²²People of Israel, every year you must set aside ten percent of your grain harvest.²³ Also set aside ten percent of your wine and olive oil, and the first-born of every cow, sheep, and goat. Take these to the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped, and eat them there. This will teach you to always respect the LORD your God.

²⁴But suppose you can't carry that ten percent of your harvest to the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped. If you live too far away, or if the LORD gives you a big harvest,²⁵ then sell this part and take the money there instead.²⁶ When you and your family arrive, spend the money on food for a big celebration. Buy cattle, sheep, goats, wine, beer, and if there are any other kinds of food that you want, buy those too.²⁷ And since people of the Levi

tribe won't own any land for growing crops, remember to ask the Levites to celebrate with you.

²⁸ Every third year, instead of using the ten percent of your harvest for a big celebration, bring it into town and put it in a community storehouse. ²⁹ The Levites have no land of their own, so you must give them food from the storehouse. You must also give food to the poor who live in your town, including orphans, widows, and foreigners. If they have enough to eat, then the LORD your God will be pleased and make you successful in everything you do.

Loans

Moses said:

15 ¹⁻² Every seven years you must announce, "The LORD says loans do not need to be paid back." Then if you have loaned money to another Israelite, you can no longer ask for payment. ³ This law applies only to loans you have made to other Israelites. Foreigners will still have to pay back what you have loaned them.

⁴⁻⁶ No one in Israel should ever be poor. The LORD your God is giving you this land, and he has promised to make you very successful, if you obey his laws and teachings that I'm giving you today. You will lend money to many nations, but you won't have to borrow. You will rule many nations, but they won't rule you.

⁷ After the LORD your God gives land to each of you, there may be poor Israelites in the town where you live. If there are, then don't be mean and selfish with your money. ⁸ Instead, be kind and lend them what they need. ⁹ Be careful! Don't say to yourself, "Soon it will be the seventh year, and then I won't be able to get my money back." It would be horrible for you to think that way and to be so selfish that you refuse to help the poor. They are your relatives, and if you don't help them, they may ask the LORD to decide whether you have done wrong. And he will say that you are guilty. ¹⁰ You should be happy to give the poor what they need, because then the LORD will make you successful in everything you do.

¹¹ There will always be some Israelites who are poor and needy. That's why I am commanding you to be generous with them.

Setting Slaves Free

Moses said to Israel:

¹² If any of you buy Israelites as slaves, you must set them free after six years. ¹³ And don't just tell them they are free to leave—¹⁴ give them sheep

and goats and a good supply of grain and wine. The more the LORD has given you, the more you should give them. ¹⁵ I am commanding you to obey the LORD as a reminder that you were slaves in Egypt before he set you free. ¹⁶ But one of your slaves may say, "I love you and your family, and I would be better off staying with you, so please don't make me leave." ¹⁷ Take the slave to the door of your house and push a sharp metal rod through one earlobe and into the door. Such slaves will belong to you for life, whether they are men or women.

¹⁸ Don't complain when you have to set a slave free. After all, you got six years of service at half the cost of hiring someone to do the work. [▷]

First-Born Animals

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁹ If the first-born animal of a cow or sheep or goat is a male, it must be given to the LORD. Don't put first-born cattle to work or cut wool from first-born sheep. ²⁰ Instead, each year you must take the first-born of these animals to the place where the LORD your God chooses to be worshiped. You and your family will sacrifice them to the LORD and then eat them as part of a sacred meal.

²¹ But if the animal is lame or blind or has something else wrong with it, you must not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. ²² You can butcher it where you live, and eat it just like the meat of a deer or gazelle that you kill while hunting. Even those people who are unclean and unfit for worship can have some. ²³ But you must never eat the blood of an animal—let it drain out on the ground.

Passover

Moses said:

16 People of Israel, you must celebrate Passover in the month of Abib, because one night in that month years ago, the LORD your God rescued you from Egypt. ² The Passover sacrifice must be a cow, a sheep, or a goat, and you must offer it at the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped. ³⁻⁴ Eat all of the meat of the Passover sacrifice that same night. But don't serve bread made with yeast at the Passover meal. Serve "the same kind of thin bread that you ate when you were slaves suffering in Egypt" and when you had to leave Egypt quickly. As long as you live, this thin bread will remind you of the day you left Egypt.

For seven days following Passover, don't make any bread with yeast. In fact, there should be no yeast anywhere in Israel.

⁵ Don't offer the Passover sacrifice in just any town where you happen to live. ⁶ It must be offered at the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped. Kill the sacrifice at sunset, the time of day when you left Egypt.[>] ⁷ Then cook it and eat it there at the place of worship, returning to your tents the next morning.

⁸ Eat thin bread for the next six days. Then on the seventh day, don't do any work. Instead, come together and worship the LORD.

The Harvest Festival

Moses said to Israel:

⁹ Seven weeks after you start your grain harvest, ¹⁰⁻¹¹ go to the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped and celebrate the Harvest Festival in honor of the LORD your God. Bring him an offering as large as you can afford, depending on how big a harvest he has given you. Be sure to take along your sons and daughters and all your servants. Also invite the poor, including Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows. ¹² Remember that you used to be slaves in Egypt, so obey these laws.

The Festival of Shelters

Moses said to Israel:

¹³⁻¹⁵ After you have finished the grain harvest and the grape harvest, take your sons and daughters and all your servants to the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped. Celebrate the Festival of Shelters for seven days. Also invite the poor, including Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows.

The LORD will give you big harvests and make you successful in everything you do. You will be completely happy, so celebrate this festival in honor of the LORD your God.

Three Festivals at the Place of Worship

Moses said:

¹⁶ Each year there are three festivals when all Israelite men must go to the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped. These are the Festival of Thin Bread, the Harvest Festival, and the Festival of Shelters. And don't forget to take along a gift for the LORD. ¹⁷ The bigger the harvest the LORD gives you, the bigger your gift should be.

Treat Everyone with Justice

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ After you are settled in the towns that you will receive from the LORD your God, the people in each town must appoint judges and other officers.

Those of you that become judges must be completely fair when you make legal decisions, even if someone important is involved. Don't take bribes to give unfair decisions. Bribes keep people who are wise from seeing the truth and turn honest people into liars.[>]

²⁰ People of Israel, if you want to enjoy a long and successful life, make sure that everyone is treated with justice in the land the LORD is giving you.

Don't Set Up Sacred Poles or Stones

Moses said to Israel:

²¹ When you build the altar for offering sacrifices to the LORD your God, don't set up a sacred pole[>] for the worship of the goddess Asherah. ²² And don't set up a sacred stone! The LORD hates these things.

Sacrifices That Have Something Wrong with Them

Moses said to Israel:

17 If an ox or a sheep has something wrong with it, don't offer it as a sacrifice to the LORD your God—he will be disgusted!

Put To Death People Who Worship Idols

Moses said to Israel:

²⁻³ The LORD your God is giving you towns to live in. But later, a man or a woman in your town may start worshipping other gods, or even the sun, moon, or stars. I have warned you not to worship other gods, because whoever worships them is disobeying the LORD and breaking the agreement he made with you. ⁴ So when you hear that someone in your town is committing this disgusting sin, you must carefully find out if that person really is guilty. ⁵⁻⁷ But you will need two or three witnesses—one witness isn't enough to prove a person guilty.

Get rid of those who are guilty of such evil. Take them outside your town gates and everyone must stone them to death. But the witnesses must be the first to throw stones.

Difficult Cases

Moses said to Israel:

⁸⁻¹² It may be difficult to find out the truth in some legal cases in your town. You may not be able to decide if someone was killed accidentally or murdered. Or you may not be able to tell whether an injury or some property damage was done by accident or on purpose. If the case is too difficult, take it to the court at the place where the LORD your God chooses to be worshiped.

This court will be made up of one judge and several priests who serve at the LORD's altar. They will explain the law to you and give you their decision about the case. Do exactly what they tell you, or you will be put to death. ¹³When other Israelites hear about it, they will be afraid and obey the decisions of the court.

The King

Moses said:

¹⁴People of Israel, after you capture the land the LORD your God is giving you, and after you settle on it, you will say, "We want a king, just like the nations around us."

¹⁵Go ahead and appoint a king, but make sure that he is an Israelite and that he is the one the LORD has chosen.

¹⁶The king should not have many horses, especially those from Egypt. The LORD has said never to go back there again. ¹⁷And the king must not have a lot of wives—they might tempt him to be unfaithful to the LORD. Finally, the king must not try to get huge amounts of silver and gold.

¹⁸The official copy of God's laws[>] will be kept by the priests of the Levi tribe. So, as soon as anyone becomes king, he must go to the priests and write out a copy of these laws while they watch. ¹⁹Each day the king must read and obey these laws, so that he will learn to worship the LORD with fear and trembling ²⁰and not think that he's better than everyone else.

If the king completely obeys the LORD's commands, he and his descendants will rule Israel for many years.

