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# The Impact of Deuteronomy 26:1-11 on Biblical Theology

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## Introduction

### Introduction to Summary Studies

Modern scholars have recognized certain Scriptural passages where the history of Israel is reviewed; two examples are Psalm 78 and Stephen's speech in Acts 7.<sup>1</sup> While much of the modern non-Evangelical research centers around memory studies, Jason Hood and Matthew Emerson published an article in 2013 called "Summaries of Israel's Story" (SIS) where they overviewed the history of summary studies, laid out criteria for identifying SIS, and finally produced a list of ancient works which they believed met their criteria.<sup>2</sup> Working from Hood and Emerson's

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of literature before 2013, see Jason B. Hood and Matthew Y. Emerson, "Summaries of Israel's Story: Reviewing a Compositional Category," *Currents in Biblical Research* 11, no. 3 (2013): 328–48. Several other studies near and after the time of this article's publication have made contributions to summary studies such as Jason Hood's 2011 dissertation *The Messiah, His Brothers, and the Nations*, The Library of New Testament Studies, (London, UK: T&T Clark, 2011), Atar Livneh's *Studies on Jewish and Christian Historical Summaries from the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods*, vol. 95 (Bristol, CT: Peeters Publishers, 2019), and Aubrey E. Buster's 2022, *Remembering the Story of Israel: Historical Summaries and Memory Formation in Second Temple Judaism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022). The field concerned with the story summaries pushes into the memory studies which is an extensive area of research not under consideration in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Hood and Emerson. Of the works Hood and Emerson review, Stauffer is given credit for as being the first to identify the summaries as a unique category in his *New Testament Theology* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1956). Terminology is borrowed from Joachim Jeska's *Die Geschichte Israels in Der Sicht Des Lukas: Apg 7,25b-53 Und 13,17-25 Im Kontext*

article, Chris Bruno, Jared Compton, and Kevin McFadden published a work in 2020 called *Biblical Theology According to the Apostles*.<sup>3</sup> Bruno, Compton, and McFadden focused exclusively on the New Testament and suggested these story summaries were akin to a form of biblical theology which can in turn, inform the modern discipline.<sup>4</sup> In the 2024 publication *Dictionary of the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, Brian Rosner, referenced Bruno, Compton, and McFadden's work saying, "apostolic biblical theology represents a remarkable precedent in many respects for the discipline of redemption-historical biblical theology."<sup>5</sup>

### Thesis and Methodology

This paper will seek to answer what contributions a single SIS from Hood and Emerson's list (Deut 26:5-10a) make to our study of biblical theology. In other words, how was Israel retelling its own story in the first stages of its existence and what can we learn from its presentation in the Scriptures? To do this, the paper will apply Bruno, Compton, and McFadden's method of *context*, *content*, and *contribution* to Deut 26:1-11.<sup>6</sup> First, the context of the passage will be analyzed to answer questions concerning the summary's reason for occurring and its location in Scripture. Second, exegesis will be performed on the passage to consider which events are selected for the summary and what they tell us about the biblical worldview the Israelites were to believe.<sup>7</sup> Third, some final contributions to

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*Antik-Jüdischer Summarien Der Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen, GER: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Chris Bruno, Jared Compton, and Kevin McFadden, *Biblical Theology According to the Apostles: How the Earliest Christians Told the Story of Israel* (London, UK: IVP Academic, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Bruno, Compton, McFadden, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Rosner, "Biblical Theology" in *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, edited by G. K Beale et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2023), 69.

<sup>6</sup> Bruno, Compton, McFadden, 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> I do not find it necessary to belabor the definition of worldview given that it is a commonly understood concept. James Sire can be helpful in saying "a worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart,

biblical theology will be proposed, one of which comes in the thesis of this paper: praxis and belief were meant to be inseparably integrated in the Israelite mind. The notion that these two were inseparable highlights the hamartiological realities experienced by human beings when compared against the backdrop of the entire Old Testament story that is largely a story of Israel's disobedience. Said another way, even if an Israelite mentally assents to the true metanarrative, his ability to live in accordance with it is hindered by sin. This demonstrates the necessity of historical progression towards the coming Messianic Figure. Israel believed a story but could not live in accordance with that story and so even from the earliest stages of their existence, was to have an expectation of Someone Who would enable them to live according to the worldview they received from God.

## **Context**

Much of the modern scholarship surrounding Deut 26:1-11 has been generated from Gerhard von Rad's claim that the summary within the passage represents an ancient historical creed(o).<sup>8</sup> As such, rather than concerning themselves with how the passage impacted the theology of Israel, scholarship has spent considerable time attempting to discern whether von Rad

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that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions which we hold about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being." James Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: Intern Varsity Press, 2004), 122. He breaks the concept down with further nuances, but essentially, he is suggesting that it is a way of viewing the world based on assumptions we hold. I believe this is sufficient for this paper. Worldview is much more than this, but it is in its simplest form, a way of viewing the world. Here, I suggest that the Scriptures are presenting a way of viewing the world which is to be considered proper via their presentation of material.

<sup>8</sup> Though he published these findings earlier, I took this data from Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), 121-123.

was correct in his claim.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the vigorous attempt to discover when the passage was constructed, Aelred Cody considered the accuracy of von Rad's descriptive language in calling the passage a "credo," opting instead for an anamnesis.<sup>10</sup> Von Rad's claim has caused an unfortunate result of giving far less concern to what the passage is attempting to communicate and much more to identifying the structure and origins of the passage which appear somewhat in flux according to scholarly conversation.<sup>11</sup> Hood and Emerson's research is helpful in recognizing that the passage is a "summary of Israel's story" due to its genre-transcendent features that display identifiable characteristics thus giving us the ability to recognize these passages without aggressive precision in genre identification.<sup>12</sup> This allows us to move beyond the need to stuff the passage into a genre category and instead consider how the passage is working in its context. As such, we will now explore the context of Deut 26:5b-9.

### Immediate Textual Context

The immediate textual context of Deut 26:5b-9 analyzed here is 26:1-5a with vv. 10-11.<sup>13</sup> We are informed that this story summary is meant to be spoken by an Israelite within the ritual

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<sup>9</sup> H L. Bosman, "Reconsidering Deuteronomy 26:5–11 as a 'Small Historical Creed': Overtures towards a 'Migrant Reading' within the Persian Period," *HTS Theological Studies* 75, no. 3 (2019): 1–8.; J A. Thompson, "Cultic Credo and the Sinai Tradition," *The Reformed Theological Review* 27, no. 2 (1968): 53–64.

