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Introduction

Moses is commanded to make a second set of tables, Deuteronomy 10:1, Deuteronomy 10:2. He makes an ark, prepares the two tables, God writes on them the ten commandments, and Moses lays them up in the ark, Deuteronomy 10:3-5. The Israelites journey from Beeroth to Mosera, where Aaron dies, Deuteronomy 10:6; and from thence to Gudgodah and Jotbath, Deuteronomy 10:7. At that time God separated the tribe of Levi for the service of the sanctuary, Deuteronomy 10:8, Deuteronomy 10:9. How long Moses stayed the second time in the mount, Deuteronomy 10:10, Deuteronomy 10:11. What God requires of the Israelites, Deuteronomy 10:12-15. Their heart must be circumcised, Deuteronomy 10:16. God's character and conduct, Deuteronomy 10:17, Deuteronomy 10:18. They are commanded to love the stranger, Deuteronomy 10:19; to fear, love, and serve God, Deuteronomy 10:20, because he had done such great things for them and their fathers, Deuteronomy 10:21, Deuteronomy 10:22.

Verse 1

Hew thee two tables of stone - See the notes on Exodus 34:1.

Verse 3

Shittim wood - See the note on Exodus 25:5, and succeeding verses, and on the parallel places in the margin.

Verse 4

Ten commandments - See the note on Exodus 20:1, etc.

Verse 6

And the children of Israel took their journey, etc. - On this and the three following verses see Kennicott's remarks at the end of this chapter.

Verse 12

Now, Israel, what doth the Lord - require of thee - An answer is immediately given. God requires,

1. That ye fear him as Jehovah your God; him who made, preserves, and governs you.

2. That ye walk in all his ways - that, having received his precepts, all of which are good and excellent, ye obey the whole; walking in God's ways, not your own, nor in the ways of the people of the land.

3. That ye love him - have confidence in him as your father and friend, have recourse to him in all your necessities, and love him in return for his love.

4. That you serve him - give him that worship which he requires, performing it with all your heart - the whole of your affections, and with all your soul - your will, understanding, and judgment. In a word, putting forth your whole strength and energy of body and soul in the sacred work.

Verse 14

Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens - All these words in the original are in the plural number: שָׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם (hen hashshamayimclass="translit"> ushemey hashshamayim); behold the heavens and the heavens of heavens. But what do they mean? To say that the first means the atmosphere, the second the planetary system, and the third the region of the blessed, is saying but very little in the way of explanation. The words were probably intended to point out the immensity of God's creation, in which we may readily conceive one system of heavenly bodies, and others beyond them, and others still in endless progression through the whole vortex of space, every star in the vast abyss of nature being a sun, with its peculiar and numerous attendant worlds! Thus there may be systems of systems in endless gradation up to the throne of God!

Verse 16

Circumcise - the foreskin of your heart - A plain proof from God himself that this precept pointed out spiritual things, and that it was not the cutting away a part of the flesh that was the object of the Divine commandment, but the purification of the soul, without which all forms and ceremonies are of no avail. Loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, the heart being circumcised to enable them to do it, was, from the beginning, the end, design, and fulfillment of the whole law.

Verse 17

God of gods, and Lord of lords - That is, He is the source whence all being and power proceed; every agent is finite but himself; and he can counteract, suspend, or destroy all the actions of all creatures whensoever he pleases. If he determine to save, none can destroy; if he purpose to destroy, none can save. How absolutely necessary to have such a God for our friend!

A great God - mighty - $\alpha\omega\alpha\omega\alpha\omega\alpha\omega\alpha\omega$ (hael haggibbor), the mighty God; this is the very title that is given to our blessed Lord and Savior, Isaiah 9:6.

Verse 21

He is thy praise - It is an eternal honor to any soul to be in the friendship of God. Why are people ashamed of being thought religious? Because they know nothing of religion. He who knows his Maker may glory in his God, for without him what has any soul but disgrace, pain, shame, and perdition? How strange is it that those who fear God should be ashamed to own it, while sinners boldly proclaim their relationship to Satan!

Verse 22

With threescore and ten persons - And now, from so small a beginning, they were multiplied to more than 600,000 souls; and this indeed in the space of forty years, for the 603,000 which came out of Egypt were at this time all dead but Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. How easily can God increase and multiply, and how easily diminish and bring low! In all things, because of his unlimited power, he can do whatsoever he will; and he will do whatsoever is right.

