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place of God? 20 Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good; in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. 21 So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Joseph's Last Days and Death

22 So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred ten years. 23 Joseph saw Ephraim's chil-

dren of the third generation; the children of Machir son of Manasseh were also born on Joseph's knees.

24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die; but God will surely come to you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." 25 So Joseph made the Israelites swear, saying, "When God comes to you, you shall carry up my bones from here." 26 And Joseph died, being one hundred ten years old; he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

deeper agent of events: 50:19-20 Joseph's command to his brothers to not be afraid is given twice (vv. 19, 21) surrounding his explanation of God's plan. *Am I in the place of God?* echoes Jacob's angry retort to Rachel in 30:2, but now in a compassionate voice. *You intended to do harm* (lit. "evil"), *God intended it for good*, a pointed antithesis in which there is a clear sense that God's intentions shaped their intentions (cf. 20:5-6) and hence the brothers are forgiven. But the brothers' fear is not entirely unfounded, for they ought to be responsible in some fashion for their intentions. This moral problem lingers in the background of this encounter. 50:22-26 The description of Joseph's final days and death echoes the lengthier portrayal of Jacob's last days. Like his father, he lives a long and full life, on his deathbed foretells Israel's future, and is embalmed in Egypt, with an oath to be buried in the promised land. V. 22 is from the P source, and the rest is from the E source. 50:22-23 The P statement of Joseph's residence in Egypt and life span echoes the similar statement for Jacob prior to his death (47:28, P). These statements compress a considerable passage of time into a brief text. V. 23 (E) similarly describes Joseph's long and full life, but does so with the familial image of Joseph seeing his great-grandchildren by

both sons. This familial image highlights the importance and blessing of offspring, ending Genesis with an image of the ancestral promise in full bloom. 50:24 Like his father, Joseph foresees the future on the eve of his death; he foretells God's plan in the exodus and the return to the promised land, but makes no mention of the enslavement in Egypt. This provides a transition to the book of Exodus, without revealing to his brothers the dangers to come. Heb. 11:22 cites the episode as an example of faith. 50:25 The oath to carry Joseph's bones is fulfilled in Ex. 13:19 and he is finally buried in the promised land (at Shechem) in Josh. 24:32. Joseph's last request thus looks forward to the exodus and the return to Canaan. 50:26 The second mention of Joseph's life span (here from E) echoes the statement in v. 22 (P), creating an envelope structure around Joseph's death. His embalming echoes Jacob's (50:2-3), but he lacks the lengthy period of mourning, the journey, and the burial. These await the fulfillment of his prophecy of exodus and return. *Coffin* (Hebrew *arot*) the same word used for the ark of the covenant (e.g., Ex. 25:16), perhaps a brief allusion to another key aspect of the exodus-Sinai story. *In Egypt* an apt hinge between the books of Genesis and Exodus.

EXODUS

Name and Content

THE NAME EXODUS, DERIVED FROM GREEK, refers to the first of the two central narrative events in the book—the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (chs. 1-15). The other event, the Lord's covenant-forging revelation to Israel at Mount Sinai (chs. 19-24), and the laws and instructions that ensue from it complete the book.

The book's Hebrew name, "These are the names," derives from the first words of the text's prologue (1:1-7), which harks back to and abridges the genealogy in Gen. 4:6-8-27. In one sense Exodus directly continues the story of Jacob's clan in Egypt (Gen. 37-50). The Lord is said to rescue Israel on account of his covenant with its ancestors (2:24; cf. 3:6, 15-16; 4:5; 6:2-4). In another sense, Exodus is a distinct book, relating the story of Israel's formation as a people and its covenant with God. The second part of the story is dependent on the first: by redeeming the Israelite slaves from Egypt, the Lord earns the right to "enslave" them to himself (Lev. 25:42, 55) by binding them to the covenant obligations.

Biblical Context

COVENANT LAW ISSUING IMMEDIATELY or indirectly from the Sinai event makes up most of what follows Exodus in the Pentateuch. Moses has the people recommit themselves to the covenant before he dies (Deut. 29:30). In the next generation the Israelites twice reaffirm the covenant (Josh. 4-5, 24), an act that will be expressly repeated only centuries later (2 Kings 22-23) and again after the Babylonian exile (Neh. 8-10). Precedent for renewing, or restoring, the covenant is set within Exodus itself, following the golden calf incident (ch. 34).

Although biblical tradition links the exodus with a (geographically unspecified) covenant (e.g., Deut. 4:45; 6:21-25; 29:25; 1 Kings 8:9, 21; Jer. 11:2-4, 6-7; 31:32; 34:13), it is the exodus itself that chiefly exercises the biblical memory. Within the Pentateuch, or Torah, the recent exodus provides a motive for worshipping the Lord (e.g., Ex. 20:2-29:46; Lev. 26:13; Deut. 6:12; 13:6-10; cf. Josh. 24:17) and observing the law (e.g., Lev. 11:45; 22:32-33; Num. 15:41; Deut. 5:5; 8:11-14; 29:2), especially those precepts protecting the disadvantaged (e.g., Lev. 19:35; 25:38, 42, 55), because the experience of slavery is meant to instill empathy for them (e.g., Ex. 23:9; Lev. 19:34; Deut. 10:19; 15:15; 16:12; 24:22; and see Jer. 34:13-14).

Moreover, the rescue of Israel from Egypt serves as a paradigm of divine saving power within the Torah (e.g., Lev 26.24–25; Num 23.22, 24.8; Deut 6.21–22; 20.1; 26.8) as well as among the prophets (e.g., Isa 11.16; 51.10; Jer 16.14–15; 23.7–8; 32.20–21; Am 2.10; 9.7; Mic 6.4, 7.15; cf. also Dan 9.15) and psalmists (e.g., Ps 77; 78.81; 105; 106.136). God is repeatedly implored to arise and save Israel from its present distress as God had in the past, in the exodus. Future redemptions of Israel may be typologically conceived as reiterations of the exodus, as the foundational narrative of the Torah is transformed from a one-time event to a recurring one (or myth, e.g., Isa 51.10–11). Nevertheless, even as the exodus may serve as myth, it does not lose its historical character. Unlike the Sinai revelation, the exodus event functions in the Bible as a point of chronological reference (e.g., Num 1.1; 9.1; Deut 9.7; Judg 19.30; 1 Sam 8.8; 2 Sam 7.6; 1 Kings 6.1; 8.16; 2 Kings 21.15; Jer 7.25).

Historical Context

THE PRESENT TEXT SEEMS TO INCORPORATE a variety of once independent sources (e.g., 4.26; 15.1-18; 20.2-17; chs. 21-23). The narratives of complaint during the wilderness trek (15.22-17.7) overlap with stories in Numbers; the plagues narrative (chs. 7-11) and Passover passage (chs. 12) manifest the kinds of duplication and dissonance that suggest the presence of different traditions. Details of the narrative often conflict or make little sense; for example, though the Israelites are said to live apart in Goshen (e.g., Gen 47.1-6; Ex 8.22; 9.26), they borrow valuable objects from their Egyptian neighbors (3.21-22) and the Lord must pass over Israelite homes to strike Egyptian households in the tenth plague (12.12-13). Comparison of Exodus with folklore and myths suggests the story is already the stuff of legend. Historical reconstruction is accordingly obstructed by a centuries-long process of literary formation that can hardly be retraced.

Nevertheless, the sojourn of Israelites in Egypt, plagues, and crossing the sea and wilderness are traditions on which diverse biblical sources inside and outside the Torah agree. External considerations lead many to place the historical exodus in the late thirteenth century B.C. during the long reign of Ramesses II, when numbers of Western Semites are known to have inhabited the Nile Delta and when conflicts with foreign labor are reported. But there is no archaeological record of the exodus in Egypt, and historical references in Exodus are slim, vague, or problematic. On the other hand, a relatively large number of Egyptian personal names are found within the tribe of Levi (e.g., Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Merari, Putiel, Phinehas, Hopnani). There is therefore a basis to surmise that ancestors of some Israelites, and particularly those associated with the priestly tribe, came out of Egypt. EDWARD L. GREENSTEIN [1974, 1981]

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4 Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5 The total number of people born to Jacob was seventy. 6 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 7 But the Israelites were fruitful and grew exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.

The Israelites Are Oppressed

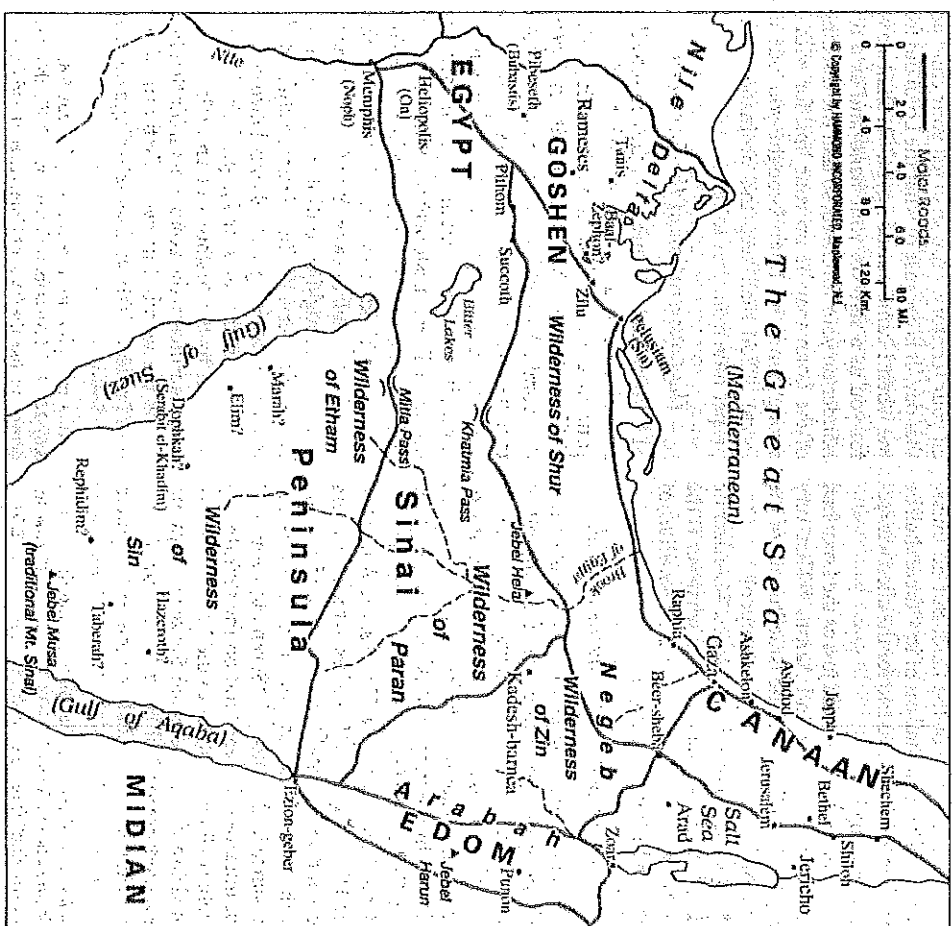
8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. 10 Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They

built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh.¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites.¹³ The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites,¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick, and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah

11-17 The prologue returns to a point prior to the conclusion of Genesis (see Introduction). The story of the Israelite population explosion in Egypt fulfills the Lord's promise of numerous progeny to the patriarchs (Gen 13.16, 15.5, 22.17, 26.4, 32.13). 1.1 *Israel*, the patriarch Jacob (Gen. 32.29; 35.10). 1.2-4 The list of Jacob's sons separates the sons of his wives, Leah and Rachel, from those of his concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah. Daughter Dinah (Gen. 30.21, 34) is, like other women, omitted, for this genealogy. 1.5 *Born to Jacob*, lit. 'coming out of Jacob's thigh,' which was inscribed (Gen. 32.26, 32). *Seventy*, counting only Jacob's sons and 'grandsons' (a very close approximation). 1.6 *Joseph's* death and mummification conclude Genesis. *Generation*, the unit of patriarchal periodization, cf. note on 12.40. 1.7 *Israelites*, lit. 'the sons of Israel' (cf. v. 1), but here referring to the children of Israel as a people. *Truthfully*, i.e. *unmutilated*. See Gen 47.27, cf. Gen 1.28; 9.17; 17.6, 20. *Profit*, The unusual Hebrew term (cf. Gen 9.7) connotes the proliferation of animals because the pharaoh's attempt at genocide. 1.8-22 The episode of the midwives reveals such fairy tales as 'Snoot-White': a monarch orders a set-vice of the opposite sex to murder a child of the monarch's sex who is feared as a threat to the throne. 1.18 The new king seems to initiate a new policy toward the Asian foreigners, but *did not know* might mean 'did not care about' (the same Hebrew verb is translated *not notice* in 2.25). The king remains anonymous, although many identify him with Ramses II (ca. 1290-1224 BCE) on the basis of v. 11 and the mention of 'Israel' within Canaan as a synonym of the preceding phrase, 'Mitzraim' (ca. 1224-1204). 1.19 *The Israelite people*, in contrast to his, (the king's) *people*. *Numerous* is *powerful* in Hebrew, cognate to the verbs rendered *mutilated* and *grew up strong* in v. 2. *Strong* is *powerful* in Hebrew, cognate to the verbs rendered *mutilated* and *grew up strong* in v. 2. *Both* terms may refer to strength in numbers (cf. e.g., Num 32.1; Deut 26.5; Joel 1.6). The assertion that *Israel*, outnumbered by Egypt, is surely hypocritical. 1.20 *Shrewdly*, lit. 'wisely'—an earlier phrase, had *called Joseph* incompactly 'Israel' (Gen 41.39); the king may resent Egypt's debt to Joseph. *Jon*, the same Hebrew verb (*nosaj*) as the name *Joseph* (*yosef*). *Especially*, lit. 'go up', more aptly referring to taking control (cf. Ising, over), rather than leaving. Letters from Egypt's agents in Canaan to pharaohs of the four-

and the other Pual, is "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, killing him; but if it is a girl, she shall live!" But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. 18 So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the seventh century BCE at el-Amarna complain of landless "Apings" joining forces with rebellious towns. Scholars have suggested a link between these landless folk and the "Hebrews," a term that may be related to "Apiru." 1.11 They say: The king's people cooperate. *Ishtunus* refers to "officers of the corvée" (cf. 1 Kings 5:13–14). *Tb' opres*, used prophetically of the Egyptian bondage (Gen 15:13), and of Sennacherib's affliction of Hagar (Gen 16:6, 9–11). *Phthom*, Egyptian *Per-Atum*, "House of (the sun-god) Atum," and *Ramesses*, "House of) Ramesses," sites in the region presumably inhabited by the Israelites in the eastern Nile Delta, the latter possibly Gamlu, but also possibly a first-millennium locality. *Pharaoh*, Egyptian *Per-^o*, "Great House," used to refer to the king of Egypt as though it were a personal name. 16.12 *They were oppressed*, i.e. "they (namely, the Egyptians) oppressed him (namely, the Israelite people)," emphasizing the Egyptians' role. *The more they multiply*, The Hebrew, *ken yithbel*, mocks the pharaoh's words in v.10, *pen yithbel*, or "(best?) they will increase. Spread, the same Hebrew verb rendered, "grow ... rich" in Gen 30:43; Israel's proliferation in the face of Pharaoh's measures echoes Jacob's increase despite Laban's scheme! The Hebrew verb, which means lit. "to explode," sounds like a contraction of *were fruitful and prolific* (v.7), an ironic reversal of the pharaoh's plan to contain Hebrew reproduction. *Came to death*, Cf. Num. 22:3–113. More precisely, "The Egyptians made the Israelites work to the point of collapse," a practice explicitly forbidden in Lev 25:43, 46; this is repeated in v. 14. 1.14 *Madder, bitter* See 12.8. *More*, more likely "bitter" as in another text tradition; the Hebrew words are spelled the same but vocalized differently (cf. Gen 14:3). *With labor*, including digging irrigation canals (see Deut 11:10). 1.15 *Hebrew midwives*, Despite the Semitic names of the midwives, the Hebrew may be interpreted as "midwives of the Hebrews," i.e., Egyptian women serving the Israelites. Unlike the pharaoh, these heroic women are named. 1.16 *Birthstool*, a distinctly Egyptian device. In ancient Israel ethnicity was paralytic so that eliminating the males suffices to wipe out the people. 1.17 For the motif of a Canaanite acknowledging Israel's God, see 18:1–142; Gen. 14:18–20; Num. 24:1; Josh. 2:10–14; 2 Kings 5:15; Jon. 1:6. The midwives' predecease both Israel and Egypt in recognizing Israel's national God is the true one. 1.19 *Vigorous*, lit. "thrive" probably



The geographical setting of the narratives in Exodus and Numbers.

hand and as an emblem^a on your forehead that by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.²²

The Pillars of Cloud and Fire

17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was nearer; for God thought, "If the people face way they may change their minds and return to Egypt."¹⁸ So God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea.¹⁹ The Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt prepared for battle.¹⁹ And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph who had required a

^a Or as a frontlet, meaning of Heb uncertain. ^b Or Sea of Reeds

Crossing the Red Sea

14 Then the Lord said to Moses:² Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall camp opposite it, by the sea.³ Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, "They are wandering aimlessly in the land, the wilderness has closed in on them."⁴ I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, so that I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And they did so.

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the minds of Pharaoh and his officials were changed toward the people, and they said, "What have we done, letting Israel leave our service?"⁶ So he had his chariot made ready, and took his army with him; he took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of

them.⁸ The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the Israelites, who were going out boldly.⁹ The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, his chariot drivers and his army; they overtook them camped by the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

10 As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord.¹¹ They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?"¹² Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."¹³ But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall

3:18. Every male, of the pure animals (see v. 15). 13:16. Emblem, a pendant or headband, interpreted in Judaism as phylacteries; see note on 13:9. 13:17. Philistines, apparently anachronistic; the Philistines would only have begun to settle the coast of Canaan at the time of the exodus yet a Philistine presence there is taken for granted (see 15:14, cf. Gen 21:34, 26:1). Thought, lit. "said"; the apprehension anticipates 14:10-11. Change their minds, or "repent," a pun in Hebrew on lead them. From a historical perspective, the northern route out of Egypt was heavily fortified and therefore impassable. 13:18. Led... roundabout, lit. "had go around" (Hebrew wayyasev) plays on "Sea of Reeds" (yam suf); see note on 10:19. Prepared for battle, or "armed" (Judg 7:11). 13:19. See Gen 50:25. 13:20. Succoth. See note on 12:37, whose narrative is resumed here. Etham. The site is uncertain; Num 33:8 places the Etham wilderness on the far side of the water Israel will cross; see 14:2. 13:21. The Lord, depicted as a storm god (see chs. 15, 19), radiates light from within a cover of cloud (cf. 18:18-9-13). The two pillars are one (see 14:24); by day only the cloud is visible, by night only the light (cf. 24:15-17; 40:34-38). 14:1-31. Following the pattern of contrasts developed throughout the plagues (see note on 8:22), Israel, whose sons had been marked for drowning by Pharaoh (1:22), is kept alive on dry land as Egypt is dealt a death blow in the water (vv. 27-30). 14:2. Turn back. Although the Israelites seem to have reached beyond the sea (see 13:20), they are instructed to double back in order to bait and entrap the Egyptians. Pi-hahiroth, possibly a temple site in the region of Succoth (13:20). Migdol, "Tower" in Hebrew, probably a fortification against Assyria north of the Bitter Lakes built in the seventh century BCE (cf. Jer 44:1). If Baal-zephon is the

Zeus Casius temple that juts into Lake Sarbonis, the other sites too are located along the northern Sinai coast and Lake Sarbonis is the sea Baal is the Canaanite storm god; "Zaphon" is known as his home on the north. Syrian coast, probably Mount Casius. 14:3. Closed in, or "enclosed" (cf. Josh 6:1). 14:4. Hardened, "stiffened" (see note on 4:21), a strong link with the plagues narratives. Gain glory for myself, lit. "prove heavy"; see v. 18; note on 4:10. Know, See note on 5:2; cf. also Josh 4:24. 14:5. The people... fled, as if Egypt had not pressed them to leave (1:21-33); or it has dawned on the Egyptians that the Israelites had left for more than three days (5:3). 14:6. He had... made ready, lit. "he (himself) harnessed"; see also note on 14:25. Army, lit. "people" (cf. Num 21:23); Pharaoh musters his "people" to head off the fleeing Hebrew people (v. 5). With him, Hebrew imma, a wordplay on "his people" (ammo). 14:7. Officers, not the officials of v. 5, but military captains. 14:8. Hardened, see v. 4. Boldly, lit. "with hand (field) high," defiantly (Num 15:30); see Num 33:3. 14:9. In the Hebrew all Pharaoh's horses... army is placed awkwardly following camped by the sea; similar phrases read smoothly in v. 23. On the anachronistic use of cavalry, see note on 15:1. 14:10. Pharaoh. The king is in focus even though the entire army is in pursuit of v. 6. There were, there...; see note on 2:6. Advancing. In the Hebrew the verb is singular, suggesting that the Egyptian army is perceived as a single horde. In great fear. Cf. Moses' reply in v. 13. Cried out to the Lord. Cf. 2:23, where the prayer is undirected, and 5:15, where appeal is made to Pharaoh. 14:11-12. Egypt is used five times in two verses. 14:11. Cf. Num 11:18-20; 14:2-4. 14:12. The very thing, not exactly; see 5:20-21. 14:13. Deliverance, in Hebrew cognate to came to their defense in 2:17 and

never see again.¹⁴ The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.¹⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward.¹⁶ But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it; that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground."¹⁷ Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.¹⁸ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.¹⁹ The angel of God, who was going before the Israelite army, moved, and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them.²⁰ It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided.²² The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on

sawed in 14:30; it anticipates 15:2, where it is rendered *salvation*. Never see again echoes 10:28-29. 14:14 will fight anticipates the cognate warrior in 15:3. God's fighting on Israel's behalf (see Deut 1:30; 3:22; 20:4) is developed in Joshua (10:14, 42; 23:3, 10b); 14:15 it is presupposed that, beside responding to the people's complaint (vv. 13-14), Moses appealed to the Lord, as in 5:22-23. 14:16 Staff (see note on 7:8-13) and stretch out your hand (see note on 7:5) recall the plagues (e.g., 10:12-13). Divide: Splitting; the sea evokes an Israelite creation myth in which the Lord cuts through the primeval sea monster (Isa 51:9; Job 26:13). Isa 51:10 in fact compares the exodus to creation. The nature myth in which the Lord cleaves the hostile sea monster a male shared with other Near Eastern cultures; is here transformed into a historical drama in which the Lord divides an inanimate sea and slays his enemies in it. Dry ground, an allusion to a version of the creation myth in which the Lord dries up the primeval sea (Ps 74:13-15; Isa 50:2; 51:10; Nah 1:4). 14:17 Gain glory. See note on 14:4. 14:19 Angel, a divine manifestation in the cloud and fire; the Lord in v. 24; see note on 3:4. Army, lit. 'camp' here and in vv. 20, 24. 14:20 I will: it apparently the angel. The divine presence, glowing within the cloud, blocks the oncoming Egyptians; see note on 13:21; cf. Josh 24:7. On the other, the Israelite and Egyptian camps. 14:21 See

their right and on their left.²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers.²⁴ At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into panic.²⁵ He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt!"

The Pursuers Drowned

26 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and chariot drivers."²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea.²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers; the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained.²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.³⁰ Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from

note on 14:16. Strong anticipates my strength in 15:2. First term rendered dry ground in vv. 16, 22; used in Gen 7:22; Josh 3:17; 4:18. 14:23 The Hebrew dates into the sea to the verses end 14:24 The Lord's radiant face, on 14:19. Looked down: The Lord's radiant face, who recognize him (v. 25). Mesopotamian kings boasted that the mere sight of their divine auras would terrify the enemy. 14:25 Clogged, lit. 'removed' or 'littered aside'; Greek and other manuscript traditions read lit. 'the bound'; thus having the Lord mirror Pharaoh, who "binds" of "thariness" preparing his chariot in v. 6 (see note on 14:6). Difficultly, lit. 'theariness'; in v. 17 the Lord says he will "prove heavy" to Pharaoh's army (see note on 14:6). Fighting. See note on 14:14. 14:27 Normal depth, lit. 'full strength' Egyptian; is enclosed by sea, twice before and once after, as the Egyptians are enveloped by the water. 14:28 Not one remained, an echo of the plagues (see note on 10:19). 14:29 Walked. The Hebrew syntax may be better understood as "had walked"; see v. 22, whose echo here frames the episode of drowning; the frame highlights Israel's salvation. 14:30 Saved. See note on 14:13. From the Egyptians, lit. 'from Egypt's hand'; contrasting with the Lord's marvelous "hand"; rendered work in v.

the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

The Song of Moses

15 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:¹ "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea."

2 The Lord is my strength and my might,² and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

3 The Lord is a warrior, and he has thrown into the sea Pharaoh's chariots and his army; he cast into the sea his great ones, his mighty ones.

4 His picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea,⁴ his great ones, his mighty ones. The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone.

5 Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power,⁵ has thrown down Pharaoh and his army; you have thrown down Pharaoh and his army; you have thrown down Pharaoh and his army.

31:1431 The Egyptians, lit. "Egypt" referring perhaps to the wonders the Lord performed there. Believed. See note on 4:1. 15:1-19 The song of Moses proper, vv. 1b-18, written in "high" archaic Hebrew verse, extensively using parallelism, expresses Israel's trust (14:31; cf. 13:106-12). Although the song refers to the events related in ch. 14, it does not narrate them in sequence and the descriptions do not entirely match. 15:1 Moses. See note on 15:21. Israelites. Since the song is formulated in the first-person singular, perhaps Moses sings a line and the Israelites respond anaphorically. I will sing, or let me sing. The Hebrew rendered triumphed gloriously is used elsewhere of the sea's exorcism (e.g., Ps 89:9) and of human arrogance (e.g., Isa 2:12); the basic sense is "to be high," a polar contrast to the Egyptians (see v. 5:10). Horse. Egyptian reliefs and paintings of the late second millennium show horses pulling chariots, but not being ridden; Biblical texts of the eighth century BCE (e.g., 2 Kgs 11) know of Egyptians traveling on horseback. Rider, lit. "the rider." Thrown, ironically honorific with "high" in "high hand" (see note on 14:8); 15:2 The Lord, the short name "Yah," placed at the end of the clause in Hebrew, meaning that the Israelites declare that "Yah" and no other—is their God; see v. 14:18. Salvation. See note on 14:13. Praise. lit. "praise." My father's God. Cf. 3:15-

your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy; you have thrown down Pharaoh and his army; you have thrown down Pharaoh and his army; you have thrown down Pharaoh and his army.

7 In the greatness of your majesty you overthrew your adversaries; you sent out your fury; it consumed them like stubble.

8 At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up, the floods stood up in a heap, the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

9 The enemy said, "I will pursue; I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them; I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them."

10 You blew with your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11 Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?