<sup>10</sup> Aelred Cody, "'Little Historical Creed' or 'Little Historical Anamnesis?'" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (2006): 1–10.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Altmann, "Feast, Famine, and History: The Festival Meal Topos and Deuteronomy 26,1-15," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 124, no. 4 (2012): 555–67. Also see footnote 48.

<sup>12</sup> Hood and Emerson, 336-340.

<sup>13</sup> Scholarly conversation often treats the passage along with vv. 12-15. Two ceremonies are in view in Deut 26:1-15 that are meant to be performed once Israel had taken possession of the land. Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 319. I have chosen to limit my study to vv. 1-11, focusing on insights from the first ceremony.

ceremony of the offering of the first fruits.<sup>14</sup> 26:1 explains that the ceremony is to be performed by an individual, given the numerous singular pronouns and verbal constructions that occur in singular form throughout the narrative elements of the passage. While the individual Israelite is in view, he is merely used as an example; the ritual is meant to be a regular practice performed by a male Israelite farmer.<sup>15</sup> Verses 2b-3a confirm this given their eye toward the future in saying this offering will occur at “the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name,” and that the offering will be brought to “the priest who is in office at that time.”<sup>16</sup>

The reference in v. 2b to “the place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name” appears to be a reference to the Tabernacle or Temple.<sup>17</sup> It is pertinent however, to note that the location of the Tabernacle was not an established (*shkhn*) location for some time given the transient nature of the Ark and Tabernacle until Solomon’s day.<sup>18</sup> Previous to the construction

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<sup>14</sup> S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1902), 288.

<sup>15</sup> One might suggest that the singular focus of the phrase *vehayah ki-thavov el-ha'arets asher adonai eloheikha nothen lekha nakhalah* in verse 1 indicates this ceremony is meant only for that generation of Israelites listening to Moses explain the ritual; there is in fact, only one generation that will cross the Jordan for the express purpose of securing the land. However, when the full context comes into view, the passage appears to clearly indicate the ceremony is of a perpetual nature. Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy - Devarim: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 237-238. All Hebrew text is analyzed from Elliger, K., W. Rudolph, and GÉrard E. Weil. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Electronic ed. (Stuttgart, GER: German Bible Society, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> All English Scripture is from *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995) unless otherwise noted. J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary Series. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 377.

<sup>17</sup> Adolph L. Harstad, *Deuteronomy* (St Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2022), 374.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Judges 20:26-27 identifies Ark’s location at Bethel, we are informed of the Ark’s location at Shiloh in 1 Sam 1-3 (particularly 3:3), it was still considered acceptable to move the Ark in 1 Sam 4:3, the Ark returns to Israel after being captured by the Philistines and rests at

of the Temple which is in the distant future from Deut 26, it is hard to see the *maqom* in 2b as the Tabernacle with absolute certainty since the Ark and the Tabernacle were separated at times.<sup>19</sup> The *maqom* referenced in 2b therefore, likely refers to the location of the Ark because it would have been the place the Israelite thought the Lord's presence rested (Exod 25:22; 2 Sam 6:2); this fits the idea of the Israelite worshiper to place the basket "before the Lord your God" (Deut 26:4, 10).<sup>20</sup>

The reference to "the priest who is in office at that time" also appears to have in view future priests who will offer the first fruits for the Israelite on the altar, given that non-Levite Israelites could not formally present the offering themselves.<sup>21</sup> So then, the data concerning the impermanent placement of the Ark and Tabernacle along with the anticipation of future priests

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Kiriath-Jearim in 1 Sam 7:2, and finally it is moved by David to the city of David (Jerusalem) and placed in a tent in 2 Sam 6. This is not an exhaustive list of the Ark's locations.

<sup>19</sup> The difficulty in isolating a place referred to here before the construction of the Temple comes in the fact that there appear to be long periods of time where the Ark and the Tabernacle were not in the same location (for instance, the time between 1 Sam 4 and 2 Sam 6). Additionally, it is not clear that Moses envisioned a time when the Ark and Tabernacle would be separate making isolation of the location of this ceremony exceedingly difficult especially since the *mzvkh* is also mentioned in Deut 26:4. The point I am making here is more geared toward the perpetual nature of the offering rather than the geographical location of the Ark or the Tabernacle, though both are at play below. See footnote 25 as well.

<sup>20</sup> The location of the Ark does not seem to be solidified until it is brought into Solomon's temple in 1 Kgs 8 which also appears to be the place where God has chosen to establish His name (1 Kgs 8:21; cf. 2 Sam 7:13). 2 Sam 7:13 ought to be viewed with some nuance and seen as a reference to both the physical Temple Solomon built and the Temple made from living stones (human beings, 1 Pet 2:5) that the Seed of David (the Messiah, Jesus Christ) will build for the Lord's Name. Only the physical location of the Temple in Jerusalem is relevant to this paper.

<sup>21</sup> The Levites were selected as the priestly class of Israel for their zeal in Exodus 32 and formally sworn into office in Num 8:5-26. Driver, 288. Harstad, 679. See footnote 25 on the altar.

suggest a future orientation of the passage and perpetuality in the offering of Deut 26:1-3.

26:3b-5a offer a fascinating blend of words and response. After bringing the offering to the place where the Lord chooses to establish His Name, the offeror declares his reception of the land promise verbally, responded to with an action from the priest, that is in turn answered with the story summary of vv. 5b-9.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the whole ritual melds together Israelite actions and words concerning the Lord's work in the life of the ancient civilization. This suggests one crucial element in this ritual is the elicitation of a physical response to what is already known and recognized mentally. If the Ark was in Jerusalem, the task of bringing the first fruits would have been an arduous journey (30+ hours of travel on foot) for someone living in the Jezreel valley (the most fertile ground in Israel).<sup>23</sup> In fact, bringing the first fruits to Jerusalem from many of the locations in Israel that are best suited for yielding crops would likely have involved a somewhat strenuous journey to Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup> For the Israelite to obey, serious physical effort was required.