Special Privileges for Priests and Levites

Moses said to Israel:

18 The people of the Levi tribe, including the priests, will not receive any land. Instead, they will receive part of the sacrifices that are offered to the LORD, ²because he has promised to provide for them in this way.

³When you sacrifice a bull or sheep, the priests will be given the shoulder, the jaws, and the stomach. ⁴In addition, they will receive the first part of your grain harvest and part of your first batches of wine and olive oil. You must also give them the first wool that is cut from your sheep each year. ⁵Give these gifts to the priests, because the LORD has chosen them and their descendants out of all the tribes of Israel to be his special servants at the place of worship.

⁶Any Levite can leave his hometown, and go to the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped, ⁷and then be a special servant of the LORD[>] there, just like all the other Levites. ⁸Some Levites may have money from selling family possessions, and others may not. But all Levites serving at the place of worship will receive the same amount of food from the sacrifices and gifts brought by the people.

Don't Do Disgusting Things

Moses said to Israel:

⁹Soon you will go into the land that the LORD your God is giving you. The nations that live there do things that are disgusting to the LORD, and you must not follow their example. ¹⁰⁻¹¹Don't sacrifice your son or daughter. And don't try to use any kind of magic or witchcraft to tell fortunes or to cast spells or to talk with spirits of the dead.

¹²The LORD is disgusted with anyone who does these things, and that's why he will help you destroy the nations that are in the land. ¹³Never be guilty of doing any of these disgusting things!

A Prophet like Moses

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁴You will go in and take the land from nations that practice magic and witchcraft. But the LORD your God won't allow you to do those things. ¹⁵Instead, he will choose one of your own people to be a prophet just like me, and you must do what that prophet says. ¹⁶You were asking for a prophet the day you were gathered at Mount Sinai[>] and said to the LORD, "Please don't let us hear your voice or see this terrible fire again—if we do, we will die!"

¹⁷Then the LORD told me:

Moses, they have said the right thing. ¹⁸So when I want to speak to them, I will choose one of them to be a prophet like you. I will give my message to that prophet, who will tell the people exactly what I have said. ¹⁹Since the message comes from me, anyone who doesn't obey the message will have to answer to me.

²⁰But if I haven't spoken, and a prophet claims to have a message from me, you must kill that prophet, and you must also kill any prophet who claims to have a message from another god.

Moses said to Israel:

²¹You may be asking yourselves, "How can we tell if a prophet's message really comes from the LORD?" ²²You will know, because if the LORD says

something will happen, it will happen. And if it doesn't, you will know that the prophet was falsely claiming to speak for the LORD. Don't be afraid of any prophet whose message doesn't come from the LORD.

Safe Towns

Moses said to Israel:

19 Soon you will go into the land and attack the nations. The LORD your God will destroy them and give you their lands, towns, and homes. Then after you are settled, ²⁻⁴you must choose three of your towns to be Safe Towns. Divide the land into three regions with one Safe Town near the middle of each, so that a Safe Town can be easily reached from anywhere in your land.

Then, if one of you accidentally kills someone, you can run to a Safe Town and find protection from being put to death. But you must not have been angry with the person you killed.

⁵For example, suppose you and a friend go into the forest to cut wood. You are chopping down a tree with an ax, when the ax head slips off the handle, hits your friend, and kills him. You can run to one of the Safe Towns and save your life. ⁶You don't deserve to die, since you did not mean to harm your friend. But he did get killed, and his relatives might be very angry. They might even choose one of the men from their family to track you down and kill you. If it is too far to one of the Safe Towns, the victim's relative might be able to catch you and kill you. ⁷That's why I said there must be three Safe Towns.

⁸⁻⁹Israel, the LORD your God has promised that if you obey his laws and teachings I'm giving you, and if you always love him, then he will give you the land he promised your ancestors. When that happens, you must name three more Safe Towns in the new territory. ¹⁰You will need them, so innocent people won't be killed on your land while they are trying to reach a Safe Town that is too far away. You will be guilty of murder, if innocent people lose their lives because you didn't name enough Safe Towns in the land the LORD your God will give you.

¹¹But what if you really do commit murder? Suppose one of you hates a neighbor. So you wait in a deserted place, kill the neighbor, and run to a Safe Town. ¹²If that happens, the leaders of your town must send messengers to bring you back from the Safe Town. They will hand you over to one of the victim's relatives, who will put you to death.

¹³Israel, for the good of the whole country, you must kill anyone who murders an innocent person. Never show mercy to a murderer!

Property Lines

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁴In the land the LORD is giving you, there are already stones set up to mark the property lines between fields. So don't move those stones.

Witnesses Must Tell the Truth

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁵Before you are convicted of a crime, at least two witnesses must be able to testify that you did it.

¹⁶If you accuse someone of a crime, but seem to be lying, ¹⁷⁻¹⁸then both you and the accused must be taken to the court at the place where the LORD is worshiped. There the priests and judges will find out if you are lying or telling the truth.

If you are lying and the accused is innocent, ¹⁹⁻²¹then you will be punished without mercy. You will receive the same punishment the accused would have received if found guilty, whether it means losing an eye, a tooth, a hand, a foot, or even your life.

Israel, the crime of telling lies in court must be punished. And when people hear what happens to witnesses that lie, everyone else who testifies in court will tell the truth.

Laws for Going to War

Moses said to Israel:

20 If you have to go to war, you may find yourselves facing an enemy army that is bigger than yours and that has horses and chariots. But don't be afraid! The LORD your God rescued you from Egypt, and he will help you fight. ²Before you march into battle, a priest will go to the front of the army ³and say, "Soldiers of Israel, listen to me! Today when you go into battle, don't be afraid of the enemy, and when you see them, don't panic. ⁴The LORD your God will fight alongside you and help you win the battle."

⁵Then the tribal officials will say to the troops:

If any of you have built a new house, but haven't yet moved in, you may go home. It isn't right for you to die in battle and for somebody else to live in your new house.

⁶If any of you have planted a vineyard but haven't had your first grape harvest, you may go home. It isn't right for you to die in battle and for somebody else to enjoy your grapes.

⁷ If any of you are engaged to be married, you may go back home and get married. It isn't right for you to die in battle and for somebody else to marry the woman you are engaged to.

⁸ Finally, if any of you are afraid, you may go home. We don't want you to discourage the other soldiers.

⁹ When the officials are finished giving these orders, they will appoint officers to be in command of the army.

¹⁰⁻¹⁵ Before you attack a town that is far from your land, offer peace to the people who live there. If they surrender and open their town gates, they will become your slaves. But if they reject your offer of peace and try to fight, surround their town and attack. Then, after the LORD helps you capture it, kill all the men. Take the women and children as slaves and keep the livestock and everything else of value.

¹⁶ Whenever you capture towns in the land the LORD your God is giving you, be sure to kill all the people and animals. ¹⁷ He has commanded you to completely wipe out the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ¹⁸ If you allow them to live, they will persuade you to worship their disgusting gods, and you will be unfaithful to the LORD.

¹⁹ When you are attacking a town, don't chop down its fruit trees, not even if you have had the town surrounded for a long time. Fruit trees aren't your enemies, and they produce food that you can eat, so don't cut them down. ²⁰ You may need wood to make ladders and towers to help you get over the walls and capture the town. But use only trees that you know are not fruit trees.

Unsolved Murder

Moses said to Israel:

21 Suppose the body of a murder victim is found in a field in the land the LORD your God is giving you, and no one knows who the murderer is. ² The judges and other leaders from the towns around there must find out what town is the closest to where the body was found.

³ The leaders from that town will go to their cattle herds and choose a young cow that has never been put to work. ⁴⁻⁵ They and some of the priests will take this cow to a nearby valley where there is a stream, but no crops. Once they reach the valley, the leaders will break the cow's neck.

The priests must be there, because the LORD your God has chosen them to be his special servants at

the place of worship. The LORD has chosen them to bless the people in his name and to be judges in all legal cases, whether property or injury is involved.

⁶ The town leaders will wash their hands over the body of the dead cow ⁷ and say, "We had no part in this murder, and we don't know who did it. ⁸⁻⁹ But since an innocent person was murdered, we beg you, our LORD, to accept this sacrifice and forgive Israel. We are your people, and you rescued us. Please don't hold this crime against us."

If you obey the LORD and do these things, he will forgive Israel.

Marrying a Woman Taken Prisoner in War

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁰ From time to time, you men will serve as soldiers and go off to war. The LORD your God will help you defeat your enemies, and you will take many prisoners. ¹¹⁻¹³ One of these prisoners may be a beautiful woman, and you may want to marry her. But first you must bring her into your home, and have her shave her head, cut her nails, get rid of her foreign clothes, and start wearing Israelite clothes. She will mourn a month for her father and mother, then you can marry her.

¹⁴ Later on, if you are not happy with the woman, you can divorce her, and she can go free. But you have slept with her as your wife, so you cannot sell her as a slave or make her into your own slave.