12 You stretched out your right hand, the earth swallowed them.

16. Deadly, cognate to "fight" in (see note on 14:8. 15:3 Warrior, lit. "man of war," typical of a storm god (see notes on 9:23; 13:21); cf. Ps 24:8; Name. See 3:13-15; 6:3. 15:4 The language recalls 14:7. Red Sea. See note on 10:19. 15:5 This verse chronologically follows vv. 8-10. Floods, plural, of "the deep" (Gen. 1:2). 15:7 Majesty, in Hebrew cognate to triumphed (v. 1). The first clause of this verse forms the third line of the distinctively Canaanite "staircase" parallelism begun in v. 6; other "staircases" are vv. 11, 11b-12a. Staircases have a rhetorical, focusing effect. 15:8 The mobile is turned stationary. Nobility. Cf. Ps 18:8; cf. also Ex 14:21. Deep, lit. 1. Floods denotes "low," a different Hebrew term from that translated floods in v. 5. In Hebrew this clause alliterates. Heavily, used nearly always of water; cf. wall in 14:22, 29. Deep, rendered floods in v. 5. The sea, or "Sea," a name of the Canaanite sea god; see note on 14:16-15:9. The first five Hebrew words (through spoil) alliterate. Destroy, lit. "dispossess," an intention at cross-purposes with the Lord's (see v. 17). 15:10 Blew, a rare verb in Hebrew. Sank, a different Hebrew verb from that translated sunk in v. 4; echoing depths in v. 5. Lead. Cf. note on v. 5. Mighty, in Hebrew cognate to glorious in v. 6; 15:14. The second praise in direct address; also a "staircase" parallelism (see note on 15:7). Gods. See note on 12:12; cf. 2 Sam 7:22-23; Ps 86:8-10. Majesty, rendered glorious in v. 6; a repeat-

13. "In your steadfast love you led the people whom you redeemed, you guided them by your strength to your holy abode.
14. The peoples heard, they trembled; paangs seized the inhabitants of Philistia.
15. Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed, trembling seized the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away.
16. Terror and dread fell upon them; by the might of your arm, they became still as a stone until your people, O LORD, passed by, until the people whom you acquired passed by.
17. You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession, the place, O LORD, that you made your abode, the sanctuary, O LORD, that your hands have established.
18. The LORD will reign forever and ever."
19. When the horses of Pharaoh with his

tion enhancing coherence. *In holiness*, or "among the holy ones" (so too in Ps 68.17 and perhaps 16.24). **15.12 Stretched**. See note on 14.16. *Right hand*. See v. 6. *Earth*, probably connoting the netherworld (e.g., Eccl 3.2); Isa 14.12), whose swallow (Num 16.32) is figurative of burial; cf. Isa 5.14 and the voracious appetite of the Canaanite death god Mot (Hab 2.5). **15.13** The song turns to the Lord's guidance of Israel to its land, using pastoral language: *led, abode* (lit. "pasture") as in Ps 23.2-3. *Steadfast love*, used of covenantal as well as personal devotion. *Redeemed*. See note on 6.6. *Strength* recalls v. 2, lending coherence. *Abode*, in Hebrew cognate to *exalt* (v. 2), the land of Israel (see v. 17). **15.14-16** Anachronistic anticipation of the reaction in the east to the news of Egypt's destruction; cf. 18.1. Josh 2.9-11; but see note on 15.15. **15.14 Philistia**. See note on 13.47. **15.15** The widespread dread suggested here (cf. Josh 9.9-10) is contradicted by the succeeding narrative; neither the Edomites (Num 20.14-21) the southern Canaanites (Num 21.1) nor the Amorites (Num 21.21-23) are intimidated by Israel's Moab conquests with Midian to defeat Israel by "magic" (Num 22.2-7). The terminology *chiefs*, lit. "bulls" and *leaders* (lit. "rains") reflects ancient Canaanite usage. **15.16** Ps 105.38 attributes the same dread to the post-plague Egyptians. As a *stone*. The simile's repetition (see v. 5) links the second part of the song with the first. The Israelites passed by the peoples situated en route to Canaan (cf. Deut 29.16). *Acquired*, "Created" is more in keeping with archaic usage (e.g., Gen 14.19, 22). Deut 32.6. Ps 74.2; 78.54; 139.13; Prov 8.22).

chariots and his chariot drivers went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground.

The Song of Miriam

20 Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing.²¹ And Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea."

Bitter Water Made Sweet

22 Then Moses ordered Israel to set out from the Red Sea,²³ and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water.²⁴ When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. That is why it was called Marah.²⁵ And the people com-

^a Or: Sea of Reeds. ^b That is Bitterness.

15.17 Mountain of . . . possession, an archaic expression referring either anachronistically to Mount Zion or to hilly Canaan (e.g., Deut 3.25). *Abode*, not the same Hebrew word as that rendered *abode* in v. 13 but cognate to *established* here. *Sanctuary*, the Jerusalem temple or a holy abode in general (cf. Ps 78.54). When Israel takes possession, the land becomes Israel's holy designated place (Ps 114.2). **15.18** Proclaiming the deity king is customary in Near Eastern creation myths; cf. e.g., Deut 33.5; Ps 29.10. **15.19** This verse recapitulates and resumes the narrative in 14.27-29.

15.20 Prophet, Miriam, so called only here; cf. Num 12.1-9; see Mic 6.4. *Miriam*. See note on 2.4. *Aaron's sister*. See note on 6.23; she conspires with Aaron in Num 12.1. *Tambourine*. Archaeological finds depict a hand drum without jingles. *Dancing*, a form of (not only female) religious praise; e.g., 32.19; Judg 21.21; 2 Sam 6.5; Ps 149.3; 150.4. **15.21** The victory song typically belongs to women (see Judg 11.34; 1 Sam 18.6-7). Miriam and her cohort may in an earlier tradition have initiated the song; note the exhortation sing in contrast to "let me sing" in v. 1, but in the present context the women answer the men. **15.22-27** In parallel episodes in Numbers, Israel is punished for its complaints. **15.22 Shur**, the site of an oasis (see Gen 16.7), located between the Negeb and Egypt (Gen 20.1). **15.23 Marah**, often identified with Hawwarah, the site of a bitter spring down the eastern coast of the Gulf of Suez. Alternatively, a site along the heavily saline Bitter Lakes. **15.24 Complained**, the key verb in virtually all the complaint episodes. **15.25 Showed**, un-

plained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"²⁵ He cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood;²⁶ he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the LORD made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test.²⁶ He said, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heads you."

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they camped there by the water.

Bread from Heaven

16 The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim, and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt.² The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.³ The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger!"

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each

usual usage of "to instruct" ("teach" in Deut 33.10); punning on the soundlike "Marah" and on *statute*, "instruction." The reference of *statute . . . ordinance* is unclear; see 16.4. *He put them to the test*. The Hebrew has the ambiguous "He put him to the test"; Israel may be testing God's reliability too (cf. 17.2). **15.26 Diseases**, not necessarily the plagues (Deut 7.15). *Heads*, used of purifying water in a similar miracle tale ("made . . . wholesome" in 2 Kings 2.21-22); making the analogy plain: I can cure you as I cured the water—if you obey me. **15.27 Elim**, often identified with Wadi Gharaudel, south of Hawwarah (see note on 15.23). The round numbers set a legendary tone.

16.1-36 In the parallel episode in Num 11, God produces the quail only after the manna fails to suffice. **16.1 The whole . . . came**, lit. "They set out from Elim, and the whole congregation came," an irregular variant on the typical travel formula (see Num 33). *Sin*, of uncertain identification, similar to *Sinai*. See 12.6, 17-18, and this is the seventh stop (see 12.37;

day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt,⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?"⁸ And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD."

9 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.'¹⁰ And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.¹¹ The LORD spoke to Moses and said, 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God."

^a Or a tree. ^b Heb. he.

13.20; 14.9; 15.22, 23; 27 and the third complaint (see 14.11; 15.24). *Departed*, the theme word "exodus" (see note on 3.10). **16.2 Aaron**. In 15.24 the people complained against Moses alone. In the wilderness, supernatural information, suggesting perhaps that the wilderness is a factor (see v. 3). **16.3 Cf. 14.11**; Num 20.3-5. **16.4 Rain**. Cf. the hail the Lord "rained down" on Egypt (rendered *cause . . . to fall* in 9.18). *Test*. Cf. 15.25-26; Deut 8.16. *Instruction*, Hebrew *torah*; see note on 15.25. **16.5 Prepare**, in the sense of "set aside" (e.g., 23.20; Josh 4.3) or "measure" ("calculate" in Deut 19.3) as in v. 18. *Twice as much*, so that one portion can be saved for the sabbath, on which gathering is forbidden (Num 15.32-36); see vv. 22-30. **16.6-7** There is no mention of quail, as in v. 13. *Know*. See note on 5.2; cf. v. 12. *Glory*, the divine aura (e.g., v. 10; 24.16; 33.18-23; 40.34-35; see notes on 13.21, 14.24), lit. "heaviness" (see note on 4.10). *We*, an unusual Hebrew form, repeated in v. 8. **16.8 Meat**, quail (v. 13). *Bread*, manna (vv. 13-15). **16.9 To the LORD**, lit. "before the LORD," an anachronistic reference to the tabernacle; cf. vv. 33-34. **16.10** Cf. Num 16.42. **16.12 Twilight** evokes Passover (12.6). *Know*. See v. 6; note on 5.2.

not caught, the owner of the house shall be brought before God,^a to determine whether or not the owner had laid hands on the neighbor's goods.

9 In any case of disputed ownership involving ox, donkey, sheep, clothing, or any other loss, of which one party says, "This is mine," the case of both parties shall come before God; the one whom God condemns^b shall pay double to the other.

10 When someone delivers to another a donkey, ox, sheep, or any other animal for safekeeping, and it dies or is injured or is caught off, without anyone seeing it, if an oath before the Lord shall decide between the two of them that the one has not laid hands on the property of the other, the owner shall accept the oath, and no restitution shall be made. 12 But if it was stolen, restitution shall be made to its owner. 13 If it was mangled by beasts, let it be brought as evidence; restitution shall not be made for the mangled remains.

14 When someone borrows an animal from another and it is injured or dies, the owner not being present, full restitution shall be made. 15 If the owner was present, there shall be no restitution; if it was fired, only the hiring fee is due.

^a Double, as in v. 4, 22.8. Be brought, rather, "appeach." Not, an oracle (see note on 21.6). To determine, in the Hebrew; rather, the householder swears (the words rendered whether or not are an oath formula). He did not lay a hand . . . Goods, meaning property as in v. 11, not goods as in x. 7:22.9. God. See note on 22.8; cf. 1 Kings 8:31-32; *Chadems*, or "de-clares to be in the wrong" (as in Deut 25.1). Double, as in v. 4. The Code of Hammurabi condemns the culprit to death. 22.10 Carried off, Cf. Job 14.4-17. 22.11 Before the Lord, or "taking" the Lord's (name)! (see note on 21.6); cf. 1 Kings 2.43. That the oath formula (see note on 22.8), taken by the safekeeper. No restitution shall be made, "(one) does not pay" restitution plus fine (see v. 9). 22.12 Restitution shall be made, because the safekeeper's negligence, spelled out in Hammurabi's law, is assumed. 22.13 Evidence. Cf. 1 Sam 17.34-35; Am 3.12. *Restitutio*. Cf. 1 Sam 31.39. Jacob goes beyond the law. 22.14 An animal, not in the Hebrew; any borrowed property may be meant. 22.15 If the owner was present, the owner could have prevented a mishap as well as the borrower; the object or animal. The hiring fee is due because the renter paid for a sound implement or animal. 22.16 A virgin, a young woman. Is not more precisely "has never been." Bride-price. Cf. Gen 24.12; 1 Sam 18.25; Deut 22.29 specifies 50 shekels. Cf. Deut 22.23-27 (rape).

Social and Religious Laws

16 When a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to be married, and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. 17 But if her father refuses to give her to him, he shall pay an amount equal to the bride-price for virgins.

18 You shall not permit a female sorcerer to live.

19 Whoever lies with an animal shall be put to death.

20 Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the Lord alone, shall be devoted to destruction.

21 You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. 22 You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. 23 If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry; 24 my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children orphans.

25 If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.

^a Or before the judges. ^b Or the judges condemn. 22.11 If her father refuses, Deut 22.29 excludes the circumstance so that the girl's marriage is guaranteed. For virgins. Cf. the legal principle implied in (see note on) 22.5. 22.18-22 These laws are formulated apodictically (you shall not) like the Ten Commandments. 22.18 Female sorcerer, from the Hebrew for "cast a spell," angled out perhaps for her popularity (cf. 1 Sam 28; Ezek 13.17-23); for the popularity of sorcery generally, see, e.g., 2 Kings 23.24; Isa 3.2-3. The Torah abominates any form of divine manipulation other than a direct approach to the Lord; cf. Lev 19.26; Deut 27.12; 22.20 Devoted to destruction, placed under ban; see Deut 13.12-17; cf. Lev 27.28-29; Josh 6.21; 7; Judg 21.5-11; 1 Sam 15.1-9. 22.21 Oppress. See 1.11-12. *Orphan*. Protecting the "fatherless" along with the indigent widow is an express duty of ancient Near Eastern monarchs as well as the Lord (e.g., Deut 10.18; Ps 68.5); cf. e.g., Deut 24.17; Isa 1.17; Jer 7.6; 22.3; Zech 7.10. 22.23 Orphan. See 3.7. 22.24 Sorcer, in war (cf. Isa 9.14-17). Wives. Men are addressed (see note on 19.15). The grain poetic justice underscores the idea that Israel was liberated for the purpose of establishing a just society. 22.25 People, Israel; Cf. Lev 25.36-37; Deut 23.19-20; Ps 15.5; Prov 28.8; Ezek 18.8; 33.17. 22.26-27 Cf. Deut 24.6, 10-13; Ezek 18.12, 16, 33.15. 22.26 Clod. Cf. Am 2.8; An Israelite letter from the

them. 26 If you take your neighbor's cloak in pawn, you shall restore it before the sun goes down; 27 for it may be your neighbor's only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And if your neighbor cries out to me, I will listen; for I am compassionate.

28 You shall not revile God, or curse a leader of your people.

29 You shall not delay to make offerings from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses.

The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. 30 You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall remain with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me. 31 You shall be people consecrated to me; therefore you shall not eat any meat that is mangled by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

Justice for All

23 You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as a malicious witness. 2 You shall not follow a majority in wrongdoing; when you bear witness in a lawsuit, you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice; 3 nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit.

4 When you come upon your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you shall bring it back.

5 When, you, see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you

seventh century BCE complains that a laborer's garment was seized for unsatisfactory work. 22.27 For cover, lit. "for it is his only covering," it is his cloak for his skin? Cf. Job 22.6; 24.7. *Compassionate* anticipates 34.6 (tendered *graciously* there). 22.28 Revile, rather "curse," as in Lev 24.11-16; 23; cf. 1 Kings 21.13; Job 29-10; Isa 8.21. *Leader*. See note on 16.22; cf. 2 Sam 16-13. Quoted in Acts 23.5. 22.29 Offerings, added in translation; inferred from such passages as Num 18.11-12, 26-30; Deut 26.1-13; the juxtaposition with the firstborn law suggests first fruits (23.19) are meant, but tribes (Num 18.21-32; Deut 14.22-29) too may be intended. *Firstborn*. See note on 13.1-2.

22.30 On the eighth day, following a seven-day period for overcoming the ritual pollution that accompanies birth (Lev 12.2-8); see Lev 22.27; cf. Ex 29.35-37.

22.31 Consecrated, or "who are holy," as in Lev 19.2, a similar context. *Mangled*. See note on 21.28.

23.1 False. Cf. (and see note on) 20.16; Lev 19.16; Deut 5.20. *Multitudes*. See Ps 27.12; 35.11. The penalty would seem to be as in Deut 19.18-19 (and in the Code of Hammurabi). 23.3 Partial. See Deut 16.19. 20

would hold back from setting it free, you must help to set it free.

6 You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in their lawsuits. 7 Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and those in the right, for I will not acquit the guilty. 8 You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.

9 You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

Sabbatical Year and Sabbath

10 For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; 11 but the seventh year you shall let it rest and the fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild animals may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.

12 Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief, and your homeborn slave and the resident alien may be refreshed. 13 Be attentive to all that I have said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods, do not let them be heard from your lips.

The Annual Festivals

14 Three times in the year you shall hold a festival for me. 15 You shall observe the festival of

^a Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

the poor, in light of Lev 19.15; Deut 1.17, and esp. v. 6 below; "(even) to the poor," for whom sympathy is natural (for the style see v. 4). 23.4 Your enemy's, "(even) your enemy's" (see note on 23.3); anyone's; cf. Deut 22.1-3. On "overcoming hatred," cf. Lev 19.17-18.

23.5 One who hates, a poetic synonym of enemy (e.g., Ps 21.8). Setting it free, or "unloading it"; cf. Deut 22.4, where loading of "lifting up," a more demanding activity, is called for. 23.6-9 These verses resume vv. 1-3 and address judges. 23.6 See note on 23.3; cf. Ex 82.3-4; Isa 10.2; Jer 5.28; Am 2.6-7; 5.12. 23.7 False charge. Cf. v. 1. Kill by erroneous condemnation; cf. Ex 94.6-7. *Acquit*, "declare in the right" (as in Deut 25.1); cf. Ex 34.7. 23.8 See Deut 1.17; 16.19; 27.25; cf. Ps 26.9-10; Prov 17.23; Isa 1.23; 5.23; Ezek 22.12; Mic 3.11.

23.9 See 22.21; Introduction. 23.10-11 Cf. the cultic emphasis of Lev 25.1-7, 20-22 and the socioeconomic emphasis of Deut 15. 23.12 Refreshed, like the Lord after creation (31.17). See note on 20.8-11; cf. the motive in 23.11; Deut 5.14-15, 23.13 *Involve* may be taken to elaborate 20.3; cf. Josh 23.7; Hos 2.17; Zech 13.2. The repetitive, impressionistic style called "parallelism" brings the section to closure. 23.14-17 On the

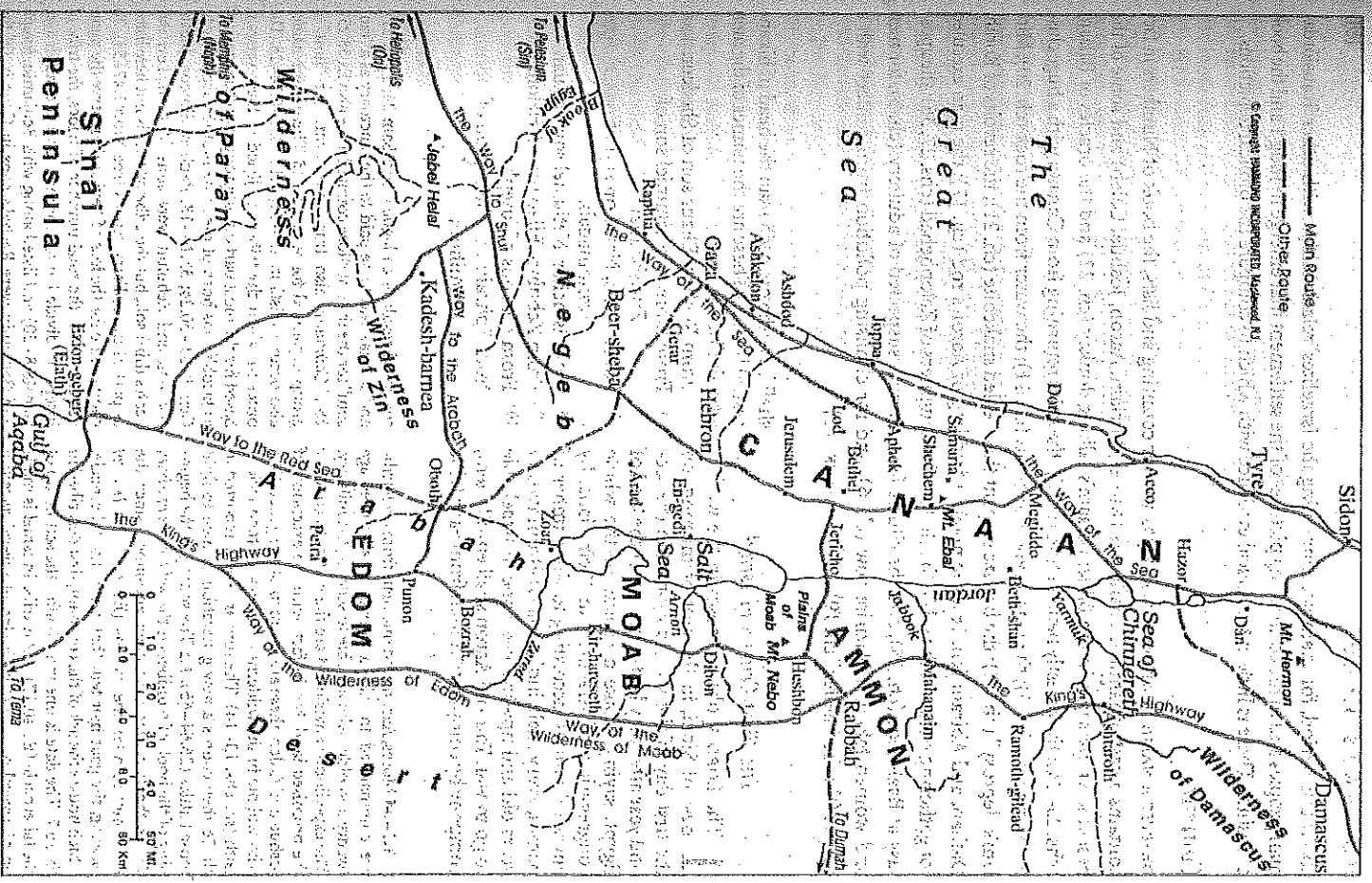
NUMBERS

NUMBERS IS THE FOURTH BOOK of the Bible and therefore the fourth in the Pentateuch ("five scrolls"), or Torah, as the first five books are known collectively. Numbers takes its English name from *Arithmoi*, the title of the book in the ancient Greek translation called the Septuagint, begun in the third century BCE. In Hebrew the book is called *Bemidbar*, "In the wilderness," a word in the first verse of the book and perhaps a more appropriate title given its contents. The book of Numbers begins with the Israelites encamped in the wilderness of Sinai and spans the forty years of the wilderness wanderings. It ends with the people on the east side of the Jordan River, in the "plains of Moab," poised for the conquest of Canaan. Lack of faith (chs. 13-14) leads to the almost complete destruction of the exodus generation, which is to be replaced by a new generation born in the wilderness and looking forward to Canaan rather than backward to Egypt.

Structure and Sources

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK follows the geographical sequence of the account as well as the change in generations over the forty years of wandering. Geographically, Numbers can be divided into three fairly neat sections: in the wilderness of Sinai, 1.1-10.10; the march through the wilderness to Transjordan, 10.11-22.1; and in the plains of Moab, 22.2-36.13. The book is also, however, divided into two sections by the two military censuses in chs. 1 and 26, which represent the doubting exodus generation and the new generation that takes its place. These two censuses, as well as several other counting episodes, have led to the impression that "numbers" are the principal topic of the book; hence its title in the Septuagint.

Modern scholars believe that the material in the Pentateuch, and therefore in the book of Numbers, was brought together from several sources. It is useful to consider two broad types of sources evident in the book of Numbers: material called "Priestly," because of its interest in cultic matters pertaining to religious ritual and genealogy; and material drawn from "old epic" sources, which has a lexical and stylistic consistency with similar material elsewhere in the Pentateuch (see Introduction to Genesis). Both Priestly and epic sections preserve ancient traditions, but most modern scholars suggest that the history of the Israelites before their settlement in Canaan was more complicated than the picture in Numbers of the twelve-tribe march from the exodus to the conquest. The biblical traditions themselves contain some ambiguity



The major places and routes that figure in the narratives of Israel's migration into Canaan (Numbers, Joshua, and Judges).

about this period, for example, concerning the Israelites' relationships with other Transjordanian peoples and in the contrasting pictures of the settlement that emerge in Judg 1 and the book of Joshua. There is little extrabiblical evidence with which to compare the biblical depictions.

Content

DESPITE A NAME THAT INDICATES a passion for counting and lists, the book of Numbers in fact contains a cast of familiar characters (Moses, Miriam, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb) and some of the best-known passages in the Bible: Balaam's talking donkey (ch. 22) and the oracles of Balaam (chs. 23-24); the priestly benediction (ch. 6); the spies returning from Canaan with a huge cluster of grapes (ch. 13); the manna and the quails (ch. 11); the water from the rock (ch. 20); Miriam's "leprosy" (ch. 12); the bronze serpent that healed snakebite (ch. 21); the revolts of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (ch. 16); the magical budding of Aaron's rod (ch. 17); the man executed for gathering sticks on the sabbath (ch. 15); the daughters of Zelophehad (chs. 27, 36); the apostasy at Baal-peor (ch. 25); and the rituals for a woman suspected of adultery (ch. 5), for men and women taking a Nazirite vow (ch. 6), and for cleansing pollution from contact with a corpse (the "red heifer," ch. 19). [JO ANN HACKERT]

The First Census of Israel

1 The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: ²Take a census of the whole congregation of Israelites, in their clans, by ancestral houses, according to the number of names, every male individually, ³from twenty years old and upward, everyone in Israel able to go to war. You and Aaron shall enroll them, company by company. ⁴A man from each tribe

shall be with you, each man the head of his ancestral house. ⁵These are the names of the men who shall assist you:

- From Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur.
- From Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.
- From Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab.
- From Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar.
- From Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon.
- From the sons of Joseph:
 - from Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud;

1.1-5.4 Moses, Aaron, and one man from each tribe are commanded to take a census of all males age twenty and older who are able to serve in the military. The expeditions envisioned are the battles to conquer the promised land, but in fact, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, these are the men of the generation who will die in the wilderness because of their lack of faith (see chs. 13-14). The similar census reported in ch. 26 then counts a new generation of men to fight those battles (26.64-65). **1.1** The setting of the beginning of the book of Numbers is the wilderness of Sinai, where the Israelites have been encamped since the third month after the exodus (Ex 19.1-2). *Tent of meeting*, the goat-hair tent that covers the tabernacle, which houses the ark of the covenant, first described in Ex 26.7. The date is one month after the setting up of the tabernacle (Ex 40.17). **1.2** A tribe in Israel is made up of several *clans* and each clan of several *ancestral houses*. Each individual male counted is to be identified by ancestral house and clan within each tribe. **1.3** Ex 30.11-12 reports the belief that a military cen-

sus could result in a plague (see 2 Sam 24; 1 Chr 21), and so a tax was to be paid to the sanctuary as a "ransom" for the lives of those counted. (See also Ex 38.25-26.) *Company*, also translated "army" or "host," a group organized for war. **1.5-15** These same names also occur in lists in 2.3-31; 7.12-83; 10.14-28. The order in which the tribes are listed in these verses is based for the most part on subgroupings characterized as Jacob's sons born of the same mother, according to Gen 29.31-30.24; 35.16-18. Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were the sons of Leah. Levi was Leah's third son, but the tribe of Levi is not here listed as part of the military census (see Num 1.47-54). To compensate for the loss of Levi and preserve the number twelve for the total number of tribes, the tribe of Joseph is divided into Ephraim and Manasseh (see Gen 48.8-20) and listed along with Benjamin. Joseph and Benjamin were Rachel's sons in Genesis. Of the final four tribes, Dan and Naphtali were the sons of Rachel's maid Bilhah, and Gad and Asher were the sons of Leah's maid Zilpah. (Naphtali and Asher have

from Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

- ¹¹ From Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni.
- ¹² From Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.
- ¹³ From Asher, Pagiel son of Ochran.
- ¹⁴ From Gad, Elisaph son of Deuel.
- ¹⁵ From Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan.