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<sup>22</sup> McConville mentions the dynamic at play in the use of language concerning the going and coming of Israel into the land and within the land and the Lord bringing of Israel into the land through use of the verb *bo*. The Israelites are commanded to go (*bo*) to the priest, declare they have come (*bo*) into the land, declare that the Lord has brought (*bo*) them into the land, and state that they have brought (*bo*) the offering. McConville, 378.

<sup>23</sup> The information concerning the fertility of the Jezreel Valley was obtained from a lecture by John A Beck given in a joint study tour orchestrated by Western Seminary and Jerusalem University College. The class was titled *Historical and Geographical Settings of the Bible*, (Jerusalem, IL: Jerusalem University College, 2022).

<sup>24</sup> The geographical location of the referenced sanctuary is not mentioned in Deuteronomy. McConville, 379. While it is true that the geographical structure of Israel allows for significant fertility in many areas of the southern and middle regions of Israel that surround Jerusalem (there are slopes and valleys west of Jerusalem that provided good farmland for the ancient city), the more fertile soils are located on the western side of the Western Uplifts (or Central Hill Country) towards the Shephelah and Coastal Plain or to the north in the Jezreel Valley and lands of Ephraim and Manasseh. Eastern Manasseh is on the eastern side of the Jordan River and stretches to form the northern border of ancient Israel

When the declaration that the Israelite has received the land promise in v. 3 is complete, v. 4 explains that the priest will set the offering before the altar of the Lord.<sup>25</sup> The priest responds with an action, again showing the integration of physical response with the mental understanding the Israelite should have as the reason for his reception of the land. The priest confirms the declaration of the Israelite is true by offering the basket.<sup>26</sup> In other words, the mediator of Israel responds to the Israelite's physical action of bringing the basket and his mental/verbal declaration of the Lord's faithfulness.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, v. 5a demonstrates the way the Israelite is to respond to the actions of the priest. The priest has confirmed the offering by setting it before the altar and the Israelite is to respond with the story of God's works in Israel's history.<sup>28</sup> The story that follows in vv. 5b-9 declares the Israelite's ability to make the

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as far as Mount Hermon. The richest soils (those with basalt) are found here. James M. Monson with Stephen P. Lancaster, *Geobasics in the Land of the Bible* (Rockford, IL: Biblical Backgrounds Inc., 2008), 25. James M. Monson with Stephen P. Lancaster, *Regions on the Run* (Rockford, IL: Biblical Backgrounds Inc. 2019), fold-out p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> The reference to the altar would indicate that the first fruits offering is taking place at the Tabernacle or the Temple rather than the location of the Ark, but it does not appear that the Ark and Tabernacle were meant to be separated when Moses composed this passage.

<sup>26</sup> The declaration could have been made as the priest was placing the basket which would subvert the suggestion above. J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries vol 5 electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974). I take these declaration and action of the priest happening sequentially or even consequentially; the priest's *weqatal* action (*velaqakh*) happens because of the worshiper's *weqatal* action (*ve'amarta*), thus suggesting the notion of confirmation. Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 101-102.

<sup>27</sup> Harstad explains that the priest represents the people before God and that the passage does not require the priest placing the basket to be the high priest. Harstad, 679.

<sup>28</sup> Again, the *weqatal* (*velaqakh*) is taken as sequential or consequential. A consequentialist reading of the *weqatal* here or in footnote 26 is not necessary but would serve to strengthen the idea of confirmation. Arnold and Choi, 101-102.

sacrifice.<sup>29</sup> The Israelite is able to make the offering because God has fulfilled the promises He made to the Israelites to bring them into the land.<sup>30</sup> If God had been unfaithful, this offering would not have been possible, and the Israelites would either still be under Egyptian slavery or would have died on the way to Canaan in the wilderness. Thus, the Israelite is to summarize his worldview with the story of God's work in the life of the nation. Verses 5b-9 are to be declared and believed as the reason the Israelite can make the offering.

Verses 10-11 are also part of the immediate context of the passage. The Israelite is to conclude his worldview summary by explaining that his offering is possible because he has received the land promise.<sup>31</sup> Verse 10a shows the Israelite has received the produce from the land precisely because God has been faithful to bring him into the land and give him an abundance. The offering is then secured before the Lord and the Israelite is to respond along with his household, the Levite, and the alien with rejoicing and worship.<sup>32</sup> Again, the verbal declarations are

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<sup>29</sup> Harstad insightfully remarks that "authentic worship and prescribed liturgical rites are not mutually exclusive." Harstad, 678.

<sup>30</sup> McConville, 380.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 380.

<sup>32</sup> There is much conversation about a supposed discrepancy between v. 4b and 10a regarding the placement of the basket. Driver resolves the discrepancy by suggesting the priest set down the basket in both vv. 4 and 10. Driver, 289. Phillips suggests that v. 4 is in disarray with v. 10 and thus it is clear the text has been "elaborated." Anthony Phillips, *Deuteronomy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 173. Von Rad suggests it is "perfectly clear that here an earlier cultic tradition has been revised by the Deuteronomist." Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1966), 157. Biddle suggests the text may have undergone editorial expansion. Mark E. Biddle, *Deuteronomy* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Pub, 2003), 381. Craigie has one of the more conservative approaches by seemingly suggesting the passage is not necessarily trying to be exhaustive in its description of the events and thus a return of the basket to the worshiper may be in view. Craigie, 320. I would suggest vv. 4 and 10 are referring to the same action of causing the basket to rest (*nvkh*) before the Lord and that the second reference is merely confirmation with the first reference being the initial action. In other words, one could translate *nvkh* in verse 4 as "place" or "set" and *nvkh* in v. 10 as "secure." In this way, *nvkh* in v. 10 acts as final

responded to with what is likely the physical act of bowing down (*shkhh*) and verbal rejoicing (*shmkh*).<sup>33</sup>

In sum, the physical act of bringing the offering in v. 2 is followed by the verbal declaration of v. 3b. This is then responded to with an action in v. 4, that is then responded to with a full summary of the Biblical worldview in vv. 5-9 that is meant to be believed. The summary culminates in a verbal declaration in v. 10a, then is followed by a physical response in v. 10b and a verbal response in v. 11.<sup>34</sup> The whole passage seamlessly integrates action and word with the worldview summary through the liturgical ritual.<sup>35</sup>

## In Deuteronomy

Regarding the context of 26:5b-9 in the book of Deuteronomy, there are two details to keep in mind. First, Deuteronomy derives its name from *Deuteronomion* meaning “second law,” but is also called *dvr̄m* in Hebrew.<sup>36</sup> *Deuteronomion* suggests a recapitulation of the four previous books.<sup>37</sup> This detail helps us

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confirmation and thus completion of the liturgical act meant to be followed by the expression of worship. Duane Christensen appears to agree that vv. 4 and 10 refer to the same act in *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 6b (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 638.