Rights of a First-Born Son

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ Suppose a man has two wives and loves one more than the other. The first son of either wife is the man's first-born son, even if the boy's mother is the wife the man doesn't love. Later, when the man is near death and is dividing up his property, he must give a double share to his first-born son, simply because he was the first to be born.

A Son Who Rebels

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁸ A father and a mother may have a stubborn and rebellious son who refuses to obey them even after he has been punished. ¹⁹ If a son is like that, his parents must drag him to the town gate, where the leaders of the town hold their meetings. ²⁰ The parents will tell the leaders, "This son of ours is stubborn and never obeys. He spends all his time drinking and partying."

²¹ The men of the town will stone that son to death, because they must get rid of the evil he brought into the community. Everyone in Israel will be afraid when they hear how he was punished.

The Body of a Criminal

Moses said to Israel:

²² If a criminal is put to death, and you hang the dead body on a tree, ²³ you must not let it hang there overnight. Bury it the same day, because the dead body of a criminal will bring God's curse on the land. The LORD your God is giving this land to you, so don't make it unclean by leaving the bodies of executed criminals on display.

Helping Others

Moses said to Israel:

22 If you see a cow or sheep wandering around lost, take the animal back to its owner. ² If the owner lives too far away, or if you don't know who the owner is, take the animal home with you and take care of it. The owner will come looking for the animal, and then you can give it back. ³ That's what you should do if you find anything that belongs to someone else. Do whatever you can to help, whether you find a cow or sheep or donkey or some clothing.

⁴ Oxen and donkeys that carry heavy loads can stumble and fall, and be unable to get up by themselves. So as you walk along the road, help anyone who is trying to get an ox or donkey back on its feet.

Don't Pretend To Be the Opposite Sex

Moses said to Israel:

⁵ Women must not pretend to be men, and men must not pretend to be women.▷ The LORD your God is disgusted with people who do that.

Don't Take a Mother Bird

Moses said to Israel:

⁶⁻⁷ As you walk along the road, you might see a bird's nest in a tree or on the ground. If the mother bird is in the nest with either her eggs or her baby birds, you are allowed to take the baby birds or the eggs, but not the mother bird. Let her go free, and the LORD will bless you with a long and successful life.

Put a Wall around Your Flat Roof

⁸ If you build a house, make sure to put a low wall around the edge of the flat roof. Then if

someone falls off the roof and is killed, it won't be your fault.

Laws against Mixing Different Things

Moses said to Israel:

⁹ If you plant a vineyard, don't plant any other fruit tree or crop in it. If you do plant something else there, you must bring to the place of worship everything you harvest from the vineyard.

¹⁰ Don't hitch an ox and a donkey to your plow at the same time.

¹¹ When you weave cloth for clothing, you can use thread made of flax or wool, but not both together. ¹² And when you make a coat, sew a tassel on each of the four corners.

When a Husband Accuses His Wife

Moses said to Israel:

¹³ Suppose a man starts hating his wife soon after they are married. ¹⁴ He might tell ugly lies about her, and say, "I married this woman, but when we slept together, I found out she wasn't a virgin."

¹⁵ If this happens, the bride's father and mother must go to the town gate to show the town leaders the proof that the woman was a virgin. ¹⁶ Her father will say, "I let my daughter marry this man, but he started hating her ¹⁷ and accusing her of not being a virgin. But he is wrong, because here is proof that she was a virgin!" Then the bride's parents will show them the bed sheet from the woman's wedding night.

¹⁸ The town leaders will beat the man with a whip ¹⁹ because he accused his bride of not being a virgin. He will have to pay her father 100 pieces of silver and will never be allowed to divorce her.

²⁰ But if the man was right and there is no proof that his bride was a virgin, ²¹ the men of the town will take the woman to the door of her father's house and stone her to death.

This woman brought evil into your community by sleeping with someone before she got married, and you must get rid of that evil by killing her.

Laws about Illegal Sex

Moses said:

²² People of Israel, if a man is caught having sex with someone else's wife, you must put them both to death. That way, you will get rid of the evil they have done in Israel.

²³⁻²⁴ If a man is caught in town having sex with an engaged woman who isn't screaming for help, they both must be put to death. The man is guilty of

having sex with a married woman. And the woman is guilty because she didn't call for help, even though she was inside a town and people were nearby. Take them both to the town gate and stone them to death. You must get rid of the evil they brought into your community.

²⁵ If an engaged woman is raped out in the country, only the man will be put to death. ²⁶ Do not punish the woman at all; she has done nothing wrong, and certainly nothing deserving death. This crime is like murder, ²⁷ because the woman was alone out in the country when the man attacked her. She screamed, but there was no one to help her.

²⁸ Suppose a woman isn't engaged to be married, and a man talks her into sleeping with him. If they are caught, ²⁹ they will be forced to get married. He must give her father 50 pieces of silver as a bride-price and he can never divorce her.

³⁰ A man must not marry a woman who was married to his father. This would be a disgrace to his father.

Who Cannot Become One of the LORD's People

Moses said to Israel:

23 If a man's private parts have been crushed or cut off, he cannot fully belong to the LORD's people.

² No one born outside of a legal marriage, or any of their descendants for ten generations, can fully belong to the LORD's people.

³ No Ammonites or Moabites, or any of their descendants for ten generations, can become part of Israel, the LORD's people. ⁴ This is because when you came out of Egypt, they refused to provide you with food and water. And besides, they hired Balaam to put a curse on you. ⁵ But the LORD your God loves you, so he refused to listen to Balaam and turned Balaam's curse into a blessing. ⁶ Don't even think of signing a peace treaty with Moab or Ammon.

⁷ But Edomites are your relatives, and you lived as foreigners in the country of Egypt. Now you must be kind to Edomites and Egyptians ⁸ and let their great-grandchildren become part of Israel, the LORD's people.

Keep the Army Camp Acceptable

Moses said to Israel:

⁹ When you men go off to fight your enemies, make sure your camp is acceptable to the LORD.

¹⁰ For example, if something happens at night that makes a man unclean and unfit for worship, he must go outside the camp and stay there ¹¹ until late afternoon. Then he must take a bath, and at sunset he can go back into camp.

¹² Set up a place outside the camp to be used as a toilet area. ¹³ And make sure that you have a small shovel in your equipment. When you go out to the toilet area, use the shovel to dig a hole. Then, after you relieve yourself, bury the waste in the hole. ¹⁴ You must keep your camp clean of filthy and disgusting things. The LORD is always present in your camp, ready to rescue you and give you victory over your enemies. But if he sees something disgusting in your camp, he may turn around and leave.

Runaway Slaves from Other Countries

Moses said:

¹⁵ When runaway slaves from other countries come to Israel and ask for protection, you must not hand them back to their owners. ¹⁶ Instead, you must let them choose which one of your towns they want to live in. Don't be cruel to runaway slaves.

Temple Prostitutes

Moses said:

¹⁷ People of Israel, don't any of you ever be temple prostitutes. ¹⁸ The LORD your God is disgusted with men and women who are prostitutes of any kind, and he will not accept a gift from them, even if it had been promised to him.

Interest on Loans

Moses said:

¹⁹ When you lend money, food, or anything else to another Israelite, you are not allowed to charge interest. ²⁰ You can charge a foreigner interest. But if you charge other Israelites interest, the LORD your God will not let you be successful in the land you are about to take.

Sacred Promises to the LORD

Moses said:

²¹ People of Israel, if you make a sacred promise to give a gift to the LORD, then do it as soon as you can. If the LORD has to come looking for the gift you promised, you will be guilty of breaking that promise. ²² On the other hand, if you never make a sacred promise, you can't be guilty of breaking it. ²³ You must keep whatever promises you make to the LORD. After all, you are the one who chose to make the promises.

Eating Someone Else's Produce

²⁴If you go into a vineyard that belongs to someone else, you are allowed to eat as many grapes as you want while you are there. But don't take any with you when you leave. ²⁵In the same way, if you are in a grain field that belongs to someone else, you can pick heads of grain and eat the kernels. But don't cut down the stalks of grain and take them with you.

A Law about Divorce

Moses said to Israel:

24 Suppose a woman was divorced by her first husband because he found 'something disgraceful about her.' He wrote out divorce papers, gave them to her, and sent her away. ²Later she married another man, ³who then either divorced her in the same way or died. ⁴Since she has slept with her second husband, she cannot marry her first husband again. Their marriage would pollute the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and he would be disgusted.

Newlyweds

Moses said to Israel:

⁵If a man and a woman have been married less than one year, he must not be sent off to war or sent away to do forced labor. He must be allowed to stay home for a year and be happy with his wife.

Loans

Moses said to Israel:

⁶When you lend money to people, you are allowed to keep something of theirs as a guarantee that they will pay back the loan. But don't take one or both of their millstones, or else they may starve. They need these stones for grinding grain into flour to make bread.

Kidnapping

Moses said to Israel:

⁷If you are guilty of kidnapping Israelites and forcing them into slavery, you will be put to death to remove this evil from the community.

