

## Handout: Deuteronomy Lesson 15

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).

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."

The poem entitled "Song of Witness" or "Song of Moses," is known in Hebrew as *Shirat Ha'azinu*. 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.

The word "rock" (*tzur*) is found eight times in the poem. It is used as a title and as a metaphor for Yahweh five times (32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31) and for false gods twice (32:31 and 37). The word "rock" is also found in verse 13 where it does not refer directly to God but may be used to indicate that the provision of food throughout the wilderness journey was directly from the provision of God.

"Jeshurun," literal "Yeshurun" is used as an alternative name for Israel. Formed from the verb *yashar*, "to be upright," it may be a clue to the original meaning of "Israel/Yisrael," thus instead of meaning "struggles with God," Israel may mean "upright of God" (only found in Dt 32:15; 33:5, 26; Is 44:2 where it is used in the context of God's care for Israel and his covenant relationship with His people).

Michal E. Hunt [www.AgapeBibleStudy.com](http://www.AgapeBibleStudy.com)