<sup>33</sup> Ludwig Koehler, et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Leiden, NL: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000).

<sup>34</sup> As mentioned in footnote 32, it seems best to take ם as a reference to confirmation in verse 10b. This does not necessarily negate the notion that ם can be seen as a physical response. Even if it is not, the integration of action and belief are still at play.

<sup>35</sup> Deuteronomy 26 is structured to focus on the affirmations of the worshiper. McConville, 377. Merrill further explains that “as with all such ritual, there must be both act and word...” Eugene F. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary vol. 4. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1994), 332.

<sup>36</sup> Tigay, xi.

<sup>37</sup> Harstad details how all parts of Deuteronomy (legislation, promises, curses, narrative, poetry) point to a retelling of what has come before. Harstad, 9-10. It is also important to note on this point that some commentators see Deuteronomy as an exposition of the ten words (*dvr̄m*) or commandments in Deuteronomy 5 and hence find a

understand the setting in which the story summary of 26:5b-9 is placed; just as the Mosaic Law is restated, so too Israel's history is restated. Likewise, the Hebrew name also helps establish the setting of the book. The title *dvrn* stems from the first line of the book and homes in on the discourses delivered by Moses before his death.<sup>38</sup> In this way, it is imperative that Israel have a correct understanding of their national identity (through words) so that when they enter the land, they will not fall away from obedience to God.

Second, Deuteronomy is considered a book about love.<sup>39</sup> The Hebrew word *'hv* appears 25 times in Deuteronomy which is the second highest of any book in the Old Testament. Given that obedience to the Law of Moses is also a central theme in Deuteronomy, the fact that *'hv* is used with such frequency showcases the idea that love for God is tied to keeping His commandments.<sup>40</sup> *'Hv* in Deuteronomy refers to both God's love for Israel (4:37, 7:8 7:13, 10:15, 10:18, 15:16, 23:6) and to Israel's required love for God by keeping His commandments (5:10, 6:5, 7:9, 10:12, 10:19, 11:1, 11:13, 11:22, 13:4, 19:9, 30:6, 30:16, 30:20). The tying together of love and obedience demonstrate the story summary of 26:5b-9 offers a worldview explanation for the Law's existence and what Israel is to remember about God's love for them through His actions. Israel's understanding of God's actions should prompt their loving obedient action to Him.

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connection with both names of the book. Biddle structures his commentary around this idea. Biddle, VII-VIII.

<sup>38</sup> Tigay, xii.

<sup>39</sup> Harstad, 24-25

<sup>40</sup> Mere external obedience does not constitute the type of obedience God is searching for in Deuteronomy. God looks for an obedience that reaches the heart. Harstad, 25. This is also a Scriptural principle suggested in John 14:21-24.

## In the Pentateuch

A significant detail we can draw from the Pentateuch is the identification of the first fruits ritual from other texts. Exod 23:19, 34:26, Lev 23:9-14, and Num 28:26-31 all detail the first fruits offering with the latter two having the most significance for our understanding of the ritual.<sup>41</sup> In Lev 23:10-14, verse 14 gives the detail that the Israelite who makes this offering “shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth” “until this same day” or until the day the Israelite makes the offering. We must remember here the distance that many Israelites would have had to travel to get to whatever “place where the Lord your God chooses to establish His name” (Deut 26:2b). Because the Israelite worshiper bringing his offering was not allowed to find sustenance on bread or roasted grain, he would need to find means contrary to his most common source of food to sustain himself on his journey.<sup>42</sup>

In Num 28:26-31, we are told that the first fruits ceremony also required additional offerings of animal sacrifice, though we are not told whose animals these are (vv. 27-30). The worshiper is required to bring the first produce of their harvest to a place far away, physically exerting himself in strenuous travel with a modified diet and sacrifice 10 expensive animals for the sake of the ceremony. Given the details concerning Lev 23:10-14 and Num 28:26-31, the obedience required as a response to the mental confirmation of God’s work in Israel’s history was a tremendous physical burden that required much strain.<sup>43</sup> If the Israelite was going to believe the story of God’s work in Israel and take action as a response to that story, they were obligated to work incredibly hard to be considered obedient.

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<sup>41</sup> McConville, 377.

<sup>42</sup> Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, Apollo Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 424.

<sup>43</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 545.

## Content

We come now to a consideration of the content of Deut 26:5b-9. This passage contains the biblical theological summary of Israel's history that is meant to be believed and recited during the first fruits ceremony.<sup>44</sup> The exegesis below will consider the language and phrases used to shed light on the worldview the text is trying to convey. It should be noted before moving forward, that the summary is a form of the Biblical worldview and thus is meant to be Israel's worldview. Israel is to believe the story as a summation of their understanding of Scripture and the events described in it and act in accordance with their belief.

### Israelite Origins (v. 5b)

In 5b, the Israelite is first meant to recall his origins from a suffering man who was blessed and protected by God.<sup>45</sup> The patriarch Jacob is in view who is the father of the nation preserved by supernatural intervention.<sup>46</sup> God protected Jacob when he was in peril and accomplished the opposite of the expected outcome in that Israel (Jacob) became a mighty nation when he should have perished in the famine.<sup>47</sup> In this way, the Israelite is meant to recall God's protection and faithfulness to His promises in crafting Jacob into a national entity.

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<sup>44</sup> Aubrey Buster argues for the notion that each summary is an abbreviated history that creates a shared set of memories and facilitates communal performance. Her notion of communal performance is not limited to a suggestion that the performance is to be performed by the whole community at the same time. Buster, 30.

<sup>45</sup> Bruggeman explains the notion of Israel's past being rooted in "an at-risk Aramean semi-nomad." Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 246.