Skin Diseases

Moses said to Israel:

⁸I have told the priests what to do if any of you have leprosy, so do exactly what they say. ⁹And remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam after you left Egypt.

Loans

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁰When you lend money to people, you are allowed to keep something of theirs as a guarantee that the money will be paid back. But you must not go into their house to get it. ¹¹Wait outside, and they will bring out the item you have agreed on.

¹²Suppose someone is so poor that a coat is the only thing that can be offered as a guarantee on a loan. Don't keep the coat overnight. ¹³Instead, give it back before sunset, so the owner can keep warm and sleep and ask the LORD to bless you. Then the LORD your God will notice that you have done the right thing.

Poor People's Wages

Moses said:

¹⁴If you hire poor people to work for you, don't hold back their pay, > whether they are Israelites or foreigners who live in your town. ¹⁵Pay them their wages at the end of each day, because they live in poverty and need the money to survive. If you don't pay them on time, they will complain about you to the LORD, and he will punish you.

The Death Penalty

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁶Parents must not be put to death for crimes committed by their children, and children must not be put to death for crimes committed by their parents. Don't put anyone to death for someone else's crime.

Don't Mistreat the Powerless

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁷Make sure that orphans and foreigners are treated fairly. And if you lend money to a widow and want to keep something of hers to guarantee that she will pay you back, don't take any of her clothes. ¹⁸You were slaves in Egypt until the LORD your God rescued you. That's why I am giving you these laws.

Leave Some of Your Harvest for the Poor

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁹If you forget to bring in a stack of harvested grain, don't go back in the field to get it. Leave it for the poor, including foreigners, orphans, and widows, and the LORD will make you successful in everything you do.

²⁰When you harvest your olives, don't try to get them all for yourself, but leave some for the poor.

21 And when you pick your grapes, go over the vines only once, then let the poor have what is left.

22 You lived in poverty as slaves in Egypt until the LORD your God rescued you. That's why I am giving you these laws.

Whipping as Punishment for a Crime

Moses said to Israel:

25 1-2 Suppose you and someone else each accuse the other of doing something wrong, and you go to court, where the judges decide you are guilty. If your punishment is to be beaten with a whip,¹ one of the judges will order you to lie down, and you will receive the number of lashes you deserve. 3 Forty lashes is the most that you can be given, because more than that might make other Israelites think you are worthless.

Don't Muzzle an Ox

Moses said to Israel:

4 Don't muzzle an ox while it is threshing grain.

A Son for a Dead Brother

Moses said to Israel:

5-6 Suppose two brothers are living on the same property, when one of them dies without having a son to carry on his name. If this happens, his widow must not marry anyone outside the family. Instead, she must marry her late husband's brother, and their first son will be the legal son of the dead man.

7 But suppose the brother refuses to marry the widow. She must go to a meeting of the town leaders at the town gate and say, "My husband died without having a son to carry on his name. And my husband's brother refuses to marry me so I can have a son."

8 The leaders will call the living brother to the town gate and try to persuade him to marry the widow. But if he doesn't change his mind and marry her, 9 she must go over to him while the town leaders watch. She will pull off one of his sandals and spit in his face, while saying, "That's what happens to a man who won't help provide descendants for his dead brother." 10 From then on, that man's family will be known as "the family of the man whose sandal was pulled off."

When Two Men Fight

Moses said to Israel:

11 If two men are fighting, and the wife of one man tries to rescue her husband by grabbing the

other man's private parts, 12 you must cut off her hand. Don't have any mercy.

Be Honest in Business

Moses said to Israel:

13-14 Don't try to cheat people by having two sets of weights or measures, one to get more when you are buying, and the other to give less when you are selling. 15 If you weigh and measure things honestly, the LORD your God will let you enjoy a long life in the land he is giving you. 16 But the LORD is disgusted with anyone who cheats or is dishonest.

Wipe Out Amalek

Moses said:

17 People of Israel, do you remember what the Amalekites did to you after you came out of Egypt? 18 You were tired, and they followed along behind, attacking those who could not keep up with the others. This showed that the Amalekites have no respect for God.

19 The LORD your God will help you capture the land, and he will give you peace. But when that day comes, you must wipe out Amalek so completely that no one will remember they ever lived.

Give the LORD the First Part of Your Harvest

Moses said to Israel:

26 The LORD is giving you the land, and soon you will conquer it, settle down, 2 and plant crops. And when you begin harvesting each of your crops, the very first things you pick must be put in a basket. Take them to the place where the LORD your God chooses to be worshiped, 3 and tell the priest, "Long ago the LORD our God promised our ancestors that he would give us this land. And today, I thank him for keeping his promise and giving me a share of the land."

4 The priest will take the basket and set it in front of the LORD's altar. 5 Then, standing there in front of the place of worship, you must pray:

My ancestor was homeless,
an Aramean who went to live
in Egypt.

There were only a few
in his family then,
but they became great
and powerful,

a nation of many people.

- ⁶The Egyptians were cruel
and had no pity on us.
They mistreated our people
and forced us into slavery.
- ⁷We called out for help
to you, the LORD God
of our ancestors.
You heard our cries;
you knew we were in trouble
and abused.
- ⁸Then you terrified the Egyptians
with your mighty miracles
and rescued us from Egypt.
- ⁹You brought us here
and gave us this land
rich with milk and honey.
- ¹⁰Now, LORD, I bring to you
the best of the crops
that you have given me.

After you say these things, place the basket in front of the LORD's altar and bow down to worship him.

¹¹Then you and your family must celebrate by eating a meal at the place of worship to thank the LORD your God for giving you such a good harvest. And remember to invite the Levites and the foreigners who live in your town.

Ten Percent of the Harvest

Moses said to Israel:

¹²Every year you are to give ten percent of your harvest to the LORD. But every third year, this ten percent must be given to the poor who live in your town, including Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows. That way, they will have enough to eat.

¹³Then you must pray:

Our LORD and our God, you have said that ten percent of my harvest is sacred. I have obeyed your command and given this to the poor, including the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows.

¹⁴I have not eaten any of this sacred food while I was in mourning; in fact, I never touched it when I was unclean. And none of it has been offered as a sacrifice to the spirits of the dead. I have done everything exactly as you commanded.

¹⁵Our LORD, look down from your temple in heaven and bless your people Israel. You promised our ancestors that you would give us this land rich with milk and honey, and you have kept your promise.

The LORD Is Your God, and You Are His People

Moses said to Israel:

¹⁶Today the LORD your God has commanded you to obey these laws and teachings with all your heart and soul.

¹⁷In response, you have agreed that the LORD will be your God, that you will obey all his laws and teachings, and that you will listen when he speaks to you.

¹⁸Since you have agreed to obey the LORD, he has agreed that you will be his people and that you will belong to him, just as he promised. ¹⁹The LORD created all nations, but he will make you more famous than any of them, and you will receive more praise and honor. You will belong only to the LORD your God, just as he promised.

Build an Altar on Mount Ebal

27 Moses stood together with the leaders and told the people of Israel:

Obey all the laws and teachings that I am giving you today. ²⁻⁴Soon you will enter the land that the LORD your God is giving to you. He is the God your ancestors worshiped, and he has promised that this land is rich with milk and honey.

After you cross the Jordan River, go to Mount Ebal. Set up large slabs of stone, then cover them with white plaster and write on them a copy of these laws.

⁵At this same place, build an altar for offering sacrifices to the LORD your God. But don't use stones that have been cut with iron tools. ⁶Look for stones that can be used without being cut. Then offer sacrifices to please the LORD, burning them completely on the altar. ⁷Next, offer sacrifices to ask the LORD's blessing, and serve the meat at a sacred meal where you will celebrate in honor of the LORD.

⁸Don't forget to write out a copy of these laws on the stone slabs that you are going to set up. Make sure that the writing is easy to read.

Curses on Those Who Disobey

⁹Moses stood together with the priests and said, "Israel, be quiet and listen to me! Today you have become the people of the LORD your God. ¹⁰So you must obey his laws and teachings that I am giving you."

¹¹That same day, Moses gave them the following instructions:

¹²⁻¹³After you cross the Jordan River, you will go to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The tribes of

Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Ephraim, Manasseh,[▷] and Benjamin will go up on Mount Gerizim, where they will bless the people of Israel. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali will go up on Mount Ebal where they will agree to the curses.

¹⁴⁻²⁶ The people of the Levi tribe will speak each curse in a loud voice, then the rest of the people[▷] will agree to that curse by saying, "Amen!" Here are the curses:

We ask the LORD to put a curse on anyone who makes an idol or worships idols, even secretly. The LORD is disgusted with idols.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on all who do not show respect for their father and mother.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on anyone who moves the rocks that mark property lines.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on anyone who tells blind people to go the wrong way.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on anyone who keeps the poor from getting justice, whether these poor are foreigners, widows, or orphans.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on any man who sleeps with his father's wife; that man has shown no respect for his father's marriage.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on anyone who has sex with an animal.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on any man who sleeps with his sister or his half sister or his mother-in-law.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on anyone who commits murder, even when there are no witnesses to the crime.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on anyone who accepts money to murder an innocent victim.

