

Handout 1: Deuteronomy Lesson 14

Behold, man, you have before you “water and fire, life and death, good and evil,” heaven and hell, the legitimate king and a cruel tyrant, the false sweetness of the world and the true blessedness of paradise. Power is given to you through the grace of Christ: “Stretch forth your hand to whichever you choose.” “Choose life, that you may live;” leave the broad way on the left which drags you to death and cling to the narrow path on the right which happily leads you to life. Do not allow the wideness of that road on the left to keep you or give you pleasure.

Caesarius, Bishop of Arles (c. 470-543), *Sermon 151.5*

Significant repetitions in the Hebrew text of chapter 29: “today” appears eight times (vs. 4, 10, 12, 13, 15 (twice), 18, 28). The reminder that Yahweh is the personal God of the present generation appears seven times in chapter 29: “Yahweh your God” is found four times (vs. 6, 10, 12, 15), “your God” once (vs. 13), “Yahweh our God” twice (vs. 18 and 29). “Yahweh your God” appears sixteen times in chapter 30 (vs. 2 twice, 3 twice, 4, 6 twice, 7, 8, 9, 10 twice, 16 three times, and 20), and seven times in chapter 31 (vs. 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 17, 25). The word “today” appears seven times in the Hebrew text of chapter 30 (vs. 2, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, and 19) and “today” three times in chapter 31 (vs. 1, 21, and 27).

The modern meaning of *til* or *until* opposed to ancient meaning: the Greek word *heos* (pronounced heh'-oce) and the corresponding Hebrew word *'ad* is used as an adverb, preposition, or conjunction meaning “continuance, even, length as to time.” In the Bible the Greek word *heos* is used to mean that some action did not happen up to a certain point; it does not imply that the action did happen later, which is the modern sense of the word “until.” In these examples the word in the Hebrew text is *'ad* and in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament the word is *heos* as it is in the New Testament):

- *Michal the daughter of Saul had no children until the day of her death* (2 Sam 6:23, NAB). Did this daughter of Saul have children after her death?
- *After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the Ark and sent out the raven and it went forth and did not return til the waters were dried up upon the earth* (Gen 8:7, NAB). In fact, the raven did not return at all.
- (concerning the burial place of Moses) *He buried him in Moab across from the valley of Beth Peor, but til this day no one knows where his grave is* (Dt 34:6, NAB). The location of Moses' grave is still unknown.
- *And they went up to mount Zion with joy and gladness, and offered holocausts, because not one of them was slain until they had returned in peace* (1 Mac 5:54, NAB). Does this mean that all the soldiers were killed after they returned in peace?
- *... and did not know her until [*heos*] she bore her son, the Firstborn. And he called His name Jesus* (Mt 1:25, *The Interlinear Bible: Greek-English*, vol. 4, page 3). According to the teachings of the Church, Mary remained a virgin her entire life.
- *Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes* (1Cor 11:26, NAB). Do we stop acknowledging his death after He comes?

Handout 2: Deuteronomy Lesson 14

Chiastic pattern of the conclusion of Deuteronomy:

A. Succession Arrangements Announced:

- Moses announces his death and the appointment of Joshua (Dt 31:1-8).

B. Creation of the Book of the Torah Announced:

- Moses instructed to write down this Torah (Dt 31:9)
- Moses' instructions for future covenant renewal ceremonies and the reading of the Torah in the Promised Land (Dt 31:13).
- God meeting with Moses and Joshua and prophesies Israel's future apostasy (Dt 31:14-18).
- The command to write the Song of Witness (Dt 31:19-23).

B* The book of the Torah Completed:

- Completion of the book (Dt 31:24).
- Charging to Levites of keep the book beside the Ark (Dt 31:25-27).
- Teaching the people the Song of Witness (Dt 32:1-27).

A* Succession Arrangements Completed:

- Moses is commanded to die (Dt 32:48-52).
- Final blessing of the people by Moses (Dt 33:1-29).
- The death of Moses and Joshua's investiture ceremony (Dt 34:1-12).

The "Song of Witness," also called the "Song of Moses," is known in Hebrew as *Shirat Ha'azinu*, literally "Song of Give-ear" (Dt 32). In the liturgy of the Old Covenant Church, the song was sung at every Sabbath morning liturgy, while the "Song of Victory" or "Song of the Sea" from Exodus chapter 15 was sung at every afternoon liturgical service. In the language of a covenant lawsuit, the "Song of Witness" served as a witness to the Israelites in every generation of the danger of apostasy as a covenant people and the divine judgment they would face for such a failure. The "Song of Witness" was part of the weekly liturgy of the Old Covenant Church until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. Today, the "Song of Victory" is still sung on the Sabbath in Synagogue services, but part of the "Song of Witness" is only recited once a year in the weekly readings.

Jewish scholar Jon Levenson, Harvard University: *There is no rabbinic ceremony in which the Jews are said explicitly to be renewing their partnership in the Sinaitic covenant, as the eight day old boy is said, for example. To be entering the covenant of Abraham (Gen 17:1-4) during his circumcision (Levenson, Sinai & Zion, page 82).* The last written record of the covenant renewal ceremony is found among the secular writings of the Qumran community which was destroyed by the Romans in 68 AD. The only echo of the commitment to the Sinai Covenant is found in the verses of the *Shema*, which are part of the covenant treaty document of the Sinai Covenant. However, those verses do not mention the word "covenant."

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