<sup>46</sup> McConville, 379.

<sup>47</sup> There is a strong contrast between the "lostness" of the Aramean and the immense population growth of Israel in Egypt. Harstad, 679.

Perhaps the most difficult phrase here is *arammi oved*.<sup>48</sup> The people group “Arameans” has been widely discussed with some suggesting the use of *arammi* skews definitive conclusions regarding the date of the passage’s composition.<sup>49</sup> The Biblical data however, supports the notion that the *av* in view is Jacob who is to be considered an Aramean.<sup>50</sup> Abraham is identified in Gen 11:26-31 as one of Terah’s sons who was from the land of the Chaldeans. There may be some ambiguity concerning this group, but when Abraham bears his son Isaac and it is time for Isaac to be married, Abraham sends his servant to take a wife from Abraham’s country (Gen 24:2-9, *artsi* in v. 4). The servant then journeys to “Mesopotamia” (*aram naharayim*) (NASB, Gen 24:10). Genesis 24:14-67 tells the story of finding a wife for Isaac from this people group with *lavan* being identified as a key figure in the story. When Jacob is sent away in Genesis 28 because Esau is angry with him, he is sent to this same *lavan* in Gen 28:5 who lives in *paddenah aram* and is identified as the “son of Bethuel the Aramean” (*ben-bethu’el ha’arami*). Thus, there is no biblical issue in identifying Jacob as an Aramean because the Scriptures describe Abraham’s family with these details.

Interpretation of the *av* in v. 5b poses some difficulty. It is possible that the *av* in view is left intentionally vague and could be considered either Abraham or Jacob.<sup>51</sup> *avd* is glossed by the HALOT, DBL, and BDB as “perishing,” “lost” or “wandering.”<sup>52</sup> Both Abraham and Jacob could be considered Arameans, live nomadic lifestyles, experience a famine, and travel to Egypt

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<sup>48</sup> Christensen, 637.

<sup>49</sup> Bosman suggests a late date. Bosman, 2. Tigay suggests an early date. Tigay, 240.

<sup>50</sup> McConville, 379.

<sup>51</sup> Biddle, 384. Tigay, 240.

<sup>52</sup> Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1977). Koehler. James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

(Gen 12:10, 24:4, 25:10, 28:5, 31:20, 24, 42-44). However, it appears more likely that Jacob is in view since he remained in Egypt when he traveled there and his reason for doing so was directly tied to a prolonged famine which also makes “perishing” a better translation choice for *oved* (Gen. 42-44).<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, Jacob is given the name “Israel” (first use in Gen. 32:29) and it is the “sons of Israel” who multiply exceedingly in Exod 1:7 which is a detail Deut 26:5b specifically mentions. The bestowal of the name *yisra’el* allows Jacob to be a stand-in for the whole nation who could then consider him their father.<sup>54</sup> It is also the case that not all of Abraham’s progeny are considered by the Biblical data to compose the nation of Israel, thus further strengthening the notion that the *av* in view is Jacob (Gen 16, 25:1-6).

We see that the content of 5b focuses on the idea that Israel as a nation had divinely orchestrated origins. Israel came from a man who should not have survived the seven-year famine that occurred in the Middle East. Jacob should have perished (*oved*) for lack of grain, but instead God granted Jacob an outcome opposite of the expected result. Not only did Jacob and his entire family survive at the behest of God’s protection, but the family was multiplied by God in such a way that they constituted enough persons to form a national entity.

### The Oppression of Egypt (vv. 6-7)

Verses 6-7 detail the events of the Exodus with similar verbiage used to describe the situation from which God rescued the

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<sup>53</sup> Arnold and Tucker detail the translation options in Bill T. Arnold and Paavo N. Tucker, *Deuteronomy 12-26: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (Baylor University Press, 2022), 255. McConville, 379. Craigie uses the word “ailing” which allows for the word to remain somewhat ambiguous in English while also giving a true description of Jacob’s circumstances. He also mentions Jacob’s old age may be wrapped up in the word *ovd*. Craigie, 321.

<sup>54</sup> The word *yshrl* reveals Jacob’s destiny (perhaps as the father of the nation). Gordon J Wenham, *Genesis 16-50 Word Biblical Commentary* vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 296.

Israelites after they had sojourned in Egypt. The offeror of the first fruits is meant to recall the events of his descendants' increased suffering in Egypt and conclude that he can make his offering because God saw his ancestors' affliction.<sup>55</sup> Even though God had preserved the nation, He allowed them to undergo tremendous affliction until they cried out to Him which naturally leads into the events of the Exodus.

Of first import is the use of *r''*; the verb is not used in Exodus 1-14 but rather is used by Moses in Exod 5:22-23 to describe what God has done to the people in sending Moses to exhort Pharaoh to let the people go. Significantly, Deut 25:6 is using the verb in the opposite manner, suggesting instead that it was the Egyptians who afflicted the Israelites while they were in Egypt rather than God.<sup>56</sup> In Exod 5:22-23, Moses views the source of *r''* as God whereas in Deuteronomy 26 he views the source of the affliction as the Egyptians. It may be that through a lifetime of seeing God's work in the life of Israel, Moses has changed his view; he appears to have had a shift sometime between Exodus 5 and Deuteronomy 26.<sup>57</sup> The significance of the verb *r''* then is due to its previous use in Exod 5:22-23 compared with its new use in Deut 26:6.

The language of "humiliation" (*anh*) and "severe work" (*avodah qashah*) is a clear harkening back to Exod 1:11-14 and 6:9 where the same words are used to describe the perilous state of Israel under Egyptian rule.<sup>58</sup> These terms intensify the memory of Israel's agony in Egypt which will allow God's salvific

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<sup>55</sup> Thompson, *Deuteronomy*.

<sup>56</sup> Arnold and Tucker, 255.

<sup>57</sup> In all other Pentateuchal uses except Num 11:11 where Moses is still ascribing the source of *r''* to God, the verb finds its source in human beings. After Num 11:11 then, Moses appears to finally recognize that human beings are the source of *r''*; this may be because God has provided relief for Moses in giving him elders on whom the Spirit of God rested to help him care for the people (Num 11:16, 24-30) and because God has continued to provide food (quail) for them in the wilderness (vv. 18-32).