We ask the LORD to put a curse on anyone who refuses to obey his laws.

And so, to each of these curses, the people will answer, "Amen!"

The LORD Will Bless You if You Obey

Moses said to Israel:

28 ¹⁻² Today I am giving you the laws and teachings of the LORD your God. Always obey them, and the LORD will make Israel the most famous and important nation on earth, and he will bless you in many ways.

³ The LORD will make your businesses and your farms successful.

⁴ You will have many children. You will harvest large crops, and your herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats will produce many young.

⁵ You will have plenty of bread to eat.

⁶ The LORD will make you successful in your daily work.

⁷ The LORD will help you defeat your enemies and make them scatter in all directions.

⁸ The LORD your God is giving you the land, and he will make sure you are successful in everything you do. Your harvests will be so large that your storehouses will be full.

⁹ If you follow and obey the LORD, he will make you his own special people, just as he promised.

¹⁰ Then everyone on earth will know that you belong to the LORD, and they will be afraid of you.

¹¹ The LORD will give you a lot of children and make sure that your animals give birth to many young. The LORD promised your ancestors that this land would be yours, and he will make it produce large crops for you.

¹² The LORD will open the storehouses of the skies where he keeps the rain, and he will send rain on your land at just the right times. He will make you successful in everything you do. You will have plenty of money to lend to other nations, but you won't need to borrow any yourself.

¹³ Obey the laws and teachings that I'm giving you today, and the LORD your God will make Israel a leader among the nations, and not a follower. Israel will be wealthy and powerful, not poor and weak. ¹⁴ But you must not reject any of his laws and teachings or worship other gods.

The LORD Will Put Curses on You if You Disobey

Moses said:

¹⁵ Israel, today I am giving you the laws and teachings of the LORD your God. And if you don't obey them all, he will put many curses on you.

¹⁶ Your businesses and farms will fail.

¹⁷ You won't have enough bread to eat.

¹⁸ You'll have only a few children, your crops will be small, and your herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats won't produce many young.

¹⁹ The LORD will make you fail in everything you do.

²⁰ No matter what you try to accomplish, the LORD will confuse you, and you will feel his anger. You won't last long, and you may even meet with disaster, all because you rejected the LORD.

²¹⁻²³ The LORD will send terrible diseases to attack you, and you will never be well again. You will suffer with burning fever and swelling and pain until you die somewhere in the land that you captured.

The LORD will make the sky overhead seem like a bronze roof that keeps out the rain, and the ground under your feet will become as hard as iron. Your crops will be scorched by the hot east wind or ruined by mildew. ²⁴ He will send dust and sandstorms instead of rain, and you will be wiped out.

²⁵ The LORD will let you be defeated by your enemies, and you will scatter in all directions. You will be a horrible sight for the other nations to see, ²⁶ and no one will disturb the birds and wild animals while they eat your dead bodies.

²⁷ The LORD will make you suffer with diseases that will cause oozing sores or crusty itchy patches on your skin or boils like the ones that are common in Egypt. And there will be no cure for you! ²⁸ You will become insane and go blind. The LORD will make you so confused, ²⁹ that even in bright sunshine you will have to feel your way around like a blind person, who cannot tell day from night. For the rest of your life, people will beat and rob you, and no one will be able to stop them.

³⁰ A man will be engaged to a woman, but before they can get married, she will be raped by enemy soldiers. Some of you will build houses, but never get to live in them. If you plant a vineyard, you won't be around long enough to enjoy the first harvest. ³¹ Your cattle will be killed while you watch, but you won't get to eat any of the meat. Your donkeys and sheep will be stolen from you, and no one will be around to force your enemies to give them back. ³² Your sons and daughters will be dragged off to a foreign country, while you stand there helpless. And even if you watch for them until you go blind, you will never see them again.

³³ You will work hard on your farms, but everything you harvest will be eaten by foreigners, who will mistreat you and abuse you for the rest of your life.

³⁴ What you see will be so horrible that you will go insane, ³⁵ and the LORD will punish you from head to toe with boils that never heal.

³⁶ The LORD will let you and your king be taken captive to a country that you and your ancestors have never even heard of, and there you will have to worship idols made of wood and stone. ³⁷ People of nearby countries will shudder when they see your terrible troubles, but they will still make fun of you.

³⁸ You will plant a lot of seed, but gather a small harvest, because locusts will eat your crops. ³⁹ You will plant vineyards and work hard at taking care of

them, but you won't gather any grapes, much less get any wine, and the vines themselves will be eaten by worms. ⁴⁰ Even if your olive trees grow everywhere in your country, the olives will fall off before they are ready, and there won't be enough olive oil for combing your hair.

⁴¹ Even your infant sons and daughters will be taken as prisoners of war.

⁴² Locusts will eat your crops and strip your trees of leaves and fruit.

⁴³ Foreigners in your towns will become wealthy and powerful, while you become poor and powerless. ⁴⁴ You will be so short of money that you will have to borrow from those foreigners. They will be the leaders in the community, and you will be the followers.

More Curses for Disobedience

Moses said:

⁴⁵ Israel, if you don't obey the laws and teachings that the LORD your God is giving you, he will send these curses to chase, attack, and destroy you.

⁴⁶ Then everyone will look at you and your descendants and realize that the LORD has placed you under a curse.

⁴⁷ If the LORD makes you wealthy, but you don't joyfully worship and honor him, ⁴⁸ he will send enemies to attack you and make you their slaves. Then you will live in poverty with nothing to eat, drink, or wear, and your owners will work you to death.

⁴⁹ Foreigners who speak a strange language will be sent to attack you without warning, just like an eagle swooping down. ⁵⁰ They won't show any mercy, and they will have no respect for old people or pity for children. ⁵¹ They will take your cattle, sheep, goats, grain, wine, and olive oil, then leave you to starve.

⁵² All over the land that the LORD your God gave you, the enemy army will surround your towns. You may feel safe inside your town walls, but the enemy will tear them down, ⁵³ while you wait in horror. Finally, you will get so hungry that you will eat the sons and daughters that the LORD gave you. ⁵⁴⁻⁵⁵ Because of hunger, a man who had been gentle and kind will eat his own children and refuse to share the meal with his brother or wife or with his other children. ⁵⁶⁻⁵⁷ A woman may have grown up in such luxury that she never had to put a foot on the ground. But times will be so bad that she will secretly eat both her newborn baby and the afterbirth, without sharing any with her husband or her other children.

Disobedience Brings Destruction

Moses said to Israel:

⁵⁸You must obey everything in *The Book of God's Law*. Because if you don't respect the LORD, ⁵⁹he will punish you and your descendants with incurable diseases, ⁶⁰like those you were so afraid of in Egypt. ⁶¹Remember! If the LORD decides to destroy your nation, he can use any disease or disaster, not just the ones written in *The Book of God's Law*.

⁶²There are as many of you now as the stars in the sky, but if you disobey the LORD your God, only a few of you will be left. ⁶³The LORD is happy to make you successful and to help your nation grow while you conquer the land. But if you disobey him, he will be just as happy to pull you up by your roots.

⁶⁴Those of you that survive will be scattered to every nation on earth, and you will have to worship stone and wood idols that never helped you or your ancestors. ⁶⁵You will be restless—always longing for home, but never able to return. ⁶⁶You will live in constant fear of death. ⁶⁷Each morning you will wake up to such terrible sights that you will say, "I wish it were night!" But at night you will be terrified and say, "I wish it were day!"

⁶⁸I told you never to go back to Egypt. But now the LORD himself will load you on ships and send you back. Then you will even try to sell yourselves as slaves, but no one will be interested.

The Agreement in Moab

29 So Moses finished telling the Israelites what they had to do in order to keep the agreement the LORD was making with them in Moab, which was in addition to the one the LORD had made with them at Mount Sinai.▷

The Third Speech: Israel Must Keep Its Agreement with the Lord

The LORD Is Your God

²⁻³Moses called the nation of Israel together and told them:

When you were in Egypt, you saw the LORD perform great miracles that caused trouble for the king, his officials, and everyone else in the country. ⁴⁻⁶He has even told you, "For 40 years I, the LORD, led you through the desert, but your clothes and your sandals didn't wear out, and I gave you special food.▷ I did these things so you would realize that I am your God."

But the LORD must give you a change of heart before you truly understand what you have seen and heard.

⁷When we first camped here, King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan attacked, but we defeated them. ⁸Then we captured their land and divided it among the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh.

Keep the Agreement

Moses said:

⁹Israel, the LORD has made an agreement with you, and if you keep your part, you will be successful in everything you do. ¹⁰⁻¹²Today everyone in our nation is standing here in the LORD's presence, including leaders and officials, parents and children, and even those foreigners who cut wood and carry water for us. We are at this place of worship to promise that we will keep our part of the agreement with the LORD our God.