¹⁶These were the ones chosen from the congregation, the leaders of their ancestral tribes, the heads of the divisions of Israel.

¹⁷Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by name, ¹⁸and on the first day of the second month they assembled the whole congregation together. They registered themselves in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names from twenty years old and upward, individually, ¹⁹as the Lord commanded Moses. So he enrolled them in the wilderness of Sinai.

²⁰The descendants of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, individually, every male from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ²¹those enrolled of the tribe of Reuben were forty-six thousand five hundred.

²²The descendants of Simeon, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, individually, every male from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ²³those enrolled of the tribe of Simeon were fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

²⁴The descendants of Gad, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ²⁵those enrolled of the tribe of Gad were forty-five thousand six hundred fifty.

²⁶The descendants of Judah, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ²⁷those enrolled of the tribe of Judah were seventy-four thousand six hundred.

²⁸The descendants of Issachar, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses,

according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ²⁹those enrolled of the tribe of Issachar were fifty-four thousand four hundred.

³⁰The descendants of Zebulun, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ³¹those enrolled of the tribe of Zebulun were fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

³²The descendants of Joseph, namely, the descendants of Ephraim, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ³³those enrolled of the tribe of Ephraim were forty thousand five hundred.

³⁴The descendants of Manasseh, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ³⁵those enrolled of the tribe of Manasseh were thirty-two thousand two hundred.

³⁶The descendants of Benjamin, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ³⁷those enrolled of the tribe of Benjamin were thirty-five thousand four hundred.

³⁸The descendants of Dan, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ³⁹those enrolled of the tribe of Dan were sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

⁴⁰The descendants of Asher, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ⁴¹those enrolled of the tribe of Asher were forty-one thousand five hundred.

⁴²The descendants of Naphtali, their lineage, in their clans, by their ancestral houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war: ⁴³those enrolled of the tribe of

switched positions in the list here.) **1.17-4.6** The tribes are listed in the same order as in vv. 5-15, except that Gad has shifted position. Gad occupies the third slot in this list, right after Reuben and Simeon. This shift seems to be based on Gad's position in the arrange-

ment of tribes in the camp described in ch. 2. There Gad is joined with Simeon and Reuben on the south side (see 2.10-16). The total of 603,550 military men (v. 46) has seemed unrealistically high to commentators, as has the similar number, 601,730, in the second

Naphthali were fifty-three thousand four hundred.

44 These are those who were enrolled, whom Moses and Aaron enrolled with the help of the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each representing his ancestral house. 45 So the whole number of the Israelites by their ancestral houses, from twenty years old and upward, everyone able to go to war in Israel— 46 their whole number was six hundred three thousand five hundred fifty. 47 The Levites, however, were not numbered by their ancestral tribe along with them.

48 The Lord had said to Moses: 49 Only the tribe of Levi you shall not enroll, and you shall not take a census of them with the other Israelites. 50 Rather you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the covenant, and over all its equipment, and over all that belongs to it; they are to carry the tabernacle and all its equipment, and they shall tend it, and shall camp around the tabernacle. 51 When the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down, and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And any outsider who comes near shall be put to death. 52 The other Israelites shall camp in their respective regimental camps, by companies; 53 but the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the covenant, that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the Israelites; and the Levites shall perform the guard duty of the tabernacle of the covenant. 54 The Israelites

census in ch. 26 (v. 51). 1:47-54 The tribe of Levi is to be considered separately from the "mandated" tribes and dedicated entirely to service at the tabernacle (see also, e.g., Deut 10:8-9; 12:12; Josh 13:14, 33). Levi is left out of the tribal list in the poem in Judg 5: 1, 50, 53. The tabernacle is called "tabernacle of the covenant" elsewhere only in Ex 38:21; Num 10:11; 1:51. Outside, here anyone who is not a Levite (see also 3:10, 38, 18:7; cf. 16:40). 1:52 The word translated *regimental* probably originally referred to a standard or banner that was used to mark a military unit and then was extended to denote the unit itself, as here (cf. the translation, *standard*, of the same word in 10:14, 18, 22, 25). In fifth-century BCE texts from the Jewish colony at Elephantine in Egypt, this word can even represent a larger legal entity that includes the families of military men. 1:53 The wrath of the Lord would be brought on by any nonlevitical trespasser who came into contact with the tabernacle. The Levites are literally its guards. 2:1-34 The tabernacle within the tent of meeting stands at the center of the camp in this description (cf. Ex 33:7-11, where the tent is set up outside the camp). At each of the cardinal points around the tent are three

elites did so; they did just as the Lord commanded Moses.

The Order of Encampment and Marching

2 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 3 The Israelites shall camp, each in their respective regiments, under ensigns by their ancestral houses; they shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side. 4 Those to camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the regimental encampment of Judah by companies. The leader of the people of Judah shall be Nahshon son of Amminadab. 4 with a company as enrolled of seventy-four thousand six hundred. 5 Those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar. The leader of the Issacharites shall be Nethanel son of Zui. 6 with a company as enrolled of fifty-four thousand four hundred. 7 Then the tribe of Zebulun. The leader of the Zebulunites shall be Eliab son of Helon. 8 with a company as enrolled of fifty-seven thousand four hundred. 9 The total enrollment of the camp of Judah, by companies, is one hundred eighty-six thousand four hundred. They shall set out first on the march.

10 On the south side shall be the regimental encampment of Reuben by companies. The leader of the Reubenites shall be Elizur son of Shedeur. 11 with a company as enrolled of forty-six thousand five hundred. 12 And those

a Or ready, or testimony; Heb *elohim*.

tribes, separated from the tent by Levites (v. 17; 1:52-53). Each group of three is arranged in a camp named for the dominant tribe of the three. The order in which they camp is also the order in which they march, the tribes on the east leading the march. The sequence in which the tribes are named in this chapter is based on the genealogically organized list in 1:5-15 with minor changes (see vv. 3-9, 10-16). The leaders are those in the lists in 1:5-15; 7:12-8:8; 10:14-28; 2:2. *Ensigns* or "signs," here suggests that each ancestral house had its own symbol that could be displayed. 2:3-9 Judah is the preeminent tribe in this scheme; it is the first tribe listed on the east side of the tabernacle and so leads the march. Judah takes with it Issachar and Zebulun from the list in ch. 1 to make up the camp of Judah (v. 9). 2:10-16 The tribes on the south side are next, headed by Reuben, the traditional firstborn. Since Judah is now at the head of the entire list, the camp of Gad (v. 10) includes Gad in the position Judah held in the list in ch. 1. Gad is the tribe to be moved up either because Reuben and Gad are associated as Transjordanian tribes or because the earlier tribes have all been "Levi" tribes (see 1:5-15) and Gad is the firstborn of

to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon. The leader of the Simeonites shall be Shimon son of Zurishaddai. 13 with a company as enrolled of fifty-nine thousand three hundred. 14 Then the tribe of Gad. The leader of the Gadites shall be Eliasaph son of Reuel. 15 with a company as enrolled of forty-five thousand six hundred fifty. 16 The total enrollment of the camp of Reuben, by companies, is one hundred fifty-one thousand four hundred fifty. They shall set out second.

17 The tent of meeting, with the camp of the Levites, shall set out in the center of the camp; they shall set out just as they camp, each in position, by their regiments. 18 On the west side shall be the regimental encampment of Ephraim by companies. The leader of the people of Ephraim shall be Elishama son of Amminudai. 19 with a company as enrolled of forty thousand five hundred. 20 Next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh. The leader of the people of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. 21 with a company as enrolled of thirty-two thousand two hundred. 22 Then the tribe of Benjamin. The leader of the Benjaminites shall be Abidan son of Gideon. 23 with a company as enrolled of thirty-five thousand four hundred. 24 The total enrollment of the camp of Ephraim, by companies, is one hundred eight thousand one hundred. They shall set out third on the march.

25 On the north side shall be the regimental encampment of Dan by companies. The leader of the Danites shall be Ahizezer son of Ammishaddai. 26 with a company as enrolled of sixty-two thousand seven hundred. 27 Those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher. The leader of the Asherites shall be Pagi son of Ochran. 28 with a company as enrolled of forty-one thousand five hundred. 29 Then the tribe of Naphthali. The leader of the

Levi's maid Zilpah (Gen 30:9-11). 2:14 For *Reuel*, read "Dewel." following 1:14 and several ancient manuscripts. 2:18-24 Ephraim leads the western camp because in Genesis he became the dominant son of Jacob's favorite son, Joseph. (Gen 48:13-20). 2:25-31 Dan is first in the northern camp because he was the eldest son born to a concubine of Jacob (Bilhah, Gen 30:1-6). 2:33 See 1:48-49. 3:1-31 The duties, arrangement, and numbers of the tribe of Levi; 3:1 Aaron is listed before Moses here because Aaron is the firstborn. This verse is set at Mount Sinai (cf. 1:1, 3:14), when Nadab and Abihu

Naphthalites shall be Ahira son of Enan, 30 with a company as enrolled of fifty-three thousand four hundred. 31 The total enrollment of the camp of Dan is one hundred fifty-seven thousand six hundred. They shall set out last, by companies.

32 This was the enrollment of the Israelites by their ancestral houses; the total enrollment in the camps by their companies was six hundred three thousand five hundred fifty. 33 Just as the Lord had commanded Moses, the Levites were not enrolled among the other Israelites.

34 The Israelites did just as the Lord had commanded Moses. They camped by regiments, and they set out the same way, everyone by clans, according to ancestral houses.

The Sons of Aaron

3 This is the lineage of Aaron and Moses at the time when the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. 2 These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Itamar; 3 these are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he ordained to minister as priests. 4 Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord when they offered unholy fire before the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children. Eleazar and Itamar served as priests in the lifetime of their father Aaron.

The Duties of the Levites

5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, so that they may assist him. 7 They shall perform duties for him and for the whole congregation in front of the tent of meeting, doing service at the furnishings; 8 they shall be in charge of all the furnishings

a Compare verses 9, 16, 24; Heb by their regiments.

were alive (see v. 4). In reverting to Mount Sinai for a few verses, the narrative implies that the information in vv. 5-13 was already understood at the time the rest of the activity in this chapter takes place. 3:2 See also Ex 6:23, 3:3. He, it was Moses who ordained the sons of Aaron (Lev 8:30; see also Ex 29:21; 30:30, 40:12-15; cf. Lev 8:12). 3:4 See Lev 10:1-2; 3:5-10 A distinction is made between Aaron and his descendants (the anointed priests) and the rest of the tribe of Levi, to which both Aaron and Moses belong. The rest of the Levites will assist (v. 6) Aaron and his descendants. 3:7-8 One of the duties of the Levites is to guard the

of the tent of meeting, and attend to the duties for the Israelites as they do service at the tabernacle.⁹ You shall give the Levites to Aaron and his descendants; they are unreservedly given to him from among the Israelites.¹⁰ But you shall make a register of Aaron and his descendants; it is they who shall attend to the priest-hood; and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death.¹¹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:¹² I hereby accept the Levites from among the Israelites as substitutes for all the firstborn that open the womb among the Israelites. The Levites shall be mine,¹³ for all the firstborn are mine; when I killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel, both human and animal; they shall be mine, I am the Lord.

A Census of the Levites

14 Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying:¹⁵ Enroll the Levites by ancestral houses and by clans. You shall enroll every male from a month old and upward.¹⁶ Moses enrolled them according to the word of the Lord; as he was commanded.¹⁷ The following were the sons of Levi, by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.¹⁸ These are the names of the sons of Gershon, by their clans: Ashbi and Shimei.¹⁹ The sons of Kohath, by their clans: Amram,

tabernacle from intrusion.³ Instead of to him, servants have to me, as in 8.16; see also 3.12; 18.6, 3.10. *Outside*, see 1.51, 3.14-13, 8.16-18, 3.12. Earlier laws had required that human firstborn (males) be usually specified, be consecrated, to the Lord (to a life of religious service), redeemed, or perhaps even sacrificed, presumably to ensure continued fertility (see Ex 13.2, 13.15; 22.29b-30; 34.19-20; see also Num 18.15). 18 to 31.15 (31.15-31.15) 31.15-31.15

3.14-39 Census of the Levites and recording of their duties. 3.14 This verse returns to the narrative's present time and place, in the wilderness of Sinai, 3.15-16 Cf. 1.47-49. The prohibition apparently does not extend to a separate census of the Levites. 3.15 By ancestral houses and by clans. Note the reverse order in 1.2 and throughout ch. 3. Unlike the earlier military census, which counted males twenty and older, this census of the Levites counts every male from a month old and upward, because they will be substitutes for Israel's firstborn males a month old and upward (vv. 40-41). One month seems to be the age at which personhood was believed to begin; see Lev 22.6, 3.17-20. See Gen 46.11; Ex 6.16-19; 3.21-39. The Levitical clans are to encamp between the tabernacle and the Israelites on three sides of the tabernacle and are given the respon-

Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.²⁰ The sons of Merari, by their clans: Mahli and Manisai. These are the clans of the Levites, by their ancestral houses.²¹ To Gershon belonged the clan of the Libnites and the clan of the Shimmites; these were the clans of the Gershonites.²² Their enrollment counted all the males from a month old and upward; was seven thousand five hundred.²³ To Kohath belonged the clan of the Amramites, the clan of the Izharites, the clan of the Hebronites, and the clan of the Uzzielites; these are the clans of the Kohathites.²⁴ Counting all the males from a month old and upward, there were eight thousand six hundred attending to the duties of the sanctuary.²⁵ The clans of the Kohathites were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle.²⁶ With Elizaphan son of Uzziel as head of the ancestral house of the clans of the Kohathites.²⁷ Their respon-

sibility to protect and to transport the tabernacle and its accessories, including the tent of meeting. 3.21-26 The first Levitical clan discussed is the Gershonites (see v. 17, 3.23, 25-26). The Gershonites encamp on the west side of the tabernacle and have custody over the accessories made of fabric (see also 4.25-26). The tabernacle, the innermost tent housing the ark, made of blue (or violet) purple and crimson linen curtains with a cherubim design (Ex 26.6), the tent of meeting made of goat-hair curtains (Ex 26.7), and its ram-skin and leather covering (Ex 26.14), the linen screen for the entrance to the tent (Ex 26.36), the linen hangings for the court surrounding the tabernacle (Ex 27.9), and the linen screen for the entrance to the court (Ex 27.16) and its cords (Ex 39.40). 3.27-32 Kohathites. See v. 17, 3.28. Eight thousand six hundred, which accords with the total of twenty-two thousand reported in 39. The difference between the Hebrew words for "six" and "three" is only one consonant, 3.29, 31. The Kohathites camp on the south side of the tabernacle and have custody over the most sacred items: the ark itself (Ex 25.10-22) and its immediate surroundings—the table that holds the bread of the Presence (Ex 25.23-30; 35.13; 39.36), the lampstand (Ex 25.31-40), the ro-

bultry was to be the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary with which the priests minister, and the screen—all the service pertaining to these.²⁸ Eleazar son of Aaron the priest was to be chief over the leaders of the Levites, and to have oversight of those who had charge of the sanctuary.²⁹ To Merari belonged the clan of the Mahalites and the clan of the Mushites; these are the clans of Merari.³⁰ Their enrollment, counting all the males from a month old and upward, was six thousand two hundred.³¹ The head of the ancestral house of the clans of Merari was Zuniel son of Abihai; they were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle.³² The responsibility assigned to the sons of Merari was to be the frames of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the bases, and all their accessories—all the service pertaining to these.³³ Also the pillars of the court all around, with their bases and pegs and cords.³⁴ The

joined clans, one covered with bronze in the court (Ex 27.1-8) and one covered with gold for burning incense (Ex 30.1-10); the vessels of the sanctuary, also translated "utensils" (e.g., Ex 27.19, 30.17-21, 26-29; 1.16, 38.3), enumerated in Num. 4.5-15; and the screen (not one of the screens in vv. 25-26, but rather the curtain that sets off the holiest portion of the tabernacle, otherwise always called the "curtain," the "screening curtain," the "curtain for the screen," or the "curtain for screening," e.g., Ex 26.31-35; 36.12, 39.34; 40.21). 3.32 Eleazar (see also 4.16). The Aaron and Moses, is a Kohathite (Ex 6.16, 18, 20; 23). 3.33-37 Merarites. See v. 17, 3.39-36. The Merarites camp on the north side of the tabernacle and have custody over the supporting structure of the tabernacle, the wooden frames, the pillars, silver bases, and accessories (Ex 26.15-30; 35.10-11; 39.33; 40.18; see also Num 4.31), and of the surrounding court, its wooden pillars, its bronze bases and pegs, and its cords (Ex 27.10-19; 35.17-18; 39.40). 3.38 The preeminent position to the east of the tabernacle was taken by Moses, Aaron, and the descendants of Aaron, set apart from

The Redemption of the Firstborn
40 Then the Lord said to Moses: Enroll all the firstborn males of the Israelites from a month old and upward, and count their names.⁴¹ But you shall accept the Levites for me—I am the Lord—as substitutes for all the firstborn among the Israelites; and the livestock of the Levites as substitutes for all the firstborn among the Israelites.⁴² Moses enrolled all the firstborn among the Israelites, as the Lord commanded him.⁴³ The total enrollment of all the firstborn males from a month old and upward, counting the number of names, was twenty-two thousand two hundred seventy-three.⁴⁴ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:⁴⁵ Accept the Levites as substitutes for all the firstborn among the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites as substitutes for their livestock; and the Levites shall be mine. I am the Lord.⁴⁶ As the price of redemption of the two hundred seventy-three of the firstborn of the Israelites, over and above the number of the Levites, you shall accept five shekels apiece, reckoning by the shekel of the sanctuary, a shekel of twenty gerahs.⁴⁷ Give to Aaron and his sons the money by which the excess number of them is redeemed.⁴⁸ So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those redeemed by the Levites.⁴⁹ From the firstborn of the Israelites he took the money, one thousand three hundred sixty-six shekels, reckoned by the shekel of the

the other Levites (see 3.5-10). *Outside*, see 1.51; 3.39. *Twenty-two thousand*. The numbers in the text actually total twenty-two thousand three hundred, see 3.28.
3.40-51 The Levites are substitutes for firstborn males (3.14-15). 3.41 Even the Levites' livestock are substituted for the livestock of the firstborn (see also v. 45, but cf. 18.17). 3.43 The number of firstborn males (22,273) is very low compared to the census numbers reported in 1.17-46. 3.46-48 Since each Levite could redeem only one firstborn male, a ransom of five shekels each had to be paid for the 273 above and beyond the number of Levites (unless that number should actually be 300 higher; see v. 28, 39). Archaeological evidence suggests that the shekel in ancient Israel weighed about 11.4 grams, though it is possible that there were two systems at work simultaneously, as in ancient Mesopotamia, and that the shekel of the sanctuary (v. 47) was heavier than the common shekel (see also the "shekels by the king's weight" in 2 Sam 14.26). 3.49-50 The ransom money will be paid by the firstborn (v. 50), or by a portion of them (v. 49).

sanctuary,⁵¹ and Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Kohathites

4 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ²Take a census of the Kohathites separate from the other Levites, by their clans and their ancestral houses, ³from thirty years old up to fifty years old, all who qualify to do work relating to the tent of meeting. ⁴The service of the Kohathites relating to the tent of meeting concerns the most holy things.

⁵When the camp is to set out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the screen^a with it; ⁶then they shall put on it a covering of fine leather,^b and spread over that a cloth all of blue, and shall put its poles in place. ⁷Over the table of the bread of the Presence they shall spread a blue cloth, and put on it the plates, the dishes for incense, the bowls, and the flagons for the drink offering; the regular bread also shall be on it; ⁸then they shall spread over them a crimson cloth, and cover it with a covering of fine leather,^b and shall put its poles in place. ⁹They shall take a blue cloth, and cover the lampstand for the light, with its lamps, its snuffers, its trays, and all the vessels for oil with which it is supplied; ¹⁰and they shall put it with all its utensils in a covering of fine leather,^b and put it on the carrying frame. ¹¹Over the golden altar they shall spread a blue cloth, and cover it with a covering of fine leather,^b and shall put its poles in place; ¹²and they shall take all the utensils of the service that are used in the sanctuary, and put them in a blue cloth, and cover them with a covering of fine leather,^b and put them on the carrying

4.1-4.9 The second Levitical census, to determine the number of Levites between the ages of thirty and fifty, the years during which they are qualified to perform their priestly duties (but cf. 8.24-26). **4.2-4** In 3.14-37 Gershon was counted first because Gershon is the "firstborn" (3.47, 21-26). Here, the Kohathites are counted first and are singled out from the other Levites because they have custody over the most holy things (v. 4; see also 3.31). **4.5-14** The most holy things are prepared for the march by Aaron and his sons. **4.5** *Screening curtain*. See note on 3.29, 31. **4.6** The poles for carrying the ark (Ex 25.13-15). **4.7** *Table of the bread of the Presence*. See note on 3.29, 31. The plates . . . *drink offering*. See Ex 25.29-37. **16**. The regular bread is the bread that is continually on the table (Ex 25.30; Lev

frame. ¹³They shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth over it; ¹⁴and they shall put on it all the utensils of the altar, which are used for the service there, the firepans, the forks, the shovels, and the basins, all the utensils of the altar; and they shall spread on it a covering of fine leather,^b and shall put its poles in place. ¹⁵When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the Kohathites shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, or they will die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the Kohathites are to carry.

¹⁶Eleazar son of Aaron the priest shall have charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the regular grain offering, and the anointing oil, the oversight of all the tabernacle and all that is in it, in the sanctuary and its utensils.

¹⁷Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ¹⁸You must not let the tribe of the clans of the Kohathites be destroyed from among the Levites. ¹⁹This is how you must deal with them in order that they may live and not die when they come near to the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and as sign each to a particular task or burden. ²⁰But the Kohathites must not go in to look on the holy things even for a moment, otherwise they will die.

The Gershonites and Merarites

²¹Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²²Take a census of the Gershonites also, by their ancestral houses and by their clans

^a Or *curtain*, or *asthenopy*; Heb *eduth*. ^b Meaning of Heb uncertain. ^c Heb *they*.

24.5-9. **4.8** *Poles* for carrying the table (Ex 25.29). **4.9** *Lampstand*. See 3.31. **4.11** *Golden altar*, for burning incense. See note on 3.29, 31 (its poles, Ex 30.4-5). **4.12** *The utensils of the service that are used in the sanctuary* are those that are used inside the tent itself and are most sacred (see 3.31). The *blue* (or *violet*) *cloth* and *fine leather* indicate the very sacred status of these items, which are placed within the tent while the camp is at rest. **4.13-14** The *altar* here is the bronze altar for sacrifice in the court that surrounds the tabernacle (see note on 3.29, 31) with its *utensils* (Ex 27.3) and its *poles* (Ex 25.6-7). **4.15** *On they will die*. See Ex 19.20-24 (cf. Ex 19.12-13). **1** Sam 6.19 (Hebrew in text only). **2** Sam 6.6-15. **4.16** See 3.32. **4.19** *Burdens*, i.e., that which he is to transport. **4.21-28** The census of the

²⁵from thirty years old up to fifty years old you shall enroll them, all who qualify to do work in the tent of meeting. ²⁶This is the service of the clans of the Gershonites, in serving and bearing burdens: ²⁷They shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tent of meeting with its covering, and the outer covering of fine leather^c that is on top of it, and the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting, ²⁸and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the entrance of the gate of the court that is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, and all the equipment for their service; and they shall do all that needs to be done with regard to them. ²⁹All the service of the Gershonites shall be at the command of Aaron and his sons, in all that they are to carry, and in all that they have to do; and you shall assign to their charge all that they are to carry. ³⁰This is the service of the clans of the Gershonites relating to the tent of meeting, and their responsibilities are to be under the oversight of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

³¹As for the Merarites, you shall enroll them by their clans and their ancestral houses; ³²from thirty years old up to fifty years old you shall enroll them, everyone who qualifies to do the work of the tent of meeting. ³³This is what they are charged to carry, as the whole of their service in the tent of meeting: the frames of the tabernacle, with its bars, pillars, and bases, ³⁴and the pillars of the court all around with their bases, pegs, and cords, with all their equipment and all their related service; and you shall assign by name the objects that they are required to carry. ³⁵This is the service of the clans of the Merarites, the whole of their service relating to the tent of meeting, under the hand of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

Census of the Levites

³⁶So Moses and Aaron and the leaders of the congregation enrolled the Kohathites, by their clans and their ancestral houses, ³⁷from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who qualified for work relating to the tent of meeting, ³⁸and their enrollment by clans was two

thousand seven hundred fifty. ³⁹This was the enrollment of the clans of the Kohathites, all who served at the tent of meeting; whom Moses and Aaron enrolled according to the commandment of the LORD by Moses.

⁴⁰The enrollment of the Gershonites, by their clans and their ancestral houses, ⁴¹from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who qualified for work relating to the tent of meeting—⁴²their enrollment by their clans and their ancestral houses was two thousand six hundred thirty. ⁴³This was the enrollment of the clans of the Gershonites, all who served at the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron enrolled according to the commandment of the LORD.

⁴⁴The enrollment of the clans of the Merarites, by their clans and their ancestral houses, ⁴⁵from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who qualified for work relating to the tent of meeting—⁴⁶their enrollment by their clans was three thousand two hundred. ⁴⁷This is the enrollment of the clans of the Merarites, whom Moses and Aaron enrolled according to the commandment of the LORD by Moses.

⁴⁸All those who were enrolled of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel enrolled, by their clans and their ancestral houses, ⁴⁹from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who qualified to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens relating to the tent of meeting, ⁵⁰their enrollment was eight thousand five hundred eighty. ⁵¹According to the commandment of the LORD through Moses they were appointed to their several tasks of serving or carrying; thus they were enrolled by him, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Unclean Persons

5 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²Command the Israelites to put out of the camp everyone who is leprous,^a or has a discharge, and everyone who is unclean through contact

^a Meaning of Heb uncertain. ^b A term for several skin diseases; precise meaning uncertain.

the items they are to transport; see 3.33-37. **4.33** See v. 28. **4.36, 40, 44, 48** The numbers here refer only to male Levites aged thirty to fifty; cf. 3.22, 28, 34, 39. **5.1-4** The entire encampment is treated as sacred because of the presence of the tabernacle; the place, the LORD says, *where I dwell among them* (v. 3). Any impurity, therefore, that is "contagious" must be kept

25 Then Balaam got up and went back to his place, and Balaak also went his way.

Worship of Baal of Peor

25 While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. Thus Israel yoked itself to the Baal of Peor, and the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel. The Lord said to Moses, "Take all the chiefs of the people and impale them in the sun before the Lord, in order that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel." And Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you shall kill any of your people who have yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor."

tania or specifically Babylonian, used here along with Asyria. *He also shall perish forever.* See v. 20:11.