<sup>58</sup> Biddle, 381. Driver, 289. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*.

deliverance to become a central focus in the story summary. This matters in that the whole possibility for the offering of the first fruits is contingent upon God's deliverance from the Egyptian oppression. The first fruits offering would not be occurring if God had not taken note of Israel's suffering.<sup>59</sup>

The language of Deut 26:7 pushes the Israelite to remember the events of Exodus 2-6 while he makes the offering.<sup>60</sup> In Exod 3:9, the Lord "saw" (*rh*) the "oppression" (*lkhts*) of Israel, in 3:7 and 4:31 the Lord "saw" (*rh*) the "affliction" (*ani*) of Israel, and in 2:24, 3:7, and 6:5 the Lord "heard" (*shm*) their cries.<sup>61</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the Israelite telling this story is meant to speak as a response to the offering placed before the altar of the Lord. He is to verbally confess his capability of giving the offering because the Lord previously took notice of his descendants' sad estate in Egypt and delivered them. Had God not taken notice, the Israelite would still be in Egypt where offerings to the Lord were prohibited (Exod 5:1-3, 7:17, 8:1, 20, 9:25-28, 9:1, 13, 10:3, 7-11, 24-27)

#### The Salvation of the Lord (v. 8)

The details of v. 8 appear to refer mainly to the 10 plagues.<sup>62</sup> Verse 8 forms a crux in the summary by making abundantly clear that the Lord has been the primary Actor in Israel's salvation history for the sake of their preservation, increase, and deliverance. The Israelite making the first fruits offering is to starkly remember the power of the Lord and respond with an offering of gratefulness coupled to this declaration of God's mighty acts.

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<sup>59</sup> Ronald E. Clements, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New Interpreter's Bible vol. II (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 479.

<sup>60</sup> Harstad, 676.

<sup>61</sup> *ts'q* is also used in Exod 5:8, 5:15, and 8:8, but not in reference to the Israelites crying out to the Lord. The other terms are used in the same or a similar manner in Exodus 2-6 as they are in Deut 26:7.

<sup>62</sup> Harstad suggests Exodus 15-Numbers 36 is skipped by this verse. Harstad, 680.

Several terms used in Deut 26:8 refer to the Lord's actions in other passages describing the 10 plagues and the Exodus narrative. *yts* appears to be causative thus placing focus on the Lord's actions and references God's bringing Israel up from Egypt in numerous places (Exod 3:10-12, 6:6-7, 13, 26-27, 7:4-5).<sup>63</sup> Of the uses of *Khzq* in the Pentateuch, only those in the book of Numbers refer to human action; all others are ascribed to God or something He was causing (Exod 10:19, *ruakh-yam khazaq me'od* or 19:16, *veqol shofar khazaq me'od*). *Khzq* is used particularly to describe the events of the plagues in Exod 3:19, 6:1, 10:19, 13:9, 32:11, Deut 3:24, 4:34, 5:15, 6:21, 7:8, 7:19, 9:26, 11:2, and 26:8 often in combination with *yad*. *wizroa' netuyah* (or some combination of *zeroa'* and *nth*) is used in Exod 6:6, 15:12, Deut 4:34, 5:15, 7:19, 9:29, 11:2, and 26:8 to refer to the outstretched arm of God. *nth* however, is also used (often in combination with *yad*) to refer to the outstretched arm, hand, or staff of Moses or Aaron in Exod 7:19, 8:1-2, 8:13, 9:22-23, 10:13, 10:21-22, 14:16, 14:21, and 14:26; these references draw attention to the plagues or the covering of Egypt with water and could be seen as a connection between God, Moses, and Aaron. Said another way, God is stretching out His hand through Moses and Aaron's outstretched hands. The focus of these terms is thus on the Lord whether He is personally performing the action or acting through another human being.

*mora* is used in Deut 4:34, 11:25, and 26:8 to refer to God's actions and in 34:12 to refer to the acts of Moses. While the primary use of this term still appears to be in reference to the plagues, 34:12 does suggest that all (*kol*) of Moses' *mora* are in view here indicating more than just the plagues performed through Moses and Aaron in the Exodus events.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, *oth* is used in reference to the plagues of Egypt, but also in Num 14:11 and 14:22 to refer to the signs that God had done since

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<sup>63</sup> Arnold and Choi, 59-61.

<sup>64</sup> Harstad, 949.

leaving Egypt; specifically, the *oth* of 14:22, were performed by God “in the wilderness” (*Ve’eth-othothai asher-asithi vemitsrayim uvammidbar*). Thus, it seems reasonable that while focus is on the plagues performed in Egypt, the larger group of God’s acts in the wilderness may also be in view according to the terminology of the passage.

*mofeth* is used in a similar manner as *khzq* and *mora* with reference to the plagues in Egypt (Exod 4:21, 7:3, 9, 11:9-10; Deut 4:34, 6:22, 7:19, 13:2-3, 26:8, 29:2, 34:11) which means that Deut 26:8 primarily has in view God’s decisive actions in Exodus 1-14. As such, the Israelite making the offering of the first fruits is to declare and reflect upon the magnificent salvific acts of God. God has preserved Israel, caused them to become a great nation, and has delivered them from the brutal oppression of the Egyptians.<sup>65</sup>

#### The Reception of Blessing (v. 9)

The focus of the verbs in Deut 26:9 is again on what God has done and continues the flow of thought from v. 8.<sup>66</sup> God delivered Israel from their oppressive conditions and brought them into a fruitful land that produces an abundant harvest. Because God has not only saved Israel, but given them a land overflowing with abundance, the Israelite can bring the offering and respond with worship and rejoicing.

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<sup>65</sup> McConville, 380.

<sup>66</sup> An extensive conversation surrounding the events of Mount Horeb appears here in scholarly literature. I find it necessary only to address the fact that Horeb is largely concerned with the nation’s obedience to the Mosaic Law, whereas the story summary of Deut 26:5b-9 is making a clear point that God was responsible for all aspects of the nation’s election, preservation, increase, deliverance, and blessing. Therefore, I see Horeb left out because even though the ritual requires the physical and mental obedience of the Israelite farmer, the whole scenario and especially the story summary demonstrate that Israel is incapable of obedience and requires God to act for them. Furthermore, it is possible to see the inclusion of the legal material from Horeb in the entire section of Deuteronomy 12-26. Clements, 480-481.