On a very important subject in this chapter Dr. Kennicott has the following judicious observations: -

“The book of Deuteronomy contains the several speeches made to the Israelites by Moses just before his death, recapitulating the chief circumstances of their history, from their deliverance out of Egypt to their arrival on the banks of Jordan. What in this book he has recorded as spoken will be best understood by comparing it with what he has recorded as done in the previous history; and this, which is very useful as to the other parts of this book, is absolutely necessary as to the part of the tenth chapter here to be considered.

“The previous circumstances of the history necessary to be here attended to are these: In Exodus 20, God speaks the ten commandments; in Exodus 24, Moses, on Mount Sinai, receives the two tables, and is there forty days and nights; in Exodus 25, 26, 27, God appoints the service of the tabernacle; in Exodus 28, separates Aaron and his sons for the priest’s office, by a statute for ever, to him and his seed after him; in Exodus 30, Moses, incensed at the golden calf, breaks the tables; yet he prays for the people, and God orders him to lead them towards Canaan; in Exodus 34, Moses carries up two other tables, and stays again forty days and nights. In Numbers 3, the tribe of Levi is selected; Numbers 8, consecrated; Numbers 10 and 11, the Israelites march from Sinai on the twentieth day of the second month in the second year; in Numbers 13 spies sent; in Numbers 14, the men are sentenced to die in the wilderness during the forty years; in Numbers 18, the Levites are to have no lot nor large district in Canaan, but to be the Lord’s inheritance; in Numbers 20, Aaron dies on Mount Hor; lastly, in the complete catalogue of the whole march (Numbers 33). we are told that they went from Moseroth to Bene-jaakan, thence to Hor-hagidgad, to Jotbathah, to Ebronah, to Ezion-gaber, to Zin, (which is Kadesh), and thence to Mount Hor, where Aaron died in the fortieth and last year. In Deuteronomy 9, Moses tells the Israelites, (Deuteronomy 9:7), that they had been rebels, from Egypt even to Jordan, particularly at Horeb, (9:8-29), whilst he was with God, and received the tables at the end of forty days and nights; and that, after breaking the tables, he fasted and interceded for his brethren during a second period of forty days and nights; and this ninth chapter ends with the prayer which he then made. Chapter 10 begins thus: “At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up,” etc. And from Deuteronomy 10:1 to the end of Deuteronomy 10:5 he describes the second copy of the ten commandments, as written also by God, and deposited by himself in the ark.

“After this we have now four verses, (Deuteronomy 10:6, Deuteronomy 10:7, Deuteronomy 10:8, and Deuteronomy 10:9), which not only have no kind of connection with the verses before and after them, but also, as they stand in the present Hebrew text, directly contradict that very text; and the two first of these verses have not, in our Hebrew text, the least connection with the two last of them. Our Hebrew text, (Deuteronomy 10:6), says that Israel journeyed from Bene-jaakan to Mosera. Whereas that very text in the complete catalogue, (Numbers 33:31), says they journeyed from Moseroth to Bene-jaakan. Again: Aaron is here said to have died at Mosera, whereas he died on Mount Hor, the seventh station afterwards; see Numbers 33:38. And again: they are here said to go from Bene-jaakan to Mosera, thence to Gudgodah, and thence to Jotbath; whereas the complete catalogue says, Moseroth to Bene-jaakan, thence to Hor-hagidgad, and thence to Jotbathah. But if the marches could possibly be true as they now stand in these two verses, yet what connection can there be between Jotbath and the Separation Of The Tribe Of Levi? It is very happy that these several difficulties in the Hebrew text are removed by the Samaritan Pentateuch: for that text tells us here rightly that the march was from Moseroth to Bene-jaakan; to Hagidgad, to Jotbathah, to Ebronah, to Ezion-gaber, to Zin, (which is Kadesh), and thence to Mount Hor, where Aaron died. Again: as the regular deduction of these stations ends with Mount Hor and Aaron’s death, we have then what we had not before, a regular connection with the two next verses, and

the connection is this: That when Aaron, the son of Amram, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, died, neither the tribe of Levi nor the priesthood was deserted, but God still supported the latter by maintaining the former; and this, not by allotting that tribe any one large part of Canaan, but separate cities among the other tribes, and by allowing them to live upon those offerings which were made by the other tribes to God himself. These four verses therefore, (Deuteronomy 10:6, Deuteronomy 10:7, Deuteronomy 10:8, and Deuteronomy 10:9), in the same text, stand thus: (Deuteronomy 10:6), When the children of Israel journeyed from Moseroth, and encamped in Bene-jaakan; from thence they journeyed and encamped at Hagidgad; from thence they journeyed and encamped in Jotbathah, a land of rivers of water: (Deuteronomy 10:7) From thence they journeyed and encamped in Ebronah; in Ezion-gaber; in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh; and then at Mount Hor; And Aaron Died There, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. (Deuteronomy 10:8) At that time the Lord Had separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name unto this day. (Deuteronomy 10:9) Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance, according as the Lord thy God promised him.