25.1-18 This chapter is a combination of two different stories about Israelite men and foreign women: one in vv. 1-5 involving Moabite women, sacrifices, and the Baal of Peor; and another in vv. 6-15 involving an apparent marriage between a Midianite woman and a Simeonite man. The two are combined by vv. 16-18, and the combined narrative is known to 3:8; 15:16; Josh 22:17; 23:10; 28:31; 25:1-5. See also Deut 4:3-4; Hos 9:10; 25:1-2. *Shittim*, "the acacias." Site unknown. See the full name Abel-shittim in 33:49, there located in the plains of Moab where the Israelites have camped since 22:1. See also Josh 2:1; 3:1; Mic 6:5 (for Gilead, see Josh 4:19-24). Shittim is the place where the conquest of the land west of the Jordan begins. *Begin*. By a change in the vowels this word could read "defiled themselves." *To have sexual relations with*, lit. "to prostitute themselves with," which phrase can be used of sexual relations or of religious apostasy. *The women of Moab*. Cf. vv. 17-18; 31:15-16. *Sacrifices of their gods* or "god" (the same Hebrew word can be used for both singular and plural) since only one god is mentioned in v. 3; see Ps 106:28-31, where these sacrifices are said to be part of a cult of the dead. *The people ate*, i.e., they participated in the sacrifices; see, e.g., Ex 32:6. Lev 7:11-18; 1 Sam 1:4, 9; Cf. v. 1-2; Ex 34:15-16. 25.3 *Baal*, lit. "lord," originally an epithet that came to be used as the equivalent of a personal name for the Syrian storm god Hadad (cf. the Akkadian king's name Hadadzer; "Hadad is help," 2 Sam 8:3-12). *Peor* is a place-name; see 23:28; 25:4 *impale*, sometimes translated "crucify" or "expose." The narrative nowhere states that the execution of the chiefs of the people takes place, unless v. 8 is the equivalent of 25:5. Moses' command to the judges of Israel (some ancient translations have "tribes of Israel," the Hebrew words for "tribes" and "judges" differ by only one consonant) is not the same as the Lord's command in v. 4. Here Moses asks only that the guilty parties be executed; again, there is

6 Just then one of the Israelites came and brought a Midianite woman into his family, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of the whole congregation of the Israelites while they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. When Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he got up and left the congregation. Taking a spear in his hand, he went after the Israelite man into the tent, and pierced the two of them, the Israelite and the woman, through the belly. So the plague was stopped among the people of Israel. Nevertheless those that died by the plague were twenty-four thousand.

10 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the Israelites by manifesting such zeal among them

no indication in the narrative that this was done. 25:15 See also Josh 22:17-18; Ps 106:28-31; 25:6 *into his family*, lit. "to his brothers." For "brother" as kin in general, see, e.g., 16:10; Gen 13:8; 29:12. What was the offense involved in this story? Perhaps simply bringing home, i.e., marrying, a Midianite woman. That it was done in the sight of Moses takes on a special significance then. Even though Moses was aware of the offense, he did nothing about it. Vv. 6-18 are an anti-Midianite story used also to elevate Aaron's family over Moses; see notes on 12:2, 16:3, 16:40. Moses could hardly punish an Israelite man for marrying a Midianite woman when he had done so himself (see 10:29-32); there is more than one attitude toward intermarriage in the Hebrew Bible; cf. Ex 34:15-16; Deut 7:2-4; Josh 23:12-13. Although the reason is not given until v. 8, the people were apparently weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting because of a plague. Once the two stories in this chapter are combined, the plague becomes a punishment for the worship of the Baal of Peor (see v. 18) and third punishment; the ones in vv. 4-5 apparently not having been carried out), and the people are weeping before the tent in supplication to the Lord (see 7:89; 16:16-18). 25.7 *Phinehas son of Eleazar*. See Ex 6:25-25; Num 20:22-29; 25:8. The Hebrew word for *penitence* is not the usual one. In fact, this word is used in the Hebrew Bible only here. The meaning is uncertain, but it was probably a denoted term; it has been suggested that this term is an alternate word for the tabernacle. *Pierced the two of them*, i.e., at once, impaling; sexual intercourse or some positioning in which the two bodies could be pierced with one thrust of the spear. *Through the belly*. The Hebrew is difficult but seems to mean *through the belly*. The Hebrew word for "belly" here though is very similar to the word for a special tent as here in this verse, and one ancient translation has "in the tent" at this point. 25:8-9 *Plague*. See v. 6; 23:10-13. The event becomes the ground for praise of the Aaronic priestly family (see 1 Chr 6:3-15; 49-53) and an indirect criticism of Moses, who apparently failed to

bring out either form of punishment in vv. 4-5 and did nothing about the trespass in v. 6. 25.12 *My covenant of peace*. See 1st 54:10; Ezek 34:25; 37:26; Mal 2:4-5.

25.13 *Perpetual priesthood*. See also Ex 29:9; 40:15; 25:14-15. Both the Israelite man and the Midianite woman were important people in their own groups; see also v. 18 and *Zur* in 31:8; 25:16-18. See ch. 33.

25.18 This verse ties together the two stories in this chapter by pairing the Midianites with the Moabites in the affair of Peor and by asserting that the plague mentioned in vv. 8-9 was the result of the same Peor incident. *Thickly*, presumably the woman's use of sexual contact to draw the Israelite man to sacrifices to a god other than the Lord; see 31:16; 1st 10:10; 2nd 10:10; 26:1-65. The last oblique to the conquest is over come when the plague of ch. 25 apparently kills the remaining Israelites of the wilderness generation (see 26:64), those who were condemned to die because of the incident of the spies in chs. 13-14 (see 14:20-25, 28-35). At this point a new military census is taken, parallel to the census in ch. 1, and from this point the

on my behalf that in my jealousy I did not consume the Israelites! Therefore says the Lord, hereby grant him my covenant of peace! It shall be for him and for his descendants after him a covenant of perpetual priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the Israelites." The name of the slain Israelite man, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, head of an ancestral house belonging to the Simeonites. The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur, who was the head of a clan, an ancestral house in Midian.

16 The Lord said to Moses, "Harass the Midianites, and defeat them; for they have harassed you in the affair of Peor, and in the affair of Cozbi, the daughter of a leader of Midian; their sisters, she was killed on the day of the plague that resulted from Peor."

A Census of the New Generation

26 After the plague the Lord said to Moses and to Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, "Take a census of the whole congregation of the Israelites, from twenty years old and upward, by their ancestral houses; every one in Israel able to go to war." Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, "Take a census of the people from twenty years old and upward, as the Lord commanded Moses."

The Israelites, who came out of the land of Egypt, were in the fortieth year in the wilderness. The firstborn of Israel, the descendants of Reuben, of Hanoch, the clan of the Hanochites, of Pallu, the clan of the Palluites, of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites, of Carmi, the clan of the Carmiites. These are the clans of the Reubenites; the number of those enrolled was forty-three thousand seven hundred thirty. And the descendants of Pallu: Eliab. The descendants of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the same Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation who rebelled against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they rebelled against the Lord, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred fifty men; and they became a warning. Notwithstanding, the sons of Korah did not die.

The descendants of Simeon, by their clans: of Nemuel, the clan of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the clan of the Jaminites; of Jacin, the clan of the Jacinites; of Zerah, the clan of the Zerahites; of Shaul, the clan of the Shaulites. These are the clans of the Simeonites, twenty-two thousand two hundred and thirty. The children of Gad, by their clans: of Zephon, the clan of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the clan of the Haggites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites. These are the clans of the Gadites, twenty-one thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Manasse, by their clans: of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites; of Aser, the clan of the Aserites; of Simezer, the clan of the Simezerites; of Gadai, the clan of the Gadaites; of Shafum, the clan of the Shafumites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Manassites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Benjamin, by their clans: of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Benjaminites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Ephraim, by their clans: of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Ephraimites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Manasse, by their clans: of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites; of Aser, the clan of the Aserites; of Simezer, the clan of the Simezerites; of Gadai, the clan of the Gadaites; of Shafum, the clan of the Shafumites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Manassites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Benjamin, by their clans: of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Benjaminites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Ephraim, by their clans: of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Ephraimites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Manasse, by their clans: of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites; of Aser, the clan of the Aserites; of Simezer, the clan of the Simezerites; of Gadai, the clan of the Gadaites; of Shafum, the clan of the Shafumites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Manassites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Benjamin, by their clans: of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Benjaminites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Ephraim, by their clans: of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Ephraimites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Manasse, by their clans: of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites; of Aser, the clan of the Aserites; of Simezer, the clan of the Simezerites; of Gadai, the clan of the Gadaites; of Shafum, the clan of the Shafumites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Manassites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Benjamin, by their clans: of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Benjaminites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Ephraim, by their clans: of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Ephraimites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Manasse, by their clans: of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites; of Aser, the clan of the Aserites; of Simezer, the clan of the Simezerites; of Gadai, the clan of the Gadaites; of Shafum, the clan of the Shafumites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Manassites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Benjamin, by their clans: of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Benjaminites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. 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The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. 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The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Benjamin, by their clans: of Bela, the clan of the Belaites; of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Benjaminites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. 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The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. 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The children of Ephraim, by their clans: of Shimon, the clan of the Shimonites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Ephraimites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Manasse, by their clans: of Gilead, the clan of the Gileadites; of Aser, the clan of the Aserites; of Simezer, the clan of the Simezerites; of Gadai, the clan of the Gadaites; of Shafum, the clan of the Shafumites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Manassites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Joseph, by their clans: of Gadi, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites; of Gad, the clan of the Gadites; of Manasse, the clan of the Manassites; of Simeon, the clan of the Simeonites; of Zebulun, the clan of the Zebulunites; of Issachar, the clan of the Issacharites; of Asher, the clan of the Asherites; of Naphtali, the clan of the Naphtalites; of Dan, the clan of the Danites. These are the clans of the Josephites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. 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The children of Issachar, by their clans: of Abihail, the clan of the Abihailites; of Shuni, the clan of the Shunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Issacharites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. The children of Zebulun, by their clans: of Serach, the clan of the Serachites; of Haddad, the clan of the Haddadites; of Tuni, the clan of the Tunites; of Zuph, the clan of the Zuphites; of Hurn, the clan of the Hurnites; of Shomer, the clan of the Shomerites. These are the clans of the Zebulunites, twenty-two thousand four hundred and thirty. 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holy oil.²⁶ But if the slayer shall at any time go outside the bounds of the original city of refuge, and is found by the avenger of blood outside the bounds of the city of refuge; and is killed by the avenger, no bloodguilt shall be incurred.²⁷ For the slayer must remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest; but after the death of the high priest the slayer may return home.

²⁸ These things shall be a statute and ordinance for you throughout your generations wherever you live. And if anyone kills another, whether you live with him or not, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses; but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of a single witness.²⁹ Moreover you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer who is subject to the death penalty; a murderer must be put to death.³⁰ Nor shall you accept ransom for one who has fled to a city of refuge, enabling the fugitive to return to live in the land before the death of the high priest.³¹ You shall not pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it.³² You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell, for I the Lord dwell among the Israelites.

Marriage of Female Heirs

³⁶ The heads of the ancestral houses of the clans of the descendants of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh, of the Josephite clans, came forward and spoke in the presence of Moses and the leaders, the heads of the ancestral houses of the Israelites. They said, "The Lord commanded my lord to give the land for inheritance by lot to the Israelites; and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. But if they are

married into another Israelite tribe, then their inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of our ancestors and added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so it will be taken away from the allotted portion of our inheritance. And when the jubilee of the Israelites comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they have married; and the inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of our ancestral tribe."

³⁵ Then Moses commanded the Israelites according to the word of the Lord saying, "The descendants of the tribe of Joseph are right in what they are saying. This is what the Lord commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad. Let them marry whom they think best; only it must be into a clan of their father's tribe that they are married. So that no inheritance of the Israelites shall be transferred from one tribe to another; for all Israelites shall retain the inheritance of their ancestral tribes. Every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the Israelites shall marry one from the clan of her father's tribe, so that all Israelites may continue to possess their ancestral inheritance. No inheritance shall be transferred from one tribe to another for each of the tribes of the Israelites shall retain its own inheritance."

¹⁰ The daughters of Zelophehad did as the Lord had commanded Moses. Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, married sons of their father's brothers. They were married into the clans of the descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's clan.

until the high priest's death atones for the victims' blood; see also Josh 20:6. If the killer steps outside the city of refuge, the pollution is released again and the avenger is justified in destroying the cause of pollution; cf. 2 Sam 19:18-23; 1 Kings 2:36-46, 35:33. *Portals of the land* See 35:25-28; Gen 4:10-11, 35:34. The land is holy because the Lord dwells there; see 5:1-4, 36:1-12. See 27:1-11, 36:1. See 27:1, 36:2. *Brother* See 25:6, 27:4, 36:3. The complaint in this verse assumes that a wife's property became her husband's upon marriage. In such a case, the solution in 27:7-8 that daughters could inherit might mean that ances-

tral land would be moved from one tribe to another, a possibility not considered in framing that earlier solution and one to be avoided (see 27:1-13). 36:4 On the jubilee of the Israelites; see Lev 25:8-55, 27:16-25. Since the land was not sold, even the jubilee regulations would not bring it back to its original owners; cf. Lev 25:13-17, 28, 31, 33, 36:6-9. A regulation that women who inherit must marry within a specific family group (or else forfeit their property) is common among societies with patrilineal inheritance laws, including other ancient Near Eastern societies; 36:13 See 22:1, 26:3, 63, 33:48-50, 35:1; Deut 34:1, 8.

DEUTERONOMY

Name and Canonical Significance

DEUTERONOMY IS THE FIFTH BOOK of the Bible and the last of those traditionally ascribed to Moses comprising the canonical division Torah, or Pentateuch. The name, which reflects the Greek designation *deuteronómion* (meaning "second law-giving"), understands the book to be an account of Moses' work as legislator, supplementing and completing the revelation of covenantal law that began at Mount Horeb a generation before (see 1:3; 4:13-14; 5:22-6:3). A similar understanding of the book as an authoritative reprise and amplification of divine legislation is represented by the Hebrew name *Mishneh Torah*. In Jewish tradition the book is also and more generally known by its opening phrase, *elohi haddavarim*, ("These are the words"); frequently shortened to *davarim* ("The Book of Words").

Deuteronomy is the only part of the Pentateuch to identify itself explicitly and repeatedly as a record of Moses' *torah* (usually translated "law" in the NRSV); 1:5, 4:8, 44; 17:18-19, 27:3, 8, 26, 28, 36, 61; 29:21; 30:10; 31:9, 11, 12, 24, 26; 32:46. *Torah* in these contexts may be characterized as the inspired, comprehensive "policy" (or "constitution") that Moses, unable himself to lead Israel across the Jordan, enacts for the people as a normative guide to their corporate existence in the national homeland they are about to occupy. In short, this authoritative *torah* is a virtual surrogate for Moses himself as the preeminent mediator of the divine word to Israel (see 5:4-5, 23-31; 34:10; cf. Num 12:6-8). From this perspective Deuteronomy is not merely a homiletical appendix to the pentateuchal narrative of Israel's prehistory and political formation under the leadership of Moses. Rather, as Moses' legacy par excellence, Deuteronomy is the interpretative key to the Pentateuch understood as a whole to preserve the abiding revelation of God's will for the ongoing life of the covenant people.

In similar fashion, Deuteronomy provides the crucial point of reference for an understanding of the canonical unity of the following collection of the Prophets (Hebrew *Nevi'im*) in Jewish scripture. Significantly, affirmations of the Mosaic *torah* in its characteristically Deuteronomistic form bracket the collection as a whole (see Josh 1:7-8; Mal 3:22). Deuteronomistic influence and perspectives are especially evident in the Former Prophets, consisting of the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings (see e.g., Josh 1:4-9, 23-24; Judg 2:11-23; 1 Sam 7:3-14, 12:1-25; 2 Sam 7:4-29; 1 Kings 9:1-9, 11:4-13, 29-39; 14:1-16; 2 Kings

17.7–23; 21.1–23.27). For this reason these books are also known as the Deuteronomistic History in contemporary biblical scholarship. Many believe that Deuteronomy at one stage during its literary formation was an integral part of this national history, before it was detached and incorporated into the Pentateuch. In its dual character, both remembering Israel's past and preparing for its future, the book occupies a pivotal position, both literarily and theologically, in the canons of Jewish and Christian scriptures (see, e.g., "The Law of Moses and the Prophets" Acts 28.23).

Literary Character, Structure, and Principal Contents

DEUTERONOMY is cast in the form of a series of testamentary speeches and acts of Moses. Four editorial prefaces or superscriptions (1.1–5; 4.44–49; 29.1; 33.1) announce the coordinated segments of the work and describe the particular character and content of each major part. The first part (1.1–4.43) consists chiefly of Mosaic memoirs on Israel's prolonged journey from Horeb/Sinai to the plains of Moab in Transjordan (1.6–3.29), followed by a hortatory discourse on Israel's destiny as God's people (4.1–40) and a brief narrative appendix (4.41–43). The second and central part of the book (4.44–28.68) publishes the covenantal *torah*, introducing and systematically articulating the divinely authorized "polity" that Israel must implement in order to secure its collective political existence as the people of God. This central section has three major subdivisions: a review and exposition of the basic terms of the Horeb covenant (5.1–11.30); promulgation of the complementary statutory rulings (11.31–26.15); and a collection of rites of covenantal ratification and sanction (26.16–28.68). The third part of the book (29.1–32.52) describes another, supplementary covenant that the Lord charged Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab. This covenant stresses the social and multigenerational inclusiveness of Israel as well as responsibilities of its individual citizens. It includes reports of the commissioning of Joshua as Moses' successor and of the written consignment of the *torah*, and it ends with the recitation of Moses' eloquent "song" of witness to Israel's future generations. The fourth and final part of the book (33.1–34.12) contains Moses' testamentary blessings of the Israelite tribes and an account of his death and burial, with a concluding epiphany. Maintenance of the covenant relationship between Israel and its divine sovereign through the rule of faith and law within the community is thus the principal concern of Deuteronomy.

Sources and History of Composition

ALTHOUGH DEUTERONOMY exhibits a remarkable coherence in comparison with the preceding books of the Pentateuch, it cannot be considered a unitary literary product. The internal evidence of the book indicates several stages of growth and editing. Among the sources used in composition are earlier pentateuchal narrative traditions, the Decalogue (which appears in a form different from that of Ex 20), legislation in the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex 20–23) together with the supplement in Ex 33–34, collections of blessings and curses, and the poems in chs. 32–33. Although some of the antecedent traditions may be older, the major stages in the compositional history of the book can with some confidence be dated to the two centuries between the fall of Samaria (721 BCE) and the beginning of the Judean restoration (ca. 535 BCE) after the exile to Babylonian. Since the early nineteenth century, critical scholarship has built a convincing case for relating at least the central portion of the book to the document recovered from the Jerusalem temple archives during the reign of King Josiah (621 BCE). Some of the

characteristic provisions of the polity bear a close correspondence to reforms attributed to that king (see 2 Kings 22–23), who seems to have renewed the efforts of King Hezekiah a century earlier (see 2 Kings 18.1–7; 2 Chr 29–31). Yet the received form of book points to an exilic setting—when the older Mosaic polity may have been set within an expanded frame of Moses' valedictory addresses to Israel. Authors must be sought among those who bore particular responsibility for the transmission, interpretation, and implementation of the Mosaic legacy of covenantal *torah*. Although reasonable arguments have been set forth on behalf of royal scribes, prophets, and tribal elders, most likely are those identified in the book itself as "levitical priests," whose functions included judicial decision-making and instruction as well as officiating in worship (see esp. 7.8–13; 27.9–10; 31.9–13; 33.8–11). [s. DEAN MCGRIDE JR.]

Events at Horeb Recalled

These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan—in the wilderness, on the plain opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2 (By the way of Mount Seir it takes eleven days to reach Kadesh-barnea from Horeb.) 3 In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the Israelites just as the Lord had commanded him to speak to them. 4 This was after he had defeated King Sihon of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei. 5 Beyond the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to expound this law as follows:

6 The Lord our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying, "You have stayed long enough at this

1.1–5 The preface understands Moses' opening address in 1.6–4.40 to be an expository foreword to *this law* (v. 5), which is the Deuteronomistic *torah* directly introduced in 4.44. 1.1 These are the words and the abridgment *Words* (Hebrew *devarim*) are often used as the book's title in Jewish tradition (see Introduction). *The plain opposite Suph* and following toponyms may define a natural amphitheater in the valley near Beth-poor; see 3.29. 1.2 Perhaps a comment on 1.19. *Mount Seir*, the Edomite highlands flanking the rift valley from the Dead Sea southward. Once thought to be the mountain refuge of Petra, *Kadesh-barnea* is now usually identified with the oases of Ain al-Qudrat in northern Sinai. In Deuteronomy and some other sources (cf. Ex 3.1) *Horeb* is preferred over "Sinai" as the name for the wilderness mount of revelation. Cf. 33.2; Ex 19.1, 11. 1.3 The date, counting from the first Passover (Ex 12.2), when Moses completed his work as God's spokesman. 1.4 As prelude to the campaign west of the Jordan, these victories vindicate Israel's trust in divine providence; see 2.26–3.22; 4.46–48; cf. Ps 135.10–12.

1.6–3.29 Moses' memoirs review what happened to Israel and why during the post-Horeb epoch of this ca-

mountain. 7 Resume your journey and go into the hill country of the Amorites as well as into the neighboring regions—the Arabah, the hill country, the Shephelah, the Negeb, and the seacoast—the land of the Canaanites and the Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. 8 See, I have set the land before you; go in and take possession of the land that I swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their descendants after them."

Appointment of Tribal Leaders

9 At that time I said to you, "I am unable by myself to bear you. 10 The Lord your God has multiplied you, so that today you are as num-

^a Cf. Sir Vg Compare Josh 12.4; Heb. *hads* and ^b Sam. Gr. MT *the Lord*.

ber. The chief lesson is that Israel's national well-being requires strict observance of all that God commands. 1.6–8 The order to depart from Horeb (see v. 2) was an oracular summons to invade and occupy the promised homeland west of the Jordan. Cf. Ex 33.1–3. 1.7 The hill country of the Amorites (also 1.19–20) and the land of the Canaanites (cf. Ex 13.11; Ezek 16.3), comprehensive terms for western Palestine using general designations for the land's pre-Israelite occupants. Component regions are the *Arabah* (the Jordan rift valley), the central highland ridge, the western hills of the Shephelah, the Negeb slope of southern Judah, and the Mediterranean coastal plain. Territory to the northeast, called the *Lebanon* range, which extends into Syria toward the upper reach of the *Euphrates*, was controlled by Aramean states during most of the earlier Iron Age; Israel claimed hegemony over the region in the era of the Davidic-Solomonic empire (2 Sam 8.3–12; 1 Kings 4.21, 24) and briefly again in the heyday of Jeroboam II's reign (2 Kings 14.25). 1.8 Divine promise of the land to Israel's ancestors. See Gen 13.14–17; 15.12–21; 17.8; 26.4–5; 28.13–14; 19–18. Before setting out, a plan of military command and tribal judiciary was implemented to lighten Moses'

fight and good in the sight of the Lord, so that it may go well with you, and so that you may go in and occupy the good land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give you.¹⁹ Thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has promised.

20 When your children ask you in time to come, "What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the Lord our God has commanded you?"²¹ Then you shall say to your children: "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.²² The Lord displayed before our eyes great and awesome signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household.²³ He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land that he promised on oath to our ancestors.²⁴ Then the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God for our lasting good, so as to keep us alive, as is now the case.²⁵ If we diligently observe this entire commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, we will be in the right."²⁶

A Chosen People

7 When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and

occupy, and he clears away many nations before you—the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations mightier and more numerous than you—and when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy.² Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for that would turn away your children from following me, to serve other gods.³ Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. But this is how you must deal with them: break down their altars, smash their pillars, hew down their sacred poles, and burn their idols with fire.⁴ For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession.⁵ If it was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all peoples—⁶ it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath that he

swore to your ancestors, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.⁹ Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keeps his commandments, to a thousand generations.¹⁰ And who repays in their own person those who reject him. He does not delay but repays in their own person those who reject him.¹¹ Therefore, observe diligently the commandments—the statutes and the ordinances—that I am commanding you today.

Blessings for Obedience

12 If you heed these ordinances, by diligently observing them, the Lord your God will maintain with you the covenant loyalty that he swore to your ancestors.¹³ He will love you; bless you, and multiply you; he will bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock in the land that he swore to your ancestors to give you.¹⁴ You shall be the most blessed of peoples, with neither sterility nor barrenness among you or your livestock.¹⁵ The Lord will turn away from you every illness, all the dread diseases of Egypt that you experienced, he will not inflict on you, but he will lay them on all who hate you.¹⁶ You shall devour all the peoples that the Lord your God is giving over to you, showing them no pity; you shall not serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

34:8, Hos 11:1. 7:8 See 5:6. Redeemed, emancipated or ransomed (also 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 21:18; 24:18; cf. Num 18:15–17; Ps 78:42; Hos 13:14). 7:9 Echoing 5:10 (cf. Mel 1:5; 9:32; Dan 9:4; Jer 4:2). Faithful, trustworthy, consistent, diligent (cf. 32:4; Ps 89:1–2; 98:3; Isa 49:2). Covenant loyalty, lit. "the covenant [Hebrew *berit*] and the steadfast love [Hebrew *chesed*]" (also v. 12). Cf. 1 Kings 8:23–24; Ps 89:24; 28:33–34; Isa 54:10; 55:3; Mic 7:20. 7:10 An emphatic revision of 5:9b (cf. Ex 34:5–7; Num 14:18). Instead of corporate punishment, which might affect several generations, retribution for breach of covenant is now targeted against individual offenders (cf. 24:16; Jer 31:29–30; 32:18–19; Ezek 18:1–20). 7:13–14 Cf. 15:6; 28:14–14; Ex 23:25–26. Grain, wine, oil, the chief agricultural products of Canaan (11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51; cf. Hos 2:8, 12). 7:15 Diseases of Egypt, presumably ceremonial by the plague of Ex 9:3; cf. Deut 28:27–60; Ex 15:26; Am 4:10). 7:16 Snare to you. See 12:29–32; cf. 7:25; Ex

17 If you say to yourself, "These nations are more numerous than I; how can I dispossess them?"¹⁸ Do not be afraid of them. Just remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt.¹⁹ The great trials that your eyes saw, the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the Lord your God brought you out of the land of Egypt.²⁰ Moreover, the Lord your God will do the same to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.²¹ Moreover, the Lord your God will send the pestilence against them, until even the survivors and the fugitives are destroyed.²² Have no dread of them, for the Lord your God, who is present with you, is a great and awesome God.²³ The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you little by little; you will not be able to make a quick end of them, otherwise the wild animals would become too numerous for you.²⁴ But the Lord your God will give them over to you, and throw them into great panic until they are destroyed.²⁵ He will hand their kings over to you and you shall blot out their name from under heaven; no one will be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.²⁶ The images of their gods you shall burn with fire. Do not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, and take it for yourself, because you could be ensnared by it; for it is abhorrent to the Lord your God.²⁶ Do not bring an abhorrent thing into your house, or you will be set apart for destruction like it. You must utterly detest and abhor it; for it is set apart for destruction.