*maqom* has in view the promised land of Canaan.<sup>67</sup> What's fascinating about the use of *maqom* in many occurrences is its reference to a holy place, a sacred place of worship, or a place where one had a spiritual encounter (Gen 12:6-7, 22:1-14, 28:10-22 for example). Analysis of the use of *maqom* in connection with spiritual events is beyond the scope of this paper and would not necessarily form a link in Deut 26:9 for the worshiper, but in combination with the word *erets*, the promised land could be viewed as a sacred space where God's presence dwells.<sup>68</sup> Canaan is meant to house a people who represent God's presence on earth perhaps indicating the establishment of a new Eden by God through the gift of the land. Because perpetuity of this offering is in view, the life and sacrifices of Israel may also anticipate their role as priests to the nations once they have been established in the land. This means the land of Canaan is functioning as the exclusive sacred space where the Lord is worshipped. Canaan is to be seen as the place where the Lord dwells meaning Israel's interaction with other nations should allow opportunity to meet the Lord.<sup>69</sup>

The idea behind *zavath khalav udevash* suggests Canaan is a paradise-like land that Israel will inherit based on God's kindness.<sup>70</sup> It is a phrase that seems to refer to an over-

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<sup>67</sup> Tigay, 241.

<sup>68</sup> This touches on a greater Biblical-theological theme where God's kingdom is God's power over God's people in God's place. The people of Israel could be seen as the people over whom God dwells, and for a time that specific geographical location was the land of Canaan but will later stretch out to include the whole earth (*erets*). Patrick Schreiner, *The Kingdom of God and the Glory of the Cross*, Short Studies in Biblical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 18, 37.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

<sup>70</sup> Scholars are somewhat allusive on interpreting the description *zuth khlu dvsh* in a literalistic manner. Durham for instance, offers little detail concerning the actuality of fertility in the land and rather points to the contrast between the circumstances in the wilderness and the land of Canaan. John Durham, *Exodus*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 33. Some choose to take the phrase as a metaphor for the abundance and blessedness of the land rather than the description I have given above; some also see the phrase as contrary to the actual fertility of Canaan. Stern offers an overview of perspectives

abundance of resources that allow for freedom from the burden of cultivation to a degree. A “flowing” source of luxury food and drink means that one does not have to cultivate it, but rather simply collect it and consume it. A stark contrast is thus made to the life of slavery lived in Egypt where the Israelites knew nothing but work and toil. The extensive use of this phrase in the Pentateuch sets the land of Canaan as a high point of anticipation regarding the fulfilment of God’s promises. The description does not need to be given in this verse, but the nature of the land is emphasized for the sake of aiding the Israelite memory in contrasting their life in Egypt and the wilderness with their life in Canaan, thus making the salvation of the Lord all the more glorious.<sup>71</sup> They are to recognize how good they have compared to how bad their ancestors had it and walk in obedience to God as a result, specifically by offering their thanks in the first fruits offering.

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in Philip D. Stern, “The Origin and Significance of ‘The Land Flowing with Milk and Honey,’” *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 4 (1992): 554–57. Also, for a hyperbolic reading see William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, Anchor Bible vol. 2 (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1998), 202. I believe this is negated by the geological data; John Beck mentioned the extreme fertility of the Jezreel Valley boasting 200 feet of topsoil. Beck, *Historical and Geographical Settings*. By comparison, some of the most fertile ground in the United States (Northwest Iowa where I am from), is between 25-30 feet. This data concerning Iowa was learned in personal conversation with farmers in the area. Israel is extremely geologically diverse and should not be described by sweeping statements regarding fertility given the many locations, particularly in the middle and northern regions, that are highly suitable for an agrarian society. Even some of the locations that are more devoid of vegetation such as the Judean wilderness still grow enough plant life for shepherds to raise sheep and goats in the modern day. This data was obtained through personal witness of shepherds tending their flocks in Judean wilderness of modern-day Israel. Stuart confirms the fertility of the land in Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishers, 2006), 117. Davies also reads the text this way. G. I. Davies, *Exodus 1-18*, The International Critical Commentary vol. 1 (New York, NY: T&T Clark: 2020), 250-251.

<sup>71</sup> So Durham, 33.

## **Contribution**

There are three clearly recognizable contributions the details of Deut 26:1-11 in its Scriptural context have demonstrated for us. First, the worldview the Israelites were to believe was integrated with practice or action. Second, the acts of God and the sinfulness of Israel demonstrate the impossibility of living according to this worldview. Third, if living according to the presented worldview is impossible, Israel ought to have anticipated a future Figure Who could live according to this worldview. These three contributions will be discussed below.

### **An Integrated Worldview**

Throughout Deut 26:1-11, we see a weighty intersection of actions and belief. The Israelite is to have mentally and spiritually assented to the declarations in v. 3b and vv. 5b-9 before he brings the offering. He was to believe the story of origin, salvation by God, and entrance into the land according to what was written in the Pentateuch. His belief in the summarized story is meant to prompt him to bring the offering given his recognition of God's marvelous preservation of Jacob in the face of starvation, the notice that God took of his ancestors while under the oppressive regime in Egypt, the great salvation God accomplished for Israel in the Exodus, and Israel's subsequent entrance into the paradise-like land of Canaan. The Scriptures present these events as true history for Israel thus crafting a worldview structure meant to be assented to. The believed worldview should create for the Israelite farmer, a grateful and thankful demeanor which yields the fruit of action. In this way, the story is consistent with the same salvation of the New Testament where Christians are saved by the grace of God which should in turn prompt obedience through the Spirit of God Who has been given to us so that we might walk in good works and obedience (John 14:21, 23-24; Rom 8:1-2, 12:1-2; Gal 5:16; Eph 2:8-10; James 2). The story of salvation should bear the fruit of action in the life of one who assents to it.

