

23 And He charged Joshua son of Nun: "Be strong and resolute: for you shall bring the Israelites into the land that I promised them on oath, and I will be with you."

24 When Moses had put down in writing the words of this Teaching to the very end, 25 Moses charged the Levites who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, saying: 26 Take this book of Teaching and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, and let it remain there as a witness against you. 27 Well I know how defiant and stiffnecked you are: even now, while I am still alive in your midst, you have been defiant toward the LORD; how much more, then, when I am dead! 28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes and your officials, that I may speak all these words to them and

וַיִּצַו וַיֹּאמֶר הוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון וַיֹּאמֶר הֲזֶק וְאַמֶּץ כִּי אַתָּה תָבִיא אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לָהֶם וְאֲנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ:

24 וַיְהִי | כְּכַלּוֹת מֹשֶׁה לְכַתֵּב אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה־הַזֹּאת עַל־סֵפֶר עַד תַּמָּם: 25 וַיִּצַו מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם נֹשְׂאֵי אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: 26 לָקַח אֵת סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה וּשְׂמַתֶּם אֹתוֹ מִצַּד אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה אֲלֵהֵיכֶם וְהָיָה־שָׁם בְּךָ לְעֵד: 27 כִּי אֲנֹכִי יָדַעְתִּי אֶת־מַרְיָךְ וְאֶת־עַרְפְּךָ הַקָּשָׁה הֵן בְּעוֹדֵנִי חַי עִמָּכֶם הַיּוֹם מִמְּרִים הָיִיתֶם עִם־יְהוָה וְאַף כִּי־אַחֲרַי מוֹתִי: 28 הַקְהִילוּ אֵלַי אֶת־כָּל־זְקֵנֵי שְׁבֵטֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם וְאֲדַבְּרָה בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם אֵת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה

GOD APPOINTS JOSHUA (v. 23)

23. *He charged* This is the first time that God speaks directly to Joshua.  
*I will be with you* God confirms what Moses promised Joshua in verse 8.

CONVEYING BOTH THE TEACHING AND THE POEM (vv. 24–30)

24. *put down in writing* Hebrew: *likhtov* ... *al seifer*. In the Bible, *seifer* means any kind of written document—even a brief letter, a legal document, or an inscription, whether written on a sheet or scroll of papyrus or parchment, or on stone, plaster, or pottery. The *seifer* in this verse is undoubtedly a leather scroll.

*this Teaching* Deuteronomy.

25. *Levites* See verse 9.

26. *Ark of the Covenant* The Ark containing the two tablets of the Covenant on which the Decalogue was written (4:13; 10:1–5). Ancient treaties were commonly deposited in sanctuaries. Keeping the Teaching next to the Ark of the Covenant indicates that it embodies the principles of the covenant and is as binding as the Decalogue itself because it comes from the same divine source. The scroll with the Teaching was undoubtedly to be kept in a container, such as a jar

or a box, to protect it from damage by moisture or worms.

*as a witness against you* Against the Israelites, whom the Levites here represent. Moses assigns the Teaching a new function: It is to be a witness, like the poem (v. 19). Unlike the poem, however, it does not testify to Israel's betrayal of God after settling in Canaan. He probably means that the Teaching will serve as evidence that Israel accepted the terms and conditions of the Covenant; this will enable the people to understand their misfortunes.

27. *Well I know* No one knows better than I, having experienced your defiance so often.

*defiant and stiffnecked* Moses used these terms to characterize Israel's behavior earlier, particularly its refusal to advance on the Promised Land and the incident of the Golden Calf (see 9:13,23).

*how much more, then* Even Moses, despite his authority, could not restrain the Israelites while he was alive; how much more likely are they to rebel after his death.

28. *Gather* As the people are to be gathered to hear the Teaching (v. 12), so their leaders are to be gathered to hear the poem.

*elders of your tribes* Because verse 30 indicates that Moses addressed the entire people, one

24. This included the description of his own death. Moses' final challenge, indeed the

final challenge for anyone, was coming to terms with his own mortality.

that I may call heaven and earth to witness against them. <sup>29</sup>For I know that, when I am dead, you will act wickedly and turn away from the path that I enjoined upon you, and that in time to come misfortune will befall you for having done evil in the sight of the LORD and vexed Him by your deeds.

<sup>30</sup>Then Moses recited the words of this poem to the very end, in the hearing of the whole congregation of Israel:

would have expected the text to contain a statement referring to all of the Israelites and not only the elders. The Septuagint has a longer reading, "the heads of your tribes, your elders, judges, and officials."

**all these words** The poem.

**heaven and earth to witness** Heaven and earth will be the third "witness" (after the poem and the Teaching) that Israel was warned.

וְאָעִידָהּ בָּם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ:  
<sup>29</sup> כִּי יָדַעְתִּי אַחֲרַי מוֹתִי כִּי־הִשְׁחַתְתָּ  
תִּשְׁחַתּוּן וְסַרְתֶּם מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי  
אֹתְכֶם וְקִרְאת אֶתְכֶם הִרְעָה בְּאַחֲרֵית  
הַיָּמִים כִּי־תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה  
לְהַכְעִיסוֹ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיכֶם:

<sup>30</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה בְּאָזְנוֹ כָּל־קֶהֱל יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת עַד תָּמָם: פ

**29. in time to come** The situation described in the poem fits several periods in Israel's later history, beginning with the time of the chieftains ("Judges") after Joshua's death.

**30.** This verse is the introduction to the poem in chapter 32.

**whole congregation of Israel** The entire nation, now formally assembled for the occasion.

RELATION OF THE VERBS  
TO THE CELESTIAL

This section brings to a close the... Seven... is in... from the... to... and the... word... and... "... who... (an... as... conclusion of...

The... a series of... to... hope... of... of... in the... the... wedding... for the... the... who... (an... as... conclusion of...

הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת עַד תָּמָם

אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת עַד תָּמָם