23:32–33; 34:12–16; Judg 2:3. 7:17–26 Implementation (the conquest theme) 7:17–19 Divine warfare. Cf. 1:28–30; 3:22; 4:34; 37–38; 9:1–20; 11:29–31; Josh 23:3–9; 10:7–20. 7:20 Persistence, perhaps a metaphor for ferocity as a weapon of divine warfare (cf. 2:25; 32:35; 26; Ex 15:14–16; 23:27–28; Josh 24:12; Hab 3:5). 7:22 Little by little. Cf. Ex 23:29–30; Judg 2:3–20; 23:31–6. 7:23 Perish. Cf. 28:20; 1 Sam 5:9–11; 14:18–20; 7:24 See 11:25; 12:3; cf. Josh 13:7–25; 26. Images of their gods shall burn. See 9:21; 1 Kings 15:13; 2 Kings 10:26–27; 23:24; 15:15. Do not covet. This and the following provisions for showdown Josh 6:18–19 and the aftermath in Josh 7:1; Judg 8:24–27; 17:2–4. Abhorrent to the Lord is a label used to prohibit things, practices and persons detested, fraudulent, idolatrous, or otherwise morally repugnant (e.g., 12:31; 17:1; 18:12–22; 21:8–24; 23:16; Prov 3:32; 6:16; 15:8–9; 26; cf. Gen 4:3–5; Ex 8:26). Destruction, or "ban" (Hebrew *cherem*). See note on 12:33–35.

you shall eat therein the presence of the Lord your God, you and your households together, rejoicing in all the undertakings in which the Lord your God has blessed you.

8 You shall not act as we are acting here today, all of us according to our own desires, for you have not yet come into the rest and the possession that the Lord your God is giving you. 9 When you cross over the Jordan and live in the land that the Lord your God is allotting to you, and when he gives you rest from your enemies all around so that you live in safety, 10 then you shall bring everything that I command you to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and your donations, and all your choice votive gifts that you vow to the Lord. 12 And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you together with your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, and the Levites who reside in your towns (since they have no allotment or inheritance with you).

A Prescribed Place of Worship

13 Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place you happen to see. 14 But only at the place that the Lord will choose in one of your tribes—there you shall offer your burnt offerings and there you shall do everything I command you.

15 Yet whenever you desire you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your

15:18-21; 30:2-15; Am 4:4-5; 12:7. Emphasis on inclusive religious celebrations is characteristic of the Deuteronomistic polity (cf. 12:12, 18-19; 14:26-27; 15:20; 16:1, 14; 26:11). 12:8-12 A temporal distinction is made between divergent practices today and the unification of worship that will become normative for settled Israel. 12:8 *We are acting*: all of us according to our own desires; i.e., each person (doing) what is right in his own sight; individual willfulness; religious judgment; 16:21-25 rather than divine authority (what is right and good in the sight of the Lord); cf. 6:18; 12:25, 28). 12:9-10 Rest and . . . possession, secure territorial dominion (see notes on 3:18-20; 11:24; cf. 33:28-29). According to developed Deuteronomistic tradition, the conditions were only met with the creation of David's empire (cf. Josh 23:1-5; 2 Sam 7:1-16; 1 Kings 5:3-5; 8:56). 12:11 *As a dwelling for his name*: better, 'to establish his name'; see note on 12:5. 12:12 *Loyalties*: See notes on 10:8-9; 18:1-8; 12:13-19. Two key functional distinctions are made here, one between 'exaltation' (cf. Ex 20:24; 1 Sam 7:16; Josh 22:10-34) which are not or no longer to be used for sacrifice

towns, according to the blessing that the Lord your God has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, as they would of gazelle or deer. 16 The blood, however, you must not eat; you shall pour it out on the ground like water.

17 Nor may you eat within your towns the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, the firstlings of your herds and your flocks, any of your votive gifts that you vow, your freewill offerings, or your donations. 18 These you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God at the place that the Lord your God will choose, you together with your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, and the Levites resident in your towns, rejoicing in the presence of the Lord your God in all your undertakings. 19 Take care that you do not neglect the Levites as long as you live in your land.

20 When the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, 'I am going to eat some meat, because you wish to eat meat, you may eat meat whenever you have the desire. 21 If the place where the Lord your God will choose to put his name is too far from you, and you slaughter as I have commanded you any of your herd or flock that the Lord has given you, then you may eat within your towns whenever you desire. 22 Indeed, just as gazelle or deer is eaten, so you may eat it: the unclean and the clean alike may eat it. 23 Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the meat. 24 Do not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water

between animals sacrificed at the altar and animals slaughtered for food. 12:15 *Whenever you desire*, as your appetite dictates (cf. 18:6; Prov 23:2) and the Lord's blessing permits (cf. 7:13). *The unclean and the clean may eat of it*: Since domestic slaughter of livestock is no different from the killing of game (gazelle or deer) for edible meat, rules of purity that pertain to the consumption of sacrificial offerings and other sacrifices are not applicable (cf. also 12:20-22; 15:22). Lev 7:19-21; 17:3-9; 12:16 Blood is the essence of animal life and must not be consumed (cf. 12:23; 15:23; Gen 9:4-5; Lev 17:10-14; 19:26; 1 Sam 14:31-35). 12:20-22 Assumingly paragraph emphasizes orthopraxy and its motives: though non-sacrificial slaughter is permitted as a geographical necessity (*When the Lord enlarges your territory*; cf. 14:23; 9:8-9; Ex 34:24), sacrificial slaughter remains preferable whenever the altar of the single sanctuary is near enough for use (vv. 20-22, 27; cf. Lev 17:3-9). 12:23 The restriction on eating blood must never be relaxed (vv. 23-25; cf. 12:16; Lev 17:10-14); requisite offerings and sacrificial duties must be

25 Do not eat it so that all may go well with you and your children after you, because you do what is right in the sight of the Lord. 26 But the sacred donations that are due from you, and your votive gifts, you shall bring to the place that the Lord will choose. 27 You shall present your burnt offerings, both the meat and the blood, on the altar of the Lord your God; the blood of your other sacrifices shall be poured out beside the altar of the Lord your God, but the meat you may eat.

28 Be careful to obey all these words that I command you today, so that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, because you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God.

Warning against Idolatry

29 When the Lord your God has cut off before you the nations whom you are about to enter to dispossess them, when you have dispossessed them and live in their land, 30 take care that you are not snared into imitating them, after they have been destroyed before you; do not inquire concerning their gods, saying, 'How did these nations worship their gods? I also want to do the same.' 31 You must not do the same for the Lord your God, because every abhorrent thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods. The Lord would even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. 32 You must diligently observe everything that I command you; do not add to it or take anything from it.

presented regularly at the sanctuary (vv. 26-27; cf. 14:22-27; 15:19-20; 16:16-17; 26:1-15). 12:28 A concluding exhortation composed of familiar phrases (e.g., 4:40; 5:29; 6:3, 17-18; 12:25). 12:29-17:13 This division treats corporate obligations and institutional structures designed to maintain Israel's national identity as the covenant people of God. 12:29-32 Specific provisions are introduced by another warning against any compromise of Israel's distinctiveness as defined by the Mosaic legislation (cf. 4:1-2; 5:32-6:3; 11:34-12:17). 12:30 *Snared*: here through attraction to, or adoption of, religious (culture) rather than by political or mutual alliance with the condemned nations (cf. 7:1-5; 25; Ex 23:33; 34:12; Judg 2:3). 12:31 *Abhorrent*: See note on 7:25-26. Imposition of children by fire is particularly associated with the cult of Molech, practiced during the monarchical era in the Hinnom Valley, a southwest of Jerusalem (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer 7:31; 19:5; cf. also 18:10; 2 Kings 13:27; 16:3; 21:6). 12:32 *Anything*: neither less nor more, because worship of the Lord augmented with pagan practices be-

13 If prophets or those who 'divine' by dreams appear among you and promise you omens or portents, and the omens or the portents declared by them take place, and they say, 'Let us follow other gods' (whom you have not known) and let us serve them, you must not heed the words of those prophets or those who 'divine' by dreams; for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you indeed love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. 4 The Lord your God you shall follow; him alone you shall fear, his commandments you shall keep; his voice you shall obey; him you shall serve, and to him you shall hold fast. 5 But those prophets or those who 'divine' by dreams shall be put to death for having spoken treason against the Lord your God—who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery—to turn you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

6 If anyone secretly entices you—even if it is your brother, your father's son or your mother's son, or your own son or daughter, or the wife you embrace, or your most intimate friend—saying, 'Let us go worship other gods,' whom neither you nor your ancestors have known, 7 any of the gods of the peoples that are around you, whether near you or far

4 Or 6a. b. Cf. Sam Syr MT adds today. c. Ch 13. In Heb. Ch 13:2 in Heb. 7 Sam Gk Compare MT lacks your father's son or daughter.

comes paganism (cf. 2 Kings 17:41). 13:1-18 Three cases are summarized to present a severe retribution against instigators of sedition. 13:1-5 Mosaic injunction to apostasy is a criminal offense; never credible even when supported by accurate prognostication. 13:6-3 *Divine by dreams*. See, e.g., Gen 37:5-10; Num 12:6; Judg 7:13-14; 23:23; 27:9; 28:28. *Omens or portents*: any forecasts or signs offered to authenticate claims of divine empowerment (see 34:11; Ex 4:9-21; 7:9; Judg 6:17-18; 9:36-40). *Testing*. See 8:2; 16:13. 4 An emphatic restatement of allegiance to the Lord alone (cf. 6:13; 10:20; 11:22). 13:5 *Spoken treason* also describes prophetic duplicity in Jer 28:16; 29:32; 50:1. *Midst*. The formula emphasizes communal responsibility to eradicate perpetrators of virulent evil from Israel's midst (also 17:7-12; 19:19; 2:24; 22:23-24; 24:7). 13:6-11 Glorious enticement to apostasy that be confronted with equal resolve and harsh punishment. 13:6-8 Loyalty to Israel's divine sovereignty takes precedence over even the closest human bonds of friendship, marriage, and collegiality. 13:6 *Intimate friend*, one as beloved as one's

away from you, from one end of the earth to the other, you must not yield to or heed any such persons. Show them no pity or compassion and do not shield them. But you shall surely kill them; your own hand shall be first against them to execute them, and afterwards the hand of all the people. Stone them to death for trying to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. Then all Israel shall hear and be afraid, and never again do any such wickedness.

12 If you hear it said about one of the towns that the Lord your God is giving you to live in, that secondly from among you have gone out and led the inhabitants of the town astray, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods," whom you have not known, then you shall inquire and make a thorough investigation. If the charge is established that such an abhorrent thing has been done among you, you shall put the inhabitants of that town to the sword, utterly destroying it and everything in it—even, putting its livestock to the sword. All of its spoil you shall gather into its public square, then burn the town and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God. It shall remain a perpetual ruin, never to be rebuilt. Do not let anything devoted to destruction stick to your hand, so that the Lord may turn from his fierce anger

own self (cf. 1 Sam. 18:3). 13:8 No pity. Cf. 7:16, 19, 13, 21:25, 12, 13:9-10 To kill offenders by stoning on presumption of guilt—legitimate communal lynching (cf. 1 Sam. 30:6, 1 Kings 12:18). But the Septuagint may preserve the preferable reading, that an accuser must first "decry" or "publicly charge" a culprit thereby initiating judicial proceedings that may result in capital punishment carried out by accuser and communal court (cf. 17:4-7; 21:18-21; 22:20-24; Josh. 7:10-26; 1 Kings 21:8-14). 13:11 Publicized execution in such circumstances is meant as a deterrent (cf. 17:12-13; 21:21). 13:12-18 This case outlines judicial procedure and martial retribution in the event that an entire town in Israel becomes contaminated by apostasy. 13:13 *Scoundrels*, i.e., "sons without worth," "outcasts" who defy legitimate authority (cf. Judg. 19:22, 20:13; 1 Sam. 2:12). 13:14 *Inquire* could connote oracular consultation (cf. Judg. 20:18, 23; Josh. 7:13-21) but the clear purport of this Deuteronomistic usage is judicial initiative to gather empirical evidence (see 17:4, 9; 19:18, cf. Josh. 22:10-34). 13:15-17 The apostate town becomes anathema, like the former nations whose practices it assimilated (12:29-30); thus a comprehensive ban must be implemented against it, lest Israel as a whole incur the wrath of God (20:16-18; cf. 7:25-26).

and show you compassion, and in his compassion multiply you, as he swore to your ancestors, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God by keeping all his commandments that I am commanding you today, doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God.

Pagan Practices Forbidden

14 You are children of the Lord your God. You must not lastrate yourselves, or shave your forelocks for the dead. For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; it is you the Lord has chosen out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

Clean and Unclean Foods

3 You shall not eat any abhorrent thing. These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. Any animal that divides the hoof and has the hoof cleft in two, and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. Yet of those that chew the cud or have the hoof cleft, you shall not eat these: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger, because they chew the cud but do not divide the hoof; they are unclean for you. And the pig, because it divides the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. You shall not eat their meat, and you shall not touch their carcasses.

13:16 *Whole burnt offering*, a sacrificial conflagration (33:10; Lev. 6:22-23; 1 Sam. 7:9; cf. Isa. 24:6-7). *Deprived ruin*, like Ai (Josh. 8:28; cf. Jer. 49:2).

14:1-21 Select rules pertaining to Israel's comportment as the Lord's holy people. 14:1 *Children of the Lord*, i.e., language elsewhere attested, especially in prophetic contexts treating Israel's filial waywardness (32:5-6; 19-20; Ps. 135:13; Isa. 1:2, 4; 30:1; Jer. 31:4, 19; 22:cf. Jer. 31:9, 20; Hos. 11:10, 11:1-4). *Lustrate*, shave. *Forelocks*, self-laceration and tonsure are Jewish prohibited because they were associated with pagan rites (cf. Lev. 19:27-28; 21:5; 1 Kings 18:28; Jer. 16:5; 41:4-5; 47:5; Am. 8:10). 14:2-4 A restatement of covenantal integrity or "holiness" based on Ex. 19:5-6 (cf. 7:6) introduces a series of dietary rules. 14:3-5 *Horrent* in the general prohibition makes food excluded from Israel's diet a matter of the Lord's direct command (see note on 7:25-26; cf. Ex. 8:26). 14:4-20 The basic categories of land animals (vv. 4-8), fish (vv. 9-10), and flying creatures (vv. 11-20) reflect the animal taxonomy of the created order (Gen. 1:20-25; 9:2-3). A common antecedent tradition, as well as some mutual influence at a late stage of textual formation, best account for the detailed similarities and differences between this classification and its counterpart

9 Of all that live in water you may eat these: whatever has fins and scales you may eat. And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it is unclean for you.

10 You may eat any clean birds. But these are the ones that you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, the buzzard, the kite of any kind, the vulture of any kind, the hawk of any kind, the night hawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind, the little owl and the great owl, the water hen and the desert owl, the carrion vulture and the cormorant, the stork, the heron of any kind, the hoopoe and the bat. And all winged insects are unclean for you; they shall not be eaten. You may eat any clean winged creature.

distance is so great that you are unable to transport it, because the place where the Lord your God will choose to set his name is too far away from you, then you may turn it into money. With the money secure in hand, go to the place that the Lord your God will choose; spend the money for whatever you wish—oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink, or whatever you desire. And you shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God; you and your household rejoicing together. As for the Levites resident in your towns, do not neglect them, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you.

You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.

Regulations concerning tithes

22 Set apart a tithe of all the yield of your seed that is brought in yearly from the field. In the presence of the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose as a dwelling for his name, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, as well as the firstlings of your herd and flock, so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. But if, when the Lord your God has blessed you, the

15 Every seventh year you shall grant a remission of debts. And this is the manner of the remission: every creditor shall remit the claim that is held against a neighbor, not exacting it of a neighbor who is a member of the

12-23 Some of the species identifications, especially of the birds, remain uncertain. 14:21 *Anything unclean for itself*, i.e., carrion or the carcass of an otherwise edible animal from which the blood was not drained (cf. 12:16, 22-23; with Ex. 22:31; Lev. 17:15; 22:8; Ezek. 44:31). The issue is ritual purity, not health preservation; the affected meat could be eaten by those who did not belong to the sacred community (resident aliens or a foreigner). The "old" prohibition against cooking a kid in its mother's milk (Ex. 23:19; 34:26) concludes the series of rules. The original significance of this prohibition is a matter of some dispute. Some view it as proscribing Canaanite religious practices, others being directed against the unnatural and callous treatment of animals. The latter Jewish dietary practice of abstaining from meat and dairy products is based on this prohibition. 14:22-29 The tithe probably originated as a 10 percent tax on agricultural produce (all the yield of your land) usually paid in kind to the land's sovereign (cf. Deut. 18:16-18; Am. 2:6-8). 15:1-3 *Sabbatical remission of debts* (Hebrew *shemittah*, only in 15:1, 2, 9; 44). Here the ancient practice is roughly adapted to

the circumstances of unification of worship. 14:23 As a dwelling for his name. See notes on 12:5, 12:11. The three annual pilgrimage festivals (see 3:6, 16-17) are presumably meant as primary occasions for presentation of both agricultural tithes and firstlings of livestock (see also 12:17, 15:19-23). 14:24-27 Emphasis again falls on "promoting inclusive" celebrations (cf. note on 12:7). Important social, economic, and administrative implications are ignored (cf. 2 Chr. 31:2-19; Neh. 10:34-36; 11:15; 12:13-14). 14:28-29 Provisions, however, is added for local storage and distribution of tithes from produce harvested every third year to sustain dispersed Levitical clans as well as to provide for others in need of charity (cf. 26:12-15; Ex. 22:21-24). 15:1-18 This remarkable revision of older laws (Ex. 21:2-11; 22:25; 23:10-11) seeks to strengthen procedures for redressing economic imbalances within Israelite society, resulting from usury and debt slavery. (For such abusive practices, see Neh. 5:1-13; Job 24:9; Ezek. 18:16-18; Am. 2:6-8). 15:1-3 *Sabbatical remission of debts* (Hebrew *shemittah*, only in 15:1, 2, 9; 44). Here the ancient practice is roughly adapted to

the false witness had meant to do to the other. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. 20 The rest shall hear and be afraid, and a crime such as this shall never again be committed among you. 21 Show no pity, life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Rules of Warfare

20 When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots, an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. 2 Before you engage in battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the troops, and shall say to them: "Hear, O Israel! Today you are drawing near to do battle against your enemies. Do not lose heart, or be afraid, or panic, or be in dread of them; for it is the Lord your God who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to give you victory." 3 Then the officials shall address the troops, saying: "Has anyone built a new house but not dedicated it? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another dedicate it. 4 Has anyone planted a vineyard but not yet enjoyed its fruit? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another become engaged to a woman but not yet married her? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another marry her." 5 The officials shall continue to address the troops, saying, "Is anyone

afraid or disheartened? He should go back to his house, or he might cause the heart of his comrades to melt like his own." 6 When the officials have finished addressing the troops, then the commanders shall take charge of them.

10 When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. 11 If it accepts your terms of peace and surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you at forced labor. 12 If it does not submit to you peacefully, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it, 13 and when the Lord your God gives it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword. 14 You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, livestock, and everything else in the town, all its spoil. You may enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you. 15 Thus you shall treat all the towns that are very far from you, which are not towns of the nations here. 16 But as for the towns of the peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. 17 You shall annihilate them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—just as the Lord your God has commanded. 18 So that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against the Lord your God. 19 If you besiege a town for a long time, 20 if you besiege a town for a long time making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an ax.

14:36-42; 20:5-8. On the administrative role of the officials, see 16:18 (cf. 10:5; Josh 1:10). Implementation of these provisions for exemption is specifically noted in 1 Mac 3:56 (cf. Deut 23:5; Judg 7:3). "Dedicating" or "inaugurating" (cf. 1 Kings 8:65; of the temple); also Deut 28:30 (the *vin*). 20:6. *Enjoyed its fruit*, made "profit" or ordinary use of the harvest (cf. 31:5; cf. Lev 19:23-25). 20:7. "Engaged," formally " betrothed"; cf. 2 Sam 3:14. 20:9. *Commanders*, lit. "officers of horses" (cf. 1 Kings 2:25). 20:10-20. Rules of engagement. 20:10. *Terms of peace*, surrender followed by vassalage (cf. 2:26; Josh 9:3-27; 11:19; Judg 1:27-35; 21:13; 2 Sam 10:19). 20:12-15. A mitigated ban is applicable against distant or external foes (cf. 2:33-35; 6:7; Num 31:7-55). 20:16-18. A total ban must be inflicted upon the prohibited nations of Canaan (see 7:1-2; cf. 12:29-31). *Anything that breathes*, livestock as well as the human populations (cf. Gen 7:22; Josh 10:40; 11:14; 1 King 15:29). 20:19-20. For the tactics called into question, see 2 Kings 3:19, 25; cf. Josephus, *Jewish War* 5:523; 6:5-6.

against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down. Are trees in the field human beings, that they should come under siege from you? 20 You may destroy only the trees that you know do not produce food; you may cut them down for use in building siege works against the town that makes war with you, until it falls to you.

Law Concerning Murder by Persons Unknown

21 If, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess, a body is found lying in open country and it is not known who struck the person down, then your elders and your judges shall come out to measure the distances to the towns that are near the body. 2 The elders of the town nearest the body shall take a heifer that has never been worked, one that has not pulled in the yoke; 3 the elders of that town shall bring the heifer down to a wadi with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck therein in the wadi. 4 Then the priests, the sons of

Levi, shall come forward for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to him and to pronounce blessings in the name of the Lord, and by their decision all cases of dispute and assault shall be settled. 6 All the elders of that town nearest the body shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the wadi, and they shall declare: "Our hands did not shed this blood, nor were we witnesses to it. Absolve, O Lord, your people Israel, whom you redeemed; do not let the guilt of innocent blood remain in the midst of your people Israel."

21:1-9. This case sketches procedures for restricting communal liability and exculpating bloodguilt in event of a rural homicide in which the culprit cannot be found and prosecuted (cf. 19:4-13; Num 35:30-34). 21:2. Appointed judges (see 16:18) exercise on current jurisdiction with local elders (see note on 19:12) in determining the town nearest the scene of the crime. 21:3-4. Transfer or expiation of liability is enacted by nonsacrificial slaughter (*break the neck*; cf. Ex 13:13; 34:20) of an unworked heifer (cf. Num 19:2, 1 Sam 6:7) in a pristine locale. Running water, the "constant flow" (cf. Ps 74:15; Am 5:24) presumably effects the removal of bloodguilt. 21:5. For the jurisdiction of the priests, the sons of Levi (also 31:9; cf. 18:1), see 17:8-13; 21:6-8. An exculpatory act (hand washing) and declaration of innocence accompany petitionary prayer for removal of bloodguilt. 21:8. Absolve, "expiate," "forgive," or "expiate" (e.g., 2 Sam 2:24; Ex 32:30; 2 Sam 21:3). 21:9. Cf. 13:5, 18; 19:18; Josh 1:

Israel. Then they will be absolved of bloodguilt. 9 So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, because you must do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

Female Captives

10 When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God hands them over to you and you take them captive, 11 suppose you see among the captives a beautiful woman whom you desire and want to marry, 12 and so you bring her home to your house; she shall shave her head, pare her nails, 13 discard her captive's garb, and shall remain in your house a full month, mourning for her father and mother, after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. 14 But if you are not satisfied with her, you shall let her go free and not sell her for money. You must not treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

The Right of the Firstborn

15 If a man has two wives, one of them loved and the other disliked, and if both the loved and the disliked have borne him sons, the firstborn being the son of the one who is disliked, 16 then on the day when he wills his possessions to his sons, he is not permitted to treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the disliked, who is the firstborn. 17 He must acknowledge as firstborn the son of the one who is disliked, giving him a double portion* of all that he has; since

* Heb. two-thirds.

21:10-21. These three articles (vv. 10-14, 15-17, 18-21) impose restraints on the exercise of authority by male heads of household. 21:10-14. Here a foreign woman acquired as a spoil of war (cf. 20:14) who then becomes a man's slave wife or concubine may not later be sold for profit by the husband (cf. Ex 21:7-10). 21:12-13. The rites make a transition separating the woman from her former identity and captive status in preparation for her role as bride. 21:14. *Go free* may denote manumission rather than divorce (cf. 15:12-13; 16:34; 16; cf. 22:19, 29; 24:1-3). As a slave, i.e., as chattel, *Disinherited*, or "violated," often refers to coerced sexual intercourse (e.g., Gen 19:42; Judg 19:24; 2 Sam 13:12). 21:15-17. The legal status of the firstborn son, with an attendant share of inheritance is fixed by priority of birth rather than paternal decision. See, e.g., Gen 21:9-13; 27:1-40; 48:13-49:4; 1 Kings 1:5-26; 1 Chr 5:1-2; cf. Code of Hammurabi 165-170; 21:15. *Disinherited*. Cf. Gen 29:31-33; 21:17. *Double portion*, "two-thirds" of

JOSHUA

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA tells the story of the Israelites who, under Joshua's guidance and with the benefit of divine intervention, crossed the Jordan River to take control of the land of Canaan. Israel takes its orders from Joshua, who gets his orders directly from the Lord. The land was God's gift, promised to the ancestors in the stories of Gen 12–50 and secured by conquest under God's military leadership. In generations to come, Israel's possession of its land would often be endangered by outside attack or foreign domination, but the book of Joshua sustained its claim on the land given to it by God.

Structure

THE BOOK SHOWS FOUR MAIN DIVISIONS: preparations for the attack (chs. 1–5), conquest of the land (chs. 6–12), apportionment of the land to the tribes by lot (chs. 13–21), and two national assemblies called by Joshua (chs. 23–24). There are three decisive demonstrations of divine power: at Jericho (ch. 6), at Ai (chs. 7–8), and at Gibeon (chs. 9–10). Each of these three stories embodies the idea of a miraculous sign and victory won by the Lord in the role of Divine Warrior. The tradition of sacrificial war confesses, "The Lord fought for Israel" (10:14, 42; cf. 23:3, 10). The geography of conquest falls into three campaigns, central (chs. 6–8), southern (ch. 10) and northern (ch. 11), with a summary in ch. 12. The apportionment of land begins in the south with Judah (chs. 14–15) and then turns to the central territories of Ephraim and Manasseh (chs. 16–17). The remaining tribes west of the Jordan receive their land based on the work of a survey commission (chs. 18–19).