But however consistent these four verses are now with themselves, it will be still demanded, What connection have they with the fifth verse before them, and with the tenth verse after them? I confess I cannot discover their least pertinency here, because Aaron's Death and Levi's Separation seem totally foreign to the speech of Moses in this place. And this speech without these four verses is a regularly connected admonition from Moses to this purpose: that his brethren were for ever to consider themselves as indebted to him, under God, for the renewal of the two tables, and also to his intercession for rescuing them from destruction. The words are these: (Deuteronomy 10:4), 'The Lord wrote again the ten commandments, and gave them unto me. (Deuteronomy 10:5) And I came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark, which I Had made: - (Deuteronomy 10:10) Thus I stayed in the mount according to the first time, forty days and forty nights: and the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also; the Lord would not destroy thee. (Deuteronomy 10:11) And the Lord said unto me, Arise, take thy journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land,' etc. But then, if these four verses were not at first a part of this chapter, but are evidently interpolated, there arises another inquiry, Whether they are an insertion entirely spurious, or a genuine part of the sacred text, though removed hither out of some other chapter? As they contain nothing singular or peculiar, are of no particular importance, and relate to no subject of disputation, they are not likely to have arisen from fraud or design; but, perfectly coinciding in sense with other passages, they may safely be considered as another instance of a large transposition [86 words] in the present text, arising from accident and want of care. And the only remaining question therefore is, Whether we can discover, though not to demonstration, yet with any considerable degree of probability, the original place of these four verses, that so they may be at last restored to that neighborhood and connection from which they have been, for so many ages, separated?

It was natural for Moses, in the course of these several speeches to his brethren in Deuteronomy, to embrace the first opportunity of impressing on their memories a matter of such particular importance as the continuation of the priesthood among the Levites after Aaron's death. And the first proper place seems to be in the second chapter, after the first verse. At Deuteronomy 1:19, he speaks of their march from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea, whence they sent the spies into Canaan. He then sets forth their murmurings, and God's sentence that they should die in the wilderness, and he ends the first chapter with their being defeated by the Amorites, their weeping before the Lord, and abiding many days in Kadesh, which is Kadesh-Barnea, near Canaan. Deuteronomy 2 begins thus: Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and We Compassed Mount Seir Many Days. Now, the many days, or long time, which they spent in compassing Mount Seir, that is, going round on the south-west coasts of Edom in order to proceed north-east from Edom through Moab to Arnon, must include several of their stations, besides that eminent one at Mount Hor, where Aaron died. And as part of their road, during this long compass, lay through Ezion-gaber, (which was on the eastern tongue of the Red Sea, and the south boundary of Edom), thence to Zin, (which is Kadesh, that is, Meribah Kadesh), and thence to Mount Hor, as they marched to the north-east; so it is probable that the five stations preceding that of Ezion-gaber were on the extremity of Mount Seir, to the south-west. And if their first station at entering the south-west borders of Edom, and beginning to compass Mount Seir, was Moseroth, this gives the reason wanted why Moses begins this passage at Moseroth, and ends it with Aaron's death at Mount Hor. And this will discover a proper connection between the four dislocated verses and the context here - Deuteronomy 1:46: 'So ye abode in Kadesh (Barnea) many days.' Deuteronomy 2:1: 'Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spake unto me; and We Compassed Mount Seir Many Days.'

'For the children of Israel journeyed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan: from thence they journeyed and pitched in Hagidgad: from thence they journeyed and pitched in Jotbathah, a land of rivers of water: from thence they journeyed and pitched in Ebronah: from thence they journeyed and pitched in Ezion-gaber: from thence they journeyed and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh: from thence they journeyed and pitched in Mount Hor, and Aaron died there, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. At that time the Lord had separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the

covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and to bless in his name unto this day. Wherefore, Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance, according as the Lord thy God promised him.â€

â€œAnd this paragraph being thus inserted at the end of the first verse, the second begins a new paragraph, thus: And the Lord spake unto me, saying, Ye have compassed this mountain long enough; turn you northward - through the east side of Seir (or Edom) towards Moab on the north. See Deuteronomy 2:4-8.â€• - Kennicottâ€™s Remarks, p. 74.

These remarks should not be hastily rejected.