¹³⁻¹⁵In this agreement, the LORD promised that you would be his people and that he would be your God. He first made this promise to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and today the LORD is making this same promise to you. But it isn't just for you; it is also for your descendants.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷When we lived in Egypt, you saw the Egyptians worship disgusting idols of wood, stone, silver, and gold. Then as we traveled through other nations, you saw those people worship other disgusting idols. ¹⁸So make sure that everyone in your tribe remains faithful to the LORD and never starts worshipping gods of other nations.

If even one of you worships idols, you will be like the root of a plant that produces bitter, poisonous fruit. ¹⁹You may be an Israelite and know all about the LORD's agreement with us, but he won't bless you if you rebel against him. You may think you can get away with it, but you will cause the rest of Israel to be punished along with you.▷ ²⁰⁻²¹The LORD will be furious, and instead of forgiving you, he will separate you from the other tribes. Then he will destroy you, by piling on you all the curses in *The Book of God's Law*, and you will be forgotten forever.

²²The LORD will strike your country with diseases and disasters. Your descendants and foreigners from distant countries will see that your land ²³has become a scorching desert of salt and sulfur, where nothing is planted, nothing sprouts, and nothing grows. It will be as lifeless as the land around the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, after the LORD became angry and destroyed them.

²⁴ People from other nations will ask, 'Why did the LORD destroy this country? Why was he so furious?'

²⁵ And they will be given this answer:

Our ancestors worshiped the LORD, but after he brought them out of Egypt and made an agreement with them, they rejected the agreement ²⁶ and decided to worship gods that had never helped them. The LORD had forbidden Israel to worship these gods, ²⁷⁻²⁸ and so he became furious and punished the land with all the curses in *The Book of God's Law*. Then he pulled up Israel by the roots and tossed them into a foreign country, where they still are today.

²⁹ The LORD our God hasn't explained the present or the future, but he has commanded us to obey the laws he gave to us and our descendants.

The Lord Will Bring You Back

Moses said to Israel:

30 I have told you everything the LORD your God will do for you, and I've also told you the curses he will put on you if you reject him. He will scatter you in faraway countries, but when you realize that he is punishing you, ² return to him with all your heart and soul and start obeying the commands I have given to you today. ³⁻⁴ Then he will stop punishing you and treat you with kindness. He may have scattered you to the farthest countries on earth, but he will bring you back ⁵ to the land that had belonged to your ancestors and make you even more successful and powerful than they ever were.

⁶ You and your descendants are stubborn, but the LORD will make you willing to obey him and love him with all your heart and soul, and you will enjoy a long life.

⁷ Then the LORD your God will remove the curses from you and put them on those enemies who hate and attack you.

⁸ You will again obey the laws and teachings of the LORD, ⁹ and he will bless you with many children, large herds and flocks, and abundant crops. The LORD will be happy to do good things for you, just as he did for your ancestors. ¹⁰ But you must decide once and for all to worship him with all your heart and soul and to obey everything in *The Book of God's Law*.

Choose Life, Not Death

Moses said to Israel:

¹¹ You know God's laws, and it isn't impossible to obey them. ¹² His commands aren't in heaven,

so you can't excuse yourselves by saying, 'How can we obey the LORD's commands? They are in heaven, and no one can go up to get them, then bring them down and explain them to us.' ¹³ And you can't say, 'How can we obey the LORD's commands? They are across the sea, and someone must go across, then bring them back and explain them to us.' ¹⁴ No, these commands are nearby and you know them by heart. All you have to do is obey!

¹⁵ Today I am giving you a choice. You can choose life and success or death and disaster. ¹⁶⁻¹⁸ I am commanding you to be loyal to the LORD, to live the way he has told you, and to obey his laws and teachings. You are about to cross the Jordan River and take the land that he is giving you. If you obey him, you will live and become successful and powerful.

On the other hand, you might choose to disobey the LORD and reject him. So I'm warning you that if you bow down and worship other gods, you won't have long to live.

¹⁹ Now I call the sky and the earth to be witnesses that I am offering you this choice. Will you choose for the LORD to make you prosperous and give you a long life? Or will he put you under a curse and kill you? Choose life! ²⁰ Be completely faithful to the LORD your God, love him, and do whatever he tells you. The LORD is the only one who can give life, and he will let you live a long time in the land that he promised to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Final Speeches and the Death of Moses

Joshua Is Appointed the Leader of Israel

31 Moses again spoke to the whole nation of Israel:

² I am 120 years old, and I am no longer able to be your leader. And besides that, the LORD your God has told me that he won't let me cross the Jordan River. ³⁻⁵ But he has promised that he and Joshua will lead you across the Jordan to attack the nations that live on the other side. The LORD will destroy those nations just as he destroyed Sihon and Og, those two Amorite kings. Just remember—whenever you capture a place, kill everyone who lives there.

⁶ Be brave and strong! Don't be afraid of the nations on the other side of the Jordan. The LORD your God will always be at your side, and he will never abandon you.

7 Then Moses called Joshua up in front of the crowd and said:

Joshua, be brave and strong as you lead these people into their land. The LORD made a promise long ago to Israel's ancestors that this land would someday belong to Israel. That time has now come, and you must divide up the land among the people.⁸ The LORD will lead you into the land. He will always be with you and help you, so don't ever be afraid of your enemies.

Read These Laws

⁹ Moses wrote down all of these laws and teachings and gave them to the priests and the leaders of Israel. The priests were from the Levi tribe, and they carried the sacred chest that belonged to the LORD.¹⁰⁻¹¹ Moses told these priests and leaders:

Each year the Israelites must come together to celebrate the Festival of Shelters at the place where the LORD chooses to be worshiped. You must read these laws and teachings to the people at the festival every seventh year, the year when loans do not need to be repaid.¹²⁻¹³ Everyone must come—men, women, children, and even the foreigners who live in your towns. And each new generation will listen and learn to worship the LORD their God with fear and trembling and to do exactly what is said in God's Law.

Israel Will Reject the LORD

¹⁴ The LORD told Moses, "You will soon die, so bring Joshua to the sacred tent, and I will appoint him the leader of Israel."

Moses and Joshua went to the sacred tent, and the LORD appeared in a thick cloud right over the entrance to the tent.¹⁶ The LORD said:

Moses, you will soon die. But Israel is going into a land where other gods are worshiped, and Israel will reject me and start worshipping these gods. The people will break the agreement I made with them,¹⁷ and I will be so furious that I will abandon them and ignore their prayers. I will send disasters and suffering that will nearly wipe them out. Finally, they will realize that the disasters happened because I abandoned them.¹⁸ They will pray to me, but I will ignore them because they were evil and started worshipping other gods.

¹⁹ Moses and Joshua, I am going to give you the words to a new song. Write them down and teach the song to the Israelites. If they learn it, they will know what I want them to do, and so they will have no excuse for not obeying me.²⁰ I am bringing them into the land that I promised their ancestors. It is a land rich with milk and honey, and the Israelites will have more than enough food to eat. But they will get fat and turn their backs on me and start worshipping other gods. The Israelites will reject me and break the agreement that I made with them.

²¹ When I punish the Israelites and their descendants with suffering and disasters, I will remind them that they know the words to this song, so they have no excuse for not obeying me.

I will give them the land that I promised, but I know the way they are going to live later on.

²² Moses at once wrote down the words to the song, and he taught it to the Israelites.

²³ The LORD told Joshua, "Be brave and strong! I will help you lead the people of Israel into the land that I have promised them."

²⁴ Moses wrote down all these laws and teachings in a book,²⁵ then he went to the Levites who carried the sacred chest and said:

²⁶ This is *The Book of God's Law*. Keep it beside the sacred chest that holds the agreement the LORD your God made with Israel. This book is proof that you know what the LORD wants you to do.²⁷ I know how stubborn and rebellious you and the rest of the Israelites are. You have rebelled against the LORD while I have been alive, and it will only get worse after I am gone.²⁸ So call together the leaders and officials of the tribes of Israel. I will bring this book and read every word of it to you, and I will call the sky and the earth as witnesses that all of you know what you are supposed to do.

²⁹ I am going to die soon, and I know that in the future you will stop caring about what is right and what is wrong, and so you will disobey the LORD and stop living the way I told you to live. The LORD will be angry, and terrible things will happen to you.