Content and Message

AT THE OUTSET ISRAEL IS DEPICTED as a mighty twelve-tribe army. The people are encamped east of the Jordan River near the northern end of the Dead Sea. The Lord encourages Joshua as their leader (1.1–2, 5–9) and promises Israel a sweeping land (1.3–4). This is the land toward which Moses had led the people in their wanderings for forty years since their departure from Mount Sinai/Horeb. In the concluding chapter, Joshua assembles all the tribes of Israel at the city of Shechem in the heart of the land of promise. There Joshua presides at a covenant ceremony in which rival gods are repudiated and Israel affirms its allegiance to the Lord alone. Preparations for entrance into the land (ch. 1) are followed by a reconnaissance of Jericho

(ch. 2), crossing the Jordan River and setting up memorial stones at Gilgal (chs. 3–4), and finally circumcision of all the males (5.2–9) because circumcision had not been practiced during the wilderness wanderings. With a celebration of the first Passover west of the Jordan (5.10–12), all was at last in readiness for the warfare, as signaled by Joshua's encounter with a mysterious heavenly commander (5.13–15). Stories of warfare (6.1–11.15) stress that the conquest was the result of the Lord's gracious action, for which Israel could claim no credit. Israel's proper role was loyalty and obedience (8.30–35). Sweeping claims are made for military conquest of all the land (11.16, 23) and its complete distribution to the tribes (13.8–19.51). This optimistic viewpoint, however, stands in sharp tension with contrary statements that describe the conquest as less than total (13.1–7, 15.63, 16.10, 17.12–13, 23.5–13).

Concluding chapters continue to advocate for loyalty and obedience. To facilitate justice in cases of homicide while at the same time curbing the practice of blood vengeance, asylum towns ("cities of refuge") are designated, three on each side of the Jordan (ch. 20). These and other towns are designated in each of the tribes to provide residential and grazing rights for the priestly tribe of Levi (ch. 21). Deep rifts in national unity are vividly displayed when the building of an altar "near the Jordan" (ch. 22) nearly results in intertribal warfare. Joshua's concluding address spirals downward to a stern warning (ch. 23), followed by a great covenanting ceremony at Shechem (ch. 24). The stage is set for the story of Israel's life in the land from start (Judges) to finish (2 Kings).

Canonical Context, Sources, and Redaction

JOSHUA INCORPORATES THREE TYPES of material. Conquest narratives describing the victories of the Lord, who fights for Israel as the Divine Warrior, make up much of chs. 2–11. Geographical lists and descriptions are found in chs. 12–21. Theological discourses introduce the book in ch. 1 and conclude it in chs. 23–24. All three types of material work together to claim the land of promise for Israel. The individual narratives in Joshua began as folktales about merely local victories, but were eventually gathered into a connected narrative as the triumphs of a unified Israel (chs. 2–11). Later this collection was reedited, growing to chs. 1–12, 23, as part of a historical work that also included the books of Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. Because the book of Deuteronomy served as its preface and theological foundation, scholars refer to this larger work as the Deuteronomistic History. The main edition of this history probably originated in the reign of the reforming king Josiah, triggered by the discovery of an early form of Deuteronomy during repairs at the Jerusalem temple (ca. 622 BCE; see 2 Kings 22–23). After the defeat of Judah, the geographical material of chs. 13–21 and the story of ch. 22 were added, and ch. 24 was appended to form a second conclusion.

The stories and other materials taken up in Joshua cannot be used directly as historical evidence for a violent conquest. The stories were told and the lists preserved to serve theological and nationalistic interests, not historical purposes. Archaeological data frequently provide illustrative light, but rarely decisive corroboration. However, when studied with the aid of social-science perspectives, the texts and excavation data combine to yield a clearer picture of the emergence of Israel in the premonarchical period. [ROBERT G. BOWEN, revised by RICHARD D. NELSON]

God's Commission to Joshua

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying, 2 "My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and the Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the Great Sea in the west shall be your territory. 5 No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous; for you shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to act in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful. 9 I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

1.1-11 God commissions Joshua. Vv. 1-9 emphasize qualities required of Joshua and the leadership he must provide in taking over the land. 1.1 Action begins after the death of Moses, who had been denied entrance into the land (Num 20.12; Deut 34.4). 1.3 Walking over the land was a way of legally claiming it. 1.4 Canaan lay west of the Jordan, stretching from the Negev wilderness in the south through the mountains of Lebanon. The description of the land of promise extending as far north as the Euphrates reflects the promise of Gen 15.18; Deut 11.24 as well as royal ideology (Ps 72.8). These expansive, ideal borders were never actually achieved. 1.5 The Lord, speaking as the Divine Warrior who leads heavenly armies into battle and fights for Israel, promises Joshua military success (see v. 3) and effective presence (see v. 9). 1.6 Strong and courageous (repeated in vv. 7, 9, 18). Cf. Deut 31.7, 23. The rhetoric of speeches in Joshua frequently echoes Deuteronomy. 1.7-8 This is the theology of Deuteronomy: Obedience to the law... Moses commanded leads to prosperity and success. Joshua is to resemble the ideal king described

Preparations for the Invasion

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, 11 "Pass through the camp, and command the people: 'Prepare your provisions; for in three days you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess.'"

12 To the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, 13 "Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest, and will give you this land.' 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan. But all the warriors among you shall cross over armed before your kindred and shall help them. 15 Until the Lord gives rest to your kindred as well as to you, and they too take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land and take possession of it; the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan to the east."

16 They answered Joshua: "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you, as he was with Moses!" 18 Whoever rebels against your orders and disobeys your words, whatever you command, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous."

in Deut 17.18-20. In the context of the Deuteronomistic History (see Introduction), this book of the law (cf. 2 Kings 22.8) refers to some form of Deuteronomy. 1.11 These three days are concluded by 3.2.

1.12-18 Involvement of tribes in Transjordan. In territory east of the Jordan settled by Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh, the followers of Moses achieved their first successes. These tribes had already occupied their land, but were now commanded to take part in the seizure of Canaan, where the other half of Manasseh will settle. Deut 3.18-20 reports their agreement with Moses. 1.13 Ref. (also v. 15) is security in the land established by the Lord's defeat of the enemy (21.44; 23.1). 1.16-18 The eastern tribes here respond eagerly and echo Joshua's own words from vv. 7, 9. A double use of only (vv. 17-18) introduces some tension into the plot, however. Reubeners may wonder whether the Lord will be with Joshua, and whether Joshua will prove to be strong and courageous. Cooperative eagerness will turn to suspicion in ch. 22 in a dispute over an altar near the Jordan.

Spies Sent to Jericho

2 Then Joshua son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab, and spent the night there. 2 The king of Jericho was told, "Some Israelites have come here tonight to search out the land." 3 Then the king of Jericho sent orders to Rahab, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house; for they have come only to search out the whole land." 4 But the woman took the two men and hid them. Then she said, "True, the men came to me but I did not know where they came from. 5 And when it was time to close the gate at dark, the men went out. Where the men went I do not know. Pursue them quickly, for you can overtake them." 6 She had, however, brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax that she had laid out on the roof. 7 So the men pursued them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. As soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

8 Before they went to sleep, she came up to them on the roof. 9 And said to the men: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and

2.1-24 Rahab outsmarts the spies. Jericho controlled several fords and routes of access into the hill country. Archaeology has shown that by the late thirteenth and early twelfth centuries BCE Jericho had been reduced to almost a small, unfortified village sitting atop the ruins of the previously walled city. 2.1 Shittim, the final desert encampment (Num 25.1), lay in the eastern Jordan Valley. Similar stories about spies are found in Num 13; Josh 7.2-5; Judg 18.2-10. Rahab is a legally independent woman with her own house. The nature of her business means that the presence of strangers would not be questioned. Rahab would later be reckoned among the ancestors of Jesus (Mt 1.5), lauded as an example of living faith (Heb 11.31), and justified by her works (Jas 2.25). 2.3-4 Come to you and came to me have a double meaning. Understood as "come into you/me," the phrase can imply sexual intercourse as well as arrival at Rahab's house. 2.6-7 Rahab is not just a harlot. She is processing flax by spreading it out on her flat roof to dry. Although Rahab has saved them from the king, the spies find themselves trapped in a rather public location on her roof (cf. 2 Sam 16.22) and the city gate was shut. Pursuers block their route back, further deepening their predicament. This puts Rahab in a position to negotiate a favorable agreement. 2.9-11 Rahab provides the content of the spies' eventual report (v. 24).

that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. 10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea" before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in any of us because of you. The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below. 12 Now then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the Lord that you in turn will deal kindly with my family. Give me a sign of good faith. 13 That you will spare my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." 14 The man said to her, "Our life for yours! If you do not tell this business of ours, then we will deal kindly and faithfully with you when the Lord gives us the land."

15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the outer side of the city wall and she resided within the wall itself. 16 She said to them, "Go toward the hill country, so that the pursuers may not come upon you. Hide yourselves

a. Cf. Gen 22.17

She confesses the Lord as universal God using language that echoes Deut 4.37-38. The kingdoms of Sihon and Og (v. 10), east of the Jordan, had been conquered under Moses' leadership (Num 21; Deut 1-2). They had been utterly destroyed, i.e., devoted to destruction in a sacred war in which the Lord fought for Israel in the role of Divine Warrior (cf. 6.17, 21). Rahab seeks to avoid this fate for her family. 2.12-14 Rahab proposes a covenant of reciprocal protection to protect her extended family. She has dealt kindly (using covenant language, "shown clemency") with the spies by showing faithfulness to the relationship between host and guest. They are to deal kindly in return by honoring a covenant to protect her family. Our life for yours indicates that the spies assent to this arrangement. Their agreement violates the prohibition of Deut 20.10-20. 2.15 The location of Rahab's house described here does not fit well with the collapse of Jericho's wall in ch. 6, given that she gathers her family into her house to save them (2.18; 6.22-23). That she resided within the wall suggests defensive fortifications of the casemate type, i.e., parallel walls divided by cross walls creating chambers that might be used for storage or residence. 2.16 Toward the hill country Rahab remains in charge of the situation. Having sent the searchers eastward toward the Jordan (v. 7), she directs the spies westward into the hills to hide for a few

three days, until the pursuers have returned; then afterward you may go your way.¹⁷ The men said to her, "We will be released from this oath that you have made us swear to you.¹⁸ If we invade the land and you do not tie this crimson cord in the window through which you let us down, and you do not gather into your house your father and mother, your brothers, and all your family,¹⁹ if any of you go out of the doors of your house into the street, they shall be responsible for their own death, and we shall be innocent; but if a hand is laid upon any who are with you in the house, we shall bear the responsibility for their death.²⁰ But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be released from this oath that you made us swear to you."²¹ She said, "According to your words, so be it." She sent them away, and they departed. Then she tied the crimson cord in the window.

22 They departed and went into the hill country and stayed there three days, until the pursuers returned. The pursuers had searched all along the way and found nothing.²³ Then the two men came down again from the hill country. They crossed over, came to Joshua son of Nun, and told him all that had happened to them.²⁴ They said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has given all the land into our hands; moreover all the inhabitants of the land met in fear before us."

Israel Crosses the Jordan

3 Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over.² At the end of three days the officers went through the camp³ and commanded the people, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD, your God

being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it,⁴ that you may know the way you should go; for you have not passed this way before. Let there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come any nearer to it."⁵ Then Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."⁶ To the priests Joshua said, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on in front of the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went in front of the people.

7 The LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as was with Moses.⁸ You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant. When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan."⁹ Joshua then said to the Israelites, "Draw near and hear the words of the LORD your God."¹⁰ Joshua said, "By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Gergashites, Amorites, and Jebusites;¹¹ the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan."¹² So now select twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe.¹³ When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap."¹⁴

14 When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people.¹⁵ Now the Jordan overflows; all its are responsible for the transport of the ark of the covenant, which embodies the LORD's presence in social warfare. The crossing is described in terms suggestive of a religious procession. 3.4. *Thou thousand cubits*, roughly 3,000 feet (1,000 meters). The people must stay at a distance because the ark is dangerously holy (cf. 2 Sam 6:6-7); 3.5. *Sanctify yourselves*. To prepare for a miraculous event, the people are to make themselves holy by means of ritual. 3.7. Any concentration in 1:17 is resolved, for the LORD is undeniably with Joshua (cf. 6:27). 3.10. Perizzites, Gergashites, Amorites, and Jebusites are listed as Canaanites in habitation also occur in 9:1, 11:3, 12:8, 24:11 and are characteristic of Deuteronomy. 3.15. The detail that the Jordan overflows all its banks makes it possible for the priests' feet to touch the edge of the water. It also

banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zairthan, while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea,⁴ were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho.¹¹ While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan; until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.

Twelve Stones Set Up at Gilgal

4 When the entire nation had finished crossing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua,² "Select twelve men from the people, one from each tribe,³ and command them. Take twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood, carry them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you camp tonight."⁴ Then Joshua summoned the twelve men from the Israelites, whom he had appointed, one from each tribe. Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, one for each of the tribes of the Israelites; so that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of

makes the miracle more impressive. 3.16. The water that would have flowed downstream was cut off because it stood still sixteen miles (twenty-six kilometers) upstream at Adam (Tell el-Damiriye). 4.1-5.1. Israel at Gilgal. These verses appear to describe two sets of twelve stones. One set is installed midstream (v. 2). Another set is erected on shore (vv. 3, 5, 8, 20) and would become a memorial to the crossing; this is the shrine at Gilgal (v. 13), which means "circle." Gilgal was a major political and religious center in the premonarchical period. There Saul was made king (1 Sam 11:15), and David's relations with Judah were later repaired (2 Sam 19:15, 40). Gilgal flourished as a sanctuary in the eighth century BCE, when it was roundly denounced by prophets (Hos 4:15; 9:15; 12:11; Am 4:4; 5:5). 4.1. A comparison of this verse with 3:10, 4:11 shows that readers are to understand

the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever."⁸ The Israelites did as Joshua commanded. They took up twelve stones out of the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD told Joshua, where they camped, and laid them down there.⁹ Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.¹⁰

10 The priests who bore the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan, until everything was finished; that the LORD commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. The people crossed over in haste.¹¹ As soon as all the people had finished crossing over, the ark of the LORD, and the priests, crossed over in front of the people.¹² The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the Israelites, as Moses had ordered them.¹³ About forty thousand armed for war crossed over before the LORD to the plains of Jericho for battle.¹⁴

14 On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.¹⁵ The LORD said to Joshua, "Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, to come up out of the Jordan."¹⁶ Joshua therefore commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan."¹⁷ When the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, as they had been before, and the people crossed over in haste. 3.16-20. The stones will teach future generations about the crossing (cf. 2 Sam 6:20-25). Repetition highlights the marvel that the water was cut off. In contrast, v. 22 emphasizes that Israel crossed on dry ground. 4.9-10. This day is a formula that signals an etiology, a story that explains the origin of a name, place, circumstance, or custom known to readers. Cf. 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29; 9:37; 10:27; 11:13; 14:4; 15:6; 16:10. 4.11. The narrative sets aside the topic of the stones and picks up the description of the crossing from v. 1. 4.12-13. The presence of the eastern tribes emphasizes that all Israel engaged in the conquest as a cooperative venture. As Moses had ordered. See Deut 3:18-20. 4.14. This fulfills the LORD's

the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet touched dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

19 The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20 Those twelve stones, which they had taken out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal, 21 saying to the Israelites, "When your children ask their parents in time to come, 'What do these stones mean?' 22 then you shall let your children know, 'Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.' 23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea," which he dried up for us until we crossed over. 24 So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, and so that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

The New Generation Circumcised

5 When all the kings of the Amorites beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts melted, and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the Israelites.

2 At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites a second time." 3 So Joshua made flint knives, and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath-haaraloth. 4 This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the warriors, had died during the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt. 5 All-

promise made in 3.7-4.18. These incidents undo each event described in 3.15-16, 4.19. The first month, Abib, i.e., March-April, later called Nisan. This note points forward to the date of Passover (5.10): 4.22-23. This response focuses on similarities to the Red Sea crossing on dry ground (in contrast to vv. 6-7). 4.24. The Jordan crossing has two ongoing purposes: that all the peoples of the earth will acknowledge the power (hand) of the Lord, and that Israel's descendants (the children of vv. 21-22) will hold the Lord in reverent awe (fear). 5.1. Neighboring kings react in fear, confirming Rahab's observations (2.9-11). Their loss of courage will motivate their strategy (9.1-2; 10.1-5; 11.1-5) and make it possible for Israel to win the victories described in chs. 6-11.

5.2-12. Circumcision and Passover. All males par-

though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people born on the journey through the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. 6 For the Israelites traveled forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the warriors who came out of Egypt, perished, not having listened to the voice of the Lord. 7 To them the Lord swore that he would not let them see the land that he had sworn to their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 8 So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised, for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

8 When the circumcising of all the nation was done, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. 9 The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

The Passover at Gilgal

10 While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. 11 On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. 12 The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Joshua's Vision

13 Once when Joshua was by Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him. 14 Or: *Sea of Reeds*. b That is the Hill of the Forerunner. c Heard to Heb. *gala* to roll

tipicating in the Passover must be circumcised (Ex 12.48), but the practice had not been followed during the wilderness period. 5.2. A second time. The man previously circumcised had died in the wilderness, so circumcision had to be repeated for the post-exodus generation. 5.3. This narrative explains a place-name near Gilgal, *Gibeah-haaraloth*, "Forensic Hill." 5.9. The *grace of Egypt* signifies Israel's low status as Egyptian slaves and perhaps insults directed at them by their captors. 5.11. *Unleavened cakes and parched grain* are appropriate foods for the first day after the celebration of the Passover because they could be prepared quickly. 5.12. *Manna* is replaced by the crops of the land of Canaan, signifying that Israel had moved from wilderness scarcity to agricultural productive land. 5.13-15. The commander of the Lord's celestial army,

with a drawn sword in his hand, Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you one of us, or one of our adversaries?" 14 He replied, "Neither, but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and he said to him, "What do you command your servant, my lord?" 15 The commander of the army of the Lord said to Joshua, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

Jericho Taken and Destroyed

6 Now Jericho was shut up inside and out because of the Israelites; no one came out and no one went in. 2 The Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have handed Jericho over to you, along with its king and soldiers. 3 You shall march around the city, all the warriors circling the city once. Thus you shall do for six days. 4 With seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets. 5 When they make a long blast with the rams' horns, as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and all the people shall charge straight ahead." 6 So Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and have seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark of the Lord." 7 To the people he said, "Go forward and march around the city; have the armed men pass on before the ark of the Lord."

8 As Joshua had commanded the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Lord went forward, blowing the trumpets, with the ark of the covenant of the Lord following them. 9 And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets; the rear guard came after the ark, while the trumpets blew continually. 10 To the people Joshua gave this command: "You shall not shout or let your voice be heard, nor shall you utter a word, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout." 11 So the ark of the Lord went around the city, circling it once; and they came into the camp, and spent the night in the camp.

12 Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. 13 The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord passed on, blowing the trumpets continually. The armed men went before them, and the rear guard came after the ark of the Lord, while the trumpets blew continually. 14 On the second day they marched around the city once and then returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

15 On the seventh day they rose early, at dawn, and marched around the city in the same manner seven times. It was only on that day that they marched around the city seven times. 16 And at the seventh time, when the priests had blown the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city. 17 The city and all that is in it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her

Somewhere near Jericho, Joshua is granted a theophany—the appearance of a heavenly being—much in the manner of Gideon (Judg 6.11-12). 5.13. Joshua evidently assumes that this man is merely a human soldier. His drawn sword signals impending battle. 5.14. The presence of this supernatural commander signifies sacred war. The Lord's heavenly forces will be fighting on Israel's side. 5.15. A direct quotation of Ex 3.3 recognizes Joshua as the direct successor of Moses. 6.1-27. Jericho is captured first in a classic sacred war and placed off-limits for Israelites. The account is framed by verses that connect with the Rahab story: vv. 1-2, mentioning the king and soldiers; and vv. 22-23, describing the deliverance of Rahab and her household in accordance with Joshua's instructions in v. 17. 6.1. That *Jericho was shut up inside and out* describes Israel's dilemma. Jericho's wall was an impenetrable defense. 6.2. A divine promise of victory was a central element of sacred-war tradition (cf. 8.1; 10.8). 6.3-4. The

siege is to reflect ceremonial features of sacred war, with a procession and priests blowing trumpets. 6.5. A long blast on a trumpet gives the signal, and the people's great shout launches a human assault made possible by a divine miracle (see vv. 16, 20). Archaeology shows that Jericho's last defensive wall no longer existed at the time of Israel's emergence. We are in the realm of confessional folklore rather than history. 6.8-9. The order of march: armed men followed by seven priests blowing trumpets, then the ark, and finally a rear guard. 6.17. Devoted to the Lord for destruction. The Hebrew word *cherem* describes things and people that fall into the distinctive category of being the Lord's exclusive property (cf. Lev 27.20-21, 28-29). Because the Lord achieved Israel's victories, booty and captives won in sacred war were classified as *cherem*. As the Lord's irrevocable possession, such *cherem* had to be kept from human use, because they would be valuable as slaves; the entire enemy population was to be



ing.
26 Joshua then pronounced this oath, say-
ing, "Cursed before the Lord be anyone who
says, 'I will not build the tower of Bethel, for
the Lord is here.'"
27 So the Lord was with Joshua, and his
name was in all the land.
28 So the Lord set up its gates.
29 And at the cost of his youngest he shall
found a foundation.
30 But the Israelites broke faith in regard to
the devoted things: Acham son of Carmi
son of Zabdi son of Zerah, of the tribe of
Judah, took some of the devoted things, and
the anger of the Lord burned against the Isra-
elites.
31 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which
is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to
them, "Go up and spy out the land." And the
men went up and spied out Ai.
32 Then they re-
turned to Joshua and said to him, "Now all the
people need go up, about two or three thou-
sand men, should go up and attack Ai. Since
they are so few, do not make the whole people
toil up there." So about three thousand of them
people went up there; and they fled before the
men of Ai.
33 The men of Ai killed about thirty
men of them, chasing them from outside the
gate as far as Shebarim and killing them on the
down slope of the hill of Bethel. Joshua and
all the Israelites wept that day because of the
breach of faith by the Israelites.

7.1–26 The first of two attacks at Ais is repulsed. The embarrassing defeat is traced to Achan's violation of the decree against making devoted things (6:17–18). The narrative units in ch. 7 are spliced in such a way that the story of Achan (vv. 1, 6–26) is interrupted by the defeat at Ai (vv. 2–5). At the "The Ruin," is identified as Et-Tell (Arabic for "The Ruin"), two miles (three kilometers) east of Bethel. During the period described in Joshua, Et-Tell was at most a small unwalled village nestled amid the remains of a long-neglected city from the third millennium BCE. As in the case of Jericho, this narrative is folklore, not history. 7.1 Details about Achan's family background portend the procedure by which this crime will be uncovered (vv. 16–18). Even though Achan acted alone in ignoring Joshua's warning (6:18), the principle of corporate responsibility means that all the *Israelite brothers* (cf. v. 11), so that *the anger of the Lord* is directed against the entire nation. 7.2 Gathering intelligence was sometimes the first step in a secret war (2.1 Judg 1:23). 7.3 *Not all will go up*. As in the first reconnaissance (2.24), these spies bring an optimistic re-

JUDGES

Historical Context

THE BOOK OF JUDGES recounts traditional stories that span a critical period in Israelite history, from the death of Joshua to a tragic and costly civil war. After an incomplete conquest that leaves much land in the hands of Israel's foes (ch. 1), Israel follows a recurring pattern of disloyalty to God followed by oppression by its enemies. Israel then cries out in repentance and the Lord sends deliverers, the so-called judges. These judges are national military leaders (chs. 2-12) or, in the case of Samson, a solitary champion (chs. 13-16). In the end, Israel descends into idleness, bloodshed, and civil war (chs. 17-21). The period that is the book's background extends from the closing decades of the Late Bronze Age through the Iron I period (ca. 1200-1020 BCE). The 410-year span that results from adding up the periods of oppression, the tenures of the judges, and the periods of "rest" mentioned in the book assumes that the judges governed "all Israel" sequentially. In fact, their leadership was more likely local and overlapping.

Despite sweeping claims in the book of Joshua of conquest of all the land, Judges describes continued warfare with Canaanites, plus challenges to Israel's hegemony posed by various tribal groups (Midianites and Amalekites) by emerging territorial states (Moab and Ammon) and by the arrival of the Philistines on the coast. Equally serious was the threat posed by aspirants to kingship within Israel (e.g., Abimelech, ch. 9) and internal anarchy resulting from the absence of kingship (chs. 17-21). The situation described by Judges continues into the narrative of 1 Samuel, named after the prophet who is also remembered as a "judge" and who facilitated the establishment of the monarchy, anointing first Saul, then David.

Protagonists and Terminology

THE BOOK PRESENTS TWELVE LEADERS: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jephthah, Izabab, Elon, Abdon, and Samson. The title, *Judges*, reflects the fact that a majority of the book's protagonists are said to have "judged" (Hebrew *shāfat*) Israel. The verb is not limited to strictly judicial function, however, but connotes a general exercise of legitimate "rule." Though scholars often describe the judges' leadership sociologically as "charismatic," the spirit of the Lord "activates the various leaders with very mixed results. Scholars distinguish between "major judges," military chiefs and heroes whose exploits are recounted in stories, and "minor

judges," about whom very little is known apart from their being listed in 10.1-5; 12.7-15. Jephthah is a "major judge" (11.1-12.6), but is also listed in the group of "minor judges" (12.7).

Apart from the introduction (2.16-19), the noun "judge" (Hebrew *shāfat*) occurs only once in this book, as a title of the Lord (11.27). As universal judge, the Lord retains a prerogative that had been attributed to various deities in other ancient Near Eastern societies.

As striking as the absence of the noun "judge" from this book is the presence of the noun "deliverer" or "savior" or its related verb "deliver" in reference to four characters (Othniel, Ehud, Tola, and Samson). It is puzzling, therefore, that this language of deliverance is uniformly absent in regard to those leaders about whom popular lore was most prolific, Deborah, Gideon, and Jephthah. In the case of Gideon, neither "judge" nor "deliverer" language is used. What, then, did Gideon do? Perhaps that is precisely the question. Discerning readers will be alert to a sense of irony throughout the depiction of the judges.

Judges reflects Israel's tradition of sacrificial war, the conviction that the Lord fought against its enemies as the Divine Warrior. The Lord guided tactics and gave assurance of victory (4.6-7), led supernatural forces into battle (5.20-21), and used panic as an effective weapon (4.15; 7.21-22). Sacral war also could imply the complete slaughter of an enemy population as spoil devoted to the Lord for destruction (1.17; 21.11).