## An Impossible Worldview

After Deuteronomy, the Old Testament expounds the story of Israel with shocking and sometimes sickening detail concerning their behavior. There is no book of the Old Testament that excludes mention of the sinfulness of the nation. Even as Moses is completing Deuteronomy, he sings a song prophesying Israel's future disobedience (Deut 32). The brutality of Moses' song comes in that the generation Moses sings to is supposedly better than their parents who were punished with death in the wilderness (Num 14). However, Joshua includes narratives of sinful action and concludes with a message that is largely the same as Moses' pessimistic anticipation of the future (Josh 7, 9, 23-24). Following Joshua, the book of Judges displays an Israel spiraling out of control. Judges ends with three stories of heinous behavior nigh unspeakable before moving to 1 Samuel where the priesthood is corrupted, and the nation rejects God as King by asking for a king like the Gentiles (Judg 17-21, 1 Sam 1-4, 8). David is a bright spot in Israel's history as are kings like Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, but all these figures fall short of God's perfect standard of holiness thus highlighting the inability of Israel to act in accordance with the worldview of Deuteronomy 26 in its Pentateuchal context.

This should not however, come as a surprise to the nation. The generation who received the first fruits liturgy had seen their parents die in the wilderness as a direct result of disobedience (Num 14:20-45, 32:13). They are then offered the story of Deut 26:5b-9 where the verbal declarations make abundantly clear that God was the decisive Actor in every major stage of Israel's journey. God preserved Jacob and built him into a great nation in Egypt. God looked with compassion on the suffering nation. God brought them out of Egypt with great signs and wonders. God brought them into the fruitful land of Canaan. God is the One Who has continued to drag the sinful nation forward through history and bless them despite their sinfulness. Even if the Israelite is obedient in bringing the offering and performing the ritual, there is no chance that he is perfectly

obedient in all areas of his life and thus he is reduced to a state of hopelessness unless God will act for him. A mere one chapter later, before the first fruits ceremony was ever performed, the Israelite who heard the words of Deut 26:1-11 also heard “cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them” (27:26, cf. Gal. 3:10). The Israelite worshiper bringing the offering ought to know that even in his obedience, he is cursed under the Law of Moses.

This is the same story given for the Christian in a passage like Rom 3:10-18. Paul brutally defines human nature as entirely sinful and completely hopeless under the Law without God’s intervention. In this way, Deut 26:1-11 displays the hopeless estate of man in his sin unless God will act to fulfill the requirements of the Law in his place.

### An Expectant Worldview

If the Israelite farmer was to bring his first fruits offering knowing that his actions were not aligned with his own beliefs according to the Law, he should have expected something greater than the Law. The Israelite has undertaken great physical exertion to bring the offering to the place where the Lord has established His name. He has declared that God is the reason for Israel’s preservation, salvation, and blessing. He worships God for this fact with all who are around him, yet he remembers the curses of the Law and knows he has not obeyed the entirety of the Law but has fallen short. What’s more, he sees his own countrymen acting with heinous disobedience all around him and may live at a time when idolatry is integrated into the national religious practices by the royal class (1 Kgs 11:1-13, 12:25-33, 14:21-31, 15:1-7, etc.).

The worldview the faithful Israelite believes is a worldview he knows he has never acted in accordance with. Simultaneously, he knows God has been the Savior in the past and continues to be in the present and that he cannot combat his sin merely by attempted obedience to the Mosaic Law. As such, he should

have looked forward to and expected that God will be the Savior in the future as well, even if he does not understand how. The worldview given to the Israelite in Deuteronomy 26, when taken in its Pentateuchal context is a perspective that calls for a Messiah. There has been some suggestion of this fact by Deuteronomy 26 even though the Messiah has not been revealed.<sup>72</sup> Still, the Israelite should not have considered the Mosaic Law to be the end of God's work in the life of the nation. Thus, even as the worldview of Deuteronomy 26 is spoken and believed, when taken together with the rest of the Pentateuch, a Messiah should have been expected. For Christians, that Messiah has been revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ. God has acted to fulfil the righteousness required by the Mosaic Law in order that those who believe in Him may act in accordance with their worldview and be free from the Law's curse (Matt 5:17-20; John 14:21-24; Rom 8:2, 12:1-2; Gal 3:13, 5:16).

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<sup>72</sup> The idea that the obedient Israelite who assented to the true metanarrative was looking for something more than the Mosaic Law is made apparent by Messianic expectation throughout the writings of Moses. The singular pronouns in Gen 3:15 make the *zra* of the woman a Messianic figure with the ability to destroy the source and effectiveness of sin by crushing its head. Noah is given his name because he was expected to be one who would give humanity rest from the *atsvvn* of their hands meaning Noah's father had an expectation that someone would come from his line who would reverse the effects of the curses and punishments (*atsvvn*) given in Gen 3:14-19. Abraham is told in Gen 22:17 that his *zra* would possess the gates of his (singular pronominal suffix on *ayv*) enemies which would have indicated to him that a singular conqueror was coming to defeat those who were considered the opposite of Abraham. In other words, because Abraham was accounted as righteous (Gen 15:6), a specific person from his line would come to defeat the unrighteous. Moses records Jacob's words concerning Judah in Gen 49:8-12 where an eternal kingdom is given to Judah as well as "the obedience of the peoples" (v. 10). The prophecies of Balaam anticipate a "star" rising from Jacob who will have victory over his enemies and have dominion (Num 25:17-19). Moses also records in Deut 18:15 that "God will raise up...a prophet like me from among you." The author of Deut 34:10-12 has not seen this prophet thus prompting the coming Messiah to be a reasonable candidate for the referent in 18:15. In this way, the Israelite offeror of Deut 26:1-11, familiar with the Pentateuch, would have had Messianic expectations at some point in the future and given Gen 49:10, would have linked them with obedience to God.

## Conclusion

This paper has shown that the story summary of Deut 26:1-11 set in its Pentateuchal context suggests obedience and belief were integrated in the Israelite mind. The context of the passage demonstrates the tremendous physical effort the worshiper would undergo to bring the first fruits offering. The content of the story demonstrates God was responsible for the preservation, salvation, and blessing of the nation which made it possible for the worshiper to bring his offering. This passage set in its Pentateuchal context suggests an impossibility of living in accordance with the story of Deut 26:5b-9 coupled to the Law and thus anticipates God's further work in the life of the nation. This anticipation was to revolve around a Messianic figure Who would live as the true Israelite and bring an end to the Law of Moses. In this way, the implications of an in-depth analysis of Deut 26:1-11 both prove and stretch beyond the thesis of this paper.

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