The Song of Moses

³⁰ Moses called a meeting of all the people of Israel, so he could teach them the words to the song that the LORD had given him. And here are the words:

- 32 Earth and Sky,
listen to what I say!
2 Israel, I will teach you.
My words will be like gentle rain
on tender young plants,
or like dew on the grass.
- 3 Join with me in praising
the wonderful name
of the LORD our God.
- 4 The LORD is a mighty rock,[▷]
and he never does wrong.
God can always be trusted
to bring justice.
- 5 But you lie and cheat
'and are unfaithful to him.
You have disgraced yourselves
and are no longer worthy
to be his children.'
- 6 Israel, the LORD is your Father,
the one who created you,
but you repaid him
by being foolish.
- 7 Think about past generations.
Ask your parents
or any of your elders.
They will tell you
- 8 that God Most High
gave land to every nation.
He assigned a guardian angel
to each of them,[▷]
- 9 but the LORD himself
takes care of Israel.[▷]
- 10 Israel, the LORD discovered you
in a barren desert
filled with howling winds.
God became your fortress,
protecting you as though
you were his own eyes.
- 11 The LORD was like an eagle
teaching its young to fly,
always ready to swoop down
and catch them on its back.
- 12 Israel, the LORD led you,
and without the aid
of a foreign god,
13 he helped you
capture the land.
Your fields were rich
with grain.
Olive trees grew
in your stony soil,
and honey was found
among the rocks.
- 14 Your flocks and herds
produced milk and yogurt,
and you got choice meat
from your sheep and goats
that grazed in Bashan.
Your wheat was the finest,
and you drank the best wine.
- 15 Israel,[▷] you grew fat and rebelled
against God, your Creator;
you rejected the Mighty Rock,[▷]
your only place of safety.
- 16 You made God jealous and angry
by worshiping disgusting idols
and foreign gods.
- 17 You offered sacrifices
to demons, those useless gods
that never helped you,
new gods that your ancestors
never worshiped.
- 18 You turned away
from God, your Creator;
you forgot the Mighty Rock,[▷]
the source of your life.
- 19 You were the LORD's children,
but you made him angry.
Then he rejected you ²⁰ and said,
'You are unfaithful
and can't be trusted.
So I won't answer your prayers;
I'll just watch and see
what happens to you.
- 21 You worshiped worthless idols,
and made me jealous
and angry!
Now I will send a 'cruel'
and worthless nation
to make you jealous and angry.
- 22 'My people, I will breathe out fire
that sends you down
to the world of the dead.
It will scorch your farmlands
and burn deep down
under the mountains.
- 23 I'll send disaster after disaster
to strike you like arrows.
- 24 You'll be struck by starvation
and deadly diseases,
by the fangs of wild animals
and poisonous snakes.

- 25 Young and old alike
will be killed in the streets
and terrified at home.
- 26 I wanted to scatter you,
so no one would remember
that you had ever lived.
- 27 But I dreaded the sound
of your enemies saying,
'We defeated Israel with no help
from the LORD.' "
- 28 People of Israel,
that's what the LORD
has said to you.
But you don't have good sense,
and you never listen
to advice.
- 29 If you did, you could see
where you are headed.
- 30 How could one enemy soldier
chase a thousand
of Israel's troops?
Or how could two of theirs
pursue ten thousand of ours?
It can only happen if the LORD
stops protecting Israel
and lets the enemy win.
- 31 Even our enemies know
that only our God
is a Mighty Rock.▷
- 32 Our enemies are grapevines
rooted in the fields
of Sodom and Gomorrah.
The grapes they produce
are full of bitter poison;
33 their wine is more deadly
than cobra venom.
- 34 But the LORD has written
a list of their sins
and locked it in his vault.
- 35 Soon our enemies will get
what they deserve▷—
suddenly they will slip,
and total disaster
will quickly follow.
- 36 When only a few
of the LORD's people remain,
when their strength is gone,
and some of them are slaves,
the LORD will feel sorry for them
and give them justice.
- 37 But first the LORD will say,
'You ran for safety to other gods—
couldn't they help you?'
- 38 You offered them wine
and your best sacrifices.
Can't those gods help you now
or give you protection?'
- 39 Don't you understand?
I am the only God;
there are no others.
I am the one who takes life
and gives it again.
I punished you with suffering.
But now I will heal you,
and nothing can stop me!
- 40 I make this solemn promise:
Just as I live forever,
- 41 I will take revenge
on my hateful enemies.
I will sharpen my sword
and let it flash
like lightning.
- 42 My arrows will get drunk
on enemy blood;
my sword will taste the flesh
and the blood of the enemy.
It will kill prisoners,
and cut off the heads
of their leaders.▷
- 43 Tell the heavens to celebrate
and all gods to bow down
to the LORD.▷
'because he will take revenge
on those hateful enemies
who killed his people.
He will forgive the sins of Israel
and purify their land.'
- 44-45 Moses spoke the words of the song so that
all the Israelites could hear, and Joshua▷ helped
him. When Moses had finished, 46 he said, "Always
remember this song I have taught you today. And let
it be a warning that you must teach your children to
obey everything written in *The Book of God's Law*.
47 The Law isn't empty words. It can give you a long
life in the land that you are going to take."

Moses Will See the Land

48 Later that day the LORD said to Moses:

49 Go up into the Abarim Mountain range
here in Moab across the Jordan River valley
from Jericho. And when you reach the top of

Mount Nebo, you will be able to see the land of Canaan, which I am giving to Israel. ⁵⁰ Then you will die and be buried on the mountaintop, just as your brother Aaron died and was buried on Mount Hor. ⁵¹ Both of you were unfaithful to me at Meribah Spring near Kadesh in the Zin Desert. I am God, but there in front of the Israelites, you did not treat me with the honor and respect I deserve. ⁵² So I will give the land to the people of Israel, but you will only get to see it from a distance.

Moses Blesses the Tribes of Israel

33 Moses was a prophet, and before he died, he blessed the tribes of Israel by saying:

² The LORD came from Mount Sinai.
From Edom, he gave light
to his people,
and his glory was shining
from Mount Paran.
'Thousands of his warriors
were with him,
and fire
was at his right hand.'

³ The LORD loves the tribes
of Israel,[>]
and he protects his people.
They listen to his words
and worship at his feet.

*⁴ I called a meeting
of the tribes of Israel[>]
and gave you God's Law.

⁵ Then you and your leaders
made the LORD your king.

⁶ Tribe of Reuben, you will live,
'even though your tribe
will always be small.'

⁷ The LORD will listen to you,
tribe of Judah, as you 'beg
to come safely home.
You fought your enemies alone;¹
now the LORD will help you.

⁸ At Massah and Meribah Spring,
the LORD tested you,
tribe of Levi.
You were faithful,[>]
and so the priesthood[>] belongs
to the Levi tribe.

⁹ Protecting Israel's agreement
with the LORD

was more important to you
than the life of your father
or mother,
or brothers or sisters,
or your own children.

¹⁰ You teach God's laws to Israel,[>]
and at the place of worship
you offer sacrifices
and burn incense.

¹¹ I pray that the LORD will bless
everything you do,
and make you strong enough
to crush your enemies.

¹² The LORD 'Most High' loves you,
tribe of Benjamin.
He will live among your hills
and protect you.

¹³ Descendants of Joseph,
the LORD will bless you
with precious water
from deep wells
and with dew from the sky.

¹⁴ Month by month, your fruit
will ripen in the sunshine.

¹⁵ You will have a rich harvest
from the slopes
of the ancient hills.

¹⁶ The LORD who appeared
in the burning bush
wants to give you the best
the land can produce,
and it will be a princely crown
on Joseph's head.

¹⁷ The armies of Ephraim
and Manasseh
are majestic and fierce
like a bull or a wild ox.
They will run their spears
through faraway nations.

¹⁸ Be happy, Zebulun,
as your boats set sail;
be happy, Issachar,
in your tents.

¹⁹ The sea will make you wealthy,
and from the sandy beach
you will get treasure.
So invite the other tribes[>]
to celebrate with you
and offer sacrifices to God.

²⁰ Tribe of Gad,

- the LORD will bless you
with more land.
So shout his praises!
Your tribe is like a lion
ripping up its victim.
- 21 Your leaders met together
and chose the best land
for your tribe,
but you obeyed the LORD
and helped the other tribes.¹
- 22 Tribe of Dan,
you are like a lion cub,
startled by a snake.▷
- 23 The LORD is pleased with you,
people of Naphtali.
He will bless you
and give you the land
to the west and the south.▷
- 24 The LORD's greatest blessing
is for you, tribe of Asher.
You will be the favorite
of all the other tribes.
You will be rich with olive oil
- 25 and have strong town gates
with bronze and iron bolts.
Your people will be powerful
for as long as they live.
- 26 Israel,▷ no other god
is like ours—
the clouds are his chariot
as he rides across the skies
to come and help us.
- 27 The eternal God
is our hiding place;
he carries us in his arms.
When God tells you
to destroy your enemies,
he will make them run.
- 28 Israel, you will live in safety;
'your enemies will be gone.'¹
The dew will fall from the sky,
and you will have plenty
of grain and wine.
- 29 The LORD has rescued you
and given you more blessings
than any other nation.

He protects you like a shield
and is your majestic sword.
Your enemies will bow in fear,
and you will trample
on their backs.

The Death of Moses

34 Sometime later, Moses left the lowlands of Moab. He went up Mount Pisgah to the peak of Mount Nebo, which is across the Jordan River from Jericho. The LORD showed him all the land as far north as Gilead and the town of Dan. ² He let Moses see the territories that would soon belong to the tribes of Naphtali, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Judah, as far west as the Mediterranean Sea. ³ The LORD also showed him the land in the south, from the valley near the town of Jericho, known as The City of Palm Trees, down to the town of Zoar.