Sources and Development

JUDGES IS PART OF ONE LONG HISTORICAL WORK extending from Joshua through 2 Kings and prefaced by Deuteronomy, which serves as a theological introduction. It continues the Deuteronomistic History (see Introduction to Joshua) from the death of Joshua (Judg 2.8) to just before the birth of Samuel (1 Sam 1). Four stages of development can be discerned in the book. First were various stories of local crises and leaders, classic examples of narrative artistry. These stories, rarely involving more than a few tribes, originated in highland villages that comprised immediate and extended families, the so-called fathers' houses and clans. Israel had begun as a lineage system and developed over time to become an agrarian territorial state. Stories of the judges preserve memories of that tumultuous epoch. Scholars generally think that in the second stage these independent stories were collected for didactic purposes, perhaps by the mid-eighth century BCE. The stories are arranged so that good examples of leadership (Othniel, Deborah, Jephthah) alternate with not so good examples (Ehud, Gideon, Samson), with the whole book centering on Abimelech's abortive reign at Shechem. In the third stage these stories were incorporated into the Deuteronomistic History, composed during the reign of the reforming king Josiah (640-609 BCE) to tell the story of Israel's life in the land. Finally, after the destruction of the nation, this historical work was updated for those living in exile. The era of the judges was enclosed within a grim framework of disobedience and its consequences (1.1-2.5; chs. 17-21).

Israel's possession of the land was often at risk. The stories in Judges provided generations of readers inspiring (though sometimes imperfect) models for resistance and national solidarity. Eventually the kingdoms of Israel and Judah failed, and large numbers were deported from the land. In its final form, Judges gives one answer to what went wrong: disloyalty to God, repeatedly resulted in catastrophe. The cyclical pattern of Judges also offered hope in times of national distress. Repentance and obedience might once again lead to deliverance. [ROBERT G. HOLING, revised by RICHARD D. NELSON]

Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the hoofbeats of his
chariots?

29 Her wisest ladies make answer,
indeed, she answers the question
herself.

30 Are they not finding and dividing the
spoil? —

A girl or two for every man;
spoil of dyed stuffs for Sisera,
spoil of dyed stuffs embroidered,
two pieces of dyed work embroidered
for my neck as spoil?

31 "So perish all your enemies, O LORD!
But may your friends be like the sun as
it rises in its might."

And the land had rest forty years.

The Midianite Oppression

6 The Israelites did what was evil in the
sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave
them into the hand of Midian seven years.
27 The hand of Midian prevailed over Israel;
and because of Midian the Israelites provided
for themselves hiding places in the mountains,
caves and strongholds. 3 For whenever the Is-
raelites put in seed, the Midianites and the
Amalekites and the people of the east would
come up against them. 4 They would encamp
against them and destroy the produce of the

land, as far as the neighborhood of Gaza, and
leave no sustenance in Israel, and no sheep or
ox or donkey. 5 For they and their livestock
would come up, and they would even bring
their tents, as thick as locusts; neither they nor
their camels could be counted, so they wasted
the land as they came in. 6 Thus Israel was
greatly impoverished because of Midian, and
the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help.
7 When the Israelites cried to the LORD on
account of the Midianites, 8 the LORD sent a
prophet to the Israelites, and he said to them,
"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I led
you up from Egypt, and brought you out of
the house of slavery, 9 and I delivered you from
the hand of the Egyptians, and from the hand
of all who oppressed you, and drove them out
before you, and gave you their land. 10 And I
said to you, I am the LORD your God; you shall
not pay reverence to the gods of the Amorites,
in whose land you live. But you have not given
heed to my voice."

The Call of Gideon

11 Now the angel of the LORD came and sat
under the oak at Ophrah, which belonged to
Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon was
beating out wheat in the wine press, to hide it
from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD
appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD is
with you, you mighty warrior." 13 Gideon an-
swered him, "But sir, if the LORD is with us

field rape described in v. 30. 5:28 The final scene be-
gins with another woman, the mother of Sisera (cf.
Deborah as a mother in Israel, v. 7), waiting in vain for
Sisera's triumphant return. The scene of a woman
looking out of a window was common in ancient Near
Eastern art and biblical narrative (2 Sam 6:16; 2 Kings
9:30; Prov 7:6). Her reference to hoofbeats sounds
ironic when read in context with v. 22. 5:30 Contrary
to what his mother assumes, Sisera is not capturing
girls for his sexual pleasure, but has been ravished
himself by a woman. 5:31 Your friends, "those who love
you." Forty years is twice as long as the oppression (4:3)
and half as long as the rest following Ehud (3:30).

6:1-8:35 Gideon (also identified in ch. 7 as Jerub-
baal) mobilizes several central hill-country and Gal-
ilean tribes against annual raiding parties from east of
the Jordan (Midianites, Amalekites, and other eastern-
ers). 6:1-10 This introduction uses the now familiar
framework (apostasy, oppression, appeal for help; see
note on 2:11-23) in vv. 1-6. Exploitation originating
from distant oases was made possible by the recent do-
mestication of the camel. 6:2 Midian was a desert con-
federation "sometimes in alliance" (Ex. 2:15-4:31;
18:1-27) and sometimes at war (Num 25-31) with Is-

rael. 6:3 Amalekites were traditional enemies during
the wilderness era (Ex 17:8-16). 6:5 Locusts, a com-
mon image to describe catastrophic destruction (Job
1:33-4; Jer 51:14; Joel 1:6-7; Nah 3:15). 6:7-10 The
warning in 2:3 that other gods would be a snare is
coming true. This time, when Israelites cried, instead
of the expected deliverer the LORD sends a prophet who
delivers an indictment, as the angel of the LORD did in
2:1-5. 6:11-32 The LORD receives a new altar (v.
11-24), and an altar of Baal is destroyed (vv. 25-32).
Gideon is slow to recognize the voice of the LORD, for
shadowing Israel's problem in ch. 10. 6:11 Gideon in
contrast to Othniel, Ehud, and Deborah. 6:11 is first ap-
proached by the angel of the LORD, a visible manifesta-
tion of the LORD's presence in human form, who at
points becomes transparent to the LORD himself. Op-
rah, a village of Manasseh not far from Shechem, Jeru-
baal, a village of Manasseh not far from Shechem. 6:12
Gideon means "Hebrew" or "Hacker" in Hebrew, prob-
ably a nickname based on his reforming activities
under normal circumstances, "wheat" would be
threshed, on a winnowing hilltop, not in a wine press
as here. 6:12 The designation mighty warrior sounds ironic
does not describe Gideon in chs. 6-7, very well

why then has all this happened to us? And
where are all his wonderful deeds that our an-
cestors recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the
LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the
LORD has cast us off, and given us into the
hand of Midian." 14 Then the LORD turned to
him and said, "Go in this night of yours and
deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I
herby commission you." 15 He responded,
"But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the
weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my
family." 16 The LORD said to him, "But I will be
with you, and you shall strike down the Mid-
ianites, every one of them." 17 Then he said to
him, "If now I have found favor with you, then
show me a sign that it is you who speak with
me. 18 Do not depart from here until I come to
you, and bring out my present, and set it be-
fore you." And he said, "I will stay until you re-
turn."

19 So Gideon went into his house and pre-
pared a kid, and unleavened cakes from an
ephah of flour, the meat he put in a basket,
and the broth he put in a pot, and brought
them to him under the oak and presented
them. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take
the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put
them on this rock, and pour out the broth." 21
And he did so. 22 Then the angel of the LORD
reached out the tip of the staff that was in his
hand, and touched the meat and the unleav-
ened cakes, and fire sprang up from the rock
and consumed the meat and the unleavened
cakes; and the angel of the LORD vanished
from his sight. 23 Then Gideon perceived that
it was the angel of the LORD, and Gideon said,
"Help me, LORD (God)! For I have seen the angel
of the LORD face to face." 24 But the LORD said
to him, "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall
not die." 25 Then Gideon built an altar there to
the LORD, and called it The LORD is peace. To

this day it still stands at Ophrah, which be-
longs to the Abiezrites.

25 That night the LORD said to him, "Take
your father's bull, the second bull seven years
old, and pull down the altar of Baal that be-
longs to your father, and cut down the sacred
pole; that is beside it. 26 and build an altar to
the LORD your God on the top of the strong-
hold here, in proper order; then take the sec-
ond bull, and offer it as a burnt offering with
the wood of the sacred pole that you shall cut
down." 27 So Gideon took ten of his servants,
and did as the LORD had told him, but because
he was too afraid of his family and the towns-
people to do it by day, he did it by night.

Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal

28 When the townspeople rose early in the
morning, the altar of Baal was broken down,
and the second bull was offered on the altar
that had been built. 29 So they said to one an-
other, "Who has done this?" After searching
and inquiring, they were told, "Gideon son of
Joash did it." 30 Then the townspeople said to
Joash, "Bring out your son, so that he may die,
for he has pulled down the altar of Baal and
cut down the sacred pole beside it." 31 But
Joash said to all who were arrayed against him,
"Will you contend for Baal? Or will you de-
fend his cause? Whoever contends for him
shall be put to death by morning. If he is a god,
let him contend for himself, because his altar
has been pulled down." 32 Therefore on that
day Gideon was called Jerubbaal, that is to
say, "Let Baal contend against him," because he
pulled down his altar.

33 Then all the Midianites and the Ama-
lekites and the people of the east came to-

α Heb Asherah; b Heb he.

maning of Joash's altar and the hacking down of the
sacred pole associated with the goddess Asherah will
provide legitimacy for Gideon's alternate name, Jeru-
baal (v. 32). 6:26 Using the sacred pole of Asherah as
firewood was a disrespectful and deliberate desecra-
tion. 6:27 Gideon remains an ambivalent figure (cf. vv.
15, 17). He is prosperous enough to command the as-
sistance of ten servants but is only brave enough to
act by night. 6:30-31 Joash, facing the zeal of his son, is
no longer an arid supporter of Baal. The case against
Baal is self-evident. A god unable to defend its own
altar deserves no defense from others. 6:32 Reflecting
his father's challenge in v. 31, Gideon's assertive action
vindicates his name Jerubbaal, Hebrew: "Let Baal Con-

hand of Naomi, you are also acquiring Ruth⁸ the Moabite, the widow of the dead man, to maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance.⁹ At this, the next-of-kin⁸ said, "I cannot redeem it for myself without damaging my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."⁹

⁷ Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one took off a sandal and gave it to the other; this was the manner of attesting in Israel.⁸ So when the next-of-kin⁸ said to Boaz, "Acquire it for yourself," he took off his sandal.⁹ Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have acquired from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.¹⁰ I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, to be my wife, to maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance, in order that the name of the dead may not be cut off from his kindred and from the gate of his native place; today you are witnesses."¹¹ Then all the people who were at the gate, along with the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you produce children in Ephrathah and bestow a name in Bethlehem; and, through

deeming of land would fall within the duties of the *go'el* to keep the land in the family.^{4,5} *Acquiring Ruth*. It is less clear that a *go'el* would be obligated to marry the widow of the deceased landowner. This may be an early form of levirate marriage, which in Deut 25:5-10 is limited to the brother of the deceased (cf. also Gen 38). Or it may be a ploy by Boaz to protect the interests of Naomi and Ruth by ensuring that Ruth and her children would not be separated from this landholding, as would happen if the kinsman redeemed the land but did not marry Ruth. Boaz accepts the double obligation of acquiring the land and Ruth, in order to maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance^{4,9-10}. This echoes the language of the levirate in Deuteronomy. Regardless of the exact legal obligation (which is disputed), Boaz's loyalty to family emerges strongly. In this his loyalty mirrors that of Ruth.^{4,7} *Took off a sandal*. This ancient practice, which needed to be explained even to biblical readers, is not to be confused with the pulling off of the sandal in the

the children that the Lord will give you by this young woman, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

The Genealogy of David

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son.¹⁴ Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin," and may his name be renowned in Israel!¹⁵ He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him!¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse.¹⁷ The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

¹⁸ Now these are the descendants of Perez: Perez became the father of Hezron,¹⁹ Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab,²⁰ Amminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon,²¹ Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed,²² Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.

^a O'V'g. *Isid from the hand of Naomi and from Ruth*. ^b O'V'g. *with the right to redeem*.

case of a brother who declines to marry the widow (Deut 25:9). The sandal is a physical representation of the conveying of goods or rights from one party to another.^{4,12} *Tamar* . . . *Judah*. See Gen 38. ^{4,16} *My nurse*. The child's guardian, like a godmother, not a wet nurse.^{4,17} *A son has been born to Naomi*, notable biological son or even a biological grandson, but a son that he replaces the family that Naomi has lost. The son represents the continuation of the family. Naomi is the central focus at the end of the story, even as she was at the beginning.^{4,18-22} The genealogy begins with Perez, the first of the twins born to Judah by Tamar (Gen 38:29). The places of honor in the last section and tenth, are occupied by Boaz, the hero of our story, and David, the preeminent king of Israel and founder of the dynasty of Judah. The genealogy turns the story into a chapter in the ancestry of David and raises the theme of family continuity to a theological continuity. The story of a family becomes the story of the royal family and hence the nation.

1 SAMUEL

THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL describe the origins of kingship in Israel and recount the reigns of the first two kings, Saul and David. The two books fall roughly into five narrative sections followed by a miscellany of assorted materials. The first section is the story of Samuel (1 Sam. 1.1-7.17), which provides a transition between the period of the judges and the monarchy. The account is dominated by a view of the prophet as a divinely appointed leader capable of functioning as priest, seer, war leader, and judge. It contains as a strong background theme the condemnation of the priestly house of Eli and rejection of the priesthood of Shiloh.

The second section describes the inauguration of kingship in Israel (1 Sam. 8.1-15.34). The central figure is Saul, Israel's first king, who is introduced in auspicious terms as a tall, earnest young man capable of leading Israel on the battlefield. He continues to share the stage with Samuel, however, and the predominant atmosphere is suspicious of monarchy in general and of Saul's kingship in particular. Not long after, Saul has proven himself in battle, his fortunes change and his life begins to unravel. Soon he is condemned for failing to obey the prophetically-mediated divine word.

The third narrative section is the story of David's rise to power (1 Sam. 15.35-2 Sam. 5.10). It is animated by the conflict between the young David, to whom the Lord has promised Saul's throne, and the increasingly jealous and often irrational old king. David is depicted in the most favorable terms as handsome and charismatic, endowed with extraordinary skills as a musician and soldier, and consistently successful in everything he undertakes because, as the narrator repeatedly reminds us, "The Lord is with him."

The fourth section records a number of events from the reign of David (2 Sam. 5.11-12.33). It centers upon the oracle of Nathan in ch. 7, in which David is promised that his descendants will rule after him in Jerusalem in an unending dynasty and that his son will build a temple for the Lord. The fifth section describes the unsuccessful revolt of David's son Absalom (2 Sam. 13.1-20.22). David is now a mature and tragic figure who is obliged to flee Jerusalem in fear for his life and very nearly loses his throne while witnessing the death of two of his sons. At the end of 2 Samuel is a miscellany (2 Sam. 20.23-24.25) containing poetry attributed to David, lists of his various officers and warriors, and a variety of narrative materials loosely related to other parts of Samuel and Kings.

Literary History

THE LITERARY FOUNDATION of 1 and 2 Samuel is a group of early narrative sources upon which later editors and compilers drew. At least four of these can be specifically identified. The first is the ark narrative, which is found in 1 Sam 4.1–7.1 and parts of 1 Sam 2 (some scholars would also include parts of 2 Sam 6). This narrative explains the capture of the ark by the Philistines as a consequence of the Lord's anger over the corruption of the priesthood of Shiloh (see 2.12–17.22–25) and shows how the Lord used the occasion to afflict the Philistines with plague. The second early source, which is much less well defined, is a cycle of stories about Saul. These stories underlie various passages in 1 Samuel, including the tale of Saul's anointing in chs. 9–10, the account of his liberation of Jabez-gilead in ch. 11, and the description of his Philistine wars in chs. 13–14. The third early source is the story of David's rise to power (1 Sam 16.14–2 Sam 5.10), which is designed to demonstrate David's innocence of wrongdoing in his conflict with the house of Saul and to explain his dramatic ascent to the throne as a consequence of divine favor. The fourth early source is the account of Absalom's revolt in 2 Sam 13–20. Its purpose was to disclose the private circumstances leading to the civil war that forced David temporarily into exile. The account explains the death of both Absalom and Amnon, David's firstborn and eldest son, to have been combined with the story of David's death and the accession of Solomon in 1 Kings 1–2 to constitute a succession narrative, explaining how Solomon came to the throne instead of one of his several older brothers.

In their present form 1 and 2 Samuel are part of the Deuteronomistic History, which extends from Deuteronomy through 2 Kings (see also the introduction to Joshua). It recounts the history of the Israelites from the time of their arrival on the plains of Moab and entry into the promised land until the time of their deportation to exile in Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The intervening events are reported and evaluated according to principles derived from the Deuteronomistic law code (Deut 12–26). Deuteronomistic editing is evident in 1 and 2 Samuel, especially in contrast to Judges or Kings. The only major passages that can be attributed to the historian are the oracle against the house of Eli in 1 Sam 2:27–36 establishing the ascendancy of the Zadokite priesthood, the historical retrospective in Samuel's farewell address in 1 Sam 12:6–15, which belongs to a series of such speeches by major figures in the history, and the oracle of Nathan in 2 Sam 7 proclaiming the Davidic dynasty and the erection of the temple in Jerusalem.

Many of the stories in 1 Samuel and to a lesser extent 2 Samuel have been influenced editorially by a point of view that regards the institution of kingship with suspicion while looking to the prophet as the one who can provide a check on royal abuses of power and serve as an agent through which the divine will can be expressed. In certain parts of Samuel this prophetic viewpoint has given the narrative its primary shape. These include the story of Samuel's childhood and rise to power in 1 Sam. 1–8; Samuel's farewell address and the two accounts of the rejection of Saul in 1 Sam. 12–15; the story of the anointing of David in 1 Sam. 16:1–13; and the account of the Bathsheba affair and Nathan's condemnation of the house of David in 2 Sam. 11–12. Though some scholars date this prophetic material to the exile and associate it with the Deuteronomistic revision of the story, others argue that it derives from the time of the monarchy and underlies the final Deuteronomistic edition. In any case, it is necessary to recognize within it a group of passages that present the monarchy in a wholly negative way that makes

room for the Deuteronomistic affirmation of Davidic kingship or even the concept of a prophetically constrained monarchy. These passages include the accounts of Samuel acting as judge in 1 Sam 7.2–17, the people's demand for a king in 8.1–22, the election of Saul as king in 10.7–27a, and Samuel's farewell address in 12.1–25. This material is united not only by its retrospective view of the institution of kingship as a failure, but also by its common representation of the city of Mizpah as the meeting place of all Israel (cf. 1 Sam 7.5; 10.17), a historical situation that existed only after the destruction of Jerusalem, when Mizpah served as the Babylonian provincial capital and headquarters of the government of Gedaliah (2 Kings 25.23). The Mizpah material is best understood as an exilic redaction of the story of the origin of the monarchy told from a uniformly hostile point of view.

The story of the history of Israel recorded in the books of Samuel and Kings is largely retold in the books of Chronicles, which use the books of Samuel and Kings as major sources. That retelling has its own emphases and interests, reflecting the concerns of a later period in the history of Israel.

The Text

FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, not all of them clear, the Hebrew text of 1 and 2 Samuel has come down to us in defective form. For this reason, translators must rely heavily on the Septuagint and other ancient versions as well as three fragmentary Samuel manuscripts from Qumran (4QSam^{a, b, c}). [E. KYJE MCCARTER JR.]

Samuel's Birth and Dedication

There was a certain man of Ramthain, a Zuphite^a from the hill-country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkannah son of Jehoiachim son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2He had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 NOW this man used to go up year by year from his town to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. 4 On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; 5 but Hannah gave a double portion, 6 because the LORD had closed her womb.

bl-28 The auspicious story of the birth of Samuel, who dominates the first half of 1 Samuel, and of his dedication as a Nazirite (see xv, 11, 22), 1.1 *Ramathaim* = Ramathaim, the site of the battle of Ramoth-gad, 1.1 *ST* Armathae, may have been in the northern region near Timnah and Iodo. *Elkanah*, though called an Ephraimite here, is given a Levitical genealogy in Gen 6:26, where he is listed as a member of the tribe of Kohath, which had special responsibility for the ark (see Num 3:29-31); this qualifies his son Samuel the priestly duties he carries out in chs. 2-3. On

he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁷So it went on year by year, as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

9 After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord.¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed

a Compare Gk and 1 Chr 6:35-36: Heb *Ramathaim-zophim*
 b Syr: Meaning of Heb uncertain c Gk: Heb lacks and
 presented herself before the Lord

Elkanah's designation as a *Zuphi*, see note on 9.5. 1.3 *Shiloh*, in the Ephraimite hills about twenty miles north-northeast of Jerusalem, was the central sanctuary of the Israelites at the time of Samuel's birth. 1.6 *Her rival*, i.e., Peninnah. The Hebrew word became a technical term for a second wife or co-wife in the rabbinic period. 1.7 The reference to the *house of the Lord* in this story are surprising in view of the biblical tradition that no temple existed before the one in Jerusalem (see 2 Sam 7.6; 1 Kings 8.16), but the Shilohite

ISAI'AH

The book of Isaiah is a composite work, the product of several different prophets who ministered at different periods in the history of Israel. Scholars normally distinguish between three main sections in the book: chs. 1-39, referred to as First Isaiah and attributed in general to the eighth-century BCE Judean prophet whose name the book bears; chs. 40-55, referred to as Second Isaiah, or Deutero-Isaiah, and attributed to an unknown prophet who lived in Babylon during the Babylonian exile of the sixth century; and chs. 56-66, referred to as Third Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah, and attributed to a prophet or prophets who lived in Judah after the return from Babylonian exile in 539 BCE.

First Isaiah The book of First Isaiah (1-39) is the earliest of the three sections. According to the superscription (1.1), Isaiah son of Amoz prophesied in Jerusalem during the reign of the four Judean kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. If the vision in 6.1-13, which is Isaiah's inaugural vision, he began prophesying in the year of Uzziah's death (ca. 738 BCE), and although the end of his ministry is less certain, it extended at least until 701 and perhaps as late as 688. Isaiah's datable oracles cluster in three main periods: the period of the Syro-Ephraimite war (735-732 BCE), when Syria and Israel attacked Judah (7.1-2); the period of anti-Assyrian agitation in the west against Sargon II (ca. 720-710); and the period of Hezekiah's revolt against Sennacherib (ca. 705-701), possibly again in 689-88. There is evidence that during the long ministry Isaiah adapted and reused early oracles in new historical settings: some oracles originally directed against Syria and Israel at the time of the Syro-Ephraimite war were later given an anti-Assyrian slant. Although the editorial process cannot be fully recovered, the genuine Isaian oracles seem to have been preserved in several subcollections. Chs. 1-5 primarily contain oracles against God's own people. The core of chs. 6-31 appears to be a collection from the time of the Syro-Ephraimite war. Chs. 13-23 contain oracles against the nations; chs. 28-33 have oracles on the revolt against Sennacherib. Not all the material in chs. 1-39 can be attributed to Isaiah of Jerusalem, however. In addition to individual oracles whose authenticity is questioned by one scholar or another, there are major blocks of material in chs. 1-39 that are clearly not the work of Isaiah of Jerusalem. Chs. 39 are largely prose narrative taken from 2 Kings 18.13-20.19 and secondarily inserted into the

book of Isaiah. Chs. 34-35 are much closer in style and content to Second or Third Isaiah and would probably be dated to the exile or postexilic period. Chs. 24-27, often referred to as the early Apocalypse, contain protoapocalyptic oracles that stand in marked contrast to those of Isaiah of Jerusalem. Although Isaiah's oracles are rooted in particular historical contexts and his threats and promises do not dissolve the reality of those contexts, the oracles in chs. 24-27 are difficult to root in any historical context and are marked by a heavy dependence on mythological motifs. Scholars normally date these chapters to the early sixth-century BCE or later. Isaiah of Jerusalem was rooted in the Zion tradition, which celebrated God as the great king of heaven and earth; Jerusalem (Zion) as the city God chose to be his royal dwelling; and the kings of the Davidic line as God's anointed vice-regents on earth. The influence of all three aspects of this tradition is evident in the prophet's message. Isaiah's inaugural vision (6.1-4) portrays God as the exalted king, from whose terrifying holiness even the most august angels must hide their eyes. That vision colors the prophet's attitude toward anything that humans might set up as a rival for the fear and allegiance that rightly belong only to the divine sovereign (see 4.2-22.8.13). Isaiah assumed that God had founded Zion/Jerusalem (14.32) lived in it (8.18), and his influence would ultimately save it. Nevertheless, since the holy God would not live in a moral sin, an morally defiled Jerusalem must be purified by judgment before the city could be saved (12.1-28.29.1-8). Isaiah's adherence to the Davidic royal tradition is clear from his assurance (9.1-7.1.1-10.32.1-2) that Ahaz (7.3-17) and his several portrayals of the ideal king (9.1-7.1.1-10.32.1-2).

Second Isaiah The book of Second Isaiah (40-55) presupposes an Israelite audience living in Babylon toward the end of the Babylonian exile (597-539 BCE). The prophet announces to his listeners that the end of their exile in Babylon is imminent. Babylon, not Assyria, is Israel's main enemy; and the burden of the prophet's message is the promise of deliverance, not the threat of judgment. Moreover, the prophet twice mentions the Persian ruler Cyrus (44.28; 45.1) as a figure who has come to the attention of his audience. Such notice certainly presupposes Cyrus's dethroning of his Median rival, Astyages (550) and perhaps Cyrus's defeat of the Lydian king Croesus (547/6) as well. Thus this anonymous prophet's work can probably be dated between 545 and 539 BCE. Although clearly dependent on First Isaiah's message, Second Isaiah is also easily distinguished. Second Isaiah shares the eighth-century prophet's emphasis on the holiness of God and his vision of God as the great king, and he at least adapts the earlier prophet's ideal of the Davidic king, democratizing it to apply it to the entire nation. Unlike First Isaiah, however, the message of Second Isaiah is primarily that of consolation, and this message is couched in a distinctive style. In relatively long, markedly lyrical oracles, Second Isaiah reassures the exiles that God still controls history. Despite present appearances, the Lord will soon demonstrate his power by bringing the Israelites back to their own country in a second exodus more glorious than the first. Before this God, who has created all things, the Babylonian idols are as nothing; God's judgment on both the Babylonians and their gods is imminent.

Third Isaiah Chs. 56-66 are so similar stylistically to Second Isaiah that they must be attributed either to the same author or to some disciple or disciples who used the poetry of Second Isaiah as a model. The historical setting presupposed is, however, different from that of Second Isaiah.

The audience addressed by Third Isaiah is once more living in the land of Judah. Isa 66:1 suggests that work had already begun on rebuilding the temple, work completed in the years 520-515 BCE. The initial return from Babylonian exile has already taken place, but this second exodus has not been as glorious as Second Isaiah predicted, and life for the returnees in Judah remains very harsh. In these difficult circumstances there are both economic oppression and an attempt to cope with life's problems, a resurgence in the pagan rituals long indigenous in Israel. In response to this situation Third Isaiah announces God's imminent judgment on the oppressors and syncretists. The prophet promises the righteous that God's glorious deliverance of Israel, long promised by Second Isaiah, is soon to be realized. Soon the wealth of the nations will pour into Jerusalem along with the rest of Israel's exiles, and the shame and sorrow of the recent past will be replaced with eternal joy and prosperity.