⁴ The LORD said, "Moses, this is the land I was talking about when I solemnly promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that I would give land to their descendants. I have let you see it, but you will not cross the Jordan and go in."

⁵ And so, Moses the LORD's servant died there in Moab, just as the LORD had said. ⁶ The LORD buried him in a valley near the town of Beth-Peor, but even today no one knows exactly where. ⁷ Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was still good, and his body was strong.

⁸ The people of Israel stayed in the lowlands of Moab, where they mourned and grieved 30 days for Moses, as was their custom.

Joshua Becomes the Leader of Israel

⁹ Before Moses died, he had placed his hands on Joshua, and the LORD had given Joshua wisdom. The Israelites paid attention to what Joshua said and obeyed the commands that the LORD had given Moses.

Moses Was a Great Prophet

¹⁰ There has never again been a prophet in Israel like Moses. The LORD spoke face to face with him ¹¹ and sent him to perform powerful miracles in the presence of the king of Egypt and his entire nation. ¹² No one else has ever had the power to do such great things as Moses did for everyone to see.

Notes

*An asterisk preceding a verse number in a poetic passage of this book indicates that the contents of two or more verses have been joined together and rearranged beginning with the verse so marked.

Phrases enclosed in half square superscript brackets (" ") are those that are difficult to translate from the original Hebrew with great certainty. Consequently, the English rendering given should be understood as only one possible way of translating such texts.

- ▷ **1.1-5,6,9,19** *Mount Sinai*: The Hebrew text has "Horeb."
- ▷ **1.24** *Bunch Valley*: Or "Eshcol Valley."
- ▷ **1.28** *The people ... we are*: Most Hebrew manuscripts; a few Hebrew manuscripts and one ancient translation "the people who live there are stronger than we are, and there are more of them than there are of us."
- ▷ **1.38** *Joshua*: Hebrew "Joshua son of Nun."
- ▷ **1.40,46** *Red Sea*: Hebrew *yam suph*, "Sea of Reeds."
- ▷ **2.9** *them*: The Hebrew text has "the descendants of Lot."
- ▷ **2.12** *Edomites*: The Hebrew text has "the descendants of Esau."
- ▷ **2.15,16** *getting rid of*: Or "sending diseases on."
- ▷ **2.19** *them*: The Hebrew text has "descendants of Lot."
- ▷ **2.22** *Edomites*: The Hebrew text has "the descendants of Esau."
- ▷ **2.23** *Philistines*: The Hebrew text has "the Caphtorim from Caphtor."
- ▷ **2.28,29** *Edomites and Moabites*: Hebrew "descendants of Esau, who live in Seir and Moabites who live in Ar."
- ▷ **3.11** *coffin*: Or "bed."
- ▷ **3.11** *hard black rock*: The Hebrew text has "iron."
- ▷ **3.12-17** *Lake Galilee*: The Hebrew text has "Lake Chinnereth."
- ▷ **3.12-17** *half the tribe of Manasseh*: Or "East Manasseh."
- ▷ **3.12-17** *Villages of Jair*: Or "Hawth-Jair."
- ▷ **4.10,11** *Mount Sinai*: The Hebrew text has "Horeb."
- ▷ **4.21** *what you said*: Or "you people."
- ▷ **4.48** *Hermon*: The Hebrew text also includes the name "Sion," probably another form of "Sirion."
- ▷ **4.49** *the Dead Sea*: Hebrew "the Sea of the Arabah."
- ▷ **5.2** *Mount Sinai*: The Hebrew text has "Horeb."
- ▷ **6.1** *these laws and teachings*: Or "the following commandment with its laws and teachings."
- ▷ **6.4** *The LORD ... true God*: Or "Only the LORD is our God."
- ▷ **7.20** *make them ... dead*: Or "send hornets to kill them."
- ▷ **9.8** *Mount Sinai*: The Hebrew text has "Horeb."
- ▷ **9.24** *he has*: The Samaritan Hebrew Text and one ancient translation; the Standard Hebrew Text "I have."
- ▷ **10.6** *the wells ... Jaakan*: Or "Beeroth Bene-Jaakan."
- ▷ **10.8** *After ... chest*: Or "After Israel reached Jotbathah."
- ▷ **11.4** *Red Sea*: Hebrew *yam suph*, "Sea of Reeds."
- ▷ **11.6** *Dathan and Abiram*: Hebrew "Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab from the Reuben tribe."
- ▷ **12.3** *sacred poles*: Or "trees."
- ▷ **13.1,2** *a prophet*: Hebrew adds "or a dreamer of dreams."
- ▷ **14.1** *when you mourn ... forehead*: Or "you must not worship Baal, cutting yourselves and shaving your forehead."
- ▷ **15.1,2** *The LORD says ... no longer ask for payment*: Or " " The LORD says loans do not need to be paid back this year.' Then if you have loaned money to another Israelite, you cannot ask for payment until the next year."
- ▷ **15.18** *six years ... work*: Or "six years of service, and it cost you no more than if you had hired someone to do the work"; or "six years of service, for what you would have had to pay a worker for two years."
- ▷ **16.6** *sunset, the time of day when you left Egypt*: Or "sunset on the same date as when you left Egypt."
- ▷ **16.18,19** *turn ... liars*: Or "keep innocent people from getting justice."
- ▷ **16.21** *sacred pole*: Or "tree."
- ▷ **17.18** *God's laws*: Or "God's laws for the king."
- ▷ **18.7** *a special servant of the LORD*: Or "one of the LORD's priests."
- ▷ **18.16** *Mount Sinai*: The Hebrew text has "Horeb."
- ▷ **22.5** *pretend to be men ... pretend to be women*: Or "wear men's clothing ... wear women's clothing."
- ▷ **22.28,29** *talks her into sleeping with him ... bride-price and*: Or "forces her to have sex."

- ▷ **22.29** Then if they are caught, he will have to marry her. He must give her father 50 pieces of silver as a bride-price and."
- ▷ **23.4** *Balaam*: Hebrew "Balaam son of Beor from Pethor."
- ▷ **23.10** *if something ... worship, he*: Or "if a man has a flow of semen at night, he is unclean and unfit for worship, and he."
- ▷ **24.14** *don't hold back their pay*: The Dead Sea Scrolls; the Standard Hebrew Text "treat them right."
- ▷ **25.1,2** *whip*: Or "rod."
- ▷ **27.12,13** *Ephraim, Manasseh*: The Hebrew text has "Joseph."
- ▷ **27.14-26** *the rest of the people*: Or "all the people who are standing on Mount Ebal."
- ▷ **29.1** *Mount Sinai*: The Hebrew text has "Horeb."
- ▷ **29.4-6** *I gave ... food*: Hebrew "you didn't eat bread or drink any wine or beer."
- ▷ **29.19** *you will cause the rest of Israel to be punished along with you*: Hebrew "The mud will be swept away as well as the dust."
- ▷ **32.4** *mighty rock*: The Hebrew text has "rock."
- ▷ **32.8** *He assigned ... them*: The Dead Sea Scrolls and one ancient translation; the Standard Hebrew Text "So there were as many nations as Israel (that is, Jacob) had children."
- ▷ **32.9** *Israel*: The Hebrew text has "Jacob"
- ▷ **32.15** *Israel*: The Standard Hebrew Text has "Jeshurun," a rare name for Israel. The Samaritan Hebrew Text and one ancient translation also use "Jacob."
- ▷ **32.15,18,31** *Mighty Rock*: The Hebrew text has "rock."
- ▷ **32.35** *our enemies ... deserve*: The Samaritan Hebrew Text and one ancient translation; the Standard Hebrew Text "I will pay them back."
- ▷ **32.42** *leaders*: Or "long-haired warriors."
- ▷ **32.43** *Tell ... LORD*: The Dead Sea Scrolls and one ancient translation; the Standard Hebrew Text "Let the nations, his people, celebrate."
- ▷ **32.44,45** *Joshua*: The Hebrew text has "Hoshea."
- ▷ **33.3** *the tribes of Israel*: Or "the nations."
- ▷ **33.4** *Israel*: The Hebrew text also uses the name "Jeshurun," a rare name for "Israel."
- ▷ **33.8** *the LORD tested you, tribe of Levi. You were faithful*: Or "the LORD tested me. I was faithful" or "the LORD tested Aaron and me. We were faithful."
- ▷ **33.8** *priesthood*: The Hebrew text has "your thummim and your urim."
- ▷ **33.10** *Israel*: The Hebrew text has "Jacob"
- ▷ **33.19** *other tribes*: Or "nations."
- ▷ **33.22** *startled by a snake*: Or "jumping out from the forest of Bashan."
- ▷ **33.23** *land to the west and the south*: Or "land south as far as Lake Galilee."
- ▷ **33.26** *Israel*: The Hebrew text also uses the name "Jeshurun," a rare name for "Israel."