An Overarching Unity

DESPISE THE DIFFERENT HISTORICAL SETTINGS to which the various parts of the book may be attributed and the clear evidence of multiple authorship, there is also a certain overarching unity to the book. All parts of the book share a common theological tradition, and the two parts seem to take up, adapt, respond to, or reverse announcements made in earlier parts of the book while staying in that same theological tradition. Like most other prophetic books, the book of Isaiah moves in a general way from oracles predominantly of judgment to those of salvation. In response to these observations, recent scholarship has begun to turn its primary attention away from the traditional historical-critical issues of historical setting and authorship toward an attempt to explain this overarching unity. Some scholars see this unity as the result of a thorough reediting of the book by the latest authors or their disciples in the exile or postexilic periods. In its most extreme form, this scholarly trend also explores how the prophetic collection as a whole has been edited to shape interconnections within the whole prophetic corpus.

Most scholars, even of the most traditional historical-critical mold, would admit there have been some late editing of the earlier parts of the book, but the evidence for a thorough, intentional, coherent editing of the book as a whole is not very persuasive. Such reconstructions are far more hypothetical than the reconstructions of traditional historical criticism. Historicist constructions at least have attested external historical events as a control over pure speculation. Battles and political crises are public events that leave records elsewhere than in the prophetic book itself. In contrast, editorial work by its very nature is private and, barring the discovery of earlier manuscripts showing variant text forms, the reconstruction of such work never rises above the level of more or less plausible hypotheses. In this author's opinion, the editor processes even within the material that may be confidently attributed to the eighth-century Isaiah of Jerusalem are often less than transparent. Thus the opinion reflected in these notes that the overarching unity of the book owes more to a common theological tradition in which all the authors stood than to any consistent and coherent editing the book has undergone. The common theological tradition and the fact that the later authors were responding to and commenting on the earlier oracles in the book are sufficient explanation for the overarching unity.

[J. J. M. ROBERTS]

1 The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

The Wickedness of Judah

2 Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth; for the LORD has spoken:
3 I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.
4 The ox knows its owner,
5 and the donkey its master's crib;
6 but Israel does not know,
7 my people do not understand.

8 Ah, sinful nation,
9 people laden with iniquity,
10 offspring who do evil,
11 children who deal corruptly,
12 who have forsaken the LORD,
13 who have despised the Holy One of Israel,
14 who are utterly estranged!

15 Why do you seek further beatings?
16 Why do you continue to rebel?
17 The whole head is sick,
18 and the whole heart faint.

19 Superscription. In contrast to other superscriptions found in Isaiah (2:1; 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 24:1; 25:1; 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 29:1; 30:1; 31:1; 32:1; 33:1; 34:1; 35:1; 36:1; 37:1; 38:1; 39:1; 40:1; 41:1; 42:1; 43:1; 44:1; 45:1; 46:1; 47:1; 48:1; 49:1; 50:1; 51:1; 52:1; 53:1; 54:1; 55:1; 56:1; 57:1; 58:1; 59:1; 60:1; 61:1; 62:1; 63:1; 64:1; 65:1; 66:1), this superscription is intended as a heading for all of chs. 1-39 (cf. Jer 1:1-3; 2:1-3). It characterizes the book as a prophetic message from God given to Judah by Isaiah, and it puts the message in a limited historical context. 12-20 God brings a legal suit against his people because of their breach of the Mosaic covenant. 12-13 The accusation: *Heavens and earth* are summoned as witnesses (cf. Deut 32:1; Ps 50; Mic 6:1-8) in this lawsuit because they were witnesses when the covenant was originally made (Deut 4:23-26; 30:19; 31:24-30). God, the father of the people of Israel, charges them with being unfaithful children (Deut 32:5-6), a crime subject to the death penalty in Israelite law (Deut 21:18-21). 13-14 *Israel* is sometimes used as a specific reference to the Northern Kingdom, but here it is an inclusive designation for God's people, since Zion, the capital city of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, is mentioned (v. 8). 15-16 Isaiah's behavior shows less understanding than he normally encountered in dumb animals (cf. Jer 14:4-9). Direct address to Israel underscores the seriousness of the wicked behavior. 14-16, sometimes translated (55:1), a simple exclamation to get the attention of those being addressed (58:11, 18). The following words identify them as God's wicked children mentioned in v. 2. *Holy One of Israel*, one of Isaiah's fa-

6 From the sole of the foot even to the head,
7 there is no soundness in it,
8 but bruises and sores
9 and bleeding wounds;
10 they have not been drained, or
11 bound up,
12 or softened with oil.

13 Your country lies desolate,
14 your cities are burned with fire;
15 in your very presence
16 aliens devour your land;
17 it is desolate, as overthrown by
18 foreigners.

19 And daughter Zion is left
20 like a booth in a vineyard,
21 like a shelter in a cucumber field,
22 like a besieged city.

23 If the LORD of hosts
24 had not left us a few survivors,
25 we would have been like Sodom,
26 and become like Gomorrah.

27 Hear the word of the LORD,
28 you rulers of Sodom!
29 Listen to the teaching of our God,
30 you people of Gomorrah!

31 write designations for God (5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11-12; 31:1; 37:23). It expresses the unapproachable majesty and sanctity of this God (cf. 6:1-5), who nonetheless graciously chose Israel and lives in its midst (12:6; Ex 24:9-11). 15-16 To treat such a holy God with contempt is utter folly; Israel has already been disciplined so harshly that it is like a person whose whole body is covered with untreated wounds yet who continues to provoke more punishment. 17-18 The historical reality behind Isaiah's metaphor of discipline appears to be the desolation of the land caused by one of the Assyrian invasions, probably that of Sennacherib in 701 BCE. *Zion*, another name for Jerusalem, which Sennacherib isolated and besieged. *Daughter Zion*, personification of the city as a young woman carrying an undertone of affection or sympathy. 19 *Lord of hosts*, another of Isaiah's choice designations for God; it occurs fifty-six times in chs. 1-39. The epithet portrays God as the king and leader of the army of heavenly beings (1 Kings 22:19) and thus underscores God's great imperial power (2 Sam 6:2; Ps 24:10; Isa 6:3). *Sodom and Gomorrah* were proverbial as cities utterly destroyed by God (13:19; Gen 19:24-29; Deut 29:23; Jer 49:18; 50:40; Am 4:11; Zeph 2:9). 11-10-17 God rejects ritual worship until such rituals are accompanied by a genuine change to moral behavior (cf. 29:13-14; Jer 6:20; 7:1-15; Am 5:21-24). 11-10 *Sodom and Gomorrah* were also

3 The Egyptians are human, and not God; their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and the one helped will fall, and they will all perish together.

4 For thus the LORD said to me, As a lion or a young lion grows over its prey, and—when a band of shepherds is called out against it—is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the LORD of hosts will come down to fight upon Mount Zion and upon its hill.

5 Like birds hovering overhead, so the LORD of hosts will protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will spare and rescue it.

6 Turn back to him whom you^a have deeply betrayed, O people of Israel. For on that day all of you shall throw away your idols of silver and idols of gold, which your hands have sinfully made for you.

8 Then the Assyrian shall fall by a sword, not of mortals; and a sword, not of humans, shall devour him;

he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be put to forced labor.

9 His rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the standard in panic,^b

says the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

32 *Government with Justice Predicted*
See, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice.

31.1-3 Cf. 30.1-17; Jer. 17.5-8, 31.4-9 The mixed imagery^c of an attacking lion (5.29) and protecting birds (Deut. 32.11) suggests God's siege of Jerusalem followed by his deliverance of the city (see 29.1-8). 31.4 Cf. Jer. 25.30, 34-38, 31.6-7 A call to repentance originally addressed to the Northern Kingdom. (cf. 2.20; 17.7-8). 31.8-9 God will destroy Assyria; the Lord dwells in Jerusalem like a fire or a furnace, ready to refine his own people or consume his enemies (see

2 Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a worn land.

3 Then the eyes of those who have sight will not be closed, and the ears of those who have hearing will listen.

4 The minds of the rash will have good judgment, and the tongues of stammerers will speak readily and distinctly.

5 A fool will no longer be called noble, nor a villain said to be honorable. For fools speak folly, and their minds plot iniquity, to practice ungodliness,

to utter error concerning the LORD, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink.

7 The villainies of villains are evil; they devise wicked devices to ruin the poor with lying words, even when the plea of the needy is right.

8 But those who are noble plan noble things, and by noble things they stand. Complacent Women. Warned of Disaster. Rise up, you women who are at ease, hear my voice; you complacent daughters, listen to my speech.

9 In little more than a year you will shudder, you complacent ones.

10 For the vintage will fail, the fruit harvest will not come. Tremble, you women who are at ease, shudder, you complacent ones.

^a Heb they

12.5; 30.27-33; 33.14). 32.1-8 In the future the mixed ideal king (9.1-7; 11.1-9) and his princes (cf. 1.24) will be marked by righteousness and justice. 32.2 In like the former officials who oppressed the people (1.23; 3.14-15), these rulers, like God, will offer relief (cf. 25.4-5; 28.12). 32.3 A reversal of the judgment (6.9-10, 32.5-8) in those days fools and villains will be called by their right names (cf. 5.20). 32.9-14 Cf. 3.16-4.1. 32.10 The failure of the vintage will end the

strip, and make yourselves bare, and put sackcloth on your loins. Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine,

for the soil of my people growing up in thorns and briers; yes, for all the joyous houses in the jubilant city.

10 For the palace will be forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever,

the joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks; until a spurt from on high is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field.

11 The fruitful field is deemed a forest, then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

12 The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.

13 My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

14 The forest will disappear completely,^a and the city will be utterly laid low.

15 Happy will you be who sow beside every stream, who let the ox and the donkey range freely.

33 *Prophecy of Deliverance from Foes*
Ah, you destroyer, who yourself have not been destroyed;

you, Assyria, life of feasting (5.10-12), 32.11-12 typical mourning rites (Jer. 4.8), 32.15-20 The decision of judgment will only be ended when the young out of God's spirit brings justice and righteousness to the people so that they live in security (see 11.2-9).

33.1-24 An extended prophetic liturgy that includes communal prayer (vv. 2-9), oracles promising deliverance from the Assyrian oppressor (vv. 1, 10-12) and a call to righteous living in God's presence (vv. 13-16). 33.1 Warning to the treacherous oppressor that his turn will come (see 10.5-12). 33.2-4 Lamentant praising God as the defender of

you treacherous one, with whom no one has dealt treacherously! When you have ceased to destroy, you will be destroyed; and when you have stopped dealing treacherously, you will be dealt with treacherously.

2 O LORD, be gracious to us, we wait for you.

3 Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble.

4 At the sound of tumult, peoples fled, before your majesty, nations scattered. Spoil was gathered as the caterpillar gathers;

as locusts leap, they leaped^a upon it. The LORD is exalted, he dwells on high; he filled Zion with justice and righteousness;

he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure.^b

7 Listen! the valiant^c cry in the streets; the wails of peace weep bitterly.

8 The highways are deserted, travelers have quit the road. The treaty is broken, its oaths^d are despised, its obligation^e is disregarded.

9 The land mourns and languishes; Lebanon is confounded and withers away; Sharon is like a desert;

Zion and describing the treachery of the oppressor. 33.2 Arm, source of strength. Morning, the time of God's intervention (Ps. 46.5). 33.3-4 Traditional imagery from the Zion tradition (see Introduction) for God's protection of Jerusalem; see Ps. 48.4-6, 76.5. 33.5-6 God's presence in Jerusalem is its treasure, the source of its security (Ps. 46.7, 11; 48.1-3; 76.1-3). 33.7-9 The situation of need is described as one of imminent war caused by the treacherous disregard of peace initiatives and earlier treaty commitments. Senacherib's continuation of the campaign against Jerusalem despite Hezekiah's offer of submission provides a possible historical setting (2 Kings 18.13-37).

^a Cf. Heb and it will leap when the forest comes down

^b Meaning of Heb uncertain. ^c Heb his treasure meaning of Heb uncertain. ^d Q Ms. MT omits. ^e Or everyone

they shall possess it forever,
from generation to generation they
shall live in it.

The Return of the Redeemed to Zion

35 The wilderness and the dry land shall^a be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom
like the crocus;^b it shall blossom
abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and sing to it,
the glory of Lebanon shall be on it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon;
they shall see the glory of
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees;
say to those who^c of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!"
Here is your God;
he will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

⁴ Then the eyes of the blind shall be
opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing
for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the
wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a
swamp,^a
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

35.1-10 This oracle originally belonged to the exile collection in chs. 40-55. **35.1-2** The wilderness will bloom (41:18-19; 51:3), and all shall see the glory of the Lord (40:5). **35.3-4** An unnamed group, perhaps the angelic members of God's divine council (cf. 40:1-2), is commissioned to strengthen the disheartened with the good news that God is coming to save them (cf. 40:9-10; 41:10, 13-14; 43:1, 5; 44:2, 5; 51:7, 54:4). **35.5-6a** The spiritual disabilities of God's people (see 6:9-10; 29:9-10; 32:3; 42:18-20) will be corrected. **35.6b-7** Cf. 41:18-19. **35.8** There will be a highway through the wilderness that no one can miss (30:20-21; 40:3-4; 42:16). **35.9** Cf. 11:6-9; **35.10** See 51:11. **36.1-39.8** Historical appendix. Apart from 38:9-20, this material seems to have been inserted from 2 Kings 18:13; 18:17-20; 19. **36.1-22** Sennacherib's

way shall be there,
at it shall be called the Holy Way,
unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go
astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up
on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransom of the Lord shall
return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

36 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. The king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, with a great army. He stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Fuller's Field. And there came out to him Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, and Shebna, the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder.

The Rabshakeh said to them, "Say to Hezekiah: Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you base this confidence, you? Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? On whom do you now rely, that you have rebelled against me?"

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36.1 Fourteenth year of King Hezekiah. According to his annals, Sennacherib besieged Judah in 701 BCE during the course of a third campaign; hence Hezekiah began his reign 715, two other passages date the beginning of Hezekiah's reign to 729 based on a synchronism with the rattle king Hoshea (2 Kings 18:1, 9), but that synchronism is probably artificial and certainly less reliable than the synchronism with the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal. **36.2** Rabshakeh, "chief steward." Assyrian title for a high official. **Lachish**, a major Judah fortress lying southwest of Jerusalem, midway between Jerusalem and Gaza. Sennacherib's siege of Lachish is graphically portrayed on a bas-relief from Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh. **36.3** Eliakim, Shebna,

see you are relying on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt; to all who rely on him. But if you say to me, We rely on the Lord our God, is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, you shall worship before this altar? Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master's servants, when you rely on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Moreover, is it without the Lord that I have come up against this land to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it."

Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall." But the Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the people sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?"

Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king, 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you; for he will not be able to deliver you. Do not let Hezekiah make you rely on the Lord by saying, The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me and come out to me; then every one of you will eat from your own vine and your own fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, until I come to you."

36.5-25 **36.6** Cf. 31:1-3. **36.7** Sennacherib misrepresents the character of Hezekiah's religious reform (2 Kings 18:3-6; 2 Chr 29:3-31:21) for a similar Assyrian misunderstanding of the religious situation in Judah, see 10:10-11. **36.9** Cf. 10:8. **36.10** This is typical Assyrian propaganda. **36.11** Aramaic was the diplomatic language of the period; the language of Judah was Hebrew. The average Judean did not understand Aramaic. **36.12** Horrible conditions resulting from a prolonged siege. **36.13-20** A propaganda speech read at the rank and file of Jerusalem's defenders. **36.19** Hamath, Arpad, Samaria. See note on 10:9.

and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Do not let Hezekiah mislead you by saying, The Lord will save us. Has any of the gods of the nations saved their land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of these countries have saved their countries out of my hand, that the Lord should save Jerusalem out of my hand?"

But they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, "Do not answer him." Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

Hezekiah Consults Isaiah

37 When King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the Lord your God heard the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the Lord your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left."

Then the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, "Say to your master, Thus says the Lord: Do not be afraid of the words of the king of Assyria, for he has heard the words that the Lord your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left."

37.1-35 From 2 Kings 19; also cf. 2 Chr 32:16-23.

37.1 Tearing his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, signs of mourning. **37.2** Delegations sent from the king to consult a prophet were normal in such circumstances (2 Kings 22:11-14; Jer 37:3). **37.5-7** Isaiah reassures Hezekiah. Rumor report of problems back in Assyria. Fall by the sword. Sennacherib was murdered by his own sons in Assyria, but he was not killed until 681 BCE, twenty years after his third campaign. This

International Setting

THE ASSYRIAN ARMY under Tiglath-pileser III conquered Damascus along with part of Israel, and in 722 they besieged Samaria, Israel's capital. The Philistine city Ashdod fell in 711. Under Ahaz, Judah became a vassal state of the Assyrian Empire. Under Hezekiah, Judah entered into a coalition with Phoenicia and Philistia (Ashkelon and Ekron) against Sennacherib. When Sennacherib attacked the Southern Kingdom in 701, forty-six fortified towns fell. Although Jerusalem was left unharmed, Judah remained a dominated land and a captive people.

Structure

THE BOOK OF MICAH IS, for the most part, well preserved. Scholars generally accept chs. 1-3, and from 2.12-13, as authentic. The remainder of the book appears to be a compilation of later additions, though 6.1-7.6 may also be authentic. Scholars are divided over the general structure of the book, but the proclamations form an overarching thematic scheme: judgment (1-2.11), salvation (2.12-13), judgment (3.1-12), salvation (4.1-5.15), judgment (6.1-16), lament (7.1-7), and hope and confidence (7.8-20). The historical circumstances of Micah's proclamations invite further study.

The Message

MICAH UNDERSTOOD HIS TASK to be a preacher of truth—to expose injustice and inequity; to offer a word of hope and salvation, and to make known a vision of a new and transformed way of life for his community and his world. Deeply concerned with ethical issues, Micah railed against the political and religious leaders of his day because they had abandoned their divinely ordained responsibility of exercising and maintaining justice throughout the land. The common good was being usurped by personal self-interest on the part of Judean law courts, large landowners, and merchants. Micah's biting proclamations made clear God's disdain for apostasy, idolatry, hypocrisy, and disregard for Torah. He condemned the break in covenant relationship that led to grave injustices and much suffering. Micah warned leaders about their selfish attitudes and smug spiritual pride. He foresaw the Assyrian invasion; he made known the devastation that an empire greater than Israel and Judah would bring on the community. His words were not heeded, and the inevitable invasion did occur, leaving many cities in ruins. Doom, however, was not Micah's overriding message. In the midst of a long judgment speech (1.1-3) is a word of hope (2.12-13); this theme continues throughout chs. 4-5 and 6-7. The book ends with an expression of confidence in God, who is merciful and who will exercise justice for the sake of the salvation of all peoples. Micah makes known to his people, and to later readers of the text, that God is indeed a God of righteousness whose compassion outweighs justice, and whose love for all remains steadfast. (PHILIP J. KINGS, revised by CAROL J. DEMBSEY)

MICAH

The Prophet

VERY LITTLE IS KNOWN about Micah, whose name, which means "Who is like the Lord," was common in ancient Israel. The prophet is distinguished from his namesakes by being identified with his hometown Moresheth, a pastoral village that was most likely a military and administrative outpost of Jerusalem. Together with Amos, Isaiah, and Hosea, Micah was one of Israel's four great eighth-century BCE prophets. His rural roots in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, enabled him to understand how the overbearing policies of the political, social, and religious leaders of his time affected the peasant class. A prophet more of the marketplace than town square than the temple or its sanctuary, Micah addressed injustice with passion and poetic eloquence.

Historical Situation

THE SUPERScription (1.1) suggests that Micah prophesied during the reigns of three Judahite kings: Jotham (742-735), Ahaz (735-715), and Hezekiah (715-687/6 BCE). More precisely, Micah's prophetic career probably spanned the last quarter of the eighth century during the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah.

A vigorous ruler, Hezekiah initiated several religious reforms. He took many precautions to safeguard Judah against the threat of an Assyrian invasion, including forming a coalition with Phoenicia and Philistia against Sennacherib, Assyria's king, the successor of Sargon II. Under Hezekiah, Judah experienced an economic revolution. Wealth, invested in the land, led to the growth of vast estates and the collapse of small holdings. Wealthy landowners thrived at the expense of small peasant farmers. The shift from a bartering to a monetary, mercantile economy increased the gap between the rich and the poor. Furthermore, many priests and prophets viewed their ministry as a business rather than a vocation and acted accordingly. Thus, Micah preached during a time when Judah was experiencing radical internal change while living under the threat of a foreign military invasion.

- "Surely the LORD is with us!
No harm shall come upon us."
12 Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a
wooded height.

Peace and Security through Obedience

- 4 In days to come
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the
mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.
Peoples shall stream to it,
and many nations shall come and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of
the LORD;
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from
Jerusalem.
3 He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall arbitrate between strong
nations far away;
they shall beat their swords into
plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against
nation;
neither shall they learn war any more;

smug confidence. 3.12 The severest of all judgments. What is most precious to God is about to be destroyed, what happened to Samaria (1.6) will also happen to Jerusalem. This stunning announcement is the one least expected by the political and religious leaders, who had put their confidence in the Zion tradition with its message of the inviolability of Jerusalem. Here Micah shatters the leaders' religious pride.
4.1-5.4 prophetic vision that promises peace for the future, closely paralleled in Isa 2.2-4, but in marked contrast to Mic 3.12. Scholars disagree on the relationship between these texts, and some have posited dependence on a common source. 4.1 *The mountain of the LORD's house*, Mount Zion 4.2 Three times each year on the major feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles) pilgrims went up to Jerusalem (Ps 122.1-4). *Instruction* (Hebrew *torah*) in the sense of divine teachings. 4.3 Micah describes a vision of world peace that God as just ruler and judge will bring about in a nonviolent way through arbitration. This vision would fulfill one of the sovereign's main responsibilities, namely, to bring peace and tranquility

- 4 but they shall all sit under their own vines
and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has
spoken.

- 5 For all the peoples walk,
each in the name of its god,
but we will walk in the name of the LORD
our God
forever and ever.

Restoration: Promised after Exile

- 6 In that day, says the LORD,
I will assemble the lame
and gather those who have been driven
away,
and those whom I have afflicted.
7 The lame I will make the remnant,
and those who were cast off, a strong
nation;
and the LORD will reign over them in
Mount Zion
now and forevermore.
8 And you, O tower of the flock,
hill of daughter Zion,
to you it shall come,
the former dominion shall come,
the sovereignty of daughter Jerusalem.

- 9 Now why do you cry aloud?
Is there no king in you?

to all nations (1 Kings 5.4; Isa 9.7; 11.1-9; Jer 23.5-33.15-16). 4.4 Peace among nations leads to individual peace symbolized by an agrarian image of security and stability. *Vines and fig trees* represent long-term stability, peace, and prosperity. 4.5 We, the congregation in Judah. 4.6-8 A divine promise. God will act positively on behalf of the remnant, and both sovereignty and noble dignity will be restored to Jerusalem. 4.7 The dispersed will be brought back to Jerusalem where the LORD will exercise dominion on their behalf from the Temple Mount. 4.8 *Tower of the flock*, translation of the Hebrew place-name Migdal Hazer Shimon after burying Rachel (Gen 35.21). Towers were sometimes erected to protect pastures. Here *tower of the flock* designates Mount Zion. Hill (Hebrew *gibeah*) refers to the fortified upper sector of capital cities where the palace and other royal buildings stood. Jerusalem, Ophel, designated the area lying between the Temple Mount and the City of David on the southeast hill. 4.9-10 Prophetic announcement of salvation. God's suffering people will be consoled and re-

- Has your counselor perished,
that pangs have seized you like a
woman in labor?
Write and groan, "O daughter Zion,
like a woman in labor,
for now you shall go forth from the city
and camp in the open country;
you shall go to Babylon.
There you shall be rescued,
there the LORD will redeem you
from the hands of your enemies.

- 11 Now many nations
are assembled against you,
saying, "Let her be profaned,
and let our eyes gaze upon Zion."
But they do not know
the thoughts of the LORD;
they do not understand his plan,
that he has gathered them as sheaves to
the threshing floor.

- 12 Arise and thresh,
O daughter Zion,
for I will make your horn iron
and your hoofs bronze;
you shall beat in pieces many peoples,
and shall devote their gain to the
LORD,
their wealth to the LORD of the whole
earth.

- 13 Now you are walled around with a wall,^a
siege is laid against us;
with a rod they strike the ruler of Israel
upon the cheek.

zented from their suffering. The references to childbirth suggest new life. At this juncture the people are in a state of transition as they move from devastation to promise of restoration. 4.10-11 *Like a woman in labor*, a image that, although not fully developed in these verses, is suggestive of the birth pangs necessary for new life. The simile conveys a message of hope, but without its dangers. 4.11-13 Prophetic announcement of salvation. The nations are coming to wage war against Zion, but Zion, according to God's promise, will prevail against them. 4.13 *Iron hoofs*, symbols of strength and hardness, respectively (Jer 1.18). *Gain*, legitimate plunder as well as illegitimate treasures, including bribes. *Wealth*, legitimate gain.
5.6 Prophetic announcement of salvation. The passage strengthens the hope of the people as they anticipate a new royal messiah, the ideal leader, promised by the prophet, who will usher in a time of strength, justice and peace. 5.1 *They strike... upon the cheek*, an act

- The Ruler from Bethlehem*
2 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

- 3 Therefore he shall give them up until the
time
when she who is in labor has brought
forth;

- 4 And he shall stand and feed his flock in
the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD
his God.

- 5 And they shall live secure, for now he
shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace.

- 6 If the Assyrians come into our land
and tread upon our soil,
we will raise against them seven shepherds
and eight installed as rulers.
7 They shall rule the land of Assyria with
the sword,
and the land of Nimrod with the
drawn sword;^a

of humiliation expressing contempt for the king. It may refer to King Hezekiah, who in 701 BCE was cowed by Sennacherib. 5.2 *Bethlehem*, a small town five miles south of Jerusalem. David, a native of Bethlehem, was anointed there by Samuel (1 Sam. 16.1-13). *Ephrathah* is identified with Bethlehem. The relationship between Bethlehem and Ephrathah is unclear. Ephrathah may have been the ancient name of Bethlehem, or it may have been absorbed into Bethlehem. This undistinguished town was paradoxically to be the source of salvation. *Mc, God: Whose origin... ancient days*, the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7). 5.4 A description, comparable to that in the royal psalms (e.g., Ps 2, 72), of the ideal shepherd-king who will bring security and peace. 5.5-6 A picture of victory over the unrelenting Assyrians to be accomplished by Israel's own leaders. 5.5 *Seven... eight*, a numerical progression, as in Am 1.3, signifying an indefinite number. The reference is to an alliance of rulers defeating the Assyrians. 5.6 *Land of Nimrod*, a poetic term for Assyria, is in parallel with *land of Assyria*.

^a Meaning of Heb uncertain. ^b GK Syr Tg: Heb and I will
c Ch 4.14 in Heb. ^d Ch Compare GK: Meaning of Heb
uncertain. ^e Ch 5.1 in Heb. ^f GK: Heb in our palaces
^g Ch: Heb in its entrance